A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road (A6MARR)

Response to Submission by Poynton Against Unnecessary Links to the Airport (PAULA) – July 2013

Introduction

This paper provides the A6MARR Project Team's response to PAULA's submission to the Phase 2 consultation on the A6MARR.

Our responses to your comments are set out beneath the points raised within the response.

1.0) In Poynton, for most of its length, the new road skirts or passes through mature woodland. West of Mill Hill Hollow the road breaks out into open country destroying the most iconic view of Poynton and Poynton Church. This view alone encompasses the geographic identity of the town nestled between the base of the Derbyshire Pennines and the Cheshire plain and overlooked by White Nancy and Lyme Park cage.

This is how the SEMMMS planners describe, and downgrade, the character of the area;
Areas of open countryside where a landscape pattern is discernible is best described as of low importance at a local level.

The landscape pattern matters at the local scale with pockets of farmland comprising a largely discordant landscape particularly to the west as pattern becomes largely irrelevant.

.... the rural hinterland south of the Greater Manchester conurbation

PAULA does not accept that the SEMMMS road can justify the impoverishment of this quintessential Cheshire countryside nor do we accept that the erosion of critical greenbelt between Greater Manchester and East Cheshire should be dismissed as "of low importance at local level".

RESPONSE: The landscape characteristics of the area will be considered and the impact of the scheme upon them assessed fully as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process and reported in the Environmental Statement for the scheme. The remit of the assessment is set out within the Scoping Report noted the following;

" 4.4.2 The landscape associated with the preferred scheme corridor comprises a composition of land use and urban and rural features and components, which has established a sequence of areas of varying character and quality.
4.4.3 In common with many such urban fringe areas there are areas where urban development in a number of forms is dominant. Housing of varying age and style abuts and influences perception of the neighbouring countryside throughout much of the area. Industrial, commercial and institutional development evokes a sense of urbanisation of the countryside, particularly along the A34 and in the vicinity of Manchester Airport. Stylised landscapes, such as those associated with the many golf courses located within this fringe to the conurbation contrast with areas of continuing agricultural activity in which there is clear evidence of long established field patterns and evidence of changing practice as boundary fences have increasingly replaced traditional hedgerows.
4.4.4 Parts of the corridor retain a strong sense of their relationship to the agricultural landscape of the Cheshire Plain. Other areas, such as that associated with and surrounding Styal, constitute significant examples and early evidence of the emergence of designed and industrial landscapes within the countryside.
4.4.5 Substantial sections of the corridor are designated greenbelt (Figure 2D), which not only serves its primary function of preventing coalescence of settlement but provides an important visual link with the countryside that surrounds the conurbation.
4.4.6 Landscape quality and visual context varies from the higher quality areas at the eastern end of the corridor associated with the Norbury Brook and Ladybrook Valleys to ordinary relatively open undulating, landscapes south of Woodford and further west towards Manchester Airport. There are

poor quality areas such as at Heald Green and localised higher quality features such as the locally prominent Wigwam Wood."

The business case NATA assessment sheet from which you are quoting refers to the landscape *pattern*. The NATA assessment sheets describes landscape pattern to which you refer as;

To the east of the study corridor the landscape pattern is represented by irregular shaped fields bounded typically by hedgerows and linear belts of shrubs and trees. To the west the landscape pattern becomes less coherent as a result of frequent interruption by urban fringe land uses. These include golf courses, green houses, formal and informal recreational land uses along with significant transport corridors and the open landscape of the airport.

Your extract from the business case *"the rural hinterland south of the Greater Manchester conurbation"* is taken from the following full sentence"

"An overall positive impact in relation to air quality and noise – reductions in noise levels and concentrations of traffic-related pollutants where traffic is removed from other parts of the network will offset the slight negative impacts in ***the rural hinterland south of the Greater Manchester conurbation****"*

1.0) Some effort has been made to hide the road behind earth bunds but the disturbed soil attracts early exploiters giving a typically scruffy appearance to landscape. The overburden takes up more space and complicates access to pipelines. The oil pipelines terminating at the Bramhall Oil Terminal, in the path of the road also present a pollution risk.

RESPONSE: Landscaping of the earth bunds will be undertaken as part of the scheme's construction.

The road is proposed to travel over the existing oil pipeline. In order for the Oil and Pipelines Agency (OPA) to safely maintain the pipeline there will be a requirement to divert the pipes in certain areas. The Project Team is currently working with the OPA to determine where and when these diversions will occur. The diversions will be carried out safely and to the satisfaction of the OPA and the road scheme.'
The contractor will manage and mitigate any pollution risks from existing or disused pipelines.

2.0) At the railway crossing next to Bramhall Golf Club the road rises on an embankment to cross the railway. This contradicts the principle of hiding the road and many local residents are extremely unhappy that the road is not going to be taken underneath the railway.

RESPONSE: Environmental and engineering aspects have been assessed when considering the design for the West Coast Mainline crossing, the outcome of which indicate that the road over rail option to be the most appropriate design. In order to mitigate the visual and noise impact of the bridge over the West Coast Mainline, we are proposing a combination of earth bunds, landscaping and parapet treatment.

2.0) The road passes through two areas of ancient woodland in Poynton. Ancient woodland was identified by SEMMMS where Poynton Brook meets Norbury Brook but it was not reported to Natural England or the Woodland Trust.

RESPONSE:

The SEMMMS team has always been aware of the location of the ancient woodland and has taken it into account in the developing design of the road.

The Environmental Scoping report identified that the proposed road would pass through a designated Site of Biological Importance (SBI) at Norbury Brook Wood. It did not state that 2.4 ha of the 22.2 ha Norbury Brook Wood is listed as Ancient Woodland but this was identified in the more detailed business case appraisal. The Environmental Scoping report was sent to both Natural England and

the Woodland Trust for comment. The Environmental Statement makes due recognition of the Ancient Woodland in its assessment of the environmental impact of the scheme.

We have continued to engage with Woodland Trust and Natural England in developing the scheme, with both groups being invited to the Environmental Forum which has been set up specifically for the scheme.

3.1) Ancient woodland near Old Mill Lane is recorded on the AWI. The northern boundary is in the direct path of the carriageway but the zone of influence engulfs half the existing area. The solution is to reroute the road around AW to leave the 50 to 150m buffer zone recommended by the Woodland Trust and based on extensive research. At Old Mill Lane the road could be aligned south of the AW and join the A6 400m south of the proposed junction.

3.2) This alternative alignment has many advantages;

-leaves a 50m buffer zone to AW
-no difference in distance for A6 south to SEMMMS traffic
-simplifies railway crossing (with associated cost reductions)
-does not cross the A6 (with associated cost reductions)
-avoids blighting the houses on the A6 and Ashbourne Road (reducing the cost of claims)

RESPONSE TO 3.1 AND 3.2: The attached plan is a preliminary drawing that has been produced to explore the viability of an indicative alignment of an alternative route for the relief road from Macclesfield Road to the A6 for the purpose of better understanding PAULA's proposals.

Our response to your suggested advantages of the route is set out as follows:

-leaves a 50m buffer zone to AW
RESPONSE: The alternative alignment affords this 50m buffer zone.

-no difference in distance for A6 south to SEMMMS traffic
RESPONSE: The distance for traffic from High Lane/ Disley will be decreased. The distance for traffic from Stockport/ Hazel Grove traffic will be increased.

-simplifies railway crossing (with associated cost reductions)
RESPONSE: Due to design constraints, such as forward visibility for drivers approaching the junction, it is not possible to go underneath the rail line without a sever reduction in design standards. Therefore, the only feasible design option is to go over the rail line for the PAULA alternative alignment option. It should be noted that you have raised concerns about the road going over the West Coast Main Line Crossing previously at point 2.0 of your response.

-does not cross the A6 (with associated cost reductions)
RESPONSE: The alternative alignment negates the need for an A6 highway bridge.

-avoids blighting the houses on the A6 and Ashbourne Road (reducing the cost of claims)
RESPONSE: It should be noted that the emerging preferred scheme does not blight any houses on the A6 or Ashbourne Road. This alternative alignment is immediately adjacent to properties on the A6 Buxton Road

The notes below give a brief description of the advantages and dis-advantages of this alternative alignment in comparison with the emerging preferred scheme alignment.

1. Alternative A6/SEMMMS alignment located outside of protected SMBC Local Development Framework (LDF) and CEC LDF corridor (dis-advantage);
2. Alternative A6/SEMMMS junction location does not provide future proofing for a continuous route to Jct25 of M60 Motorway (dis-advantage);
3. Alternative A6/SEMMMS junction located immediately adjacent to residential properties (dis-advantage);
4. Alignment requires two structures to cross Norbury Brook (dis-advantage);
5. Alignment severely severs agricultural land usage through this area (dis-advantage);
6. Alignment severs multiple PRoW routes through this area (dis-advantage);

7. It is only feasible for the alternative alignment to go over Hazel Grove railway line (disadvantage in terms of impact on local properties);
8. Under the alternative alignment, a continuous line to the M60 would require the demolition of residential properties and an underground reservoir. It would also severely impact Hazel Grove Golf Course. (disadvantage).

In light of the above considerations of the preliminary design for the indicative alternative alignment we consider the existing proposed alignment of the A6MARR to be the optimum design.

3.3) SEMMMS say there is no alternative route to avoid the Ancient Woodland but this is probably because the junction with the A6 pre-supposes an extension up to Bredbury to join the M60. However SEMMMS traffic studies have already warned that traffic flow from the M60 to SEMMMS would have to be restrained. It is plausible that a more restrictive/staggered junction with the A6 might fulfill this function.

RESPONSE: The SEMMM Strategy recommended that
• 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.

The study's recommendation that junctions should be at grade and most likely signal controlled was intended to provide the required management of traffic along the route.

3.4) The road alignment design in this area has probably been affected by the total confusion evident in the SEMMMS documents whereby in February 2010 a SEMMMS environmental report downgraded the Ancient Woodland to SBI but the SEMMMS team correctly reported the Ancient Woodland in submissions to council in preparation for applying to the courts for planning permission. The AW was entered in the AWI in 1980s and correctly identified in the SEMMMS report 2001.

RESPONSE: As stated above, the SEMMMS team has always been aware of the location of the ancient woodland and has taken it into account in the developing design of the road.

3.0) The Mill Hill Hollow photomontage shows the line of the road much higher than the on accompanying drawing. In this area there are two attenuation ponds, a viaduct and extensive cuts and embankments, a roadside cycleway and a complicated rearrangement of the footpaths, yet the photomontage indicates that the tree cover is virtually unchanged. We believe there are several major errors in the photomontage which create a very misleading impression of the changes to Mill Hill Hollow.

4.1) The photomontage guidelines advise that particular details in the model should be made visible so that the scaling and alignment between photograph and model can be easily verified. These details are absent from the photomontages. It is possible that there are similar errors in the other SEMMMS photomontages.

RESPONSE TO POINTS 3.0 AND 4.1: The Photomontage images have been created following technical guidance in accordance with the principles of the Landscape Institute Standards and in particular 'Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment' – Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11.

This guidance was followed for the creation of each photomontage image that was used within the Local Liaison Forums held in May2013, and where based upon the April 2013 Design Freeze.

The photomontage guidelines advise that particular details in the model should be made visible so that the scaling and alignment between photograph and model can be easily verified, this is the case in all images apart from the Mill Hill Hollow – in this case the upper element of a HGV has been made visible and highlighted to show the impact of the scheme.

Please note that an updated Photomontage is being developed as part of the planning application submission that will be based upon the preferred scheme that has been developed post Phase 2 Consultation in preparation for the planning application.

5.0) The SEMMMS ROW plan shows that the Ladybrook Valley Interest Trail follows Norbury Brook and then Ladybrook from Old Mill Hill Lane to Mill Hill Hollow. The latest SEMMMS detailed ROW plans do not show the LVIT or any ROW on this section. The LVIT is 8 miles long and runs from Lyme Park to Cheadle Heath. Every effort should be made to retain this valuable walking route.

RESPONSE: The Ladybrook Valley Interest Trail will be indicated on future drawings. All Public Rights of Way which are severed by the scheme will be subject to diversion and reconnection to the Public Rights of Way network.

6.0) The SEMMMS NO2 concentration contour plots indicate that there will many publicly accessible areas close to the A555 that will be in breach of the 40ug annual NO2 limit specified in the

> *DIRECTIVE 2008/50/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 21 May 2008, on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe*

Many of these exceedances will be the caused by the opening of the new road.

RESPONSE: Along the route of the scheme, there will be areas where annual average NO2 concentrations exceed the limit value specified in the UK Air Quality Strategy. However, should the scheme be granted consent, air quality modelling indicates that a far greater number of properties will benefit than will be disadvantaged in air quality terms as traffic is diverted away from existing congested roads with air quality objective exceedences to this purpose designed by-pass.

6.1) Other locations on the A6 at Disley and the A34 at Cheadle currently record exceedances and are predicted to experience an increase in traffic and therefore a predictable increase in NO2 when the road opens.

RESPONSE: A large number of properties within the greater Manchester area and Cheshire East currently exceed annual average NO2 objectives due to local traffic movements. A number of properties in Disley are predicted to experience an increase in pollutant levels if the scheme goes ahead with 3 additional properties exceeding the air quality objective as a result of increased traffic in tis area. However it is predicted that 780 properties in Greater Manchester will be removed from exceedence as a result of the proposed scheme as traffic levels in those areas is reduced (see Table below).

Exceedances of Objective Annual Mean Values for NO_2 and PM_{10}	Greater Manchester AQMA		Disley AQMA	
	NO_2 (>40 $\mu g/m^3$)	PM_{10} (>40 $\mu g/m^3$)	NO_2 (>40 $\mu g/m^3$)	PM_{10} (>40 $\mu g/m^3$)
2017 Do Minimum	4,357	0	85	0
2017 Do Something	3,577	0	88	0

6.2) Other locations which currently experience moderate NO2 concentrations that are close to background levels are predicted to see rises close to 40ug and are therefore at risk of breaching the Directive.

RESPONSE: As stated above, large numbers of properties will benefit in air quality terms by the proposed scheme with a much smaller number being disadvantaged**.** Approximately 79% of the 11,000 receptors within the study area are predicted to experience a reduction in annual mean NO_2 concentrations as a result of the implementation of the proposed scheme, 2% of receptors will be unchanged and 19% will be subject to an increase in annual average NO_2.

7743 receptors (94%) within the Greater Manchester AQMA are predicted to experience an overall decrease in NO_2 concentrations with the scheme. 373 receptors are predicted to experience an increase in NO_2.

73% of receptors are predicted to experience an overall decrease in PM_{10} particulates with the scheme. The proposed scheme would not introduce any exceedances of the PM_{10} objective in either of the AQMAs.

Receptors in the Disley AQMA will receive an overall increase in NO_2 and PM_{10} concentrations as a result of the proposed scheme. Discussions are ongoing with Stockport, Cheshire East and Derbyshire County Councils with regards to addressing this traffic and consequent air quality impact.

6.3) The breaches along the SEMMMS corridor would lead to the route becoming an air quality management area and according to the Directive measures could be included in the air quality plan to give additional protection to the children of Queensgate Primary School.

RESPONSE: A number of roads in the Greater Manchester area, including in Stockport Council, have been declared as AQMAs for their potential for long term exposure of the public to NO2 concentrations approaching the current air quality standards.

Should the scheme be demonstrated to have the potential to give rise to long term exposure of the public to NO_2 concentrations approaching the current air quality standards, then the Council will have a duty to declare an AQMA in those locations.

However, at this time the worst case assessment carried out, which does not take into account potential mitigation associated with changes in topography, vegetation or improving long term pollution trends, suggests that only a small number of properties have the potential to exceed the air quality standards. Properties which benefit in air quality terms as a result of the proposed scheme may be removed from the existing AQMAs.

Local Authorities are required to update their AQMAs and Action Plans when significant changes in air quality are recognised. This will include all new development including the A6-MARR scheme should it be developed. Air quality modelling indicates that air quality ay Queensgate School will remain well below air quality standards and objectives set to protect young children if the scheme is developed.

6.4) We deplore the fact that this optional provision was not discussed with the parents or offered to the school.

RESPONSE: We have directly engaged with parents, governors and teachers at Queensgate Primary School during both the Phase 1 and 2 consultations on the scheme via specific Local Liaison Forum meetings held at the school. During the Local Liaison Forums we have provided detailed analysis and feedback and with the attendance of expertise from the project team have responded to the issued raised by those attending these meetings.

7.0) The school is within 150m of the road. SEMMMS estimate the noise levels will be 50 to 60 LA10, 18hr dB. These levels exceed the advised maxima for effective instruction of school children in a playing field area.

RESPONSE: BB93 recommends that for new schools noise levels in unoccupied playgrounds, playing fields and other outdoor areas should not exceed 55 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$ and there should be at least one area suitable for outdoor teaching where noise levels are below 50 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$. The predicted traffic noise levels from our acoustic model are less than 55 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$ for the majority of the playing fields area. Close to the southern boundary predicted traffic noise levels are higher than 55 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$. Predicted traffic noise levels in the area to the north of the school building are less than 50 dB $L_{Aeq,30min}$.

8.0) The SEMMMS team have suggested in their publicity material that the air quality limits are only an indicator of air quality and not a limit above which there is a definite health risk.

We deplore this very misleading assertion that will incorrectly reassure local people that the road is not an additional environmental health risk.

RESPONSE: The statements we have made with regard to air quality are accurate. The statement are as follows:

"The current air quality assessments are focused on concentrations of two principal pollutants, being nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and particulate matter (PM10).

These assessments have demonstrated that whilst there will be predicted increases in concentrations along the new road, especially at the junctions, the predicted air quality levels are generally forecast to be below the concentrations stated in the UK air quality standards.

These standards represent thresholds which are adopted as an indicator relative to the risk to human health; they are not a trigger level above which there is a definitive risk to human health."

We have outlined that should the scheme go ahead there will be areas that will experience a deterioration in air quality and some which will experience an improvement and this has all been calculated in accordance with national guidance and best practice. The information is accurate in so far that an exceedance of the air quality standard does not automatically result in a health impact and therefore there is no requirement for a corrective statement to be issued. Greater information on the degree of change will be available within the Environmental Statement that will accompany the planning application.

8.1) The SEMMMS team claims that the road will improve air quality based on an averaging principle. Elsewhere SEMMMS says carbon dioxide emissions increase slightly due to the road. This might be expected to accompanied by a worsening of air quality.

RESPONSE: The Air Quality model identifies the annual average pollutant levels with and without the scheme should the scheme be granted planning consent. We have presented these as an annual average as the UK national regulations, the EU Air Quality Directive and the World Health Organisation guidelines all present standards as annual averages and hence for us to do otherwise would not allow a comparison. Secondly, we have located air quality monitoring equipment along the length of the scheme and these have been collecting annual average data to aid in the validation of the modelled results and again to allow a comparison with the model. The standards also prescribe an hourly average and we will be presenting in the Environmental Statement where the annual average results indicate that a breach of the hourly average is possible.
The Environmental Statement will be made available as part of the planning application for the scheme which is programmed to be submitted in Autumn this year.

8.2) This averaging method or the guidelines the method is based on has not been identified. However a breach of the Directive can be as simple as a single exceedance at a single location. There is no principle of offsetting an exceedance with compliant results from other measurement locations.

RESPONSE: The methodology employed is based on UK legislation and best practice guidance The Environmental Statement will be made available as part of the planning application for the scheme which is programmed to be submitted in Autumn this year.

8.3) We strongly object to the fact that despite the clear evidence of present and future Air Quality Directive exceedances, the impact of the road on air quality is still described as beneficial.

RESPONSE: 79% of the 11,000 receptors within the study area are predicted to experience a reduction in annual mean NO_2 concentrations as a result of the implementation of the proposed scheme, 2% of receptors will be unchanged and 19% will be subject to an increase in annual average NO_2.

7743 receptors (94%) within the Greater Manchester AQMA are predicted to experience an overall decrease in NO_2 concentrations with the scheme. 373 receptors within the Greater Manchester AQMA are predicted to experience an increase in NO_2.

73% of receptors are predicted to experience an overall decrease in PM_{10} particulates with the scheme. The proposed scheme would not introduce any exceedances of the PM_{10} objective in either of the AQMAs.

While it is accepted that receptors in the Disley AQMA will receive an overall increase in NO_2 and PM_{10} concentrations as a result of the emerging preferred scheme, the vast majority of receptors

within the study area will benefit from the scheme in terms of air quality. As noted above, work is ongoing which will seek to address forecast increase in traffic on the A6 through Disley.

8.4) The SEMMMS team suggest that air quality will improve with a modal shift from motorised to non motorised transport facilitated by a quality cycle route the full length of the scheme.

RESPONSE: Air quality would improve with modal shift. Providing high quality cycle facilities would encourage modal shift. However, the air quality benefits that are forecast to arise are not attributable to mode shift as a result of the provision of improved cycle facilities proposed as part of the scheme.

8.5) The ROW plans however show the cycle route is actually a bridle path on the central 2 mile section and the SEMMMS team have not decided on the surface construction leaving it to the contractor for economic proposals.

RESPONSE: The majority of off-road cycle routes are defined as bridleways. The surfacing material will be appropriate for its proposed usage. In line with standard practice, the exact specification for the surfacing materials will be determined at the detailed design stage.

8.6) We do not think this a satisfactory cycle route design and its effect on modal shift will be very limited.

RESPONSE: See 8.5

9.0) SEMMMS has studiously ignored obvious alternatives to road transport.

-the possible extension of the Metrolink through to Hazel Grove from Cheadle Heath has been physically blocked by the loss of track bed at the new singe track bridge over Chester Road, Hazel Grove.

-the Stockport/Wilmslow railway line passes within 2 miles of the runway as it crosses the SEMMMS corridor. If a rail spur were added Stockport could have a fast rail link to the Airport which would slash the journey time compared to the existing rail route via Manchester Piccadilly or the road route.

-cycleways particularly in the North/South direction could be transformative yet natural routes like the Ladybrook Valley remain unexploited.

RESPONSE: The SEMMM Strategy is multimodal. All three local authorities are committed to delivering the strategy in full.

Appendix L of the published scheme business case gives a summary of progress against the SEMMMS study recommendations and this is reproduced below, supplemented with some more detailed examples of the projected implemented.

Schemes Implemented

Over the last ten years since the completion of the SEMMMS study, approximately £63 million has been spent on SEMMMS projects. Within the five priority themes of SEMMMS, the schemes that have been delivered 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 Manchester Airport. The improvements were designed to reduce journey time, improve reliability and to increase comfort and convenience to all users.

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 include Brinnington – Harrytown, Heavily – Harrytown, , Brinnington – Werneth.

Work has also continued on the proposals for a Metrolink extension to Stockport. However, the delivery of such a route is unlikely before 2016. Consideration is also being given to tram-train options for extending the tram system beyond Stockport to Marple. A rail station improvement programme has commenced across Tameside, Stockport, Manchester, Derbyshire and Cheshire East.

Examples of improvements to cycling and walking to Railway Stations in Stockport include:

Major maintenance work on the Middlewood Way which provides a partially off - road route to local schools and a high quality off - road link between Rose Hill and Middlewood stations. This has led to an increase in the number of users on the route, especially at weekend. The Marple Multi User Trail (delivered as part of the Conect2 Lottery funding from Sustrans) continues the Middlewood Way connections to Romiley with onward connections on the PrOW network and quieter sections of highway to Romiley station and Bredbury.

Improved connections have also been developed for cyclist going from/to Reddish North station and the Fallowfield Loop or the Trans Pennine Trail and Hazel Grove station and the hospital and other areas via a route parallel to the A6. An on-going regime of Cycle parking improvements continues across the Borough with most having cycle lockers and/ or Sheffield Stands. Pedestrian crossing and pavement improvements have been undertaken at most other stations as necessary.

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.

Quality Bus Corridors, as described above are another example of how reallocation of road space has been used to support sustainable transport. Junction 1 of the M60 is an important example of QBC improvement that has been implemented which involved bus priority measures being introduced at Junction 1 of the M60 motorway (Pyramid Roundabout). The location is a large grade separated signalised roundabout that is used both by local and strategic motorway traffic. Buses were delayed travelling from east to west through this very busy motorway junction and pedestrian and cycle facilities were poor. The construction of a bus only link road (Completed August 2007) Introduction of an additional signal control at the Didsbury Road exit; and widening of Didsbury Road to introduce two lane egress from the roundabout. The construction also improved the route of the pedestrian and cycle facilities at a point where the Trans Pennine Trail passes through the borough. Significant public transport journey time improvements were created westbound. It has been successful in acting as a catalyst in increasing political and public confidence to progress additional bus priority schemes; such as a similar scheme at Junction 27 which also included pedestrian and cycle improvements.

Transport Change

A strength of the SEMMMS strategy 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;
- Improvement of cycle facilities on school sites ;
- 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 implemented travel plans;
- 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.

9.1) SEMMMS defends this position by claiming the modal mix was decided in 2001 before SMBC took the lead. We think SEMMMS could have been far more imaginative over the last 12 years and should have achieved a far more balanced modal mix. From 2001, SEMMMS spent no significant effort analysing the benefits of alternative modes.

-no WebTAG analysis was carried with and without the SEMMMS cycleway

-or for the Metrolink into Hazel Grove

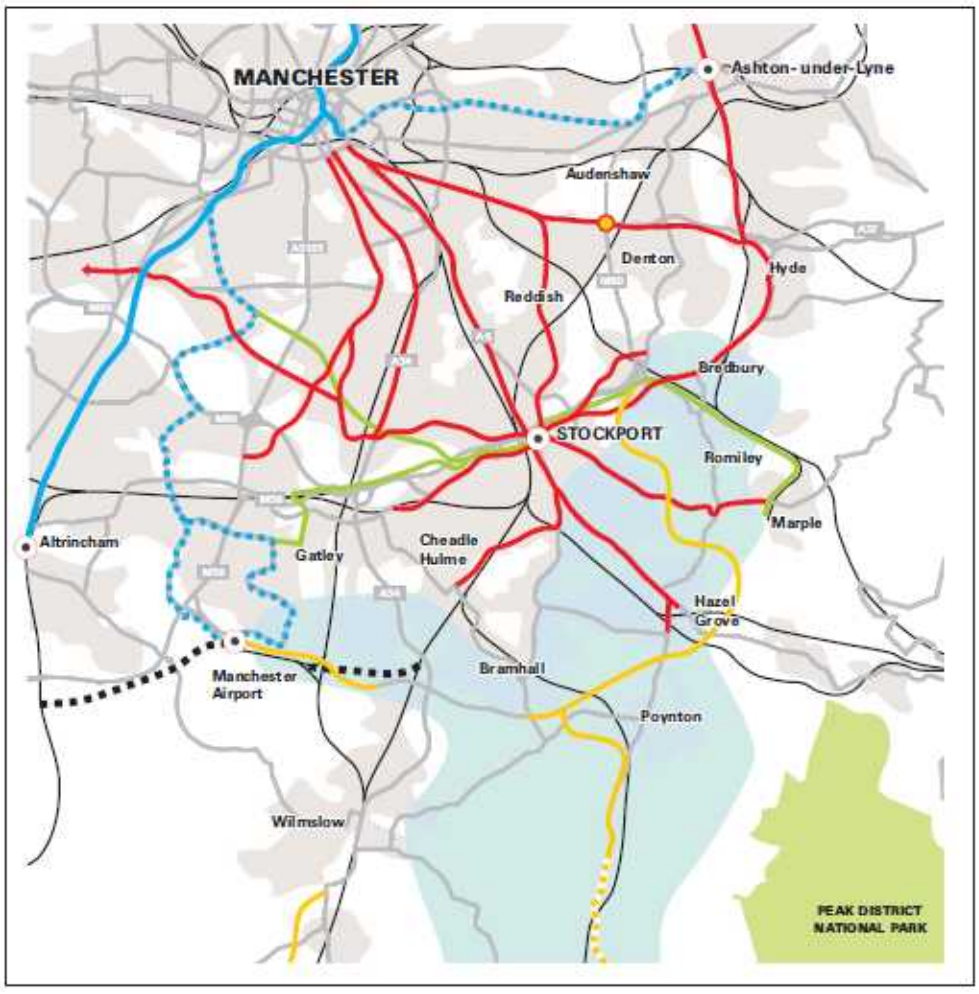
-or for heavy rail from Stockport to the Airport

-only a WebTAG analysis with and without the road was carried out

RESPONSE: Please see above response regarding SEMMMS strategy measures implemented to date.

With reference to the infrastructure elements of the SEMMMS recommended strategy illustrated in Figure 7.5 of the Final Report and re-produced below, it should also be noted that it is very clear that none of the other recommended elements of the strategy actually cover the same corridor as the recommended road schemes. In fact, the recommended road schemes are the only infrastructure proposals in this corridor. The road schemes were an integral part of the SEMMMS recommended strategy.

Figure 7.5: SEMMMS Recommended Strategy: Selected Infrastructure Elements



- Existing Metrolink
- Committed Metrolink extension
- Metrolink extensions
- New roads
- Improved Road
- Road interchange improvement
- QBC
- New rail
- Improved rail
- Interchange
- Area for road space reallocation associated with new roads

A business case for the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road was submitted to the Department for Transport in November 2012 which was Webtag compliant. The business case includes evidence supporting why the Scheme is needed and an appraisal of the benefits and any adverse impacts of the scheme.

10) Much of the road is to be constructed on land with a very high water table. SEMMMS to date has failed to produce a drainage report detailing what precautionary measures are to be taken to ensure local residents are not at an increased risk of flooding as a result of displacing vast quantities of soil. We believe it was essential that this information be in the public domain during consultation.

RESPONSE: The Environmental Assessment will consider this issue and will be published as part of the planning application. This issue is specifically considered within the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy Report for the scheme which is currently being finalised based on the preferred scheme and will be submitted as part of the planning application.

Any de-watering exercises that are required during construction will be determined during detailed design dependent on the final design and the types of construction proposed for the various bridges, retaining walls and highway features.