

NEWS UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2004

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SEMMMS - THE STORY SO FAR...

SEMMMS, the South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy, has been improving the lives of people living and working in south east Greater Manchester over the last two years.

A major programme of work has rapidly begun, bringing with it a wide range of local improvements. These include: traffic calming schemes in residential areas and around schools, which improve road safety; Integrated Transport Corridor schemes across the area, which reduce bus journey times; accessibility improvements for all modes of travel in the town and district centres; and an investment in Travel Plans for businesses and schools across Stockport offering genuine, sustainable travel alternatives. All of these improvements and many more are happening alongside the development of the New Relief Road, so we can strengthen the future of Stockport as a place to live, shop and work.

The SEMMMS based projects, which are backed by money from national



government, offer a whole range of transport solutions to tackle issues of congestion, air quality, accessibility and road safety in the borough. By ongoing, effective investment in all modes of transport, including rail, bus, road, cycle and pedestrian provision, we can provide a

higher quality transportation system for Stockport.

To keep you up to date with all the developments this newspaper is filled with local stories that give an illustration of what is going on in your area and across the whole region.

Get Our Metrolink Back On Track!



Greater Manchester's aspirations for a truly integrated transport network were dealt a severe blow by the Secretary of State for Transport's announcement that the planned expansion of Metrolink to Oldham and Rochdale, Ashton, South Manchester and Manchester Airport is "not approved".

The announcement has been greeted with disbelief and disappointment, not just by Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority and Executive but by Greater Manchester MPs and councillors, the business community, local people and the media. The decision fails to recognise Metrolink's proven success as the most cost-effective way of

increasing public transport use and reducing future congestion.

Metrolink is also absolutely vital to the future economic success of the area – with the expanded network estimated to create thousands of jobs and have a significant positive impact on the local economy.

GMPTE's Metrolink team are currently preparing a detailed re-submission of the scheme - its economic and regeneration benefits and an alternative funding package for delivering it, which is to be submitted to the government shortly.

A major lobbying initiative is also underway – called "Get Our Metrolink Back On Track" – to get the decision reversed. Highly successful public events involving local people, MPs, local councillors and public and private sector partners have been held in Manchester, Oldham,

Rochdale and Tameside. At the end of September a high-level delegation delivered over 41,500 messages and pledges of support to 10 Downing Street. Councillor Maureen Rowles, Stockport spokesperson on GMPTE, said: "First and foremost the Authority would like to thank everyone involved for their tremendous efforts to get Metrolink back on track over the past few months. This is possibly the most hostile reaction to a Government decision which I, for one, have witnessed during my political career and the support shown by local communities, the private and public sectors, local media, MPs and the travelling public has been overwhelming."

To pledge support, please visit the GMPTE website at www.gmpite.com or sign one of the books of support, which can be found at council offices throughout Greater Manchester.

SEMMMS NEW RELIEF ROAD

Work is now well underway to develop the 25km relief road for south east Manchester and the three local authorities, Stockport, Cheshire and Manchester, would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part in the extensive consultation process.

Between September '03 and January '04 almost 20,000 responses were received regarding proposals for the New Relief Road. Comments on the scheme came via consultation leaflets, exhibitions, by telephone, by letter, website and in person and all this feedback has been incorporated into the design process. Working with local people has played a vital role in the development of the scheme and will continue to be crucial in helping the three councils develop a relief road that meets the local needs.

Along with the public consultation, detailed work has been carried out to understand the environmental impact of the New Relief Road. Specialist consultants have studied a number of subjects including air quality, ecology, nature conservation, traffic noise and vibration and have also identified a number of issues that need further consideration as the design develops. The Environmental Assessment is identifying specific measures that can be used to minimise impact on surrounding areas. This may

include measures such as landscaping, screening or the use of 'quiet surfacing' for noise reduction.

The three local authorities are still keen to hear people's views on the scheme and will endeavour to keep everyone informed on the development of the relief road as work progresses. It is a priority for Stockport, Cheshire and Manchester Councils to develop a road that fulfils the requirements of local communities. The scheme is central to the provision of traffic relief for south east Manchester and remains environmentally and economically viable.

What happens next?

Following the outcome of the consultation and studies so far, more detailed design work is being undertaken to determine the precise alignment and junction layout of the route. A detailed cost-benefit analysis has also been submitted to the Department for Transport, which puts forward the business case for the road and indicates the level of funding required by Government to support the road through to completion. A decision from Government is expected in December 2004 and backing for the New Relief Road would then allow a planning application for the scheme to be submitted in autumn 2005.



Left to right: Mrs Pigram, a member of the public, discussing the SEMMMS New Relief Road with Highways Specialist, Nick Whelan and Councillor Sue Derbyshire, Stockport Council's Executive Member for Infrastructure.

Feedback from Stage 2 Consultation

Stage 2 consultation (November '03 - January '04) looked at the Relief Road in more detail.

The consultation, which involved leaflets and exhibitions, offered alternative routes for particular sections of the road, as well as the different types of junction layouts available along the route. We asked people to let us know which options they would prefer to see introduced. The results were as follows:

Route Options

The responses received regarding the route options at Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road (West) and Poynton Bypass indicated that there was support for both options. With no clear favourite, further work has been carried out to decide which would be the preferred option.

Junction Options

There was a clear preference from respondents regarding the options available at five of the eight proposed junctions. At each of Stockport Road West, Marple Road, Macclesfield Road, Chester Road and Woodford Road a majority of respondents preferred Option 2. These options generally involved the Relief Road passing under the existing road and being joined by slip roads.

At the other junctions, Bean Leach Road & Stepping Hill Link, A6 Buxton Road and Shadow Moss Road, the responses indicated that both options have support but again with no clear favourite. In these cases, further work has been carried out to reassess the options available.



Councillor Mark Hunter

COUNCIL LEADER'S COMMENTS

Councillor Mark Hunter, Leader of Stockport Council commented, "I am very pleased with the progress that has been made so far on the implementation of this comprehensive strategy. SEMMMS has allowed us to focus additional resources on transport initiatives as well as work in partnership with other local authorities and GMPTE in order to reap the maximum benefits for the people of Stockport. In particular, the borough has already benefited from SEMMMS funding and we've seen improvements in journey times for public transport, new and safer cycling and pedestrian facilities, as well as wide-ranging improvements in the district centres and town centre. All of this is working alongside the development of the New Relief Road, which will be central to the provision of traffic relief in Stockport.

It has been extremely disappointing to hear that we will not be getting the Metrolink extension in Stockport at this time. However, SEMMMS is a 20-year transport plan and we remain steadfast in our determination to bring Metrolink to Stockport. In the meantime we will forge ahead with other major improvements for travel across the borough in order to strengthen the future of Stockport for everyone."

STOCKPORT TOWN CENTRE GETS THE SEMMMS TREATMENT

During 2003 visitors to the town centre will have seen extensive highway and footpath improvement works underway.

As recommended by SEMMMS, Stockport Council identified a number of improvements that could be made to the town centre environment, pedestrian and cycling accessibility and bus movement, especially along Warren Street and around Bridgefield Street and Great Egerton Street.

In consultation with the Town Centre Management Network, local businesses and bus operators, a number of improvements were developed. The views of Stockport's residents and businesses were also sought and played a vital role in the design and development of the scheme. Details of the proposals were made available for wider consultation via a dedicated website, local exhibitions and leaflets.

Improvements to Bridgefield Street and Great Egerton Street are now complete and if you are a pedestrian, cyclist, car-user or travel on public transport you will benefit from a more accessible town centre. The creation of a two-way link for buses between Mersey Square and Great Egerton Street and the installation of new bus stops has meant

fewer delays and a more reliable and better public transport service through this busy area. Complementary funding has also helped to improve access into the car parks, with the repositioning of entry / exit points helping to reduce delays.



Councillor Sue Derbyshire, Executive Member for Infrastructure, said, "These improvements will benefit everyone who visits the area. Bus services are now closer to the town centre and the two-way link has greatly improved reliability. This, in turn,

should encourage more people to travel by public transport.

"Access into the town centre has been improved for pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities and deliveries are now easier for businesses due to the reduced congestion. The new footpaths, road surfaces, landscaping, lighting and street furniture have all greatly enhanced the look and feel of this bustling town centre location, making it a place to be proud of."

Find out what's happening in your area

STOCKPORT - URMSTON

Main bus route: 23/23A
Description: This transport corridor serves communities in Stockport, Manchester and Trafford and passes through important centres such as Stretford, Chorlton, Didsbury and Parris Wood. Following an extensive two stage consultation programme in Chorlton a scheme has been designed with the aim of resolving some of the transport problems people currently face. Construction of the scheme is due to begin in autumn this year and will hopefully be completed by spring next year. Didsbury Village is another area that would benefit from ITC related improvements. A large scale consultation is being carried out in Didsbury and work is underway to develop a scheme that will deliver improvements and meet the needs of the community.

MANCHESTER AIRPORT SERVICE ROUTES

This covers the network of bus routes providing access to Manchester Airport. This network runs through three Local Authority areas: Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, Manchester City Council and Trafford MBC. The main causes of delay to the services tend to be at major signal junctions and within the urban centres, where high levels of peak time traffic create delays at junctions leading to queuing and general congestion. These corridors and the public transport links they support will be developed over the entire life of the SEMMMS programme.

MANCHESTER - NORTHENDEN

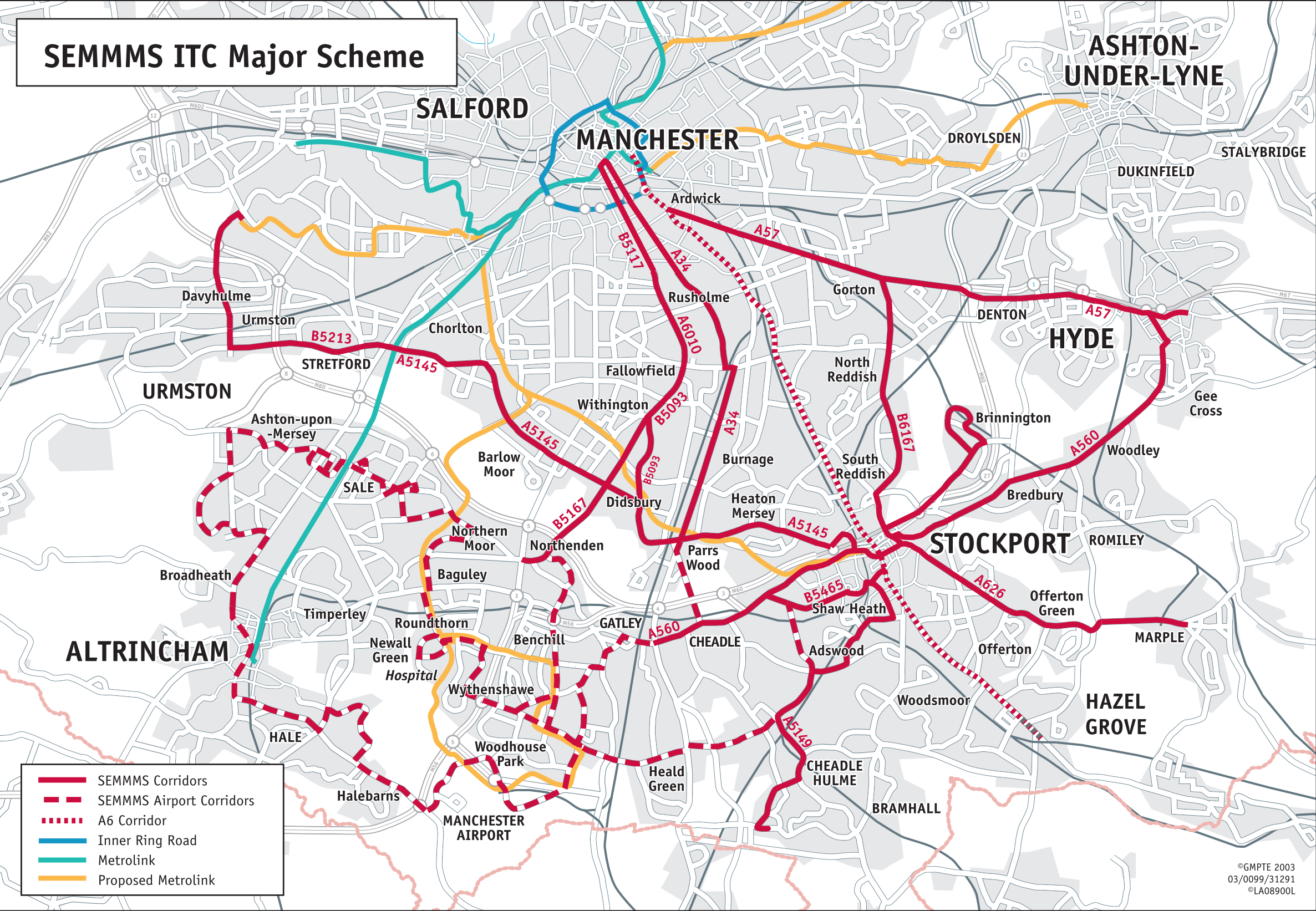
Main bus routes: 41 & 43
Description: Mainly used by commuters to the city centre and education precinct, the corridor provides links to several local centres. Work completed so far includes a local improvement scheme in Withington and a joint safety / bus priority scheme in Rusholme. Additional sections of bus lane on both approaches to this important district centre are to be implemented before October this year. Further schemes will continue to be developed for this corridor over the next three years, including looking at changes to some main junctions in the Northenden area.

WITHINGTON - DIDSBURY

Main bus route: 42 (to Manchester and Stockport)
Description: A short corridor linking the centres of Withington and Didsbury. The only work planned for 2004 is the introduction of a new signalised pedestrian crossing on Wilmslow Road close to Withington Fire Station. This will be complimented by improvements to the pavements and to the two adjacent bus stops.

MANCHESTER - BURNAGE - STOCKPORT

Main bus routes: 130 & 50
Description: The route serves the education precinct and connects with rail stations at Oxford Road, Mauldeth Road, Burnage and East Didsbury. Extensive consultations with the communities around the Kingsway (A34) / Moseley Road / Birchfields Road junction and the Parris Wood (A34) junctions on specific proposals at these locations were carried out in April this year. Work is now being done on detailed designs, cost estimates, tender preparation and programming with a view to works starting in February 2005. Manchester City Council have already carried out some works on this corridor and feasibility studies are to be undertaken during 2003/04 into the scope for junction modifications at the Kingsway / Moseley Road / Birchfields Road junction and at the Parris Wood interchange, with a view to identifying potential schemes for 2004/05.



HAZEL GROVE - MANCHESTER (A6)

Main bus route: 192
Description: One of the busiest routes in Greater Manchester connecting Stockport and Manchester city centres. Work has been completed between Stockport Town Hall and Manchester City Centre, with the introduction of measures to improve conditions for all road users. A number of junction and bus stop improvements south of the Town Hall have also been completed. A wide spread consultation was undertaken earlier this year regarding proposals in Stepping Hill and Hazel Grove, including improvements to local walking and cycling routes. Work on this scheme and on developing proposals for the remaining sector of the A6 will be progressed in the following year.

STOCKPORT - CHEADLE

Main bus route: 11
Description: The corridor connects with Stockport Rail Station in the East and Gatley Rail Station in the west. Proposals being considered include improving transport connections in Gatley, Edgeley and Cheadle District Centres. Feasibility and some outline design work will be undertaken to develop potential schemes for future consultation.

MANCHESTER - HYDE (A57)

Main bus routes: 170, 201, 204
Description: The corridor is part of the Eastern Gateway and connects with the rail network at Belle Vue and Hyde Central station. Corridor improvements are supported by other projects including the re-building of Hyde Bus Station, the Denton regeneration strategy, Gorton District Centre regeneration and proposed M60 - A57 junction improvements. Work has already been successfully completed at the Hyde Road / Devonshire Street junction and work is underway to develop further schemes for future consultation in Gorton and Denton. A number of bus stop upgrades have been completed this year on the Tameside section of this corridor.

STOCKPORT - CHEADLE HULME

Main route: 313
Description: The corridor connects Stockport with Shaw Heath, Adswood and Cheadle Hulme railway station. A first phase of consultation was carried out in 2003, giving people the chance to raise any problems they may currently experience on this corridor. The results of this consultation have been used to develop proposals and details of these are to be put to the local communities most directly affected this autumn. Work is likely to be ongoing along the corridor over the next year and work on improvements to a number of bus stops on this corridor is to start shortly.

STOCKPORT - HYDE (A627/A560)

Main bus route: 330 Stockport - Hyde orbital
Description: The corridor links Stockport Town Centre, Portwood employment area, Lower Bredbury, Bredbury District Centre and rail station, Woodley District Centre and rail station, Gee Cross and Hyde. Work has been successfully completed in the Bridgefield Street / Great Egerton Street area, improving the bus stops and bus and servicing access arrangements in this part of the Town Centre. The layout of the car parks and the way traffic moves around the area has also been changed. Feasibility and some outline design work is being undertaken to develop potential schemes for future consultation elsewhere on the Stockport section of this corridor.

STOCKPORT - REDDISH (B6167)

Main bus route: 203
Description: The corridor links Stockport and Manchester via Gorton and North & South Reddish. Following two stages of consultation with the public, some of the original proposals have now been amended and improved. These take into account direct feedback from the public as well as additional design work. Detailed design work and preparation of tender documentation is now being carried out for schemes on Reddish Road and Gorton Road with a view to works starting this Autumn for completion by April 2005. For more information on these proposals please look out for information leaflets which will be distributed in the Reddish area.

STOCKPORT - BRINNINGTON

Main bus route: 325
Description: A circular route linking Stockport and Brinnington. The Brinnington Scheme was successfully completed last year, addressing the safety concerns of local residents. Local feedback on the scheme has been positive and monitoring has shown a significant reduction in the number of accidents in the area.

STOCKPORT - OFFERTON AND MARPLE

Main bus routes: 358 & 314
Description: The corridor links Stockport Town Centre, the Hall Street Precinct, Offerton, Offerton Green, Rose Hill and Marple Town Centre. Stockport Council is considering undertaking public consultation on this corridor in Autumn 2004, to establish public and business concerns over specific aspects of the corridor as an important transport route within the Stockport road network. Work is to start shortly on improvements to a number of bus stops on this corridor.





Councillor Sue Derbyshire

CHANGE THE WAY WE TRAVEL

Major infrastructure improvements will bring about significant benefits to local communities, but they can not stand alone, and SEMMMS recognises the importance of changing peoples attitudes to travel.

SEMMMS recommends a series of travel awareness initiatives that will allow residents and businesses to make more informed decisions about their travel choices. Stockport Council has been working closely with a number of organisations to help develop 'Travel Plans', which press forward a package of measures aimed at promoting greener, cleaner travel alternatives.

Stockport Council is working with Stepping Hill Hospital to develop a plan which includes public transport, cycling, walking and car-share initiatives, as well as car parking schemes. The Primary Care Trust has implemented a number of successful walking and cycling campaigns. The four colleges in Stockport are also working with the Council to improve students' travel arrangements, which have included the introduction of cycling facilities, installation of GMPTE travel information kiosks and improvements to disabled facilities and cycle / pedestrian security. We are also working with head teachers throughout the borough to develop Transport Plans for schools.

Councillor Sue Derbyshire, Executive Member for Infrastructure, said, "Traffic congestion is recognised as one of the most important issues for local people but practical measures on their own are not enough - education, awareness raising and action within the whole community is vital. We realise that real choices have to be made available so improvements to public transport, walking and cycling facilities have been crucial in helping to ensure people can make appropriate choices. Small changes will make a difference; just choosing to walk or cycle to your local shop will make an impact and it is everyone's responsibility to help improve the quality of life in Stockport."

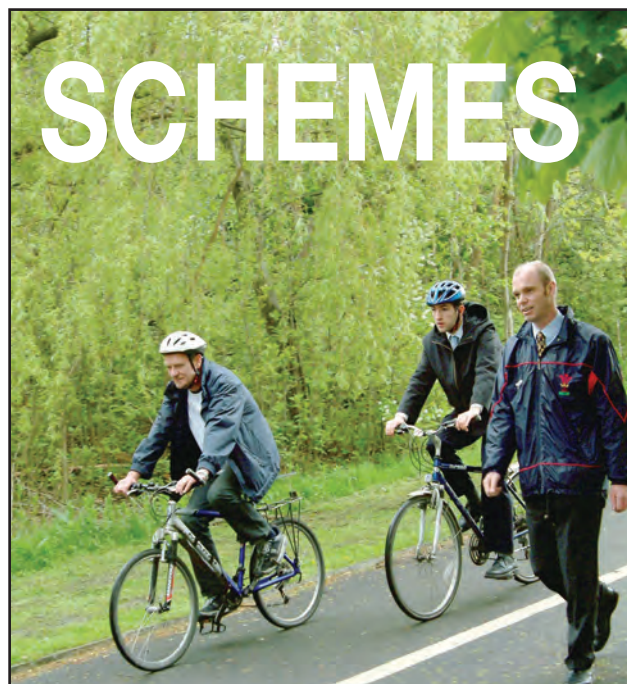
If you are interested in developing a Travel Plan for your school or business please contact Travel Co-ordinators Duncan Laird or Richard Lovell on Tel: 0161 474 4593/4886.

CYCLE

SEMMMS aims to make people aware of the benefits of cycling by investing in high quality cycling facilities, giving everyone the opportunity to cycle safely and easily around the borough.

By providing a network of on-road and off-road links, Stockport Council hopes to encourage even more people to cycle, helping to relieve congestion, improve air quality, road safety and health. Hazel Grove has already benefited from the first phase of cycle improvements and a route for cyclists running parallel to the A6 has been started. New direction signs now guide cyclists, who would prefer to ride away from the busy A6, onto an alternative, quieter route. This has given even the most novice cyclists the chance to gain easy access into Hazel Grove District Centre. The provision of new cycle shelters close to the shops also gives cyclists the added benefit of secure cycle parking, with all the amenities within easy reach.

This is only Phase 1 of the network



development and the Council aims to provide a series of safe, direct and pleasant routes that join-up the network across the borough. These routes will also benefit pedestrians, especially off-road sections, where surfacing and lighting is improved, without posing an obstacle for other transport modes.

The next phase of work within Hazel Grove is scheduled for 2004/05 and the council will be consulting with cycle users in order to provide the best facilities for all cyclists.

Yellow School Buses in Stockport

Three yellow school buses have been operating in Stockport, from Brinnington to Werneth and Harrytown High schools, since January 2003. This scheme is hugely successful and these yellow buses are now operating at capacity, with 201 pupils signed up and a waiting list established. The number of anti-social behaviour incidents has been reduced dramatically: in 2003 there were no reported incidents on the buses, compared to 35 reported incidents in 2002.

Councillor Maureen Rowles, Stockport spokesperson for the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority, has said, "The features of the yellow school bus services - such as reserved seats, regular drivers, CCTV and the introduction of a code of conduct - have clearly had the desired effect in terms of improving student behaviour. GMPTE did not receive any written reports of anti-social behaviour on the school buses for either school last year, which is a marked improvement. The services have

proved popular with pupils and parents and I'm delighted that the authority has agreed to provide another yellow bus so that, in the new school year, we can meet demand and more pupils can benefit. We hope that the positive experiences pupils are having using the yellow school buses will encourage them to continue using public transport when they are older."



SEMMMS SIGNALS A NEW LOOK

For Stockport Station

SEMMMS is also helping to improve our rail service and in November 2003 Stockport unveiled its new 21st Century railway station.

Following months of hard work and an investment of £3.5m, Network Rail, Virgin Trains, GMPTE and Stockport Council were able to provide the people of Stockport, as well as visitors to the borough, with a brand new-look station.

Councillor Mark Hunter, Leader of Stockport Council, said: "The station plays a vital role in the regeneration of the borough, linking us to major UK cities and encouraging a shift to more sustainable travel. Unfortunately, this year we have experienced some disruption whilst Network Rail upgrade the West Coast Main Line. However, we have been working with various organisations to keep journeys running as smoothly as possible, with bus replacement services and advanced warning of closures.

"The completion of the station has undoubtedly been welcomed by all residents and I hope that the signalling improvements and track renewal will bring about a faster more efficient rail service for Stockport in the long term."

Additional rail improvements are planned for each of the rail corridors in the SEMMMS area, including:

- Major improvements planned for the very busy Cheadle Hulme station
- Enhancements at east Didsbury, Gatley, and the important station at Heald Green
- The development of a scheme for the Stepping Hill/Woodsmoor area

Plus a number of smaller schemes, which will include improved passenger facilities at stations, improved rolling stock (new or refurbished, providing better passenger capacity and facilities), improved access to / from stations.

All of these improvements will build on the existing use of rail in the SEMMMS area to better meet the needs of passengers in the years ahead.

LOCAL MPs SUPPORT SEMMMS

Local MPs Andrew Stunell, Patsy Calton and Ann Coffey continue to give their full support to the delivery of SEMMMS. In a joint statement they said, "We recognise that reducing congestion and offering alternative methods of transport is a high priority for local communities. Through SEMMMS funding we have already seen noticeable improvements, particularly with the integrated transport measures and the regeneration of our town and district centres. However, delivery of the whole strategy is vital if we are to reap the full benefits of rail, bus, road, cycle, pedestrian and Metrolink provisions. SEMMMS represents the best solution to traffic relief in our local communities and it is good to see that plans for the New Relief Road and lobbying for the return of Metrolink remain a high priority."

News from Government Office North West

We are now in the third year of implementing SEMMMS and I am pleased that all the partners have been successfully working together. This collaborative effort has resulted in further LTP funding being provided. For 2004/05, £15 million has been given to the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority and Stockport, Tameside, and Manchester Councils. £1.5 million has also been given to Cheshire County Council. The SEMMMS Quality Bus Network was approved in August 2003 and £6 million was allocated to GMPTE, which will offer improved bus corridors radiating from Stockport town centre and Manchester Airport.

I have continued my association by chairing the Implementation Steering Group, which is co-ordinating the measures being introduced by local authorities, the Highways Agency and transport operators.

As a resident I can see the benefits of the excellent work being carried out for those living, working and travelling in the SEMMMS area. I look forward to another successful year for all involved.

Mike Hayward
Transport Policy & Planning - GONW

WIDE RANGING LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR SHAW HEATH

A whole series of improvements are being implemented in the Shaw Heath area, thanks to funding from SEMMMS.

To help overcome the road safety concerns of local residents Stockport Council undertook a consultation with over 1,300 households in the area, from which a number of measures were proposed so that residents could benefit from a safer and friendlier neighbourhood environment. This comprehensive set of measures includes 20mph zones and other traffic calming measures such as chicanes and raised junctions. A 'Safer Routes To School' initiative has been jointly developed with Cale Green Primary School, including footway symbols and improved facilities at school crossing patrol points. The area will also benefit from new and improved traffic signals and improved bus stop facilities, such as raised platforms to allow easier access on to the buses, especially for disabled passengers and parents with pushchairs.



MARPLE REVITALISED BY SEMMMS

Between October 2003 and June 2004 the pedestrian areas of Market Street, Derby Way and the Chapel Walk alley, Marple, underwent extensive refurbishment and landscaping as part of the SEMMMS regeneration programme.

Stockport Council worked closely with Marple Centre Regeneration Partnership (this includes Marple Business Forum, Marple Community Council and Marple Civic Society) as well as local businesses and residents to ensure that the improvements benefited everyone and met the needs of the local community.

Over £200,000 was invested in regenerating Marple, making the centre a

more attractive and accessible place to live, work and visit. The pedestrian areas have been re-paved using high quality materials, which fit in with the earlier improvements made to Marple Memorial Park entrance. New street furniture has been placed in a central position along Market Street to make the pedestrian area more open and safe. Residents also benefit from a safer neighbourhood environment through improvements to crossing facilities and street lighting. The planting of new trees and improved landscaping has completed the refurbishment and made Marple a greener, more attractive centre.

Councillor Dave Goddard, Executive

Member for Regeneration, said, “This has been a comprehensive regeneration scheme for Marple District Centre, one which has involved the local community in its development. The work has helped to renew the vitality of the centre making it more accessible, safe and attractive to everyone.”



Councillor Mark Hunter (centre), with Jim Scotte (left) from Marple Community Council, and Paul Whatmough (right), chair of the Marple Business Forum.

THE FUTURE FOR SEMMMS... What's next?

SEMMMS is a 20 year transport strategy and over the last two years much has been done to improve transport problems in south east Manchester. It is now of the utmost importance that we maintain momentum and continue to deliver on projects that will bring improvements to travelling conditions for everyone.

A number of the measures, including the New Relief Road, are significant proposals that will take some time to develop and fund, so the visible evidence of

implementation on the ground may be modest in these early years. However, a programme of schemes, including further work on Integrated Transport Corridors, 20mph zones, improved public parking and public transport facilities has already begun this year and will continue to feature over the next few years in consultation with local communities. It is only by implementing the full range of measures, both big and small, that we can fully realise the benefits of SEMMMS.

R E S P O N S E S L I P

If you have any comments you would like to make regarding any of the SEMMMS schemes, or if you would like to receive further information, please complete the slip below, place in an envelope and return to:

SEMMMS 5, FREEPOST NEA 9015, Sheffield, S3 7ZZ. (no stamp required)

	NAME
	ADDRESS
	POST CODE