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**MINISTER ANNOUNCES STRATEGY TO CUT
CONGESTION IN SOUTH EAST MANCHESTER**

A long-term strategy to break the stranglehold of congestion, bring public transport into the 21st century and make roads safer in South East Manchester has been welcomed by Transport Minister John Spellar.

Responding to the recommendations of the South East Manchester Multi Modal transport study, the Minister has given the go ahead to the Alderley Edge Bypass and public transport improvements which are part of a proposed £1 billion package of improvement to the road, rail, Metrolink and bus network over the next 20 years.

Transport Minister John Spellar said:

“We welcome the solutions proposed by the study. It is an excellent example of how multi-modal transport solutions can be devised to address complex and deep seated transport problems.

“We have seen that a wholly roads based solution would have added to, rather than alleviated, the long-term traffic problems in the area. Instead the study has identified a balanced strategy which will deal with congestion problems for motorists, but which does so by investing across all modes of transport and in a sustainable way.

“The outputs of the study will be balanced across transport modes and across the South East Manchester area. The most deprived neighbourhoods and more affluent car owning neighbourhoods are all set to benefit from the additional transport investment involved.”

The South East Manchester Multi Modal Study was commissioned by the government as part of its 10 Year Plan for Transport. The study looked at ways to improve all forms of transport in the area to reduce congestion, make roads safer and modernise public transport services.

Responding to the North West Regional Assembly, which had previously endorsed the recommended strategy, the Minister today agreed to:

- Provisional acceptance of the Alderley Edge bypass
- Provisional acceptance for a Quality Bus Corridor programme to improve bus services in South East Manchester, providing significant time savings, quality and reliability improvements
- An extra £7.445 million for Greater Manchester and £1.5 million for Cheshire to spend in 2002/03 on improvements to include:
 - Improvements to bus and rail facilities
 - Improved signing, management and maintenance of the road network to improve journey reliability
 - More facilities for cyclists and pedestrians
 - Better management of freight

- Investment to support urban regeneration
- Highways Agency to draw up plans to improve the M60/M67/A57Denton interchange.
- Local Authorities and the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority to continue the detailed development of other schemes, which will include:
 - A6 bypass
 - Poynton bypass
 - A555 MALRW (Manchester Airport Link Road West)
 - Possible Metrolink Extensions
- The Strategic Rail Authority to continue to work with Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority and local authorities to develop detailed assessments of the benefits of expanding the rail system and explore funding through existing mechanisms.
- Local Authorities to develop Transport Change proposals, including:
 - A campaign to encourage the use of public transport
 - A strict enforcement of Land Use Policy to promote development decisions which reduce car dependency
 - Urban regeneration that maximises the attractiveness and potential of existing centres as places of employment, retail and leisure opportunities to reduce car dependency and promote social inclusion.
 - An announcement on a further extension of the Metrolink System to Stockport will be made as soon as possible.

The improvements are designed to help reduce road congestion and accidents; increase rail use by up to 50 per cent in peak periods and 100 per cent off peak; increase bus use by eight per cent in peak periods and 30 per cent in off peak periods and increase use of the Metrolink.

Proposals for encouraging the use of public transport and improving air quality through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions have also been welcomed by environmental groups.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. **Alderley Edge bypass.** A 5.4km single carriageway bypass to the west of Alderley Edge and Nether Alderley. New roundabout will be provided at the northern and southern ends with a further roundabout at Chelford Road. The existing A34 is used by up to 27,700 vehicles a day causing community severance, road safety problems, air and noise pollution and poor access to village amenities.
2. **Quality Bus Corridor.** This will comprise of 14 routes radiating from Stockport Bus Station and Manchester Airport, which will be incorporated into the Greater Manchester Quality Bus Network. They will offer an integrated public transport network incorporating improvements to bus priority, timing, reliability and quality, bus stops, information, fares and ticketing and better services for the mobility impaired through adapted buses and access at stops.
3. Both of the above schemes have been provisionally accepted as part of the Cheshire and Greater Manchester Local Transport Plans respectively. This categorisation applies to schemes, which the Government has agreed to support subject to certain

conditions. This includes schemes where a statutory approval, which is essential to the scheme is still required, or where the success of a scheme is dependent on a contribution from a third party.

4. **Rail Improvements.** An incremental level of rail improvements is likely to be delivered through the proposed new Trans Pennine and Northern franchises. In addition, the SRA will encourage GMPTE and local authorities to develop bids for RPP funding for a number of the proposed improvements to services, stations and their surroundings. The SRA will also take forward an initial assessment of the potential for re-introducing orbital rail services between Stockport and Stalybridge, as well as the case for a Western link to Manchester Airport.
5. **Metrolink.** The Study looked at three Metrolink extensions. The extension of the Metrolink from the Phase 3 Airport Line (a committed scheme) at Hough End to Stockport Bus Station. An extension beyond Stockport to serve Portwood, Bredbury, Romiley and Rose Hill sharing the existing heavy rail line beyond Romiley. A link between Stockport and the Wythenshaw loop (which forms part of the Phase 3 Airport extension). This would utilise the existing heavy rail freight line between New Mills and Heaton Mersey through the Mersey Valley. GMPTE have submitted an economic appraisal for the Hough End to Stockport extension and if approved will submit an application to pursue powers under the Transport and Works Act 1992.
6. **Transport Change.** A campaign through improved information, travel plans, safe routes to school, travel blending and other similar measures to win the 'hearts and minds' of travellers to encourage them to use their cars more responsibly and public transport where possible. Land Use Policy will also be strictly enforced to promote sustainable development aimed at reducing car dependency and urban regeneration programmes will promote existing centres as places of employment, retail and leisure opportunities to reduce car dependency and promote social inclusion.
7. **Denton Interchange.** The junction of the M60/M67/A57 suffers considerable congestion and improvements are to be given a high priority by the Highways Agency.
8. **A6 bypass / A523/A555 Poynton bypass / A555 MALRW.** These schemes were withdrawn from the national trunk road programme in 1998, being inappropriate in size and scale to the problem they were designed to solve. The study concluded that reduced scale bypasses that provided sufficient capacity to divert traffic from existing congested routes whilst not providing an attractive alternative route for motorway traffic were appropriate. These will now be progressed by local authorities.
9. The current protected route of the A6 Bypass will impact on an area of Ancient Woodland in the Goyt Valley. Whilst the reduced scale of the Bypass proposed by the study should reduce this impact there may still be a small impact that cannot be mitigated. Ministers have asked the local authorities, when developing detail of the scheme, to consider further the scope for minimising or negating those impacts. In making this announcement and allowing the scheme to progress, Ministers have taken into account the potential benefits that the scheme will deliver to communities on the current A6, such as reduced congestion and wider public transport and regeneration, as part of an overall integrated strategy.

10. Extra LTP money for Greater Manchester and Cheshire will be spent to enhance LTP activity in the following areas:

- Roads
- Rail
- Bus
- Use of Road Space
- Freight
- Maintenance

The LTP authorities will continue to work closely with each other, local operators and GONW in the SEMMMS Implementation Group.

For Further information:

Clive Naish, Regional Information Officer
Tel: 0161 952 4517

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