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TIMETABLE SET FOR CITY CENTRE PROGRAMME

Work on the £6 million regeneration of Inverness city centre is due to get under way at the end of April, next year, and be completed by the end of 2007.

Inverness City Partnership, in association with The Highland Council, has appointed Land Use Consultants, Glasgow, to lead the design and implementation of the city centre streetscape and traffic management programme.

LUC met local stakeholders today (Thursday) and over the next week will be issuing a questionnaire to local businesses and residents to assist in the technical design process.

They will then progress the final design of the works and prepare tenders of the early phases of the nine-phase programme of improvements with the aim of awarding a contract in April, next year.

Phase one will see a new pedestrian crossing provided on Bridge Street, linking Castle Wynd and Church Street as well as improvements along the full length of Church Street.

Further phases will see improvements introduced at Queensgate; Union Street; Drummond Street/Baron Taylor's Street/Lombard Street; Stephen's Brae; Ness Walk; Station Square/Falcon Lane; Inglis Street and the Raining Stairs.

It is intended to sequence the work to allow the city centre streetscape to be progressively completed, without widescale simultaneous disruption.

Marie Mackintosh, City Partnership Officer, said the appointment of the project managers was a significant milestone for the city centre project.

She said: "LUC have considerable experience in designing and project managing this kind of major city centre project and have given a commitment to closely liaise with local businesses and residents over the major works that lie ahead.

"It is unwise to give specific timescales for the nine phases of work at this stage, as much will depend on the progress LUC make with the design of the works and the tendering process and the progress we make in obtaining the necessary traffic orders to change the flow of traffic, parking and loading in the "old town".

"The programme will also have to be developed in detail with the contractor once appointed. But we have set a target for starting work on Bridge Street by the end of April and completing the programme by Christmas 2007 or early in 2008 and will do everything we can to stick to this."

The aim of the programme is to reduce traffic in the city centre; improve public transport services; create more space for pedestrians; and enhance the environment generally.

Funding has been secured from the Scottish Executive's Public Transport Fund; the City Vision Fund; The Highland Council; Inverness Nairn Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise and the Inverness Common Good Fund.

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Notes To Editor:

Land Use Consultants (LUC) is an award winning multi-disciplinary environmental consultancy with expertise in urban and landscape design. The practice, with offices in Glasgow, London and Bristol, was landscape architect for the iconic Eden Centre in Cornwall, and is currently completing the £6 million public realm scheme for Glasgow's International Financial Services District. LUC has been established in Scotland since 1979 and has worked extensively throughout Scotland and the north of England on a wide portfolio of design, planning and environmental management projects. In Inverness LUC will be supported by Arup, Turner& Townsend and ID Consultants.