Appendix A – Summary of the SEMMMS Strategy

A.1 Summary of the wider SEMMMS strategy

Background

The late 1990s saw a review of Government Transport Policy, which included a review of the trunk road building programme. This review culminated in the *New Deal for Trunk Roads in England* report. Its recommendations included the down sizing of the trunk road network, which is the responsibility of the Highways Agency. In the South East Manchester Area the recommendations included:

- De-trunking the A6 and A523;
- Withdrawing the following associated road schemes from the trunk road building programme:
  - A6M Stockport North South Bypass including the Stepping Hill Link;
  - A523 / A555 Poynton Bypass; and
  - A555 Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road (MAELR) and MALRW Manchester Airport Link Road West.

These schemes have been identified on various plans since the 1930s, with a number of residential and employment developments occurring on the assumption that these schemes would be constructed. Indeed, the Highways Agency, the body responsible for delivering them, progressed the schemes such that a preferred route was agreed, along with appropriate procedures for the A6 (M) following a Public Inquiry in 1988. Furthermore the central section of the A555 MAELR was constructed as part of a local authority A34 bypass scheme. This was jointly funded by the Highways Agency and private developers, on the assumption that the rest of the route would be built shortly afterwards. Anecdotally, local residents feel they were promised this at the associated Public Inquiry (with supporting Highways Agency evidence).

Finally, the *New Deal for Trunk Roads in England* recommended that a multi modal study be undertaken in the South East Manchester area to consider the existing transport problems, and subsequently develop a long term 20 year strategy designed to address these issues.

This resulted in the **South East Manchester Multi Modal Study (SEMMMS)** being commissioned and managed by Government Office for the North West (GONW). This included a Steering Group comprising of the relevant local authorities, transport organisations and a wider reference group to reflect local interests. Consultants were then appointed to undertake the study, which commenced in January 2000 and was completed in September 2001 when a final report, including a recommended strategy, was published.

SEMMMS Strategy

The SEMMMS Strategy was developed in accordance with the *'Guidance on the Methodology for Multi-Modal Studies*', and the final report was supported by the local authorities, the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA), the North West Regional Bodies and the Government.

The study itself identified a variety of issues and problems across the study area of parts of Cheshire, Derbyshire, Manchester, Tameside and the whole of Stockport. Recommendations were made using a multi modal approach to improving transport networks in the area and linked to future planning policy and regeneration of existing town, district and local centres.

Five core objectives were adopted in the Strategy:

- the promotion of environmentally sustainable economic growth;
- the promotion of urban regeneration;
- the improvement of amenity, safety, and health;
- the enhancement of the regional centre, town centres and local and village centres and the Airport, and

- the encouragement of the community and cultural life of the neighbourhood and of social inclusion.

The five core objectives had clear linkages to the transport issues that were identified/ considered. These were broken down in to five priority themes.

Public Transport - The provision of a fully accessible public transport system to promote sustainable economic growth, the improvement of neighbourhood community and cultural life, and the encouragement of social inclusion are integral to the delivery of the SEMMMS objectives.

Use of Road Space - Changing the way in which road space is allocated and the quality of the network for users can form part of the broader promotion of urban regeneration and the creation of improved amenity, safety and health by making public transport, cycling and walking more attractive to the public. This develops the community and cultural life of the neighbourhood and the encouragement of social inclusion. This was identified as a key concern and became an integral part of the strategy.

Transport Change - Transport change was a key element of the strategy and implemented in many cases through the measures under the Public Transport and Use of Road Space. Other aspects of Transport Change were taken forward separately, for example the development of school travel plans and the promotion of Safer Routes to School, and the development and implementation of business travel plans.

Urban Regeneration - Urban Regeneration within the SEMMMS area allowing improvements to the streetscape and improved accessibility of the area by a range of transport modes. In this way urban regeneration enabled several elements of the strategy to be packaged together for delivery.

Roads - The development of a package of highway works, in particular the major highway schemes identified in the SEMMMS strategy, was dealt with fully in direct discussions between the DfT and the three authorities (Cheshire County Council, Manchester City Council, and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council) charged by the Secretary of State with the development of the schemes. Other highway related work included the reduction of the negative impact of freight traffic on roads in the SEMMMS area, through encouraging the use of appropriate routes and rail freight.

Whilst a 20 year Strategy was developed, the work was split in to Short, Medium, and Long Term programmes.

SEMMMS concluded that some of the highway problems could only be addressed through the implementation of a 'lower key' form of the (pre-existing) road schemes. However, it was noted that the highway proposals were one element of the overall package of recommendations that the study concluded should be implemented in their entirety if the 20-year transport vision were to deliver its full outcomes.

In 2002 the recommendations of the Strategy were welcomed by the then Transport Minister, John Spellar, who invited the local authorities to take forward the schemes necessary for delivery.

SEMMMS progress to date

Approximately £63 million has been spent on SEMMMS projects since 2001/02. Within the five priority themes of SEMMMS, the schemes that have been delivered schemes include:

Public Transport

SEMMMS Major Scheme Quality Bus Corridors/ Integrated Transport Corridors (QBCs/ITCs). This included eleven main corridors plus a network of routes to serve the airport. The improvements were designed to reduce journey time, improve reliability and to increase comfort and convenience to all users.

The eleven main corridors in the SEMMMS programme were:

- Manchester – Hyde (A57);
- Stockport – Hyde (A560/A627);

- Stockport – Brinnington;
- Stockport – Marple (A626);
- Stockport – Cheadle Hulme;
- Stockport – Cheadle (A560);
- Stockport – Urmston (A5145);
- Manchester – East Didsbury (A34);
- Manchester – Northenden (A6010/B5167);
- Withington – Didsbury (B5093); and
- Stockport – Reddish (B6167).

Other Public Transport improvements have included:

- accessibility improvements to bus stops on other bus routes
- improvements to accessibility for number of transport interchanges and railway stations in the SEMMMS area;
- the provision of a computerised booking and scheduling system for flexible transport providers such as Ring and Ride and Local Links;
- the provision of yellow buses to improve school journeys by reducing anti-social behaviour and so increasing use of public transport for school journeys. Yellow School Bus services in operation in Stockport are Brinnington – Harrytown, Heavily – Harrytown, Offerton – Brinnington, Reddish – St. Annes, Brinnington – Werneth.

Work has also continued on the proposals for a Metrolink extension to Stockport throughout SEMMMS so far however, the delivery of such a route is unlikely before 2013. Consideration is also being given to tram-train options for extending the tram system beyond Stockport to Marple. The delay and possible non-delivery of these schemes have been identified as a possible weakness to the SEMMMS programme as it will compromise its overall integrated approach.

A rail station improvement programme has commenced across Tameside, Stockport, Manchester, Derbyshire and Cheshire East.

Use of Road Space

Road space reallocation has involved the creation of on street cycle facilities, improvements to the pedestrian network, reducing traffic speed and removal of targeted vehicles from inappropriate routes, in order to make vulnerable road users feel more secure. This has included:

- Improvement work on the pathways in the Mersey Valley in Northenden, which provide links with Chorlton Water Park and the Trans Pennine Trail in 2006/07;
- Improvement work on the Black Path in Wythenshawe, linking the Wythenshawe area with Manchester Airport in 2006/07;
- Continuing implementation of traffic calming schemes such as Half Moon Lane, Offerton a 20 mph zone serving three schools in the local area;
- The provision of on highway cycle lanes and advanced stop lines (ASLs) at traffic signals for example: A6017 Stockport Rd, Denton – The A6017 Stockport Road, Denton forms a strategic link on the Trans Pennine Trail (NCN62);
- Increasing the number of cycle stands in town centres, leisure facilities and schools across the SEMMMS area. For example 12 cycle stands have been provided at the Ken Wood leisure centre in Hattersley; and

- Environmental improvements including work to a major residential area to the south west of Hyde, thereby improving pedestrian access to Hyde town centre especially for the mobility impaired.

Transport Change

A strength of SEMMMS is the increased ability to encourage behavioural change due to increased school travel plan delivery and the ability to improve the accessibility of routes. A large part of the work to encourage a change in modal split away from private motor vehicles, reducing congestion and the health and environmental effects of this type of transport, is related to the production of travel plans for schools and business but other actions that encourage modal shift have also been pursued such as:

- Safer Routes to Schools including the provision of improved traffic signals, signing and lining with relevant TRO's, maintenance of sight lines, dropped kerbs and tactile paving for example: Manchester's £1.2m Safer Routes to School programme aims to underpin Travel Planning in schools with physical measures that make walking and cycling an attractive and safe alternative to the car. The Safer Routes to Schools & 20 mph measures around schools won the ICE Award in 2007, commending the programme as an exemplar;
- Improvement of cycle facilities on school sites for example the implementation of cycle parking at Offerton High School, Stockport;
- Walking promotion schemes such as walking buses, Walk Once a Week (WOW) and park and stride e.g. St Peters Catholic Primary School, Hazel Grove, Stockport who have park and stride and take part in walk to school week and Abingdon Primary School, Reddish Stockport who have a walking bus and a WOW scheme in operation.
- Other education establishments such as Adult Education and Six Form Colleges have also been approached to develop travel plans and in Stockport, they are all involved in the Stockport Travel Easy Partnership (STEP) to support the implementation of these plans through collective working and joint travel initiatives.
- In Stockport area wide travel plans have been produced to help reduce specific congestion issues such as the Stanley Green Industrial Estate in Heald Green and at another industrial estate in Bredbury.

Urban Regeneration

The ability to regenerate district centres and integrate schemes with necessary maintenance works has been identified as a strength of SEMMMS. As such there has been a significant amount of work done by the Greater Manchester authorities via SEMMMS funding to improve accessibility, aid public transport, improve public safety, improve the environment and the streetscape in local, district, and town centres including:

- Pedestrian access improvements to the district centres such as footway improvements on Windermere Avenue, Denton, Littlemoor Road, Longdendale and Joel Lane, Hyde in 2006/07;
- Improvements to street lighting for example, in the Haughton Green area of Denton, Dane Bank, and the Clough End Road area of Hattersley as well as areas in Hyde in 2006/07 and works in the residential areas of Dane Bank and Haughton Green, Denton, Denton town centre and, Hyde town centre in 2007/08;
- Improvements to centres such as:
    - Gorton, Northenden, Withington and Wythenshawe in 2007/08;
    - Improvements in Woodley with the entire pedestrian centre resurfaced, new street furniture and improved CCTV, lighting, cycle parking and pedestrian and cycling access in 2009/10; and
    - Improvements in the Stockport Town Centre including: the refurbishment of Mersey Square to create a good quality space for events and improve pedestrian safety;

improvements to the public realm on Middle Hillgate; and the development of St Peter Square as a 3.3 acre 'urban park' public space and busway.

Roads

A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road – The design and preparation of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road has continued with significant work undertaken in meeting DfT requirements as part of the scheme promotion. **The non-delivery of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road has been identified as a major threat to the success of the overall strategy**.

Local safety schemes have also benefited from SEMMMS funding.

- These have included speed reduction schemes – for example 20 mph zones outsides schools and crossing and signal improvements. In Tameside work of this nature has been undertaken in response to the identification of locations with injury accident records including Stockport Road, Denton (Two Trees Lane to Stockport boundary) where there has been a reduction of the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph.
- Tameside has also improved road safety via the Watchman programme. In 2001, as part of a Local Service Agreement, the Council commissioned, co-developed and introduced a bespoke safety camera system in a discrete pilot study area. The main focus of the scheme is through the encouragement of road users to drive more slowly rather than through enforcement. The system is also capable of reminding road users of the posted speed limit
- SEMMMS funding has allowed a total of 20 Watchman camera units and 48 vehicle actuated signs to be provided within the SEMMMS area. Spending on Watchman was £104,000 in 2006/07 and £85,000 in 2007/08.
- The implementation of the Watchman system has led to year on year collision and casualty reductions, especially when set against the high traffic flows. In 2000 a total of 1170 personal injury casualties were recorded throughout the Borough, where as in 2007 this total had dropped to 745. It is accepted that the spread of Watchman throughout Tameside has led to calmed traffic speeds in general.

The A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road

On the basis of the SEMMMS Strategy recommendations, the road schemes that were originally listed on the Roads Programme (as developed by the Highways Agency) did not form part of the Strategy. Instead it was recommended that the local authorities within the study area develop smaller and more appropriate scale road proposals along the protected alignments. It recommended that these be designed to provide relief for the study area communities affected by inappropriate through traffic, but not to provide a new strategic route of regional and potentially national significance.

The recommendations included:

- a road is constructed between the M60 at Bredbury and the A6 at Hazel Grove following the protected alignment for the A6(M). The construction of the Stepping Hill Link between the A6 north of Hazel Grove centre and the new road forms part of the recommendation. It is recommended that the north-south bypass be constructed to dual carriageway standard with a 40/50 mph design speed.
- Junctions should be at-grade and most likely signal controlled;
- a bypass of Poynton is constructed. The bypass should comprise an east-west section linking the A555/A5102 junction north of Woodford to the A6 at Hazel Grove. Traffic modelling undertaken for the study indicates that a dual carriageway is more than likely required, but junctions can be accommodated at grade. For the north-south bypass of the A523 a single carriageway bypass is recommended from the existing A523 at Adlington, joining the east-west section of the bypass north of Woodford;
- a reduced scale scheme is constructed in the MALRW corridor. Traffic modeling indicates that an at-grade dual carriageway linking the Airport roundabout at the end of the M56 spur to

the Western end of the A555 at Handforth is sufficient. An at-grade junction at Styal Road should be provided. Combined with other recommendations, there is the opportunity to introduce dedicated HGV/public transport lanes along the MALRW corridor.

It was recommended that the protected alignments in the development plans for the MALRW, Poynton Bypass and A6 (M) proposals be maintained. It is also recognised, however, that the reduced scale schemes recommended may be able to use modified alignments that have lower adverse environmental impacts or bring additional traffic or other benefits. Therefore, alignments may deviate from the protected routes. The implementing authorities should not feel constrained by the protected alignments.

On the A523, between the northern end of the Silk Road and Adlington, it was envisaged that capacity improvements would be required if the full benefits of the strategy to the villages and lanes between the A34 and A523 north of Macclesfield were to be achieved. It was judged that such improvements could be achieved through on-line (or close to line) improvements, although more investigation was recommended. If an off-line scheme is required, traffic forecasts indicate that a single carriageway scheme would be sufficient.

The three local authorities involved, Cheshire East Council, Manchester City Council and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council accepted the SEMMMS Strategy's recommendations and the Minister's request to begin development and appraisal of these schemes and ensure *"that the designs of these schemes maximises the benefits that they can bring to the study area*."

The full scheme comprised of 21.5 kilometres of new road which was proposed to run from Junction 25 on the M60 to Junction 5 on the M56 as a dual carriageway with two single carriageway link roads – the Stepping Hill Link and Poynton Bypass. As previously mentioned, the central 3.9 kilometres of the relief road scheme has already been built as part of the A34 bypass scheme.

Two public consultation exercises were undertaken during this time to help understand the level of support and approval of the proposals, along with the route alignment and type of junctions required. It was noted that both consultations had good response rates with high levels of public support for the scheme. Furthermore, specialist consultation was undertaken with local environmental interest groups. The feedback from these groups and local walking, cycling and horse riding disability groups all assisted in developing the scheme detail.

The three local authorities created a Major Scheme Business Case (MSBC) bid for funding the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road which was formally submitted in July 2004. The Department of Transport requested further information on the traffic modelling which was subsequently submitted. They also requested that the local authorities considered whether the scheme could be funded from PFI (Private Finance Initiative). The local authorities explored this option submitting further information to the Department of Transport over the next few years.

Progress of Relief Road Major Scheme Business Case

In July 2007 the Department's considered response stated that while the scheme provided value for money, limited funding capabilities meant it was not possible to fund the Relief Road as a single scheme, such that consideration should be given to its phased delivery. Three potential phases of the scheme were identified by the local authorities, and were submitted the DfT for consideration in 2007/ 08 as follows:

- M60 to the A6, including the Stepping Hill Link;
- A6 to Manchester Airport with Poynton Bypass; and
- A6 to Manchester Airport without Poynton Bypass (A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road).

The DfT and Local Authority Officer's jointly examined the key policy drivers in the area and agreed that **the A6 to Manchester Airport section was the priority scheme due to the potential economic impact on Manchester Airport (and therefore the City Region) of delaying access improvements, which in turn could constrain future growth**.

In Autumn 2008, the Government announced they would contribute up to £165m towards the cost of the phase of the scheme from A6 to Manchester Airport without the Poynton Bypass, if that was matched with local contributions, and subject to a satisfactory business case submission. The scheme cost was estimated at £330m. This phase of the original SEMMMS Relief Road is the scheme known as the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road.

In May 2009 the Leaders of the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) agreed to create a Greater Manchester transport fund of over £1.5 billion to fund key projects including a contribution of £125m towards the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road. Local Authority officers had indicated that following a review £290m would be sufficient to build this scheme. The Region accepted the AGMA approach and incorporated it in their response to the Regional Funding Allocation 2 (RFA2) process.

In July 2009 the Government responded to the RFA2 consultation saying "*We welcome AGMA's allocation of £125m from the Transport Fund for a new road link between Manchester Airport and the A6 to the east. This represents a very positive response to the Department's offer to provide up to £165m for this scheme if a local contribution was forthcoming to meet the balance of costs and will now allow preparation work to move ahead*".

The A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road scheme is a low cost alternative derived from the overall SEMMMS scheme recommended in 2000/01. However, the objectives set for the full scheme (as detailed below) are met by the low cost alternative - albeit to a lesser extent and with dependency on the area gaining traffic relief from the scheme. The A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road is an integral part of the overall SEMMMS strategy and is primarily focused on contributing to the realisation of the SEMMMS objectives. It should be noted that these scheme objectives stand regardless of whether a full or low cost alternative is pursued as a solution i.e. only the extent to which the objectives are achieved would change:

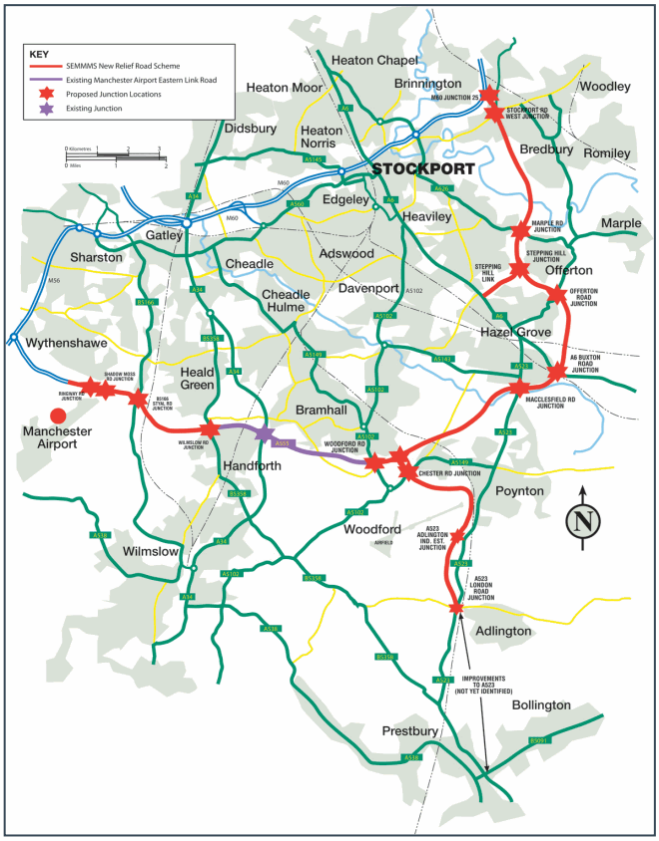
- Promote environmentally sustainable economic growth:
  - Improve transport network efficiency;
  - Promote economic growth; and
  - Protect the environment.
- Promote urban regeneration:
  - Improve access to principal regeneration sites outside the Core Study Area;
  - Improve access to brownfield/renewal sites within the Core Study Area; and
  - Improve levels of employment
- Improve security and reduce crime;
  - Minimise accidents;
  - Improve security and reduce crime;
  - Reduce noise levels;
  - Promote the use of healthier transport modes.
- Enhance "centres" at all levels and the Airport:
  - Reduce the impact of road traffic;
  - Improve public transport accessibility, reliability and punctuality to centres from the study area;
  - Provide for access to the Regional Centre from local centres;
  - Achieve mode split and traffic level targets for Airport related traffic; and
  - Improve road journey time reliability to the Airport.
- Encourage community, cultural life and social inclusion:

- Improve access to health, educational and leisure facilities;
- Provide accessible transport to the mobility impaired, elderly and families;
- Improve cycling and pedestrian facilities in residential areas;
- Minimise the impact of traffic on local communities; and
- Improve transport access to/from areas of local deprivation.

The original SEMMMS Relief Road Scheme

The wider SEMMMS strategy included the concept for a Relief Road, comprising 21.5 kilometres of new road stretching from Junction 25 on the M60 to Junction 5 on the M56. It was recommended that this be a dual carriageway with two single carriageway link roads – the Stepping Hill Link and Poynton Bypass. The extent of the Relief Road, as defined in the initial wider strategy work is indicated in ***Figure A.1***. It is noted that the central 3.9 kilometres of the relief road scheme has already been constructed as part of the A555 and A34 bypass scheme.

Figure A.1 - The A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road Scheme



The three local authorities, Stockport, Manchester City Council and Cheshire (now Cheshire East) jointly produced a Major Scheme Business Case bid for funding the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road, which was formally submitted to the DfT in July 2004. Over the next few years, further information was submitted to the Department, including an investigation into the possibility of funding the scheme by PFI (Private Finance Initiative).

In July 2007 the Department's considered response stated that whilst the scheme provided value for money, limited funding capabilities meant it was not possible to fund the Relief Road as a single scheme, such that consideration should be given to its phased delivery. Three potential phases of the scheme were identified by the local authorities, and were submitted to the DfT for consideration in 2007/ 08:

- M60 to the A6, including the Stepping Hill Link;
- A6 to Manchester Airport with Poynton Bypass; and
- A6 to Manchester Airport without Poynton Bypass (A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road).

The Local Authority Officers examined the key policy drivers and transport problems in the area and decided that the A6 to Manchester Airport section was the priority scheme due to the potential economic impact on Manchester Airport (and therefore the City Region) of delaying access improvements, which in turn could constrain future growth.

Following the Eddington study, which highlighted transport's pivotal role in supporting the future economic success of the UK, reforms of the planning, funding and delivery of transport interventions were recommended. The study recognised the need to maximise sustainable returns from investment, whilst improving the environmental performance of transport.

Eddington also recognised the importance of connecting inter regional routes as part of the network. This role is played by the A6, A523 and A34, linking Greater Manchester with Cheshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire. Eddington considered a number of road schemes including the Relief Road and recognised that it provided high value for money. Using the Eddington criterion for BCRs, the Relief Road BCR was increased slightly to 5.60.