

Item 1

Application Reference: DC/053678

Location: Land to the south of Stockport, adjacent to and between the A6 (Buxton Road) and land to the east of the Styal railway line, north of Styal Golf Course.

Proposal: Construction of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road (whole route), incorporating:

- Seven new road junctions;
- Modification to four existing road junctions;
- Four new rail bridge crossings;
- Three new public rights of way/accommodation bridges;
- Four new road bridges;
- A pedestrian & cycle route;
- Six balancing ponds; and
- Associated landscaping, lighting and infrastructure works.

Within Stockport:

- Six new road junctions;
- Modification to three existing road junctions;
- Three new rail bridge crossings;
- One new public right of way/accommodation bridge;
- Three new road bridges;
- A pedestrian cycle route;
- Four balancing ponds; and
- Associated landscaping, lighting, engineering and infrastructure works.

Type of Application: Reg 3 Council's Own Development

Registration Date: 04/11/2013

Expiry Date: 24/02/2014

Responsible Officer: Suzanne Broomhead

Applicant: Stockport MBC, Cheshire East Council & Manchester City Council

Agent : URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Ltd

Summary

Planning permission is sought to construct a new dual carriageway from the A6 near to Hazel Grove (south east Stockport) to Manchester Airport and the link road to the M56. The application spans three Authority boundaries, namely Stockport MBC, Cheshire East Council and Manchester City Council, and as such, a detailed planning application has been submitted to the three authorities for determination of the scheme which falls within each of the Authority boundaries.

This report will cover in detail the proposed scheme which falls within Stockport, however, it is considered important that all decision makers are fully furnished with the whole proposed scheme and relevant facts pertaining to it. Each local planning authority is responsible for the recommendation and determination of the scheme within their Authorities jurisdiction.

Committee Status

The application is to be determined by Planning and Highways Regulations Committee due to the proposal exceeding the threshold by which Area Committee is able to determine. The proposal is also a departure from the Development Plan.

Due to the extent of the application, the scheme will be reported to Stepping Hill, Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme South, Marple and Cheadle Area Committees.

Members are advised that following the recommendation of the Planning and Highway Regulation committee the scheme will need to be referred to the Secretary of State under The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009.

The Application

The applications submitted to Cheshire East Council (CEC), Manchester City Council (MCC) and Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) seek consent for the construction of a relief road orientated east west between the A6 near Hazel Grove via the existing A555 to Manchester Airport. The proposed relief road comprises two new sections of dual carriageway, the first section is approximately 5.1km in length, starting from a new realigned section of the A6 at Hazel Grove (Stockport) extending west to the existing A555 at Woodford Road, Bramhall. The second section is approximately 3.2km in length and is an extension to the existing A555 which currently terminates at Wilmslow Road. The route continues in a westerly direction crossing Styal Road and heads towards Manchester Airport along the line of Ringway Road West.

The scheme would connect the A6 at Hazel Grove to Manchester Airport, travelling adjacent to Handforth, Poynton, Hazel Grove, Bramhall, Cheadle Hulme, Wythenshawe District Centres and Gatley and Heald Green Local Centres.

Each of the proposed carriageways would measure 7.3m wide. The east and west bound traffic would be separated by a hard standing central reservation measuring between 1.8m and 3.9m across with a concrete central barrier. The Scheme speed limit is proposed mainly to be 50mph, however in Manchester, between Styal Road and the tie in to Ringway Road West, the central reservation is proposed to be kerbed and vary in width between 3.0m and 5.4m. At this point it is not proposed to have a central barrier due to the proposed speed restriction in this location being 40mph.

Between the A6 and Styal Road there is proposed to be a soft verge on either side of the carriageway with a shared use cycleway and footway to the north of the relief road, separated from the carriageway by a soft verge.

Between Styal Road and the tie in to Ringway Road, the shared cycleway and footway would be adjacent to the highway. A soft verge is proposed on the outside of the shared cycleway and footway with soft verge present on the opposite side of the road.

Detailed alignment of the proposed relief road

The proposal starts in Stockport to the east of Hazel Grove with a traffic signalled T-Junction located on a realigned section of the A6. From this junction the relief road moves west and passes under the existing A6 (Buxton Road) which is taken over the main alignment on a new bridge for the use of buses, cycles and pedestrians. The route continues under the Hazel Grove to Buxton railway line and continues west passing properties on Old Mill Lane to the north.

It is proposed that a Bridleway quality bridge would be provided to divert the Public Right of Way (PRoW) and farm vehicles across the relief road near Old Mill Lane.

The proposal continues west passing between Norbury Brook and to the rear of residential properties on Darley Road and Ashbourne Road. At Macclesfield Road an at-grade signalised cross roads arrangement is proposed allowing all traffic movements with facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

From the A523 Macclesfield Road the route continues west and runs to the north of Norbury Brook and associated woods and south of the residential streets of Sheldon Road and Longnor Road. The scheme then crosses authority boundaries into Cheshire East where the scheme crosses Norbury Brook via a bridge at Mill Hill Hollow. A bridleway quality bridge is proposed to divert the PRoW and farm vehicle access across the scheme at Hill Green. The route then passes in cutting under Woodford Road, which is proposed to be raised in the vicinity of the relief road, crossing back into Stockport where the road is proposed to climb on embankment over the West Coast Main Line.

A new at-grade signalised roundabout junction would provide access to the Bramhall Oil Storage Depot and a new link providing access to Chester Road

is proposed. The junction is proposed to incorporate Pegasus facilities for equestrians, pedestrians and cyclists.

At the A5102 Woodford Road the existing roundabout joining with the A555 is proposed to be replaced by a new grade separated junction with the main route passing through cutting under Woodford Road. The junction configuration is proposed to be signalised to incorporate crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

A shared cycleway and footway is proposed to be constructed adjacent to the existing A555, for its entire length, within Stockport and Cheshire East. Where the A555 crosses over the A34 in Stockport it is proposed that junction adaptations be implemented to facilitate and manage the anticipated traffic flows. The junction is proposed to be signalised and provide crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

The A555/A34 is proposed to be upgraded with widened carriageways and traffic signal controls, including the introduction of controlled crossing facilities for pedestrian and cyclists. North of this junction, at the junction of the A34 and Stanley Road the roundabout is proposed to be upgraded to traffic signal control and increased lane capacity. Toucan crossing facilities for pedestrian and cyclists are proposed to be integrated into the signal controls for both junctions.

The existing A555 alignment continues west out of Stockport into Cheshire East under the existing at-grade separated dumb-bell junction linking to the B5358 (Wilmslow Road), where new west facing slip roads are proposed.

Between the B5358 Wilmslow Road, and the B5186 Styal Road, the proposal continues through Cheshire East passing through Styal Golf Course and agricultural land into Stockport. A bridleway quality bridge is proposed to divert the PRow across the road at Yew Tree Farm. The proposal would then pass over Styal Railway Line in Stockport which is located in a deep cutting, and head into Manchester between the airport southern rail spur and Moss Nook electricity station.

At Styal Road, it is proposed that an at-grade signalised cross road arrangement incorporating Toucan facilities, for pedestrians and cyclists would be constructed requiring extensions to the existing road over rail bridge over the northern airport spur. From Styal Road, the proposal runs parallel to the airport rail spur where it is proposed to terminate as it merges at the existing Ringway Road/Ringway Road West junction west of Shadowmoss road. Between Shadowmoss road and the proposed main alignment, Ringway road would be stopped up and a new layout arrangement with Shadowmoss Road constructed.

Overall, the proposal incorporates:

- Seven new road junction (six of which are proposed in Stockport and one in Manchester);

- Modifications to four existing road junctions (three in Stockport and one in Cheshire East);
- Four new rail bridge crossings (three in Stockport and one in Manchester);
- Three new public right of way/accommodation bridges (two in Cheshire East and one in Stockport);
- Four new road bridges (three in Stockport and one in Cheshire East)
- A pedestrian and cycle route for the whole length of the relief road, including retrofitting it to the existing A555(Cheshire East and Stockport);
- Six balancing ponds for drainage purposes (four in Stockport, one in Cheshire East and one in Manchester); and
- Associated landscaping, lighting, engineering and infrastructure works.

Background and Planning History

Whilst there have been no previous planning applications for the A6MARR, the general route of the proposed relief road is well established and has been defined and safeguarded for road construction purposes since the 1930's.

In 2001 the South East Manchester Multi-Modal Strategy study (SEMMMS) was published which identified the problems with the transport system in the area and made recommendations for improvements. Amongst a package of investment in the public transport network, the study proposed that the local authorities develop roads of an appropriate scale designed to provide relief to the problems in the study area communities, but not to provide a new strategic route of regional and potentially national significance.

The content and objectives of the SEMMMS Study were endorsed across the North West at all political levels. The A6MARR was seen as a major part in delivering the recommendations of the SEMMMS study with the scheme being prioritised by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Transport for Greater Manchester.

In its Autumn Statement 2011 and National Infrastructure Plan 2011, the Government presented its vision for the UK transport system, and later identified the A6MARR as one of 70+ major infrastructure projects aimed at addressing congestion and improving performance on the highway network.

Environmental Statement

The applications as submitted to the three Local Planning Authorities are accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) which is considered to meet the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. The Environmental Statement covers the scheme in its entirety ensuring that each of the three Local Planning Authorities is aware of constraints outside of their authority boundaries.

The ES sets out the results/findings of the EIA, including proposals of a number of mitigation measures that would be implemented to prevent and/or minimise any adverse effects. These are set out under a series of separate

chapters which are as summarised as follows:

Chapter 1 provides a general introduction and description of the scheme, the methodology and approach taken in preparing the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and explains the format and structure of the ES and each of its chapters.

Chapter 2 explains the need for the scheme. This chapter states that the A6MARR is one element of the wider South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy (SEMMMS) with the proposal intending to provide strategic connectivity to Manchester Airport and the south Manchester corridor and highlights the current transport related problems and issues within the area and the role that the proposal would make in addressing these problems.

The chapter further explains that the scheme is supported and promoted by the three local authorities: Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, Cheshire East Council and Manchester City Council with all partners and supporters committed to the efficient delivery of the scheme to ensure that the North West economy can thrive in the future.

As a key part of the wider SEMMMS strategy, the A6MARR is identified as providing much-needed congestion relief to local and strategic routes in the area, congestion that currently constrains the growth potential of the Cheshire East, Manchester and Stockport economies to the detriment of local communities.

The chapter states the underlying philosophy of the A6MARR scheme in providing priority for public transport and non-motorised modes of transport, providing a step change in the allocation of existing road space in favour of sustainable modes of transport - improving access for public transport, pedestrians and cyclists, and improving quality of life in residential areas along the south Manchester corridor.

Chapter 3 describes the principal alternatives considered for the scheme and provides an overview of development of the scheme. The alternatives considered relate to ten junction arrangements along the route, and arrangements for the proposed crossing of the West Coast Main Line.

Chapter 4 gives a general description of the existing environment, land uses and site setting for the A6MARR, along with an overview description and summary of key features/aspects of the scheme along sections of the route.

Chapter 5 details the key design components and construction activities which constitute the proposed scheme and associated operational characteristics. The chapter includes a description of the proposed route, topography, junctions, structures, cycletracks, footpaths and bridleways, lighting, drainage, watercourse diversions, earthworks and how the scheme integrates into the current network.

Chapter 6 outlines the approach to consultation prior to the submission of the planning applications. The chapter explains the history of the scheme, and the consultation with statutory and non-statutory bodies since 2009.

Chapter 7 explains the scope of the studies and assessments which have been undertaken and any modifications that have been made to the scope as the studies and assessments have progressed. It further describes the relationship between environmental impacts and their effects and terms referred to in various assessments and sets out a common format for the assessment reported to in chapters 8 – 17. The chapter identifies that The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 11, Section 3 (DMRB) provides a framework for identifying and considering potential impacts with major road projects. The topics assessed by the EIA are as follows:

- Air Quality
- Cultural Heritage
- Landscape and Visual Effects
- Nature Conservation
- Geology and Soils
- Noise and Vibration
- Effects on All Travellers
- Community and Private Assets
- Road Drainage and the Water Environment
- Cumulative Effects

Chapters 8-17 report the findings of the studies and assessments undertaken and identify any likely significant environmental effects including cumulative effects. A common format has been adopted for the reporting of the assessments undertaken for each of the environmental aspects investigated.

Chapter 8: Air Quality – this chapters contains an assessment of the potential impacts of the scheme on air quality including impacts associated with dust generated during construction activities and associated with working areas, additional emissions from construction traffic. The assessment for air quality has focussed on:

- Local air quality with parts of the road network where volumes of traffic would be affected by the introduction of the scheme into the network;
- Changes in concentrations of oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and levels of nitrogen deposition where changes in volumes of traffic within the road network affected by the introduction of the proposed scheme into the network could potentially affect sites designated for ecological value;
- Changes in greenhouse gas emissions (regional emissions) attributable to the introduction of the proposed scheme into the local road network;
- Nuisance associated within construction related dust; and
- Impact on local air quality associated with construction traffic.

The air quality assessment has considered the effects of the proposed development upon a total of 11,036 receptors including residential properties, care homes, hospitals, schools, nurseries and businesses.

The Environmental Impact Assessment has demonstrated that Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) concentrations would fall at approximately 79% of receptors whilst 2% would be unchanged and 19% would experience an increase.

The ES further identifies that Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) concentrations are predicted to fall at approximately 61% of receptors whilst 22% would be unchanged and 17% would experience and increase.

The EIA demonstrates that implementation of the proposed scheme is expected to result in a small increase in regional emissions associated with increased vehicular usage of the road network.

Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage – this chapter contains assessments of cultural heritage assets with the EIA focussing on:

- Archaeological assets and their setting;
- Built heritage assets and their setting; and
- Historic landscape.

The assessments have generally been focussed on known heritage assets and areas identified as having archaeological potential within 600m wide study area centred on the proposed scheme alignment. Known sites and monuments beyond this margin have also been assessed where it has been recognised that the proposed scheme may have a discernible impact on their setting, the Zone of Theoretical Visibility for the proposed scheme being adopted as a basis for determining such potential.

The EIA has identified the 29 known archaeological assets of low value will be damaged, destroyed or removed during the construction of the proposed scheme.

The assessments have demonstrated that all but one of the known and potential assets of archaeological interest would be subject to impacts which would be no greater than slight and adverse. The assessment further demonstrates that the impact on the one other asset, Norbury Mill, would be moderate and adverse.

The assessments have concluded that the proposed scheme does not involve direct impact on any listed buildings or buildings identified as being of historic or architectural importance. The loss of some of the agricultural land to the south of Norbury Hall which contributes to the setting of the farmhouse and encroachment into the curtilage of the buildings has been identified as having a moderate and adverse impact of the setting of the asset. The relationship of the site and building to its surroundings are however not proposed to be altered to an extent which would compromise the value of its cultural heritage.

As such, the applicant has concluded that the impact does not constitute a significant effect.

The impacts related to historic landscapes has fully been assessed within the ES and concludes that that impacts related to historic landscape types would be no greater than slight and adverse, and as such, concluded that such impacts do not constitute a significant effect.

The overall conclusion of the assessments is that the impacts identified do not constitute a significant effect collectively either in part or in their entirety.

Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Effects – this chapter investigates the likely impacts on the landscape character of the urban areas, urban fringe and countryside associated with the proposed scheme corridor between the A6 and Manchester Airport and assesses the visual impacts on sensitive receptors associated with the proposed scheme corridor.

The assessments have identified that whilst the proposed scheme generally integrates into the receiving landscape, there would be localised impacts to landscape character that would be significant in the long term.

Four such locations are identified:

- North of Norbury Brook
- Where the proposed scheme crosses the Ladybrook Valley
- At the Bramhall Oil terminal; and
- At the crossing of the West Coast Main Line.

Moderate and adverse effects would occur at the western end of the scheme in the short term reducing to slight/moderate in the design year (2032).

The assessment has identified that two locations would have large adverse and long term visual impacts. These locations are identified as being two receptors at the southern end of Old Mill Lane in the winter of the design year. Moderate to large adverse impacts are also identified at 13 residential receptors along the route of the proposed development in the long term during winter months, reducing to six in the summer months.

Chapter 11: Nature Conservation – the chapter assesses in detail potential impacts of the scheme on Norbury Brook Site Biological Interest, habitats and fauna. The study areas adopted for each species are as follows:

- Norbury Brook SBI – the boundary of the designated site
- Habitats – the proposed permanent land take and temporary working areas and contiguous habitat where they are extending beyond land take
- Great Crested Newts – 500m either side of the proposed permanent land take
- Badgers – 50m either side of the proposed permanent land take

- Otter – along Lady brook and Norbury Brook where two watercourses cross and land take and a further 100m along both water courses either side of the land take
- Bats – a corridor comprising the proposed land take and extending 100m either side of land take
- Bats (roost potential) – proposed land take and any temporary working areas.

The chapter identifies that the scheme would have an impact on a badger sett, 6 outlier setts, Great Crested Newt ponds, loss of ancient woodland, bat habitats and a kingfisher habitat and proposed mitigation measure to reduce potential impacts.

The ES demonstrates whilst the majority of impacts can be mitigated, the loss of the ancient woodland, as a resource, cannot be mitigated against, and as such, would constitute a significant effect at a local level. In the context of Norbury Brook SBI, it has been concluded that the scheme would not have a significant effect.

The assessment has further demonstrated that there will be a net addition of habitat types as a result of proposed planting, and whilst of benefit, could not constitute a significant benefit.

The assessment relative to fauna and protected species has demonstrated that with the proposed mitigation measures in place, there will be no significant effects.

Chapter 12: Geology and Soils – the chapter provides a description of the solid and drift geology and soils associated with the proposed scheme corridor and the assessment of potentially contaminated site where construction could involve disturbance and potential release of contaminants.

The assessment established that there were potentially ten contaminated sites within a 1km wide corridor centred on the alignment for the proposed scheme. On further investigation only one of these falls within the land take of the proposal, and lying within Manchester City Council Authority Boundary.

The applicant has identified mitigation measures for the site and identified further investigation works required.

Looking at the geology of the area, it has been concluded that it is unlikely that the proposed scheme would have any significant effects on the geology and soils of the area.

The ES further advises that there may be unknown contaminants, and therefore mitigation may be required if contamination is found.

Chapter 13: Noise and vibration – this chapter focuses on:

- A qualitative assessment of potential noise impacts in relation to sensitive receptors during construction;
- Assessment of potential traffic related noise impacts and nuisance relative to sensitive receptors following the opening of the proposal;
- Assessment of potential impacts on sensitive receptors as a result of vibration associated with construction; and
- Assessment of potential impact on sensitive receptors as a result of vibration associated with the future use.

Sensitive receptors relative to all four assessments include:

- Residential dwellings;
- Schools, colleges and childrens nurseries;
- Community facilities including sports centres;
- Places of worship;
- Hospitals, care/nursing homes, health centres and clinics;
- Laboratories containing sensitive equipment; and
- Heritage buildings.

Consideration was also given to outdoor areas commonly used by people where the ambient noise level are currently below 50dB(A).

The ES has demonstrated that there would be an increase in traffic related noise at the majority of sensitive receptors. In the short term, of the 26,034 residential receptors and 123 non residential receptors, 9,575 are likely to experience an increase in noise, whilst 6,489 are likely to experience a decrease.

Road noise has been identified as being mitigated through the use of low noise surface and acoustic barriers.

There are 55 residential properties that would potentially experience levels equal to or in excess of 68 dB(A) and a 1dB(A) increase as a result of the scheme, and thus, it may be necessary to provide noise insulation to properties.

The ES further identifies potential noise mitigation, and identifies that construction activities and noise limits should be agreed and specific contractors' method statements would be required prior to construction activities such as piling or blasting. The recommended mitigation would satisfactorily reduce the impact of such a development.

Chapter 14: Effects on All travellers – this chapter assesses the anticipated impacts on non-motorised users of the existing footpaths, PRow and road network relative to the impacts on accessibility and the amenity value on the network affected and, assess the impact on motorists using the existing network and the proposed scheme relative to driver stress.

The assessments have identified that the proposed scheme would be beneficial to non-motorised users of the public rights of way network due to the new east west footpath and cycleway connecting various local centres and existing footpaths. It does however further identify that there may be some amenity loss due to proposed diversions of footpaths.

Driver stress would generally decrease in the locality particularly for strategic traffic using the proposed scheme, however, there would be instances where driver stress would increase along specific sections.

Chapter 15: Community and Private Assets – the chapter assesses the impact of the scheme on private land take, loss of land used by the community, effects on land take on agricultural resources, and effects on development land.

The ES identifies that the proposed scheme would involve the loss of agricultural and recreational land together with residential, industrial and commercial land.

The scheme has been identified as severing and fragmenting up to 23 agricultural holdings with potential impacts for future operation.

Land take from Woodford Receptions Ground would result in approximately 12.5% of the total area being lost, the majority of which is currently scrub land with intermittent trees which bounds with the existing A555.

16 locations have been identified where residential land would be required for the scheme with the ES providing full commentary on each property and its likely impact.

Chapter 16: Road Drainage and the Water Environment – this chapter examines in full the potential impacts on the water environment focussing on surface waters, ground water and flood plains. A full flood risk assessment has been submitted with the planning application which supports the application and informs the ES.

The ES proposes mitigation both during construction and in the design of the scheme to minimise impacts.

The assessment has identified two areas of notable flood risk, one being the confluence of the Norbury Brook, Poynton Brook and Lady Brook and the second being the area related to Spath Brook in the vicinity of Stanley Green Trading Estate.

All potential impacts of the scheme have been investigated and it has been concluded that with the inclusion of the mitigation, impacts on the geomorphology, hydrology and flood risk of surface waters and on water quality, flows and levels of groundwater will be no greater than slight at specific locations, and as such, slight overall.

The scheme would not have significant effects on water quality and biodiversity at four out of five local watercourses. Mitigation is proposed on Baguley Brook.

Chapter 17: Cumulative Effects – this chapter identifies potential cumulative effects including:

- Those which arise from changes caused by a combination of impacts from existing or planning development and the proposed scheme; and
- Those which arise from a combination of impacts identified by different environmental disciplines within the ES.

The chapter identifies that separate developments or environmental disciplines and associated impacts may not be significant, however, when considered together may become significant.

In order to assess the impacts, the applicant undertook an assessment to identify potential developments looking at proximity to the proposed scheme, type and size of development and proximity to known environmental receptors.

Those considered to be of note all relate to the application submitted to Manchester City Council, and identifies Airport City, Manchester Airport Metro Link extension and a car park to the north of Ringway Road West with the ES identifying that there would be cumulative impacts upon landscape and visual impacts in these areas.

The ES further identifies that for a number of properties adjacent to the proposed scheme there will be significant and adverse cumulative impacts, however, the proposed scheme would also result in significant beneficial effects outside of the immediate scheme corridor in relation to air quality and traffic related noise. Mitigation measure relating to individual impacts has been proposed and is considered acceptable.

Chapter 18: Schedule of Environmental Commitments – this chapter identifies the key mitigation measures reported throughout the ES and which form the mandatory schedule of commitments under the contracts for construction. The commitments and mitigation are best appreciated through the submission.

Overall, it is concluded that no significant cumulative impacts are anticipated for the scheme provided all the mitigation measures and commitments detailed within the ES are adopted and implemented.

Non-technical summary – this document gives a brief overview of the main findings of the ES in an easily understandable and accessible format.

Site and Surroundings

The proposed alignment of the scheme traces the southern fringe of the Greater Manchester conurbation from the A6 in the east to Manchester

International Airport. The corridor of the scheme comprises a sequence of open space and countryside, much of which is designated as Green Belt and identified as a Landscape Character Areas of Lady Brook Valley and Woodford. The route of the scheme has been protected from development that would prejudice a road scheme within the corridor since the 1930's.

The land use pattern along the route is predominantly agricultural, however there is recreational and sports areas, institutional grounds and residential properties together with industrial and commercial uses.

From the A6 to the A555/Woodford Road Junction the corridor is characterised by open agricultural land used for grazing, the wooded valleys of Norbury Brook and Lady Brook and the urban areas of Hazel Grove to the north, Poynton to the south and Bramhall to the west.

The development is proposed to occupy the southern extent of Hazel Grove Golf Course (land outside of the operational golf course but within its ownership) and crossing Ox Hey Brook. The highway boundary and landscaping areas are proposed to abut a number of residential properties adjacent to the existing A6. From the A6, the alignment crosses the Hazel Grove Railway Line and runs through open fields passing between Norbury Brook and the southern extent of Old Mill Lane where it would pass in close proximity to residential dwellings. The proposed cycle path would abut with the boundary of the southern most residential property on Old Mill Lane. The scheme would pass to the south of residential properties on Darley Road and Ashbourne Road and would cross Macclesfield Road abutting with Brookside Garden Centre. The topography along this part of the route is gently undulating and at Norbury Brook the land is incised and slopes steeply downwards. A section of the wooded valley created by Norbury Brook is classified as ancient woodland.

The development would continue west through open pasture in parallel with the Ladybrook Valley Interest Trail and Norbury Brook and in close proximity to residential properties on Longnor Road, Sheldon Road, Norbury Hall, Mill Hill Hollow and Barlowfold Farm.

Ladybrook Valley is characterised by relatively steep sides. The scheme continues through open countryside and agricultural land of undulating topography, passing several public footpaths to the north and south before crossing Woodford Road and the West Coast Main Line. The scheme passes Hill Green Farm and Bramhall Golf Club to the north and Distaff Farm to the south.

The scheme continues south west through open agricultural land crossing several footpaths and the access road to Bramhall Oil Terminal and Ashmead Farm. The aforementioned are immediately to the north of the proposal with the settlement of Bramhall beyond the depot.

The proposal seeks consent to cross the northern extent of Moorend Golf Course before joining with the existing A555. There are residential properties

to the north and south of Woodford Road and on Albany Road in close proximity with the scheme together with Queensgate School lying immediately to the north of the site.

The route continues along the existing A555 passing through relatively flat pasture with urban areas of Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme to the north. The scheme abuts with Woodford Recreational Ground to the north and Londfield Poultry Farm and Andertons Nurseries to the south. The existing A555 crosses closely with residential properties associated with Hall Moss Lane. Between Hall Moss Lane and the A34 the A555 is mainly surrounded by open fields and Chester's Park Croft, a residential caravan park.

The scheme continues past the Stanley Green Trading Estate, the community of Handforth and residential properties on Stanley Road and Stanley Road Farm before passing under Wilmslow Road and approaching land currently occupied as Styal Golf Club. In the location is outlying infrastructure associated with Manchester Airport, areas of pasture and the settlements of Handforth, Heald Green and Moss Nook.

Immediately to the west of Wilmslow Road the proposed alignment crosses an existing airport storage facility and passes immediately to the south of Little Acorns Day Nursery. The proposal then continues back into open fields currently used for grazing livestock and the residential properties of Bolshaw farm.

A large residential dwelling known as 'The Grange' sits to the south of the proposed alignment with a large commercial nursery and two farms: Yew Tree Farm and Outwood Farm. Continuing west the proposal crosses a footpath before crossing the northern extent of Styal Gold Club. The scheme emerges to the west of the golf course into open fields used for grazing. The final section of the scheme within Stockport is where the scheme crosses the Styal Railway line. All land to the west of the Styal Railway Line falls within MCC jurisdiction, with the scheme predominantly tracing the Manchester Airport Railway line spurs through open fields near to residential and commercial properties in Moss Nook. The scheme terminates at the Junction of Ringway Road/Ringway Road West.

Members will appreciate that whilst their remit is to determine the element within SMBC jurisdiction, the proposal weaves in and out of SMBC, CEC and MCC and it therefore important to appreciate the siting of the whole scheme and not just that within its own boundary.

The full details of the proposed route alignment and location of existing structures is best appreciated from the plans submitted with the planning application.

Policy Background

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications/appeals to be determined in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for Stockport comprises:

- Policies set out in the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review May 2006 (SUDP) which have been saved by direction under paragraph 1(3) of Schedule 8 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; and
- Policies set out in the Stockport Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS) adopted 17th March 2011.

Given the Core Strategy DPD was prepared in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, paragraph 214 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) suggests that 'full weight' should be given to them in the 12 month period up to March 2013, even if there is a limited degree of conflict with the NPPF. Paragraph 215 further states that following the 12 month period, the degree of weight given the relevant policies should be based on the degree to which they are consistent with the NPPF, with those policies closest to the framework given the greatest weight.

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF then states that weight may be given to emerging plans from the day of publication, with the weight to be given dependant on the stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies and according to the degree of consistency with the NPPF. However, given the early stages reached in the preparation of the allocations DPD, it is considered that little weight can be given to it at this stage.

The Planning Advisory Services' National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Compatibility Self-Assessment Checklist has been undertaken on Stockport's adopted Core Strategy. This document assesses the conformity of Stockport's adopted Core Strategy with the more recently published NPPF and takes account of saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan where applicable. No significant differences were identified

Interpretation and commentary on the development plan will be discussed in full in the analysis, whilst discussion on the NPPF will be both within this section and the analysis.

Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review (saved policies)

CDH1.2: Non Residential Development in Predominantly Residential Areas
ST2.2: Protection for Major Road Schemes
LCR1.1: Landscape Character Areas
EP1.7: Development and Flood Risk
NE1.1: Sites of Special Nature Conservation Importance
NE1.2: Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
GBA1.1: Extent of Green Belt
GBA1.2: Control of Development in Green Belt
GBA2.1: Protection of Agricultural Land
L1.8: Strategic recreation routes

L1.9: Recreation routes and new development
LCR1.1: Landscape Character Areas
EP1.8: Manchester Airport Public Safety Zone
EP1.9: Safeguarding of Aerodromes and Air Navigation Facilities

Core Strategy Policies

CS1: Overarching Principles: Sustainable Development - Addressing Inequalities and Climate Change
CS5: Access to Services
CS8: Safeguarding and Improving the Environment
CS9: Transport and Development
CS10: An Effective and Sustainable Transport Network
SD1: Creating Sustainable Communities
SD3: Delivering the Energy Opportunities Plan - New Development
SD6: Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change
SIE -1: Quality Places
SIE-3: Protecting, Safeguarding and Enhancing the Environment
SIE-5: Aviation facilities, Telecommunications and other Broadcast
T-1: Transport and Development
T-3: Safety and Capacity on the Highway Network
AS-2: Improving Indoor Sports, Community and Education Facilities and their Accessibility

NPPF

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For decision taking this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with the Development Plan without delay; and
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of-date, granting permission unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole; or
 - specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

Consequently, proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and development that conflicts should be refused unless materials considerations indicate otherwise.

The main policies/statements set out in the NPPF which are relevant to this proposal are as follows (summarised):

Paragraph 31 states that Local Authorities should work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development, including large scale facilities such as rail freight interchanges, roadside facilities for motorists or transport investment necessary to support strategies for the growth of ports, airports or other major generators of travel demand in their areas. The applicant in this case SMBC, CEC and MCC have worked positively together and with neighbouring authorities to ensure the proposal is viable and meets the aims of the paragraph. The scheme would promote economic growth, relieve existing congestion on the highway network and promote sustainable transport.

Paragraph 32 states that all developments that generate significant amounts of movements should be supported by a Transport Statement or Assessment. Plans and decisions should take account of whether:

- the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;
- safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and
- improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development.
- Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

The proposed development has been supported by a Transport Assessment (TA)which identifies the impacts of the development. The TA includes mitigation measures, and complementary mitigation measures which are proposed to mitigate impacts of the development and increase sustainable transport choices.

Paragraph 41 – Local Planning Authorities should identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to wide transport choice. The proposed development runs along a route protected within SMBC under Policy ST2.2. the scheme therefore accords with para 41.

Paragraph 79 – The Government attaches great importance to Green Belt, The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belt are their openness and their permanence.

Paragraph 80 – Green Belt serves five purposes:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up area;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To reserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

Paragraph 87 – States that as with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. This policy reiterates previous Green Belt policy and continues in Paragraph 88 which states that when considering planning applications, LPAs should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Paragraph 90 further states that development may not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and includes ‘engineering operations’ and ‘local transport infrastructure’ which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location, provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The applicant has given considerations to paragraphs 87, 88 and 90 of the NPPF, and the purposes of the Green Belt and considers that the proposed development would be harmful to openness and would not safeguard existing areas of the countryside located within the application site, and as such, considers that the proposed development would represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The applicant has therefore submitted very special circumstance which they believe clearly outweighs any harm to the Green Belt. To avoid repetition, full discussion on the Green Belt can be found later in the report.

Paragraph 103 advises that determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere and only consider development appropriate in areas at risk of flooding where, informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment following the Sequential and Exception Test, it can be demonstrated that:

- within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location; and
- development is appropriately flood resilient and resistant, including safe access and escape routes where required, and that any residual risk can be safely managed, including emergency planning; and it gives priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems.

As part of the planning submission the applicant has provided a Flood Risk Assessment prepared in accordance with the NPPF technical guidance. Full commentary and responses from statutory bodies can be found in the body of the report.

Paragraph 109 – The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.

Full discussion on the natural and local environment can be found within the report, however, on balance it is considered that the scheme accords with the general principles of para 109.

Paragraph 112 – Local Planning Authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality land. Full discussion can be found within the analysis section, however, in summary, the scheme does not result in the loss of best and most versatile land, although a significant amount of agricultural land would be lost and severed. The benefits and need for the scheme do however outweigh the potential harm.

Paragraph 118 – When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- proposed development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect on the sites notified special interest features is likely, an exception should only be made where the benefits of the development, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the features of the site and any broader impacts;
- opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

Opportunities for mitigation and biodiversity have been taken where possible to ensure that the impacts of the development are acceptable. It is considered

that the ES fully assesses the impacts, and with mitigation the scheme will ensure compliance with para 118.

Paragraph 120 – To prevent unacceptable risks from pollution and land stability, planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location. The effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, the natural environment or general amenity, and the potential sensitivity of the areas or proposed development to adverse effects from pollution, should be taken into account.

Paragraph 123 – Planning policies and decisions should aim to:

- avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse effects on health and quality of life as a result of new development;
- mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from new development, including through the use of conditions;
- recognise that development will often create some noise and existing businesses wanting to develop in continuance of their business should not have unreasonable restrictions put on them because of changes in nearby land uses since they were established; and
- identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.

Paragraph 128 – In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where a site includes or has the potential to include heritage assets within archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. The applicant has provided in full an assessment of the potential impacts, and whilst the Councils Conservation and Heritage Officer would seek to condition further surveys, as discussed in the analysis section below, the information currently presented is considered to be sufficient to determine the proposal.

Paragraph 132 – When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional.

Paragraph 135 – The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the

application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Paragraph 139 – Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

Paragraphs 186 and 187 – Local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development and should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Paragraph 215 – states that 12 months after the publication of the NPPF (March 2012) due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the framework the greater the weight that may be given).

Pre-Application Public Consultation by the applicant

The planning application has been supported by a Statement of Community Involvement which identifies the full history and engagement of the public and stakeholders throughout the process.

The applicant has undertaken the following consultation prior to the submission of the application:

- Statutory and non-statutory consultees were engaged in 2009;
- Views and opinions from statutory and non-statutory consultees were sought in February 2010 on the revised scope of the ES.
- A series of forums for statutory and non-statutory consultees and interest groups were held between February 2012 and June 2012.
- Phase One Consultation - 18 public exhibitions were held throughout October, November and December 2012 across the length of the scheme. Exhibitions lasted for 2 days at each location, and were advertised via local radio, newspaper adverts, notifications on the website and leaflet drops to local residents. The purpose of the exhibitions was to engage with local residents and interested members of the public. Phase One asked broader questions about the proposed development in order to gauge overall support and preferences on the layout of six junctions along the proposed route.
- Specific consultation with affected land owners was undertaken throughout the summer of 2012.

- Phase Two Consultation - Following the first phase of public consultation, a revised scheme was prepared, taking into account the feedback received from the first phase of consultation, in particular in relation to the various junction options that had been previously consulted on. This was the subject of a further public consultation in June 2013. This phase provided feedback on the results of Phase One and sought views on the proposed development after taking on board the comments given in Phase One. Phase Two also provided feedback on proposed mitigation measures and highlighted the interventions that have taken place to amend the Scheme in response to the feedback received, or where a change has not been possible, why this is the case.

The information and data captured by the applicant as part of the consultation process demonstrates that there was overall support for the proposed A6MARR. 69% of overall respondents supported the proposals with approximately 50% of respondents specifying that they are strongly in favour of the proposals. 13% of overall respondents specified that they were not in favour or definitely not in favour of the proposed development.

Public Consultation

The application was advertised by the direct notification of 1201 properties, the display of 25 site notices and publication of a press notice on the 6th November 2013. The application was advertised as a departure from the development plan due to the location of the development within the Green Belt, a major development, development affecting Public Rights of Way and development affecting the setting of a listed building.

In response to the consultation carried out by the Local Planning Authority, responses were received from 101 properties and a total of 117 individual letters. In addition to individual letters, a petition against the scheme was received.

Of the 117 individual responses:

9 letters of support were received which raise the following points:

- Bypass is long overdue;
- The scheme will remove inappropriate traffic from the local road network, especially around Woodford and significantly improve quality of life;
- Support the principle but think some junctions would be better grade separated;
- Will improve local traffic situation especially Hazel Grove, Bramhall, Heald Green and Cheadle Hulme;
- The remaining SEMMMS roads should be built;
- Improved safety to properties along the current A6 and residential areas
- Essential for the local and regional economy.

5 letters of comment advising the following:

- That positive effects to the economy should be greater than the negative impacts;
- That steps have been taken to ensure the bottle neck does not move to the A6;
- Ancient woodlands should not be destroyed in the construction of the road;
- Finance should be available to complete the scheme to the M60;
- Air Quality should meet with European standards
- Noise should be mitigated;
- That a long-term view should be taken;
- Hope that the cycle facilities as proposed are implemented and other routes should be considered.

102 letters of objection from 85 properties have been received, raising the following matters (summarised):

- Insufficient time was given to the general public to make comment on the proposal;
- The proposed scheme would have a major impact on congestion on High Lane and up to Whaley Bridge;
- The application is based on unproven and incomplete data;
- Will result in greater congestion;
- Speed limit at Hazel Grove should be reduced to 30mph;
- Irreplaceable damage to precious countryside and wildlife habitat, including ancient woodland;
- Damage to SBI's, bats, badgers, great crested newts;
- New roads always create extra traffic ;
- It is not a relief road, it is to support house building, and big business;
- Flooding;
- Increased noise
- Detrimental impact on air quality and pollution
- Reduction in open countryside and impact on Green Belt;
- Detrimental impact on visual amenity;
- Impact of new bridges and structures in the rural setting;
- Impact on property values;
- The scheme is not needed and will not benefit residents;
- Impact and uncertainty on the land required for the development to be implemented;
- Waste of public money;
- Some the proposed junctions appear to be near capacity at opening year;
- Traffic emissions;
- Loss of agricultural and recreation land;
- Scheme is a white elephant and consultation has not been listened to;

- Details of accommodation bridges, junctions and layouts not acceptable;
- No provision for the acquisition of land required for the Poynton Bypass;
- Unacceptable diversion of footpaths;
- Money should be spent on sustainable transport measures;
- Object to the current location of noise mitigation;
- Impact on Queensgate School;
- Local Authorities should not be dealing with the scheme;
- Breach of planning policy;
- Scheme does not maximise land for development of Green Belt land for housing;
- Alternative scheme should have been considered;
- Reduction in jobs
- Carillion own a 20% stake in Airport City and have been awarded the contract;
- The scheme does not promote sustainable transport;
- Character of the area will be severely and adversely impacted;

With regard to the petitions:

One petition has been signed by 33 people (some of them from the same address) and raises concern with regard to the erection of a bridge over the West Coast Main Line close to Woodford Road. The petition states that they are concerned about the impact on visual amenity and feel that the bridge is out of keeping in the rural area. They are concerned that the structure will detract from the current views. They wish to see the scheme go underneath the railway.

It is stated that a number of residents purchased their properties following seeing plans showing the scheme going under the railway.

In addition to the individual responses identified above, letters have also been received from the following interested parties:

- Woodford Community Council;
- Friends of the Earth Manchester;
- High Lane Residents Association;
- North West Transport Roundtable and the Campaign for Better Transport;
- Stockport Green Party;
- Stockport Friends of the Earth;
- Prestbury Parish Council;
- Poynton Against Unnecessary Link-roads to the Airport (PAULA) Residents Group;

The grounds of response from the aforementioned interested parties include:

Woodford Community Council -

Support the scheme as submitted but request the following is adequately addressed:

- The western and Eastern Sections should be opened simultaneously;
- The Poynton Bypass should be built to coincide with SEMMMS;
- Mitigation measures should be taken to ensure residents experience minimal disruption;
- Noise and air pollution should be monitored;
- Consideration should be given to low road noise surface;
- Consideration should be given to ancient woodlands.

The support is based on the premise that the scheme will eventually be connected with the M60 as this intermediate stage potentially moves the bottle neck to the A6.

Friends of the Earth Manchester:

Does not support the scheme as they do not believe that the case has been made for the economic, environmental and transport benefit claims as put forward in the planning application.

They consider the scheme would have a wide range of detrimental environmental, economic and social impacts that contradict national objectives and legal obligations and believe that the three Local Planning Authorities have a legal obligation under European and UK air quality and climate change legislation to refuse planning permission for the scheme.

They question the scope of the proposed scheme and believe that it is unacceptable that alternative options including a public transport improvement and cycling and pedestrian infrastructure only option, without the A6MARR, have not been considered.

They consider that there are flaws in the traffic modelling and traffic generation forecasts and question why significant sums of public money should be spent on a scheme which they do not believe would contribute towards lowering carbon emissions, and would in their opinion lead to an increase.

Manchester Friends of the Earth raise concern with regards to air quality and air pollution in general, state the requirements of the UK as a whole and highlight areas of the scheme which are of concern. They highlight the PM2.5 have not been assessed in the EIA. Air quality impacts have been

cited as a reason when the Highways Agency are not proposing to allow hard shoulder running on the M60 J8-18.

The response highlights the levels of traffic and states that 'the A6MARR scheme does little to reduce AM and PM peak congestions – in fact the scheme makes peak congestion worse and has major increases in some specific areas – which raise serious concerns in relation to air pollution'.

The response further identifies climate change legislation and questions the accuracy of traffic modelling and further state that they believe the SMBC, MCC and CEC have a legal obligation under European and UK air quality and climate change legislation to refuse planning permission for the proposed road scheme.

High Lane Residents Association:

Against the road and have no faith in the effectiveness of the proposed enhanced mitigation measures because they are unclear.

Would like the following points taken into account during deliberations:

- The original proposed increase in traffic as present at public consultation were alarmingly high;
- The figures have since been amended to an increase in 10-15% increase in the light of enhance mitigation measures;
- Current mitigation is only a brief outline with details to be finalised later;
- Full traffic modelling should be available to help laypeople understand how and why figures have changes with mitigation;
- Find it extremely difficult to accept the figures output by the model. To us they appear undemonstrated, unproven and unrealistic;
- Would wish the principle of the measures to be trialled and tested and proven before plans for the scheme are passed;
- Concern at the main focus of the monitoring of the enhancement mitigation;
- Fear that the community in High Lane will suffer as a consequence of the proposal and there will be no going back;
- The mitigation measures have not be considered in the same level of detail as the rest of the scheme;
- Enhanced mitigation should be clear and complete before construction begins and should be completed in discussion with those communities affected;
- Sought an extension to the public consultation so that the enhanced mitigation measure can be finalised and treated as part of the planning application.

North West Transport Roundtable and the Campaign for Better Transport-

State that the plan to build this road runs contrary to all good sense and a mounting volume of evidence. They advise that the concept has no environmental credentials and will have any number of negative effects that will impinge on quality of life in south east Manchester/ north east Cheshire. In their submission in objecting to the scheme they consider that they demonstrate:

- Traffic growth has been flattening out and falling both nationally and in the wider SEMMMS area for some years, cancelling out the argument for road building;
- There are flaws in many of the assumptions behind the transport forecasts;
- There are many questionable aspects to the modelling which did not examine a sufficiently wide geographical area and failed to model walking and cycling;
- Economic modelling has been overly optimistic and speculative and the economic case is still unproven;
- The health benefit assessment is wrong to assume there would be more benefits than disbenefits from the scheme based on assertions about economic opportunities;
- Properly conductive tests on alternative road building were not carried out
- The scheme will not meet its objectives;
- Modal spilt in the target area is already dominated by car and will not be helped;
- Insufficient attention has been paid to air pollution and knock-on health impacts;
- Overall, harmful emissions will rise, breaching EU standards;
- Building the road will, in effect, drive a horse and cart through sustainability and carbon reduction plans & policies the promoting authorities are signed up to;
- The impact of increased noise and pollution as well as air pollution is likely to have a real detrimental effect on people's health;
- The big population within easy access to rolling countryside would lose a precious and very convenient resource on the urban fridge;
- The Green Belt will be breached between Greater Manchester and Cheshire East.

Stockport Green Party:

Objections are based on the premise that they don't believe that the proposal is compatible with the principles expressed in statutory local and national planning documents.

They point out in their objection that the benefits as identified are by no means certain and raise four objections:

1. Despite the relief road being included in SEMMMS, its proposed construction at this time is in contradiction to the SEMMMS recommendations given the onus on implementing these as a whole;
2. A planning application has been submitted despite the lack of specific mitigation measures having been put forward for the A6 in Disley and High Lane, which is predicted to experience a large increase in motor vehicle traffic, and hence congestion;
3. Despite the relief road being mentioned at various points in the Core Strategy, its inclusion is clearly at odds with the principles and proposed actions on sustainable transport, climate change, impact on the environment, reduction in the need to travel and promotion of modal shift set out in the Core Strategy. The principles of the Core Strategy should take priority over relief road construction;
4. The proposed relief road is contrary to the NPPF principles in that it:
 - a. Does not jointly and simultaneously achieve economic, social and environmental gain;
 - b. Does not align with several NPPF core planning principles, in particular by effectively implementing the least sustainable SEMMMS recommendation before those which are sustainable transport modes;
 - c. Does not secure reductions in greenhouse gas emissions;
 - d. Is not based on up to date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics of the area and country.

Stockport Friends of the Earth:

Raise objection to the scheme and concern that the proposal could attract fracking into the area.

Concern that the scheme would increase air pollution and its impact on wildlife, especially pollinating insects.

Proposes that an alternative approach to the scheme would recognise the merits of local transport networks.

Prestbury Parish Council:

Do not support the way in which road building is being carried out contrary to governmental guidance on how transport infrastructure should be appraised. The Parish Council raise concern with regards to the scheme and wish to understand what the full impact on the parish would be if:

- 1) The A6MARR is built
- 2) The A6MARR and Poynton Bypass is built

- 3) All the SEMMMS roads are built; and
- 4) All the SEMMMS roads and all the other strategic routes in the Cheshire East pre submission Core Strategy are built.

They raise concern with regards to the Local Enterprise Partnerships and the impacts that development could have on Prestbury. They advise that new roads invariably attract development along them, and state that all the SEMMMS schemes are within the Green Belt.

The state that it has been apparent for some time that if any part of the SEMMMS network is constructed, it would automatically trigger the building of the remainder of the network, part of which is scheduled to pass through Prestbury.

They raise concern that the SEMMMS Study endorsed the road schemes based on a very high growth rate in traffic which they advise has not materialised, and have in fact flattened out and since declined.

Concern is raised that no business case of traffic modelling is available for the remaining SEMMMS schemes or other schemes proposed in Cheshire East.

They consider that the Department for Communities and Local Government should call in the planning application for the A6MARR and hold a Public Inquiry in order that all issues surround this and the connecting roads and nearby settlements can be properly and exhaustively examined.

PAULA Residents Group:

State that:

The scheme needs to demonstrate that when the road opens air quality is not worsened in areas of poor air quality and pollution levels are within the Limits determined by the EU Air Directive.

PAULA questions the method that the applicant has used and identifies that they believe that there is contradictory evidence in their application.

They identify that the SEMMMS method involves counting the number of houses that see improved or worsened air quality and states that there are however other methods based on the EU Air Quality Directive which identifies representative locations near to source of the pollutant. PAULA state that although they may use the same limit values the SEMMMS method will always be less sensitive to rises in total air pollution and more people will be affected to a greater degree.

They state that there are contradictory conclusions in that in one report the houses flanking the existing A555 which sees a 100% increase in traffic shows an acceptable air quality whereas another SEMMMS report show exceedancies along the cycle track that runs parallel to the road.

They consider there are significant weaknesses in the SEMMMS method with less than 10% of the total number of houses being assessed.

They consider that the modest improvement on the A6 where terraces flank the road will overestimate the benefits compared to the significant worsening in Disley.

PAULA questions the locations of where the NO2 sensors were placed and which they believe lead to anomalies.

PAULA further express concern that the applicant has not followed the DfT advice note on assessment on air quality.

They further raise concern that the proposal is intended to go through Carr Wood, an ancient woodland and consider that they could of easily realigned the road to avoid the wood and at less cost. They state that contrary to the current assessment at least half the wood would be adversely affected.

They consider the scheme need to comply with the EU Air Quality Directive and that Carr Wood needs to be protected by diverting the road around the wood.

PAULA concludes by stating that the existing A555 should probably have been declared an air quality management area in 2009.

The above is a summary of all the pertinent points of support and objection. Copies of all letters are available for viewing on the application file.

Overview

All objections received were put into a database to establish the main areas of concern regarding the scheme. The following summarises the concerns:

- 19.8% of responses raised concern with regards to Air Quality;
- 2.1% were concerned about conservation assets
- 40.4% were concerned that the development would have a detrimental impact on the economy;
- 10.4% were concerned about house prices;
- 9.4% worried about Highway Safety

16.7% were concerned about Noise;
36% concerned about pollution
11.5% didn't consider the relief road is needed;
45.8% of respondents were concerned about traffic congestion; and
11.5% concerned about visual impact.

Of the responses received, the following is an indication of location of responder:

3.1% Bramhall
1.0% Cheadle
0.0% Cheadle Heath
48% Hazel Grove and High Lane
3.1% Marple
3.1% Woodford
22.9% Other within Stockport
3.1% Cheshire East
2.1% Manchester
9.4% Other
4.2% Did not specify

Consultee Responses

Highways Agency - Having given the application due consideration the Agency can inform that it would not wish to raise any objections to the principle of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road planning application being granted planning permission, however this is subject to the agreement of details between Stockport Council and the Highways Agency.

The Agency and consultants JMP are in the process of reviewing the information submitted by the applicant in support of the planning application. Once that review is complete the Agency should be in a position to agree with Stockport Council what our requirements will be in order to help facilitate the delivery of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief road.

Following discussions between the Highways Agency and the applicant a further response was received on the 20th December 2013 stating:

The Agency has now received further information from Stockport Council in relation to the proposed scheme and its impact on the strategic road network and can confirm that the Agency does not wish to make any further comments in relation to the application. A formal TR110 form under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010 confirming the Secretary of State for Transport TR1 offers no objection.

As you are aware the Secretary of State for Transport currently has made line orders under the Highway Act to construct the A6(M) Stockport North South Bypass. This made line order overlaps with the extent of the A6MARR planning application.

The A6(M) Stockport North South Bypass scheme was dropped from the strategic roads programme in 1998 and as such the Highways Agency on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport (as set out in Article 26 (32)(B)) does not proposed to issue any direction in respect of the proposed A6MARR application.

As it was agreed that the Agency would maintain its Highway orders along the line of the SEMMMS route to provide opportunity for a local scheme to be worked upon and it is now clear a local scheme is sufficiently advanced, the Agency will now formally start the Highway Order revocation process. The process will start with the publication of a draft revocation order (and associated revocation orders) on the 8th January 2014.

The line of the propose A6MARR also overlaps with the current route in place under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for Poynton Bypass and Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road West.

Under article 26 b (iv) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010 the Agency can confirm on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport it does not proposed to issue any direct with respects to this planning application. The agency will Liaise with the relevant Planning Authorities to agree a mutually convenient date for these Route Protects to be formally removed.

Network Rail – Network Rail is placing a holding objection on the above proposal.

Whilst we are supportive of projects of this nature we are concerned that the proposal documents do not address the concerns of Network Rail that have been flagged up to the developer,

1. The date shown on the coversheets of the various bridge reports received supersede the (July 2012) reports previously supplied to Network Rail for review & acceptance. As the new reports contain no description of changes made we are currently unsure whether we would be able to accept them.
2. With regard to the Hazel Grove location, Network Rail discussed in detail with the SEMMMS team the need for comparative overbridge

and underbridge option reports to be supplied to us for review and consideration. We note that the overbridge option has been excluded from the latest submissions. Furthermore, an update to the SEMMMS 'draft' level crossing report (dated Aug 2012) is still awaited. As previously advised to SEMMMS, it is essential that the aforementioned is issued to NR to enable us to make an informed decision.

Planning Application Block Plans Proposed Sheet 23. It is proposed to install temporary fencing in the fields by the level crossing 'Mill Farm user work crossing'.

Network Rail would require guarantees that

- Access to the level crossing 'Mill Farm user work crossing' is maintained at all times during the development as access is required to complete asset inspections and maintenance of the crossing.
- The crossing is only used by the authorised user and is not available for the developer to access the fields either side of the railway lines

What impact will the development works have on Norbury hollow crossing on Norbury Hollow road? This crossing is located on a narrow road and manoeuvrability is limited. Presently vehicles coming off the A6 and travelling to the crossing have to reverse back to a house should a vehicle come against them as there is no space for vehicles to pass each other.

- Will the traffic increase over the crossing during the development works?
- Will heavy duty vehicles be traversing the crossing?
- Increased use of the traffic may cause damage to the decking which will incur a cost for repair or replacement of damaged equipment
- Increased traffic has the potential to back onto the crossing and restrict the ability of the crossing keeper to close the gates

UPDATE: Following discussions between Network Rail and the applicant, Network Rail have verbally advised that they will remove their holding objection. At the time of publishing the report the formal written response is still awaiting. Members will be updated verbally at committee.

Environment Agency - We would have no objection in principle to the proposed development but would like to make the following comments.

We have reviewed the information submitted and would recommend the following conditions are attached to any decision notice.

Flood Risk

Condition

The development permitted by this planning permission shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), from AECOM ref 1007/6.7/061 Rev 5 dated 02/10/2013 and the following mitigation measures detailed within the FRA:

1. *Limiting the surface water run-off generated by the proposed development so that it will not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site.*

Contaminated Land

We would further recommend the following conditions:

Condition

No development approved by this planning permission (or such other date or stage in development as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority), shall take place until a scheme that includes the following components to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall each be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority:

- 1) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified: all previous uses potential contaminants associated with those uses a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.
- 2) A site investigation scheme, based on (1) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.
- 3) The results of the site investigation and detailed risk assessment referred to in (2) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.
- 4) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy in (3) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action.

Any changes to these components require the express written consent of the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Condition

If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted a remediation strategy to the local planning authority detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with and obtained written approval from the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

Condition

No occupation of any part of the permitted development shall take place until a verification report demonstrating completion of works set out in the approved remediation strategy and the effectiveness of the remediation shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority. The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met. It shall also include any plan (a "long-term monitoring and maintenance plan") for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action, as identified in the verification plan. The long-term monitoring and maintenance plan shall be implemented as approved.

Ecology

Information outstanding - comments to follow.

Informatives

The route of the proposed development affects watercourses, some of which are designated "main river". In particular, Handforth Brook and Norbury Brook.

In accordance with the Water Resources Act 1991 and the North West Region's Land Drainage Byelaws, the Environment Agency's prior written consent is required for any proposed works or structures in, under, over or within 8 metres of the top of the bank of a "main river".

UPDATE: The applicant provided additional detail as requested by the Environment Agency. At the time of finalising the report the Environment Agency had not had sufficient time to assess the detail. Members will be update verbally following the full assessment. Having spoken to the Environment Agency, they are satisfied that the applicant was providing them with this information they required, and that following assessment of the scheme they are likely to request conditions be attached to the planning permission.

Manchester Airport - Despite making references to aerodrome safeguarding in the supporting documentation, it is not clear within the material how these matters have been addressed in the design of the scheme. Therefore a considerable amount of additional detailed information will be required to enable full aerodrome safeguarding assessments of the proposal. We therefore provide comments on the basis of what is currently presented. These are in relation to the whole route but where a particular feature is identified we have stated which section of the route is being referred to.

In the absence of fully detailed safeguarding assessments, we require conditions to be attached to any permission granted, as per the recommendations set out below. The informatives that we have provided, and details of the further information that is required will help the applicant understand which safeguarding aspects require further consideration, and the additional details that the Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport will require for assessment prior to the approval of certain aspects of the scheme.

LIGHTING COLUMNS - Recommended Condition:

The installation of lighting (permanent and temporary) shall not commence until full details of the proposed lighting scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA, in consultation with the Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport.

Informative:

From an aerodrome safeguarding perspective, the principal matters that require assessment are the height of the lighting columns and direction of lighting. With regard to the height of the lighting columns, they must be designed so as not to infringe any of Manchester Airport's protected Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (as detailed in CAA publication CAP 168: Licensing of Aerodromes). Obstacle Limitation Surfaces protect Visual and Instrument Flight Paths and represent the lower limit of the blocks of protected airspace in the area immediately around an aerodrome. With regard to the direction of lighting, the lighting should be designed so that it is of flat glass, full cut off design with horizontal mountings and no light spill above the horizontal. These lighting requirements are applicable to both the permanent scheme lighting and any temporary flood lighting that is proposed during the construction period.

Further Information Required:

The areas closest to Manchester Airport are the most crucial from a physical safeguarding perspective - sections 1 and 2 of the route, as shown on the interactive map. To enable accurate safeguarding assessments we will need the grid reference, to six figures Eastings and Northings, of each proposed

lighting column on drawing no. 60248122_1300_002 Rev D (Proposed Lighting Ringway Road West Junction Sheet 1 of 9) and drawing no. 60248122_1300_003 Rev E (Proposed Lighting Styal Road Junction Sheet 2 of 9), together with the proposed height of the columns and the ground level at these points taking any new landscaping into consideration.

SIGNAGE

Recommended Condition:

The installation of any signage shall not commence until full details of the signage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA, in consultation with the Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport.

Informative:

From an aerodrome safeguarding perspective, the principal area for consideration is the height of the proposed signage. The height of the signs must not infringe any of Manchester Airport's protected Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (as detailed in CAA publication CAP 168: Licensing of Aerodromes). Obstacle Limitation Surfaces protect Visual and Instrument Flight Paths and represent the lower limit of the blocks of protected airspace in the area immediately around an aerodrome.

Further Information Required:

As with the lighting columns, the Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport will require further details regarding the location (to six figures of Eastings and Northings) and height of all proposed signs within section 1 and 2 of the route, as well as the height of ground level at these points. We presume that these signs will be located at the road side rather than on an overhead gantry.

STYAL ROAD AIRPORT SPUR BRIDGE - Further Information Required:

In order for us to provide detailed comments about the proposed Styal Road Airport Spur Bridge within section 2, and the lighting arrangements for this area, we require details of the maximum height of the bridge AOD, the height of each lighting column and the ground level of the road at these points.

LANDSCAPING

Recommended Conditions:

1. Development shall not commence until a fully detailed landscaping and ecological mitigation scheme for the route has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA, in consultation with the Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport. Appropriate modifications and/or mitigation measures to minimise any identified risks to aircraft and airport operations will also need to be incorporated into the detailed proposals.

2. Development shall not commence until a fully detailed drainage scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA, in consultation with the Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport. Appropriate modifications and/or mitigation measures to minimise any identified risks to aircraft and airport operations will also need to be incorporated into the detailed proposals.

3. Development of the “Styal Attenuation Pond”, as shown on drawings for section 2, shall not commence until full details of the bird control measures that are to be installed have been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA, in consultation with the Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport.

4. A bird hazard management plan shall be in place during construction to ensure that any earthworks do not become a bird attractant. This should form part of the construction management plan, which is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA, in consultation with the Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport, prior to development commencing. (Manchester Airport will be able to advise on the appropriate means of mitigation.)

Informative (general comments and advice provided by Manchester Airport’s specialist bird hazard consultant):

There are a number of acknowledgments of the issue of bird hazard safeguarding in the documentation submitted with the planning application, primarily the document „Aerodrome Safeguarding Manchester International Airport 1007/11.01/164“, and within the Environmental Statement (ES). However, it is unclear how these issues have been addressed in the application and that any necessary mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposals.

The final paragraph of page 7 of „Aerodrome Safeguarding Manchester International Airport 1007/11.01/164“ states that “All of the above constraints have been taken into consideration by the SEMMMS Project Team in developing the preferred scheme layout.” This narrative suggests that the applicant is aware of the need to address the potential impacts of the development on the bird hazard at Manchester Airport, yet there is no evidence within the documentation submitted that demonstrates any “appropriate study” has been carried out within the terms described within ICAO Annex 14 (as the applicant refers to), nor how the findings of any study have been incorporated into the proposals. Additional detail will be required.

There were no references to birdstrike risk within the ES and other documents provided, other than a brief statement at paragraph 10.3.78 in the ES, as follows:

“Mitigation measures will provide planting either side of the proposed scheme gradually providing screening to the proposed scheme and introducing extensive belts of low level planting. Mitigation measures are restricted within the vicinity of the airport to reduce high level planting that will provide cover for birds and thus increase the risk of bird strikes.”

The detailed methodology and conclusions that lead to this assessment of birdstrike risk is not described. The resulting planting scheme is also not described other than that “high level planting” will be reduced. Although there may be limits on how tall any trees and other vegetation can grow within close proximity to Manchester Airport, due to the physical safeguarding aspect of ensuring that no obstacles breach the Obstacle Limitation Surfaces around the aerodrome, from a bird hazard safeguarding aspect “low level planting” (the use of shrubs rather than trees) can in some instances create a more severe bird hazard than tree planting by creating conditions for roosting starlings and feeding concentrations of a variety of species, along with harbouring breeding birds.

The bird hazard related to water bodies is not addressed in the ES despite it being a critical aspect of bird hazard safeguarding. In addition to considering Natural England Guidelines in the design of new ponds (paragraph 11.5.18 of the ES) and the intended 2:1 replacement of ponds to be lost to the development (paragraph 11.5.19 of the ES), we require the applicants to address and, where necessary, mitigate the birdstrike risk in the design. Therefore, if pond replacements are required in this development to mitigate the loss of great crested newt habitat, evidence that the applicant has considered the bird hazard aspects and addressed these in the siting and design of any new ponds, should be provided. This must be addressed as the application proceeds and in the detailed design process.

The sections of the route that are closer to the Airport (sections 1-5 in particular) will need to be assessed in detail for their effect on birdstrike risk. Appropriate modifications and/or mitigation measures to minimise any identified risks will also need to be incorporated into the detailed landscaping and SUDS proposals.

Informative and Further Information Required by Section (comments and advice provided by Manchester Airport’s specialist bird hazard consultant):

Section 01 (Landscape Mitigation Proposals Figure 5.44.1) – This is a critical area for bird hazard safeguarding, being the undershoot of Runway 23R. Full details of the proposed planting scheme will be required for assessment by the Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport prior to its approval. We

also require input into the Construction Management Plan to minimise issues with earth moving and ponding in particular.

Section 02 (Landscape Mitigation Proposals Figure 5.43.1) – The proposed “Styal Attenuation Pond” is very close to the NE extended centreline of Runway 23L/05R, at 2.9km from the threshold and offset from the 23R approach by 0.6km. This is an extremely critical location and it will therefore be important to demonstrate that the bird hazard has been properly considered and mitigated. To enable us to complete the necessary safeguarding assessments, we will require additional information that is currently not presented – precise dimensions and, most critically, the volume, surface area and persistence of water content.

This lagoon will require bird control measures to be installed (this will require a planning condition on any consent granted), the type of which will be determined depending on how frequently standing water is expected to be held there. If the lagoon is only likely to hold standing water for short periods (<3 days at a time, <30 days per annum) then we would advise trialling tethered commercial fishing net floats as a passive bird deterrent (which would be less expensive than netting and permit easier access for inspection and maintenance). If the lagoon is expected to hold water for longer periods and/ or more frequently, then a net installation will be required. This should be designed to allow access to smaller birds while being a barrier (and visible as such) to larger species (larger than a moorhen). The details of the bird mitigation could be discussed as the final design of the lagoon is decided, and will require approval from the Safeguarding Authority for Manchester Airport. Any bund at this location should either be unplanted (other than grasses and wild flowers), which would have the secondary benefit of reducing the deposition of leaves and other debris into the lagoon, or very careful consideration would need to be given to an appropriate species mix. In particular, the planting of any conifers and/ or any shrubs likely to produce dense “thicket” conditions must be avoided. 6

Section 03 (Landscape Mitigation Proposals Figure 5.42.1) – Nine new ponds are proposed within this section, the closest being approximately 2km from the Runway 23R touchdown point and just over 1km east of the extended centreline for Runway 23L. Although there are some existing ponds being lost to development, we request that any additional ponds created under the 2:1 replacement proposal be sited elsewhere. There are already a substantial number of ponds in this location and these new ponds could present an increase in waterfowl habitat in close proximity to the airport and its critical airspace.

Section 04 and 05 – In addition to the ponds indicated in section 03, drawing 5.41.1 indicates six more new ponds immediately to the east of the previous group. These further add to the amount of waterfowl habitat in close proximity to the airport and its critical airspace.

Sections 06-10 – No aerodrome safeguarding issues from a bird hazard perspective.

Section 11 – A new pond and an attenuation pond is proposed. This is of little consequence due to the location and large number of similar ponds in the immediate area, provided that the design and adjacent planting are not attractive to geese and swans.

Sections 12-23 – No bird hazard safeguarding concerns due to the types of landscaping proposed and distance from the Airport.

RUNWAY APPROACH LIGHTING

Drawings from section 1 indicate that some of Manchester Airport's approach lighting is to be located within the central reservation of the road. We therefore need to carefully consider the potential impact of this from a safety, operational and maintenance point of view before providing any comments in relation to this aspect of the proposal. In order for a more detailed evaluation to be carried out we require the detailed proposals showing the whole area around the affected approach lights, which would help to illustrate how much space there would be around the lights. We will provide further comments upon receipt of this information.

USE OF CRANES

Should any crane operations be required during the construction process, we would like to draw the applicant's attention to the requirement within the British Standard Institute Code of Practice for the safe use of cranes, for crane operators to consult the aerodrome before erecting a crane in close proximity to an aerodrome. We therefore recommend that the following informative be attached to any approval that is granted:

Cranes, whilst they are temporary, can be a hazard to air safety. Should any cranes or tall construction equipment be required during the construction process, a separate assessment of crane operations will be required. The developer or crane operator must therefore notify Manchester Airport Airfield Operations at least one month in advance of intending to erect a crane or tall construction equipment. The proposed crane operations will then be assessed to determine whether a Tall Equipment Permit would need to be obtained and whether any regulatory procedures or operating restrictions would need to be agreed in advance.

Coal Authority – I have reviewed the proposals and confirm that part of the application site falls within the defined Development High Risk Area; therefore

within the application site and surrounding area there are coal mining features and hazards which need to be considered in relation to the determination of this planning application.

The applicant has obtained appropriate and up-to-date coal mining information for the proposed development site and has used this information to inform the Ground Investigation Report (February 2011) appended to the Environmental Statement (Appendix 12A), which accompanies this planning application.

The Ground Investigation Report correctly identifies that the application site has been subject to past coal mining activity. The Coal Authority records indicate that the extreme eastern part of the site has been subject to both recorded and likely historic unrecorded underground coal mining at shallow depth. There are also recorded mine entries in the vicinity of this part of the site.

The Ground Investigation Report has been informed by an appropriate range of sources of information; including a Coal Mining Report, BGS geological mapping, the results of previous site investigations, and historic mapping. Based on this review of existing sources of geological and mining information the Risk Assessment concludes that coal mining legacy poses a potential risk to the eastern part of the proposed development.

Accordingly, appropriate recommendations are included in Sections 3.4 and 5.3 for further intrusive site investigation works prior to development in order to establish the exact situation regarding ground conditions and to enable appropriate remedial measures to be identified, if necessary.

The Coal Authority Recommendation to the LPA

The Coal Authority concurs with the recommendations of the Ground Investigation Report; that coal mining legacy potentially poses a risk to the proposed development and that intrusive site investigation works should be undertaken prior to development in order to establish the exact situation regarding coal mining legacy issues on the site.

The Coal Authority recommends that the LPA impose a Planning Condition should planning permission be granted for the proposed development requiring these site investigation works prior to commencement of development.

In the event that the site investigations confirm the need for remedial works to treat the mine entries and/or areas of shallow mine workings to ensure the

safety and stability of the proposed development, this should also be conditioned to ensure that any remedial works identified by the site investigation are undertaken prior to commencement of the development.

The Coal Authority considers that the content and conclusions of the Ground Investigation Report are sufficient for the purposes of the planning system and meets the requirements of the NPPF in demonstrating that the application site is, or can be made, safe and stable for the proposed development. The Coal Authority therefore has no objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of the above condition.

Planning Policy - The principle of the proposed road scheme is supported by long established and recently reviewed and adopted statutory Development Plan policies;

UDP Saved Policy ST2.2 Protection for Major Road Schemes,
Core Strategy Core Policy CS10 AN EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORT NETWORK Road Network paragraph 3.456.

The Planning Statement (PS) submitted in support of the application sets out how the proposal sits with relevant policies.

A significant proportion of the application site is within Green Belt. Consequently there is the need to assess how the proposal sits with the five purposes of the Green Belt as contained in the NPPF.

It is acknowledged with respect to *Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment* that the proposed development would be harmful to openness and would not safeguard existing areas of the countryside located within the application site. See PS Para 5.2.18.

However, while the PS states the proposed development has been sympathetically designed to follow the contour of land and is partially located within cutting, limiting the visual impact of above ground structures, the Council's Landscape Team will comment.

Having regard to NPPF it is considered that the proposal constitutes 'inappropriate development within the Green Belt'. The PS sets out that the acknowledged harm to the Green Belt arising from the proposed development is; 'clearly outweighed by the benefits arising from the A6MARR and it is considered that these are very special circumstances.

It is considered that very special circumstances do exist and these are set out in PS paragraphs 5.2.24 – 5.2.31.

Saved UDP Policy USO1.3 and Core Strategy Core Policy CS8 set down how proposals which affect Local Open Space will be considered. PS paragraph 4.5.42 sets out; as part of the proposed development, an area of 7,442m² at Woodford Recreation Ground would be lost due to the construction of the exit slip road heading east on the A555 as it approaches Woodford Road, Bramhall. Following design refinement the land take has been reduced in order to maintain the use of the existing football pitches located here. This loss of formal Public Open Space shall be replaced with a new area of 17,201m² approximately 250m east bounded by the new relief road and the rear of properties on Albany Road.

It is considered the replacement area constitutes an appropriate compensatory equivalent area to that being extinguished. It is acknowledged that only 'ancillary formal' areas will be lost and no actual existing sports pitches will be built upon. While the replacement area is larger it would be appropriate to consider as part of this provision / creation what facilities can be accommodated in this proposed new area in discussion with the Council's Public Realm Team Manager; Ian Walmsley.

The SEMMMS Socio-Economic Impact Report mentions in paragraph 1.2 that the scheme 'bypasses heavily-congested district and local centres, including Bramhall, Cheadle Hulme, Hazel Grove, Handforth, Poynton, Wythenshawe, Gatley and Heald Green' and would improve connectivity to Manchester Airport. It is therefore considered that the proposal could result in encouraging car trips away from these centres towards the proposed leisure and 9,290sq m of retailing at Airport City in the event that Airport City is developed as envisaged in the Masterplan. However, if the proposal helps to relieve congestion in these centres that could improve the shopper and pedestrian experience in those centres, particularly if HGV movements through Hazel Grove District Centre are noticeably reduced.

Health & Environment Advisor (Planning)

Section 1.1.1 in the introduction focuses on the benefits to economic growth and has no mention of the direct social and environmental benefits provided by the road scheme specifically rather than the overall SEMMMS. For example there is no promotion of the intent to improve sustainable transport options through provision of the parallel pedestrian/cycling facilities and intent to connect to and improve the wider networks, as well as the associated benefit of improvements to bus timetables from decongestion of the wider road network in the local area. Indeed the complementary measures should inform the introduction, not least because they inform the sustainability of the scheme. An addendum or revised version is suggested.

Ecology

The partial loss of the ancient woodland will have an extremely detrimental effect on this rare and unique habitat which cannot be replaced, especially reflecting the long term nature of such sites. As such this will impact on local biodiversity levels and negatively strongly affect biodiversity. Since such loss cannot be mitigated (as the SS and Environmental Statement (ES) acknowledge), in the interests of accuracy this should be reflected in assessments and statements in the SS which should acknowledge that such an impact is not 'moderate' or 'slight'. Indeed, it is suggested that this factor should be reflected in some of the responses in the SS to standard questions from the Local Planning Authorities. Specifically, in terms of Stockport, the following response should be amended and taken account of, especially if there are any implications for the scheme:

4.7.4 – Have habitats been newly maintained or formed? The response should be YES/NO given the loss of the unique ancient woodland habitat which cannot be replaced and the loss of which cannot be mitigated, despite the creation of other types of new habitats.

Renewable Energy

Although the need for an energy statement as required by Stockport's Core Strategy policy for new development has been waived in light of the type of development the scheme delivers, if there is any signage such as speed restriction signs or warning signs that require power proposed for the scheme, has renewable energy been considered as a resource for such equipment (e.g. solar or wind powered warning signs)? If such equipment is not being utilised then a statement should be added to Section 4.5.2. reflecting this fact. If it is being utilised then a statement outlining how it will be powered should be included.

Were renewable energy options considered for powering any road or signage lighting on the scheme? If not then there needs to be a statement added to the SS outlining why not in terms of technical feasibility. i.e. the specific reasons how such technologies as wind and solar pv are not suitable for use. If they are suitable but were not considered cost effective, then some indication of the prohibitive costs to the project should also be included.

Public Transport / Active Travel Commuting Opportunities

There is no mention of any assessment of the benefits and impacts on buses and bus users which is clearly laid out in the business case (Page 50 – Impacts on Society (including Figures 3.6 and 3.7) ; Page 56 – support lower carbon travel; Page 81 – Public Transport Benefits). This should be added to a revised SS (or at least be provided as an addendum).

The Sustainability Statement also does not address the benefits to bus users which is clearly outlined in the business case (page 81), highlighting how lower skilled deprived areas in Stockport can obtain access to the Manchester Airport Enterprise Zone by bus, reflecting reduced bus travel times through congestion relief. In addition the Planning Statement highlights the benefits to Hazel Grove in terms of improvement to bus times (Page 36) and general improvements to bus timetables from decongesting the highway (paragraph 5.2.11), all of which should be reflected in the sustainability statement for the social and environmental benefits.

As an example it is critical to residents in Derbyshire that the Buxton to the airport 199 bus should not be diverted to avoid Stockport town centre as a result of the scheme, since it is a crucial resource for people accessing the town and further education establishments in particular. It should also be noted that the bus route could extend out to the airport providing links from Stockport town centre for non-car owners in the Borough and beyond to sustainably access work etc., at the Airport Enterprise Zone.

Commuting

The issue of out-commuting was identified in Stockport's Core Strategy as a concern in terms of potential impact on the Borough's main town and district centres of the loss of high skilled residents to other areas. However the new job provision available at Airport City is deemed sustainable by National Planning Policy Framework standards. However, in order to address carbon emissions from the scheme's in-use phase, it may be useful to examine the potential for planning conditions to emphasise the need to promote the sustainable transport modes (public transport, cycling, walking) that the road scheme enables and improves (i.e. the need to implement the remainder of the SEMMMS Strategy in full).

UPDATE - Following a response received from the applicant, further comments have been received:

The response from the planning applicant's generally addresses my concerns however there are two points that should inform the decision on the application:

The first is regarding the applicant's comments on consideration of energy use (and associated carbon emissions) regarding lighting and any signage requiring power use – they have stated that signs will be reflective or use light from adjacent street lighting, which is sensible and acceptable. In addition they state that where any lighting of signs may be undertaken at a later date, that use of renewable energy will be considered at that stage. Given the

Council's policies on carbon management, could and should this be conditioned?

Secondly their response on the Ancient Woodland concerns is inaccurate in that it states that I requested that loss of Ancient Woodland should be noted. As you will see from my original comments I suggested that this factor be reflected in some of the responses in the Sustainability Statement given the irrevocable loss of this unique habitat. Indeed their helpful summary of where the Environmental Statement outlines the loss of ancient woodland serves to highlight why I made my suggestion, since this unmitigatable loss impacts on the sustainability of the scheme and a loss of such exceptional biodiversity cannot be offset by economic gain or social benefit.

I do feel that this loss, highlighted as it is in the Environmental Statement, should be acknowledged in the Sustainability Statement.

- I accept that whilst the introduction is not fully balanced in terms of highlighting social and environmental benefits, the benefits are outlined later in the document or in other documentation.
- I accept that the control of bus operators lies outside the control of the applicant.
- I accept the response on commuting.

Environmental Health (Pollution) - I have looked at the air quality submission for the development for both the operational and the construction phase.

For the operational phase:

Approximately 79% of receptors within the study area are predicted to experience a reduction in annual mean NO₂ 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 NO₂.

Adverse and beneficial changes in NO₂ concentrations are greater than the upper guideline Bands provided in the guidance. However, the number of receptors in exceedance benefiting from the scheme outnumber those adversely affected by a factor of over 20. The large, Medium and small improvement in annual average NO₂ objective exceedances at 548, 446 and 3033 receptors respectively, compare with the large, medium and small adverse changes of 95, 49 and 31 receptors respectively. Consequently, far more receptors already in annual average NO₂ objective exceedance will benefit from the scheme than will be adversely affected by it.

83% of sensitive receptors either benefit or are unchanged in terms of PM10 particulates as a result of the implementation of the proposed scheme.

With existing guidance on long term trends, adverse and beneficial changes associated with the scheme will continue over extended periods.

A few issues were raised with the consultants but these have now been clarified and this department accepts the conclusions of the report.

Designated Sites

All designated sites within the study area benefit as a result of the implementation of the scheme.

Compliance with EU Directive is not affected - Low compliance risk.

The scheme provides quantifiable mitigation of existing air quality for over 79% of sensitive receptors in the study area. For the proposed scheme itself, no effective, viable and quantifiable mitigation measures can be incorporated into its operational design at this stage to mitigate adverse impacts on local receptors along the alignment.

Construction phase

The development falls in to the 'Large' dust emissions class under relevant guidance and there are large numbers of residents potentially effected from both the operational phase of the construction and track out by vehicles carrying material along roads.

The only way this can be controlled is by the submission of a detailed work schedule and as suggested, a Construction environmental management plan, code of construction practice and dust mitigation strategy.

This strategy shall have regard to The Greater London best practice guidance "The control of dust and emissions from construction and demolition" 2006 and the Institute of air quality management (IAQM) 2012 guidance 2012.

The strategy shall also incorporate all measures proposed in air quality submission which formed part of the application.

Noise

Prior to the construction phase beginning I will require a detailed work schedule and as stated in the noise and vibration statement and a construction environmental management plan. This shall be submitted for approval and works shall not commence until it has been agreed.

This plan shall provide detail of the types and timetable for piling operations, demolition and rock blasting and detail of ground stabilisation.

The plan shall also state how levels of vibration will be monitored by the contractor and what mitigation will be used.

The noise report states that the contractor will be required to complete a detailed assessment in accordance with BS5228 as part of the finalisation of working methods and informed by the specific plant and machinery which will be used. The contractor will be required to agree appropriate thresholds based on the data derived from the monitoring surveys undertaken at the time with the local authorities. Construction noise exceptions will be agreed for locations where activities such as piling or extensive breakout will be likely to involve noise levels that unavoidably exceed general thresholds. Work shall not begin until this has been agreed.

Noise mitigation measures within BS5228 and within the noise report shall be implemented during the construction phase.

For the operational phase the noise mitigation proposed within chapter five of the environmental statement shall be implemented.

Work (including routine maintenance of vehicles and plant, loading and unloading of vehicles) associated with the construction of the development shall only take place between the following hours :

Monday to Saturday 0700 to 1800,

Saturdays 0800 to 1300

And at no time on Sundays and bank holidays .

In the event that work associated with the construction of the development is required outside these hours, the applicant must seek the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority including dates/times at which the work is intended to take place, details of the nature of the work and the machinery/plant required to carry out that work (unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority). Work shall only then proceed in accordance with the approved details.'

Environmental Health (Contamination) – No Objection. Please include the following conditions on any decision.

Please note that these conditions should be applied as a phased approach, depending upon the outcome of each subsequent condition i.e if the investigation carried out to satisfy CTM1 recommends further works then CTM2 should then be applied etc.

- CTM 1
- CTM 2
- CTM 3
- Con 1 Informative

CTM1

No development shall take place until an investigation and risk assessment into contamination at the site, in accordance with a scheme to be approved in writing by the local planning authority, has been carried out. The investigation and risk assessment shall include recommendations for remedial action and the development shall not be occupied until these recommendations have been implemented.

The report submitted with the application has identified potentially unacceptable risks from contamination and further investigation is required to ensure that these risks to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policy EP1.5, "Development on or near Contaminated Sites", of the Stockport Unitary Development Plan Review.

CTM2

No development shall take place until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the specified use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme to be submitted shall specify but not be limited to :-

- (i) the proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria
- (ii) all remedial works to be undertaken including the quantities of materials to be removed from and imported to the development site.
- (iii) the proposals for sourcing and testing all materials imported to the site including testing schedules, sampling frequencies and actual and allowable contaminant concentrations (as determined by appropriate risk assessment in accordance with the document "Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination" (CLR11)).

CTM3

The development shall not be occupied until the approved remediation scheme required to be submitted by Condition [XXXX] has been carried out. Within [XXXX] months of completion of remediation measures, a validation report assessing the effectiveness of the remediation carried shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The report shall specify any further remediation measures necessary and indicate how and when these measures will be undertaken.

CON1 INFORMATIVE

Any investigation or risk assessment which seeks to establish the presence or otherwise of contamination on or close to the site of a proposed development should be carried out in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

Greater Manchester Fire Service – No response received

Peak District National Park – The Peak District National Park has assessed the impact of the proposed road on the National Park and considered that it would not have a significant impact on the National Park. Based on the information provided the National Park no longer have concerns regarding the proposal.

Arboricultural Officer – The development sits within the rural area of the borough and the proposed new developments will impact on the trees. A full tree survey has been supplied as part of the planning application to show the condition and amenity levels of the existing trees and where applicable which trees could be retained to increase the amenity levels of the site with retained mature trees.

In principle the design will have a major negative impact on the trees on site and within neighbouring properties, therefore it could only be accepted in its current format with some greater restrictions around the semi ancient woodland site and existing mature trees in the work sites to prevent any intrusion of heavy plant materials or chemical leaching. There will also need improved landscaping design to include a detailed landscaping scheme that includes a greater number of new trees to improve the amenity and aesthetics of the site including the loss of the protected trees and the semi ancient woodland, making sure a high percentage of these are native large species, as well as increased native hedgerows at every opportunity. As the site is slightly isolated a community orchard scheme should also be considered along the new public right of way/pedestrian footpaths to allow access for all to a supply of free fruit.

The style of proposed planting needs to be altered to make sure the species are appropriate for location and future maintenance restrictions. It has been noted that currently *Fraxinus excelsior* has a movement restriction by DEFRA and as such can't be used, also we need to make sure *Fagus sylvatica* and *Populus* spp are not used as they are not native to the region and also cause long term issues for the ground flora and fauna.

As discussed above special consideration needs to be given to using local fruit species along the new footways as well as southern varieties that produce higher yields of fruits.

The details of the flora, fauna, under-storey and main tree species need to be region specific for the replacement woodland planting that is proposed as these sites are very delicate eco-systems and as such no detrimental effect can be allowed with special care to be taken on the stored soil material to prevent external seed contamination.

The following conditions would be relevant to any planning application relating to the site;

Condition Tree 1

No existing tree within the site shall be cut down, topped, lopped, uprooted, wilfully damaged or wilfully destroyed without the prior written approval of the local planning authority, with the exception of those indicated otherwise on the approved plan. Any hedgerows, woody plants or shrubbery removed without such consent or dying or being severely damaged or being seriously diseased, within 5 years of the development commencing, shall be replaced within the next planting season with trees of such size and species as may be approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Condition Tree 2

No development shall take place until all existing trees on the site except those shown to be removed on the approved plans, have been fenced off in accordance with BS 5837:2012 "Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations" as shown on the root protection plan Appendix C. The fencing shall be retained during the period of construction and no work, excavation, tipping or stacking of materials shall take place within any such fence during the construction period.

Condition Tree 3

No development shall take place until details of all proposed tree planting, including the intended dates of planting, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All tree planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the development being brought into use.

Highway Engineer - The application is for the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road (A6MARR), a road scheme which provides 10 kilometres of new 2-lane dual carriageway on an east-west route from the A6 near Hazel Grove via the 4 kilometres of existing A555 to Manchester Airport and the link road to the M56. The application has been submitted to Stockport, Cheshire East and Manchester City Councils for determination. The principle aims of the scheme are to provide congestion relief to local communities, support economic growth and improve journey time reliability on the network.

The A6MARR scheme is an integral component of the wider South East Manchester Multi-Modal Strategy (SEMMMS), which has delivered over the last ten years a range of public transport and sustainable transport measures to local communities across south-east Manchester. The A6MARR scheme is an integral part of and critical to delivering the long-term objectives of the SEMMMS strategy.

The submission includes a comprehensive Transport Assessment which incorporates, inter alia, traffic modelling for the network and proposed local junctions and a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit appraisal and Designers response for the scheme.

The need for the A6MARR scheme

The lack of a direct east to west transport link across south-east Greater Manchester and Cheshire East is contributing to traffic congestion on major and minor roads and meaning that people and goods cannot move easily, directly and efficiently. This is constraining the local economy, affecting air quality in local areas and reducing access to key destinations. The problem needs addressing and A6MARR has been identified as the best solution as part of the overall SEMMMS Strategy.

The business strategy, objectives and priorities for Stockport, Cheshire East and City of Manchester are closely aligned and inter alia, emphasise the need for better accessibility to jobs, improved connectivity to Manchester Airport via the A6MARR and the international business community, congestion and safety benefits and reduced emissions and District Centre business growth.

In line with the SEMMMS strategy recommendations for a more appropriate scale road proposal to provide relief to local communities affected by inappropriate through traffic, the philosophy has been to provide at-grade signal controlled junctions and safe crossing facilities for non-motorised users wherever possible. Beyond this grade separated arrangement will be used.

The primary focuses of the A6MARR are:

- Relieving existing traffic congestion and addressing poor connectivity which constrains the economy through the lengthening of journey times. Average peak time vehicle speeds of less than 10mph have been recorded on many parts, with Greater Manchester experiencing the greater levels of congestion than other urban areas and comparable to Outer London;
- Improving access to Manchester Airport to support economic growth and regeneration;

- Improving transport links in communities throughout south Manchester;
- Reducing trips using residential streets and through local centres;
- Relieving current congestion problems along the A6 and in local centres;
- Improving environmental conditions in local communities and
- Relieving congested conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, improving accessibility and safety.

In summary the overall strategy is for a road of appropriate scale to provide relief to local communities affected by inappropriate through traffic. It is not the intention to provide a new strategic route of regional and potentially national significance. At grade signal controlled junctions and safe crossing facilities for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) will be provided wherever possible.

Existing Traffic Conditions

The Transport Assessment includes examination of traffic conditions from 2000 and investigates how these have changed over the last 12 years. It looks at average journey time rates (minutes per mile) with assessment of 32 routes. It shows that journey times in general are much longer in the peak hours than the potential journey time under free-flow traffic conditions.

The TA considers the impact of traffic congestion, looks at traffic volumes on north-south routes showing they have increased whilst traffic volumes have reduced on some of the east-west links. The TA shows that because of the congested conditions significant volumes of traffic are now using north-south roads along with the M60 as part of a route to make an east-west journey. There is a study of movements along the A34 and origin-destination movements along the A6.

The TA demonstrates that Stockport had the fourth lowest average vehicle speed on 'A' roads during the 2011/12 morning peak period of all ten Greater Manchester Local Authorities. The analysis of traffic speeds confirms that the study area suffers from heavy congestion and demonstrates that these are amongst the worst conditions nationally. There are particular problems along the A6 through Stockport and Hazel Grove.

The accessibility analyses show that public transport journey times are poor along the east-west corridor, in particular between the A6 corridor and Manchester Airport.

Accident data has been obtained from Transport for Greater Manchester for the three year period 2009 to 2011. This shows accident clusters across the local highway network for both the Stockport and Manchester areas.

There is a concentration of accidents on the A6 between Hazel Grove and M60 motorway and a smaller cluster of accidents on the A6 through High Lane, relatively few accidents on the A34 apart from clusters at the A34/A555, A34/Stanley Road and A34/Cheadle Royal junctions.

There are some accident issues on east-west routes through across the study area including the A560, Simonsway/ Finney Lane, B5094 Stanley Road, Acre Lane, Moss Lane and Hollyhedge Road.

There is a concentration of KSI and pedestrian/pedal cycle accidents on the A6 between the Hazel Grove and M60 motorway and a similar concentration on the A560 High Street through Cheadle, involving adults. In the Wythenshawe area there are a relatively high number of pedestrian/pedal cycle injury accidents involving children.

Overview of A6MARR scheme

Within Stockport the scheme requires six new road junctions, modification to three existing road junctions, three new rail bridge crossings, one new public right of way/accommodation bridge, three new road bridges, a pedestrian cycle route, four balancing ponds and associated landscaping, lighting, engineering and infrastructure works. The scheme submitted for determination has been informed by and evolved following extensive discussion/design and a two phase community engagement exercise.

Key elements of the scheme are:

- The road is a dual 2-lane carriageway.
- A new signal controlled junction is provided on a realigned section of the A6.
- The road travels west passing under the existing A6 Buxton Road.
- A new A6 road bridge is provided for the use of buses, equestrians, cycles and pedestrians. To the south-west of the bridge the road passes under the Stockport to Buxton rail line.
- The road passes over the West Coast Mainline near Poynton/Woodford on a bridge.
- A signalised gyratory junction is provided at the Bramhall Oil Terminal. This junction, with minimum abortive work and disruption, can accommodate the Poynton Bypass should it be progressed.
- At the A5102 Woodford Road the road ties into the existing A555 via a grade separated junction.
- Improvements are proposed to the A34/A555 junction with additional lanes/capacity and full signalisation.
- Improvements are proposed to the A34/Stanley Road junction including full signalisation.

- The road continues to the B5358 Wilmslow Road where the existing grade separated junction will be improved.
- The road continues to a revised junction layout at Ringway Road/Ringway Road West.

The road would be subject to a 50mph speed limit from the A6 at Hazel Grove to the eastern end of the existing A555. The existing A555 will remain at the national speed limit.

From the western end of the existing A555 to the B5166 Styal Road junction the speed limit would be 50mph, with the remaining section to the western scheme limits being 40mph.

The scheme includes new cycle and pedestrian routes along its length which will be integrated with the existing local cycle and pedestrian network to maximise access to the new route and the benefits associated with the scheme. A shared cycleway/footway will be introduced adjacent to the existing A555 to provide a continuous route.

A number of Public Rights of Way will be directly affected by the road improvement proposals form an integral part of the scheme.

Lighting is restricted to junctions and their approaches along the extent of the road, for sustainability and environmental reasons.

Measures to mitigate the environmental impact of the scheme are included along the route.

The principle elements for me to comment on are junction design, highway safety and operation, new and affected infrastructure for non-motorised users, mitigation and complementary measures. Matters such as highway drainage and construction specifications, lighting, markings, signage etc. are the extent of detail which tends to be resolved by the use of planning conditions.

SEMMMS/A6MARR overall scheme modelling

The strategic highway traffic modelling carried out in relation to the Relief Road has been carried out using the SATURN modelling software, an industry approved tool for area wide modelling. SATURN (Simulation and Assignment of Traffic to Urban Road Networks) is a steady-state Wardrop equilibrium assignment model which predicts route choices and resulting traffic flows on road networks, based on the generalised costs of travel. Under traditional Wardrop assignment, a user optimum is achieved by each origin to destination movement attempting to minimise average travel cost. In other words the model assumes that all drivers have 'perfect' knowledge of the lowest cost route between each origin to destination movement under the prevailing traffic conditions and having found the shortest (least resistance)

path from origin to destination, network equilibrium having occurred when no traveller can decrease travel effort by shifting to a new path.

The model was developed jointly between Transport for Greater Manchester and consultants and is an update of the model originally developed for GM Transport Innovation Fund work. The model (created to cover three periods 0700-1000, 1000-1600 and 1600-1900) is fully compliant with national guidance, having been validated and subjected to review by the Department for Transport as part of the business case for the scheme. The A6MARR scheme has now secured entry level approval from the Government.

The model produced is not a 'predict and provide' type, it is primarily to predict traffic movement in the forecast opening year of 2017. The over-arching SEMMMS Philosophy is not to provide a road intended to release development opportunities, it being to, inter alia, stimulate local growth, reduce congestion in local areas and improve transport links, accessibility and safety. Whilst it is typical practice to require a model to be produced for a design year 15 years post opening for a new road scheme, the applicant submits that such an approach is counter to the objectives and philosophy of the SEMMMS strategy.

Scheme Design

Highway Design Standards are set down in Department for Transport publication 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges'. This provides guidance on the appropriate carriageway standards for new road schemes based on the expected traffic flow levels and depending on whether the scheme is a rural or urban road.

Technical Advice Note 79/99 sets out the expected standards for a new urban road based on expected hourly traffic volumes. The most appropriate format for the A6MARR is a high standard single or dual carriageway road for predominantly through and with limited access.

Thus the road is designed as a dual two-lane carriageway to provide relief to local communities affected by inappropriate through traffic, with at grade and grade separated junctions.

The design of A6MARR and side road junctions has been carried out in accordance with DMRB documents TD9 Highway Link Design; TD27 Cross Sections and Headroom; TD22 Layout of Grade Separated Junctions; TD19 Requirement for Road Restraint Systems; TD50 The Geometric Layout of Signal-Controlled Junctions and Signalised Roundabouts and TD42 Geometric Design of Major/Minor Priority Junctions.

Where grade separated junctions have been proposed the design incorporates variations to standard and as such relevant 'Departures from Standard' must be obtained by the Design Engineer from the Overseeing Authority (Stockport Council in its capacity as Local Highway Authority).

Detailed assessment of the scheme shows that the introduction of lane gain and lane drop arrangements on the existing section of the A555 between the A34 and B5358 will require a Departure from Standard. The proposed layout is an over-provision compared to standard, and is reflective of the relative close proximity between existing junctions.

The scheme also introduces a section of weaving between the A34/A555 and A6MARR/B5358 Wilmslow Road junctions which is below standard, 650m compared to a desirable minimum of 1000m. This will require a Departure from Standard although consideration could be given to reducing the existing speed limit to 50mph/modify the design. This is the level of detail which will be resolved as part of the detailed design/construction element and future Road Safety Audits. There is no reason to express a concern from a planning perspective.

There are two other aspects of the Design which require a Departure from Standard.

Spath Lane over-bridge constrains the provision of a ghost-island diverge (or parallel) at the proposed westbound taper diverge at the A34 Handforth Bypass junction. It should provide adequate queuing capacity within the confines of the slip road but requires a Departure from Standard.

The proposed westbound parallel merge at the B5383 Wilmslow Road junction is an overprovision compared to standard based on predicted traffic flows, thus requires a Departure from Standard to be obtained.

Proposed A6MARR Junctions modelling

The operational assessment of junctions along the A6MARR corridor has been carried out using LinSig and ARCADY, Industry accepted modelling software.

LinSig is a software tool which allows traffic engineers to model traffic signals and their effect on traffic capacities and queuing. As well as modelling the effects of traffic signals LinSig also optimises signal timings to reduce delay or increase capacity at a junction or group of interlinked junctions.

ARCADY is a software tool which models traffic capacity, queues and delays at roundabouts, used by traffic engineers when assessing existing layouts or when analysing the impacts of proposed design changes.

Model outputs are generally presented in terms of the Degree of Saturation (DoS) for each modelled link, and the Mean Maximum Queue (MMQ) presented in Passenger Car Units.

In traffic engineering terms, the degree of saturation of a junction (typically under traffic signal control) or a road is a measure of how much demand it is experiencing compared to its total capacity.

The degree of saturation (expressed in percentage terms) is a ratio of demand to capacity on each approach to the junction. A value of 100% means that demand and capacity are equal and no further traffic is able to progress through the junction. Values over 85% are typically regarded as suffering from traffic congestion, with queues of vehicles beginning to form.

Proposed A6MARR Junctions and Link Design

A6 junction with A6MARR junction and tie-in junctions

The proposals for these junctions are shown on General Arrangement Drawing 1.

The A6 will be realigned over approximately 1km in length with a new signalised junction with the A6MARR to be constructed about half way along the realigned length of road. Lanes will be allocated as a single through-lane for traffic on the realigned A6 along with dedicated lanes for traffic turning towards the A6MARR. Dedicated right and left-turning lanes will be provided on the A6MARR approach to the realigned A6.

From here the A6MARR route extends westwards within a cutting across the existing alignment of Buxton Road. A new single lane bridge with associated footway/ cycleway will be provided to carry a realigned Buxton Road over the A6MARR with use of the bridge restricted to buses, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

The parallel footway/cycleway running alongside the A6MARR will terminate on approach to the new junction with the realigned A6 and connect with a new footway/cycleway provided on Buxton Road via a ramp access.

Forecourt access to existing commercial premises to the immediate west of the new bridge will be remodelled with a single vehicular access point and formalised car parking area.

Tie-in junctions are located close to Yew Tree Avenue to the west and Norbury Hollow Road to the east. The existing Toucan crossing facility on the A6 north of Yew Tree Avenue will be relocated eastwards. The Yew Tree

Avenue and Occupiers Lane junctions will be improved with protected right turn lanes with refuge islands.

The Toucan crossing will link with Footpath 65 and local bus services would turn right, at the Yew Tree Avenue junction to use the existing eastbound A6 via the new bridge structure over the proposed A6MARR.

The eastern tie-in point of the realigned A6 will be via a signalised junction located to the west of Wellington Road. It is not proposed to provide a section of footway alongside the realigned A6 between Wellington Road and this new junction, vulnerable highway users will instead be encouraged to cross the A6 at a new pedestrian refuge to be situated close to and on the East side of the Wellington Road junction.

A new highway link will be provided to the existing A6 alignment which can be utilised by non-motorised users away from the main realigned A6 route. This will link with the footway on the south side of the A6 and effectively connect with the new refuge crossing point.

One possible option would be to incorporate controlled crossing facilities at the new tie in junction and enable pedestrians to cross here rather than having to utilise the new pedestrian refuge to cross the A6. Whilst there is merit in this option I do not consider the refuge facility and alignment proposed will be any less commodious or fundamentally unsafe.

The pedestrian refuge proposed to the East of the Wellington Road junction will have to be sited so not to inhibit vehicle movements through the junction or access to private driveways within the vicinity.

The applicant is also considering an option to relocate the new pedestrian refuge on the west side of the Wellington Road junction which will involve construction of a short length of footway alongside the A6 running west from the Wellington Road junction. It is fair to say that this is probably the preferred option as it will provide a route which is realistically on the desire line and will reduce the travel distance for pedestrians emerging from Wellington Road and crossing to the existing A6 alignment. Whichever option is progressed I am satisfied that works are within the submitted site edged red. The finite detail of this element of the scheme will be addressed as part of the detailed construction drawings which will be required to satisfy planning conditions, in the event that permission is granted.

The submitted GA drawing raises a concern with the kerbline alignment of the realigned A6 where it crosses the Wellington Road junction. Movement of the kerbline and setting back of the Stop Line as suggested on the drawing will

seriously compromise visibility to and for drivers emerging from the Wellington Road junction. Reduction in footway width would also compromise pedestrian safety and this is unacceptable. Discussion with the applicant has identified that this issue can be overcome within the existing scheme and highway boundary. This should ensure user safety is not compromised along with significantly improving visibility to the West for emerging drivers, this being essential as it is the leading direction.

I also have reservations about the proximity of the Yew Tree Avenue/Buxton Road junction with the new A6/Buxton Road (Western tie-in) junction. There is potential for traffic queuing on Buxton Road blocking the right turn into Yew Tree Avenue, giving rise to risk of collision. This could be overcome by appropriate carriageway markings to keep the junction clear, a matter which can be addressed as part of the detailed design.

Overall I am satisfied that the junction arrangements proposed in this vicinity will not cause significant harm to highway operation and safety in this location. The finite detail of the Wellington Road tie-in will be addressed as part of the detailed construction drawings which will be required to satisfy planning conditions, in the event that permission is granted.

In summary I am satisfied that the design of the A6/A6MARR junction and the tie in junctions on the A6 will be fully in accordance with the relevant DMRB Standards.

The traffic model submitted includes Linsig Assessments of the A6MARR/Realigned A6 Junction and the Realigned A6/Buxton Road (Eastern

LinSig Link	Lane Description	Morning Peak		Evening Peak	
		DoS	MMQ	DoS	MMQ
1/1	A6 north (Ahead)	72%	14	85%	20
1/2	A6 north (Right)				
2/1	A6 south (Left)	64%	7	54%	7
2/2	A6 south (Ahead)				
3/1	A6MARR (Left)	8%	1	10%	1
3/2	A6MARR (Right)	74%	23	87%	33

The table shows that the A6MARR/realigned A6 junction layout is predicted to operate within capacity under 2017 future year conditions. The maximum DoS value is 87% for the right-turn from the A6MARR to the A6 (towards High Lane) during the evening peak period. Whilst this suggests the junction could suffer from operational difficulties the likely queue lengths along the A6 would not be significantly worse to existing conditions.

The A6/Buxton road junction will be fully signalised junction with no provision for non-motorised users to cross.

LinSig Link	Lane Description	Morning Peak		Evening Peak	
		DoS	MMQ	DoS	MMQ
1/1	A6 north (Ahead)	81%	23	93%	43
1/2	A6 north (Right)				
2/1	A6 south (Ahead & Left)	85%	31	70%	19
3/1	Buxton Road	82%	7	52%	3

The table shows that the junction is predicted to operate within capacity under 2017 future year conditions.

A6MARR Link, A6 to A523

The proposal for this link is shown on General Arrangement Drawing 2. The A6MARR then runs under the Hazel Grove to Buxton railway line and towards the A523 Macclesfield Road. Footpath 109 requires diversion and a new section of path provided with a bridge the new road before linking back into the existing Footpath route. Connection to Footpath 62 will be provided via a new footbridge over Norbury Brook.

There are laybys proposed either side of the link situated between the new A6MARR/Realigned A6 junction and the new bridge carrying the existing A6 road. Whilst I understand these have been included to facilitate possible bus stops I have reservations with the potential for collision when vehicles are accelerating away from the laybys. The applicant has advised the merits of the laybys will be investigated further, redesigned if necessary or possibly removed from the scheme. I am therefore satisfied that this issue can be addressed as part of the detailed design and discharge of conditions in the event that permission is granted.

Overall I am satisfied that the design of this link has been carried out fully in accordance with DMRB standards.

A523 Macclesfield Road junction

The proposal for this junction is shown on General Arrangement Drawing 2. The A6MARR will intersect with A523 Macclesfield Road via an at-grade all movement signalised cross-roads junction arrangement involving widened to the A523. The footway on the eastern side of the A523 will be maintained with controlled crossing facilities provided at the new junction. New sections of footway on the western side of the A523 will connect with the junction and the new footpath/cycleway alongside the northern side of the A6MARR. A pedestrian refuge island will be provided north of Towers Road to facilitate crossing of the A523.

The submitted drawing indicates the potential for a double ahead lane southbound on the A523 with a sub-standard merge distance south of the junction. This is far from ideal and gives rise to risk of side collisions of merging vehicles or collision with a vehicle with vehicles waiting to turn right to the garden centre. DMRB Standards recommend a merge distance of 100m beyond the junction intervisibility zone, at present circa 50m is proposed. This concern has been raised with the applicant and options are being considered to amend the layout, markings and lane designation to remove this concern. I have sufficient comfort from discussions that a junction fully in accordance with DMRB standards can be delivered and am satisfied that this can be dealt with as part of the detailed design and condition discharge process, in the event that permission is granted.

There is also some uncertainty about visibility splays which will be achievable for the Garden Centre and Norbury Hall accesses. The applicant is aware of this and has assured that splays measuring 2.4m by 70m minimum in both directions can and will be provided. Requisite splay areas will need to across highway land to ensure provision and protection in perpetuity and this can be dealt with by planning condition in the event that permission is granted.

In summary I am satisfied that the design of the A6/A523 junction will be satisfactory and in accordance with the relevant DMRB Standards.

The traffic model submitted includes a Linsig Assessment of this junction and the nearby A523/Dean Lane/Mill Lane junction which will be affected operationally by the A6MARR scheme/junctions. The proposed junction will be fully signalised junction with controlled and uncontrolled provision for non-motorised users to cross. Output summaries are tabulated below.

LinSig Link	Lane Description	Morning Peak		Evening Peak	
		DoS	MMQ	DoS	MMQ
Fiveways Junction					
1/1	A523 south (Ahead & Left)	73%	13	84%	34
1/2	A523 south (Ahead & Right)				
3/1	A5143 Dean Lane	85%	13	86%	13
4/1	Mill Lane	22%	3	15%	1
5/1	A523 north (Ahead & Left)	66%	12	56%	10
5/2	A523 north (Right)				
A6MARR Junction					
1/1	A6MARR west (Left)	75%	11	89%	22
1/2	A6MARR west (Ahead)				
1/3	A6MARR west (Ahead)	73%	11	96%	21
1/4	A6MARR west (Right)				
2/1	A523 north (Ahead & Left	88%	12	94%	12
2/2	A523 north (Ahead & Right)	93%	15	98%	18
2/3	A523 north (Right)				
3/1	A6MARR east (Left)	90%	16	65%	9
3/2	A6MARR east (Ahead)				
3/3	A6MARR east (Ahead)	87%	15	64%	9
3/4	A6MARR east (Right)				
4/1	A523 south (Left)	78%	12	79%	12
4/2	A523 south (Ahead)				
4/3	A523 south (Right)	25%	3	35%	4

The table shows that both the A6MARR and A523 are likely to experience some operational/queuing and delay issues during both peak traffic periods. It is however shown that the new junction is capable of operating, albeit with some difficulty, within capacity under 2017 future year conditions. It is also shown that it is predicted that there will be no queuing interaction between the two junctions. Considering this within the overall context and wider benefits of the scheme I do not see how a capacity objection on this basis could be sustained.

A6MARR Link, A523 to Bramhall Oil Terminal/Chester Road

The proposal for this link is shown on General Arrangement Drawings 3 and 4.

From the A523 the A6MARR route runs West before crossing Norbury Brook at Mill Hill Hollow. A short section of Footpath 3 and the Lady Brook Interest Trail will be diverted at the end of Mill Hill Hollow with a new footpath to Norbury Brook passing under the A6MARR.

The A6MARR then passes under Woodford Road and over the West Coast Main Line via new bridge structures. Footpaths 31 and 37 will be

diverted/stopped in part with the new footpath/cycleway. Whilst the overall walking distance will be increased the experience will be improved with the new traffic free route.

Along this link there are two vehicle accesses and waiting areas to provide maintenance access to the proposed attenuation ponds located to the north and south of the scheme alignment. I have some concern that vehicles would have to rapidly decelerate/ accelerate when leaving/ joining the A6MARR mainline carriageway and this gives rise to risk of collision. The applicant has advised that usage of these laybys would be extremely infrequent and carefully located lockable barriers will prevent public access. The geometry of the scheme on both approaches affords forward visibility in excess of the Desirable Minimum required within DMRB, providing road users with ample warning of slow turning vehicles. I am therefore satisfied there is no requirement for redesign or omission from the scheme and no justification to oppose this element of the scheme.

Overall I am satisfied that the design of this link has been carried out fully in accordance with DMRB standards.

Bramhall Oil Terminal/A5149 Chester Road junction

The proposal for this junction is shown on General Arrangement Drawing 5. The scheme incorporates a new at-grade signalised gyratory at Bramhall Oil Terminal with a new link road and signal controlled junction to the A5149 Chester Road and a signalised on-demand link to Bramhall Oil Terminal. Controlled crossing facilities for non-motorised users will be incorporated into the designs.

A small number of dwellings off Chester Road will need to be accessed via a short section of cul-de-sac on the original road alignment. A right turn pocket will be provided however given the proximity of this junction to the new signalised junction and potential for standing traffic I consider there could be difficulties for drivers to emerge from the cul-de-sac and join the major road. Whilst visibility could be inhibited by standing traffic and the applicant has acknowledged the potential difficulties and addressed concern by providing, within the design, sufficient width to the right turn pocket/hatching which will allow a vehicle turning right from the cul-de-sac to stand without unacceptable risk before joining the main flow. The right turn into the cul-de-sac will also be improved by appropriate markings to keep the junction clear of standing traffic. Overall I am satisfied that this issue has been addressed, the finite detail can be determined at detailed design stage/through the condition discharge process in the event that permission is granted.

A section of Footpath 19 which crosses the A6MARR road alignment to the east of the new junction will be closed and rerouted parallel with the A6MARR

before crossing via an underpass adjacent to the railway line and back to the former alignment of the footpath.

Footpaths 14a, 15, 16 and 58 which currently cross the proposed site of the new junction will be diverted to use new footpath/cycleway routing and crossing facilities provided at the new gyratory junction.

It is noted that the design of the A6MARR scheme at this location allows for the future accommodation of the Poynton Bypass.

In summary I am satisfied that the overall design of the junctions in this locality are satisfactory and in accordance with the relevant DMRB Standards.

The traffic model submitted includes a Linsig Assessment of the Gyratory and free standing signal junction. Both junctions will have crossing facilities (controlled and uncontrolled) for non-motorised users. Output summaries are tabulated below.

Link	Lane Description	Morning Peak		Evening Peak	
		DoS	MMQ	DoS	MMQ
A6MARR/ Bramhall Oil Terminal/ A6MARR Link Road Gyratory					
1/1	A6MARR west (Ahead)	38%	4	59%	9
1/2	A6MARR west (Ahead)	56%	4	78%	9
1/3	A6MARR west (Ahead)	56%		78%	
2/1	Gyratory at Bramhall Oil Terminal (Left)	41%	3	64%	6
2/2	Gyratory at Bramhall Oil Terminal (Ahead)	41%		64%	
2/3	Gyratory at Bramhall Oil Terminal (Ahead)	40%	4	60%	9
2/4	Gyratory at Bramhall Oil Terminal (Right)	36%	2	48%	2
3/1	Bramhall Oil Terminal (Ahead & Left)	9%	1	9%	1
4/1	A6MARR east (Ahead & Left)	50%	7	34%	4
4/2	A6MARR east (Ahead)	56%	9	42%	6
4/3	A6MARR east (Ahead)	56%		41%	
5/1	Gyratory at A6MARR west (Right)	20%	1	40%	3
5/2	Gyratory at A6MARR west (Right)	27%	1	45%	3
6/1	Gyratory at A6MARR Link Road (Ahead)	31%	1	25%	1
6/2	Gyratory at A6MARR Link Road (Ahead)	54%	4	42%	3
6/3	Gyratory at A6MARR Link Road Ahead	53%	3	41%	2
9/1	Gyratory at A6MARR east (Ahead)	41%	4	56%	6
9/2	Gyratory at A6MARR east (Right & Ahead)	41%	4	55%	6
11/1	A6MARR Link Road (Left)	64%	3	41%	7
11/2	A6MARR Link Road (Left)	62%	5	55%	6
Gyratory – A6MARR Eastbound Exit Pedestrian Crossing					
1/1	A6MARR east at Pedestrian Crossing (Ahead)	36%	4	57%	9
1/2	A6MARR east at Pedestrian Crossing (Ahead)	35%	4	52%	8

Link	Lane Description	Morning Peak		Evening Peak	
		DoS	MMQ	DoS	MMQ
A6MARR Link Road/ realigned A5149 Chester Road					
1/1	A6MARR Link Road (Left)	46%	7	71%	15
1/2	A6MARR Link Road (Ahead)	64%	4	45%	3
2/1	A5149 south (Ahead)	62%	5	72%	9
2/2	A5149 south (Right)	62%		72%	
4/1	A5149 east (Left)	64%	8	53%	6
4/2	A5149 east (Right)	64%		53%	
4/3	A5149 east (Right)	53%	7	33%	3

The tables show that both of the A6MARR/Bramhall Oil Terminal and A6MARR Link Road/realigned A5149 Chester Road junctions are predicted to operate within capacity under 2017 future year conditions. There is no queuing interaction predicted between the two junctions.

A6MARR Link, Bramhall Oil Terminal to A5102 Woodford Road

The A6MARR then continues across Moorend Golf Course to the A5102 Woodford Road, as shown on General Arrangement Drawing 5. I am satisfied that the design of this link has been carried out fully in accordance with DMRB standards.

A5102 Woodford Road junction

The proposal for this junction is shown on General Arrangement Drawing 5. The A6MARR will intersect with the A5102 Woodford Road via a grade separated restricted movements junction. The A6MARR will pass under a new road bridge for the A5102 Woodford Road with signalised T-junctions at the top of each slip road to facilitate traffic movements. The provision of the westbound on-slip requires property demolition and access removal.

Access to 135 – 143 Woodford Road will be remodelled with a short section of cul-de-sac from the new signalised junction of the A5102 Woodford Road and A555 eastbound off-slip road. An on-demand signal stage will be incorporated into the junction.

There are a few dwellings within the vicinity of the junction which enjoy direct access on Woodford Road. By virtue of the modified kerblines, change to highway form and the footway/cycleway layout which is integral to the scheme there may be a need to modify and/or reconstruct some domestic dropped crossings and ensure access retention. The finite detail of such works can be determined as part of the junction detailed design/condition discharge process in the event that planning permission is granted.

The junction design has been carried out having regard to DMRB standards and I am satisfied it is suitable for its intended purpose.

The proposed junction is a restricted movements grade separated (half-diamond west-facing slip roads) arrangement with controlled crossing facilities for non-motorised users. The Linsig assessment output summary is tabulated below.

LinSig Link	Lane Description	Morning Peak		Evening Peak	
		DoS	MMQ	DoS	MMQ
A6MARR/ A5102 Woodford Road (Northern Junction)					
1/1	A5102 north (Ahead)	76%	8	48%	4
1/2	A5102 north (Ahead)	76%		48%	
2/1	A5102 south (Ahead & Right)	51%	8	77%	5
3/1	A6MARR Off-slip (Left)	55%	6	81%	12
3/2	A6MARR Off-slip (Right)	21%	1	28%	1
5/1	Resident cul-de-sac	6%	1	6%	1
A6MARR/ A5102 Woodford Road (Southern Junction)					
2/2	A5102 north (Right)	69%	5	46%	3
3/1	A5102 south (Left)	19%	2	7%	1
3/2	A5102 south (Ahead)	67%	7	52%	7

The table shows that the A6MARR/A5102 Woodford Road junction is predicted to operate within capacity under 2017 future year conditions. In the evening peak hour queues on the A6MARR eastbound off-slip road are predicted to be 12 pcus in the left-turn lane and 1 pcu in the right-turn lane, equating to queue lengths of 69 metres and 6 metres respectively.

There is some potential for queues to form between the two signalised T-junctions particularly during the morning peak period however the design afford sufficient storage capacity between the junctions to avoid concern. I am therefore satisfied that there will be no adverse queuing interaction between the two junctions.

Existing A555 Link, A5102 Woodford Road to A34

To the west of Woodford Road the A6MARR route is the existing A555, a dual two lane carriageway known as the Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road which currently crosses the A34 and continues to the B5358 Wilmslow Road at Handforth. This link is shown on General Arrangement Drawing 6.

A555/A34 junction

The proposal for this junction is shown on General Arrangement Drawing 7. The scheme proposes significant upgrades to the A555/A34 grade separated junction to include additional lanes on all approaches and additional circulatory lanes and full signalisation of the roundabout. Controlled crossing facilities on the A34 for NMUs will be provided on the northern side of the junction. The A555 westbound merge slip road will change from a direct merge taper to a lane gain configuration and the eastbound diverge slip road will change from a direct diverge taper to a lane drop configuration. As commented previously gain and lane drop arrangements will require a Departure from Standard.

Another Departure from Standard is required for the proposed westbound taper diverge at the A34 Handforth Bypass junction. The proximity of the Spath Lane over-bridge constrains the provision of a ghost-island diverge at this location so a taper diverge is proposed. This is considered acceptable on the basis that the slip road arrangement, which flares to four lanes at the A555/ A34 roundabout, provides adequate queuing capacity within the confines of the slip road.

Footpath 38A which runs parallel to the A555 will be stopped up in part and a new shared-use footway/ cycleway connecting Earl Road with the new footway/ cycleway running parallel to the length of the A6MARR.

A short section of Footpath 81 to the immediate south of the A555 westbound off-slip road will be diverted to facilitate widening of the slip road with a replacement section of footpath provided. These paths will link to pedestrian/cycle crossing facilities at the A555/A34 junction.

On the A34 south of the A555 junction, entry capacity is increased by widening the A34 to afford 4 traffic lanes on the approach to the roundabout. This link is under Cheshire East jurisdiction.

Assuming the Design Engineer can obtain the relevant Departures from Standard from the Overseeing Authority and the weaving concern on the A34 Northbound approach to the roundabout can be addressed, I am satisfied that the junction design is in accordance with DMRB Standards.

The upgraded junction which includes provision of additional lanes on all approaches, additional circulatory lanes and full signalisation of the roundabout has been subjected to a Linsig assessment. The output is tabulated below.

LinSig Link	Lane Description	Morning Peak		Evening Peak	
		DoS	MMQ	DoS	MMQ
J1:1/1	A555 off-slip west (Left)	65%	5	69%	4
J1:1/2	A555 off-slip west (Left & Ahead)				
J1:1/3	A555 off-slip west (Right)	41%	3	41%	3
J1:2/1	Gyratory at A555 west (Ahead)	73%	8	77%	9
J1:2/2	Gyratory at A555 west (Ahead)	61%	4	65%	5
J1:2/3	Gyratory at A555 west (Ahead & Right)	67%	6	66%	5
J2:1/1	A34 north (Left)	66%	9	92%	19
J2:1/2	A34 north (Ahead)	78%	10	71%	10
J2:1/3	A34 north (Ahead)				
J2:1/4	A34 north (Right)	62%	9	71%	10
J2:2/1	Gyratory at A34 north (Ahead)	32%	3	34%	3
J2:2/2	Gyratory at A34 north (Ahead & Right)	32%	2	51%	5
J2:2/3	Gyratory at A34 north (Right)	32%	1	17%	1
J3:1/1	Gyratory at A555 east (Ahead)	68%	4	71%	5
J3:1/2	Gyratory at A555 east (Ahead)	68%	5	65%	2
J3:1/3	Gyratory at A555 east (Ahead & Right)	70%	5	66%	2
J3:2/1	A555 off-Slip east (Left)	53%	4	33%	2
J3:2/2	A555 off-Slip east (Left)	53%		32%	
J3:2/3	A555 off-Slip east (Ahead)	64%	6	64%	6
J3:2/4	A555 off-Slip east (Ahead)	71%	7	60%	6
J4:1/1	Gyratory at A34 south (Ahead)	21%	3	14%	2
J4:1/2	Gyratory at A34 south (Ahead & Right)	56%	3	60%	3
J4:1/3	Gyratory at A34 south (Right)	47%	1	48%	1
J4:2/1	A34 south (Left)	33%	4	28%	3
J4:2/2	A34 south (Left & Ahead)	80%	13	78%	13
J4:2/3	A34 south (Ahead)	80%	13	79%	13
J4:2/4	A34 south (Ahead)	80%	13	78%	13

The table shows that the upgraded junction will operate within capacity under 2017 future year conditions.

A34/Stanley Road junction

The proposal for this junction is shown on General Arrangement Drawing 7. The A34/ B5094 Stanley Road 'Stanley Green' roundabout junction is capacity constrained resulting in significant queuing and delay in the morning and evening peak periods. Toucan crossings across both A34 approaches can exacerbate peak period congestion leading to significant queuing on the northbound and southbound A34 approaches. Queuing traffic impacts on the northbound flow of traffic and the need for improvements for both vehicular and non-motorised users is integral to the A6MARR scheme. Additional traffic lanes, circulatory lanes and an all movement at-grade signalised roundabout is proposed and the design is in accordance with DMRB Standards

The upgraded junction has been subjected to a Linsig assessment. The output is tabulated below.

Item	Lane Description	2017			
		AM		PM	
		DoS	MMQ	DoS	MMQ
1/1	A34 north (Left & Ahead)	98%	20	99%	23
1/2	A34 north (Ahead)	98%	39	98%	51
1/3	A34 north (Ahead)	103%		105%	
2/1	B5094 east (Left)	89%	10	84%	7
2/2	B5094 east (Left)	99%	22	86%	7
2/3	B5094 east (Ahead)				
3/1	A34 south (Left & Ahead)	96%	19	94%	16
3/2	A34 south (Ahead)	98%	21	96%	18
3/3	A34 south (Ahead)	97%	20	96%	18
4/1	B5094 west (Left)	32%	1	54%	3
4/2	B5094 west (Ahead)	23%		59%	
10/1	Gyratory at A34 north (Ahead)	76%	7*	86%	9*
10/2	Gyratory at A34 north (Right)	76%		86%	
11/1	Gyratory at B5094 east (Ahead)	59%	1	43%	2
11/2	Gyratory at B5094 east (Ahead)	99%	14*	84%	3
11/3	Gyratory at B5094 east (Ahead & Right)	96%	12*	80%	2
12/1	Gyratory at A34 south (Ahead)	52%	4	23%	1
12/2	Gyratory at A34 south (Right)	58%	1	34%	1
12/3	Gyratory at A34 south (Right)	58%		34%	
9/1	Gyratory at B5094 west (Ahead)	74%	3	72%	2
9/2	Gyratory at B5094 west (Ahead)	82%	3	79%	3
9/3	Gyratory at B5094 west (Ahead)	82%	10*	72%	8*
9/4	Gyratory at B5094 west (Right)	82%		72%	

The table shows that operational performance will be significantly improved however some residual issues are likely to remain on both the A34 southbound and B5094 Stanley Road westbound approaches, albeit to a lesser extent compared to existing operational difficulties. It is predicted that queues on the A34 northbound approach should not extend back to the A555 junction.

A555 Link, A34 to B5358 Wilmslow Road

The proposal for this link is shown on General Arrangement Drawing 7.

Construction of the new road results in the introduction of a section of weaving between the A34/A555 and A6MARR/B5358 Wilmslow Road junctions which is below standard, 650m compared to a desirable minimum of 1000m. This will require a Departure from Standard. The applicant is considering options, one could be to reduce the existing speed limit to 50mph and reclassify/amend this section of road.

Assuming a Departure from Standard can be obtained or a suitable redesign is provided within the existing scheme limits, I am satisfied that this link can be provided in accordance with DMRB Standards.

B5358 Wilmslow Road junction

This junction design and associated works fall under Cheshire East jurisdiction.

A6MARR Link, B5358 Wilmslow Road to Styal Road

I am satisfied that the section of this link which falls with Stockport has been designed fully in accordance with DMRB Standards. A new bridge is proposed to carry the road over the rail line along with a new subway and shared footpath/cycleway.

A6MARR/B5166 Styal Road junction

These junction designs and associated works fall under Manchester City jurisdiction.

A6MARR Link, Styal Road to Ringway Road West

This link and associated works fall under Manchester City jurisdiction.

Conclusion

In conclusion I am satisfied that the design has due regard to relevant DMRB Standards and assuming Departures can be obtained from the Overseeing Authority, the A6MARR will be fully in accordance with design requirements and standards.

The local junction modelling assessment confirms that the A6MARR scheme is able accommodate 2017 future year traffic forecasts. This is in-line with the SEMMMS design philosophy and strategy recommendations for a more appropriate scale road proposal to provide relief to local communities affected by inappropriate through traffic, but not to provide a new strategic route of regional and potentially national significance.

The A6MARR will improve access to south-east Manchester and Cheshire East, result in less traffic on local roads providing for a safer environment and shorter journey times for vehicular traffic.

Mitigation and Complementary Measures

A package of Mitigation and Complementary Measures is proposed to address the predicted change in traffic flow on the local highway network following completion of the A6MARR scheme. The aim of these measures is to ameliorate the scheme's impact on local communities where there are predicted to be traffic increases and to seek opportunities to encourage walking, cycling and public transport use in general and where there are predicted to be reductions in traffic flow.

Consultation with the three local authorities has identified areas which must be prioritised for Complementary and Mitigation Measures and funding has been allocated

It is expected that following the issue of any planning approval, further extensive consultation will be required with determining authorities regarding the implementation of mitigation measures. It is reasonably anticipated that most mitigation measures will be implemented prior to the opening of the A6MARR, although it will perhaps be the view of the relevant authorities that the level of impact on traffic patterns should be monitored prior to deciding whether or not it is appropriate to implement measures.

Mitigation Measures (falling within Stockport)

A6 through High Lane and Disley

The traffic modelling predicts significant increases in traffic flow by upto 30% on the A6 through High Lane and Disley, both in terms of background traffic growth and the reassignment of longer distance traffic as a result of the introduction of the A6MARR. There is also the potential risk of increased traffic flows on Windlehurst Road.

The A6 Buxton Road is part of the national Primary Route Network and performs an important role for the Greater Manchester City Region carrying a mix of general and freight traffic from the Peak District and beyond into Greater Manchester and providing a strategic link between Greater Manchester and north Derbyshire. Extensive improvements have already been undertaken however the constant high level of traffic movement creates a potentially intimidating environment for vulnerable road users. The nature of the A6 through High Lane and Disley means that it is neither possible nor desirable to significantly increase network capacity along this corridor thus it is considered that the package of measures on the A6 corridor through High Lane and Disley should focus on improving non-motorised user facilities.

Proposed measures include:

- cycle lanes on sections of the A6 between Hazel Grove and New Mills Newtown where practicable;
- a new pedestrian refuge on the A6 Buxton Road at Wellington Road;
- a new Puffin crossing on the A6 Buxton Road outside the Church/ War memorial in High Lane;
- new uncontrolled pedestrian crossings with refuge islands on Windlehurst Road;

- a new pedestrian refuge on the A6 Buxton Road West outside Lyme Park to link bus stops and the park entrance; and
- a new cycle link between Disley and High Lane/ Poynton through Lyme Park.

Following a second phase of consultation further analysis was carried out with the strategic A6MARR SATURN highway model. This identified residual junction 'hot-spots' following completion of the A6MARR scheme as well as junctions expected to receive congestion relief. On the basis of this evidence it was determined that enhanced measures are required along the A6 corridor through High Lane and Disley.

These enhanced mitigation measures seek to:

- better manage traffic flows for local residents at the A6 Buxton Road/ Windlehurst Road junction through a local junction improvement scheme;
- enhance the local district centre environment in Disley village through the introduction of shared-space type interventions and
- limit the attractiveness of the A6 to longer distance traffic which would otherwise switch from other cross-county routes with the A6MARR in place. This will be achieved through a combination of gateway treatments and reduced speed limits.

Traffic modelling of the A6MARR with the original mitigation predicted an increase in traffic of up to 30% on the A6 through High Lane and Disley. The introduction of enhanced mitigation measures markedly reduces this increased traffic flow to between 11 and 16%.

Some growth on A6 through High Lane and Disley should be expected when one considers that without the A6MARR in place traffic growth in the A6 corridor between the M60 motorway and Disley is heavily constrained, compared to other routes through Stockport, most notably through Hazel Grove and Stockport Town Centre.

With the A6MARR in place, the A6 through Hazel Grove and Stockport Town Centre is predicted to experience reduced traffic levels (below 2009 base year levels), resulting in journey times over this section of A6 markedly improving.

Therefore whilst there may be some junction delay at particular locations on the A6, such as in Disley or in High Lane, these delays are more than offset by reduced junction delays elsewhere along the A6.

Tabulated summary of traffic figures

Without mitigation

	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
A6, Threaphurst Lane-Windlehurst Road	24500	25900	32100	6200	24%
A6, Windlehurst Road –Andrew Lane	20900	22100	28100	6000	27%
A6, Andrew Lane-Jacksons Edge Road	18700	19800	25200	5400	27%
A6, Buxton Old Road-Redhouse Lane	18700	19800	25600	5800	29%
A6, Greenshall Lane-Albion Road	18300	20700	27700	7000	34%

With mitigation (enhanced)

	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
A6, Threaphurst Lane-Windlehurst Road	24500	25900	29300	3400	13%
A6, Windlehurst Road –Andrew Lane	20900	22100	24500	2400	11%
A6, Andrew Lane-Jacksons Edge Road	18700	19800	22400	2600	13%
A6, Buxton Old Road-Redhouse Lane	18700	19800	22900	3100	16%
A6, Greenshall Lane-Albion Road	18300	20700	22700	2000	10%

There is a risk that traffic could increase on the A627 Torkington Road/Offerton Road in Hazel Grove. It is suggested that traffic flows are monitored prior to and following completion of the A6MARR and should there be a material increase, appropriate traffic management/mitigation would be introduced.

The traffic modelling has identified various other locations and sections of the network which require mitigation, these are identified below.

Torkington Road & Threaphurst Lane, Hazel Grove

The modelling has identified a potential risk that completion of the A6MARR scheme could lead to some inappropriate routeing of local traffic between the A6 south-east of the new A6MARR junction and Offerton using 'country lanes' such as the unclassified Torkington Road and Threaphurst Lane. It is recommended that both Torkington Road and Threaphurst Lane are designated as Quiet Lanes, minor rural roads which have been designated to pay special attention to the needs of non-motorised and other vulnerable road users. Measures such as lower speed limits and discrete road signs aim to encourage drivers to slow down and be considerate to more vulnerable users who can in turn use and enjoy country lanes in greater safety and with less threat from speeding traffic. The final form of mitigation would be subject to consultation and agreement.

Tabulated summary of traffic figures

Without mitigation

	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
Torkington Road	1500	2500	2700	200	8%

With mitigation in place

	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
Torkington Road	1500	2500	1700	-800	-32%

Gillbent Road, Cheadle

The modelling predicts a potential risk of increased traffic levels on Gillbent Road following completion of the A6MARR. In order to mitigate this potential risk and discourage its use it is recommended that consideration is given to the introduction of speed management measures and/or local access

improvements on Gillbent Road. The final form of mitigation would be subject to consultation and agreement.

Tabulated summary of traffic figures

Without mitigation

Gillbent Road	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
	11700	12700	15000	2300	18%

With mitigation in place

Gillbent Road	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
	11700	12700	12200	-500	-4%

A34 Corridor / Handforth (B5358)

The modelling predicts increased traffic flows along the A34 Handforth bypass following completion of the A6MARR. Capacity issues along the A34 are currently limiting the attractiveness of this route and the modelling predicts that some traffic will divert onto the route through Handforth. To discourage this it is recommended that mitigation is introduced, the final form being subject to consultation and agreement with Cheshire East Council.

Tabulated summary of traffic figures for A34 Corridor

Without mitigation

	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
A34, Stanley Road-Eden Park Road	53100	63900	67200	3300	5%
A34 (South of A555)	53600	58600	67300	8700	15%

With mitigation in place

	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
A34, Stanley Road-Eden Park Road	53100	63900	68000	4100	6%
A34 (South of A555)	53600	58600	69600	11000	19%

Complementary Measures (falling within Stockport)

The A6MARR footway/cycleway provides a new orbital link for the strategic cycle/pedestrian network and it is essential that this is fully integrated with the existing local network to maximise access to the new route and therefore maximise the benefits associated with the A6MARR scheme. Public Right of Way upgrades are proposed, this is a complementary measure and in principle has support from landowners in terms of delivery.

A6 through Hazel Grove

The traffic modelling predicts that completion of the A6MARR will significantly reduce traffic flows on the A6 north of the new A6MARR junction. This route currently carries high volumes of traffic, including heavy goods vehicles and bus services. The pedestrian/cycle environment along the A6 through Hazel Grove is currently poor and an accident problem. This along with congestion, noise, severance, vibration and poor air quality are adversely affecting the vitality of the District Centre. On street parking and servicing causes problems and parking restrictions lead to a lack of parking overall for visitors to shops and properties.

The predicted reduction in traffic through Hazel Grove presents the opportunity to reallocate road space by, for example, the introduction of bus lanes where space permits and/or by reducing the number of lanes to a single lane in each direction with a shared third lane for right-turning provision and pedestrian refuges.

Tabulated summary of traffic figures

Without mitigation

	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
A6, North of Bramhall Lane	28900	26200	19300	-6900	-26%
A6, Dialstone Lane-Bramhall Moor Lane	36600	36500	31300	-5200	-14%
A6, Bramhall Moor Lane- Commercial Road	36800	37900	31000	-6900	-18%

With mitigation in place

	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
A6, North of Bramhall Lane	28900	26200	19400	-6800	-26%
A6, Dialstone Lane-Bramhall Moor Lane	36600	36500	31400	-5100	-14%
A6, Bramhall Moor Lane- Commercial Road	36800	37900	31100	-6800	-18%

Bramhall

The traffic modelling predicts a reduction in traffic flows through Bramhall following completion of the A6MARR scheme. Junctions in the heart of the village lack controlled or preferential crossing arrangements and currently experience peak period congestion due to the high volume of traffic passing through the District Centre. There is a lack of adequate pedestrian crossing facilities on key desire lines.

Completion of the A6MARR represents an opportunity for an environmental and traffic scheme to be introduced in Bramhall that improves the pedestrian and traffic environment within the local district centre.

Tabulated summary of traffic figures

Without mitigation

A5102 Bramhall Lane South	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
	22400	27000	26000	-1000	-4%

With mitigation in place

A5102 Bramhall Lane South	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
	22400	27000	26200	-800	-3%

Finney Lane, Heald Green

The modelling predicts that Finney Lane will experience a significant reduction in traffic flow as a result of completion of the A6MARR scheme. Heald Green is a thriving Local Centre with a wide variety of shops and services and is a focus for pedestrian activity. It also proves an attractive stop for commuter traffic.

There is a potential opportunity for further district centre environmental improvements/public realm aimed at enhancing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

Tabulated summary of traffic figures

Without mitigation

	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
Bolshaw Road	5600	6900	1600	-5300	-77%
Finney Lane, Styal Road- Outwood Road	24500	26500	14800	-11700	-44%
Finney Lane, Queensway-St Anns Road Sth	17100	18400	15500	-2900	-16%

With mitigation in place

	2009 Base	2017 Without A6MARR	2017 With A6MARR	2017 Impact of A6MARR	2017 %Impact of A6MARR
Bolshaw Road	5600	6900	1600	-5300	-77%
Finney Lane, Styal Road- Outwood Road	24500	26500	15200	-11300	-43%
Finney Lane, Queensway-St Anns Road Sth	17100	18400	15900	-2500	-14%

In conclusion a package of Complementary and Mitigation is proposed as required to address the predicted change in traffic flow on the local highway network following completion of the A6MARR scheme.

Funding within the A6MARR scheme budget has been allocated for these works and this will be allocated to the three local authorities. It will then be the responsibility of the local authorities to consult on/approve the requisite works, evaluate and monitor (if deemed appropriate) and implement, with best endeavours to be made that this happens in advance of opening of the A6MARR. The works will not be subject to specific conditional control but it will be appropriate to have a carefully worded condition (in the event that permission is granted) which seeks to ensure that traffic flow reductions and management is delivered with /appropriate measures and management implemented to achieve these objectives.

Cycling routes / Public Rights of Way works

Alongside road construction, an essential part of the SEMMMS strategy is promoting and improving accessibility and movement for non-motorised users. The focus is on encouraging modal choice, reducing journey times and improving safety of those most vulnerable.

There is an extensive network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways in the vicinity of the proposed A6MARR scheme alignment, a number of these are near to or will be affected by the road construction.

Prior to submission the applicant engaged in a comprehensive engagement exercise with users of such facilities and 'The Vulnerable Road User Group' has been set up specifically for the A6MARR scheme. This is to discuss and gather feedback on pedestrian, cycle and equestrian facilities, provision for disabled groups and Public Rights of Way. Extensive discussion has also

taken place with Public Right of Way and Cycling Officers with Stockport and at adjoining Authorities and endeavour has been made to incorporate controlled crossing facilities at junctions, in standalone locations and afford improvement to various routes.

A comprehensive survey of non-motorised users on routes altered or impacted by the A6MARR scheme was undertaken by TfGM to establish indicative levels of use for each route.

There is a broad spectrum of users and for differing purposes, both for formal in terms of commuter trips or informal/recreational. The amenity value of these routes is high and needs to be retained.

An independent Concise Cycle & Pedestrian Audit of the A6MARR has been carried out and this will assist/inform the detailed design of the scheme. The design of the A6MARR non-motorised user facilities has been carried out in accordance with the DMRB Standards.

At the A6MARR/ Realigned A6 Junction there is no provision for non-motorised users. Provision is via the existing alignment of Buxton Road with links to the new pedestrian/cycleway, a 2.5m wide route, alongside the A6MARR. A new bridge with associated footway/cycleway will be provided to carry a realigned Buxton Road over the A6MARR, with use being restricted to buses, pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. The parallel footway/cycleway running alongside the A6MARR terminates on approach to the new junction with the realigned A6. The route will connect with a new footway/cycleway provided on Buxton Road via a ramp access.

The 2.5m shared pedestrian/cycleway will run on the North side of and adjacent to the A6MARR from the A6 to the Bramhall Oil Terminal Gyratory. It will be sited adjacent to the eastbound carriageway of the A6MARR and separated from the carriageway by a 2.0m grass median.

Footpath 109 would be diverted immediately south of Old Mill Lane to accommodate construction of the A6MARR scheme. Continued access to footpath 109 along the wood-enclosed Norbury Brook south of the dual carriageway from Old Mill Lane would be provided by a new section of path, bridged over the dual carriageway before linking back into the existing Footpath 109 alignment. A further footbridge over Norbury Brook will provide a connection to Footpath 62.

At the A6MARR/A523 Macclesfield Road Junction all left-turn lanes are filtered and have associated island refuges for NMUs. There will be Toucan crossing facilities provided across the northern A523 Macclesfield Road arm and the eastern and western A6MARR approaches. The crossing facilities will

provide connections to the new footway/cycleway running alongside the eastbound carriageway and also link with a new footpath proposed to run alongside Norbury Brook to the immediate south of the A6MARR. .

A new section of footway on the western side of the A523 in the vicinity of the A6MARR junction will connect with the existing footway to the north of Norbury Hall and provide access to the footpath/cycleway and a new footpath running westwards parallel to Norbury Brook. A pedestrian refuge island is also proposed to facilitate crossing the A523 north of Towers Road.

A short section of Footpath 3 and the Lady Brook Interest Trail requires diversion at the end of Mill Hill Hollow. Continued access will be provided by a new footpath descending to Norbury Brook, passing under the A6MARR along the river bank and ascending on the opposite side of the road.

Between Hazel Grove and Bramhall Oil Terminal Footpaths 31 and 37 would be diverted via an elevated step-free crossing (Hill Green accommodation bridge) and associated bridleway closely following the alignment of the stopped up section of Footpath 31.

Footpath 21 will be diverted via a parallel footway provided as part of the new bridge construction to carry Woodford Road (Poynton) over the A6MARR. A ramp and steps access will connect the Woodford Road footway with the footway/cycleway. The resultant diversion will increase walking distances for existing users by some 140m. Whilst the extra travel distance is not ideal the experience and environment will be improved for all users. The footpath/cycleway will connect the severed Public Right of Ways and provide opportunities for traffic free circular walks.

To the East Bramhall Oil Terminal Footpath 19 currently crosses the A6MARR road alignment. A section of this path will be closed and rerouted to run parallel with the A6MARR at the bottom of the northern embankment slope before crossing via an underpass adjacent to the rail line and back to the former alignment.

Footpaths 14a, 15, 16 and 58 which currently cross the site of the new junction will be diverted to use crossing facilities which will be provided at the new gyratory junction.

Access to the South of Bramhall would be maintained with a new footpath link from the A6MARR to Footpath 16. A new footpath/cycleway will run alongside the spur connecting Chester Road to the A6MARR. Controlled crossing facilities will be provided for NMUs to cross the new Gyratory junction. At the A6MARR/Bramhall Oil Terminal Gyratory, the design includes provision for a

Toucan crossing on the eastern approach and exit arms and Oil Terminal approach. The crossing will tie-in with the dedicated footway/cycleway running parallel to the northern side of the A6MARR at this location.

The A6MARR Link Road/A5149 Chester Road Junction will be signalised with integrated crossing facilities.

To the west of the Oil Terminal the 2.5m wide cycleway/footway is provided offline/away from the carriageway and upto a junction formed on the East side of Woodford Road.

Shared footway/cycleways at 3.0m width will be provided along both the eastern and western sides of the bridge to improve connection with Woodford Road to the south.

From Woodford Road the route takes the form of a bridleway running parallel but offline to the existing eastbound A555 upto Hall Moss Lane. An uncontrolled crossing facility is provided within Hall Moss Lane with the route running south across the Hall moss Lane bridge over the A555. A new footpath/cycleway is then provided from Hall Moss Lane running west alongside the westbound A555 carriageway towards the A34.

The footpath/cycleway then intersects the Spath Lane overbridge/Wilmslow Footpath 80 and then west to the A34 roundabout junction.

A new footpath/cycleway is provided alongside the A34 southbound carriageway upto Stanley Toad with additional footpath/cycleway routes around the perimeter of Stanley Road roundabout.

A new footpath will be provided across the central island of the roundabout to provide a connection between Footpath No.81 and the shared footpath/cycleway.

In addition, from the A34 junction, a footpath/cycleway will run West with controlled crossing of the A34 and then retro-fitted onto the existing A555 westbound carriageway to the B5358 Wilmslow Road junction. A controlled crossing facility is proposed on the northern side of the Wilmslow road dumb bell junction and then the footpath/cycleway reverts back to the concept of a 2.0m grass median separating it from the A6MARR carriageway, running as far as the B5166 Styal Road junction.

Footpath 7 forms part of a local PRow network and will be diverted to pass under the A6MARR via the new road over rail bridge crossing the Styal rail line.

Controlled crossing facilities are provided at the Styal Road intersection then the footpath/cycleway continues adjacent to the eastbound carriageway at a width of 3.0m wide but without the 2.0m grass segregation upto the Ringway Road West junction.

In conclusion the scheme delivers a comprehensive package of pedestrian and cyclist improvements. These are in the form of maximising the provision of controlled crossing facilities and other crossing facilities at strategic junction and on the adjoining network alongside provision of a shared footpath/cycleway/bridleway along the full extent of the A6MARR. The design of the route and crossing facilities are in accordance with relevant DMRB Standards and will deliver shorter journey times for pedestrian and cyclists. Remote from the A6MARR scheme there will be appreciable safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in built up areas by virtue of the reduction in traffic and reassigned vehicle movement. I am therefore satisfied that non-motorised user needs have been given full and proper consideration and have been reasonably and satisfactorily accommodated for within the overall scheme design.

During construction works, public rights of way will need maintaining where possible with upgrade works undertaken sensitively. Necessary diversions and closures will need to go through due legal process in advance of implementation. The final design, construction detail and delivery management will be the subject of a planning condition in the event that permission is granted.

Bus Services

The opening of the A6MARR provides a good opportunity for new or rerouted bus services to use the new road which will result in reduced journey times and improved accessibility. There are good prospects for new services to link the Airport with Stockport Town Centre, the new Park and Ride of the A6 and with areas in Cheshire East. Discussion is on-going with Transport for Greater Manchester with respect to bus service provision and routing and ensuring the impact of construction works do not disrupt existing services.

Road Safety

The effect of completion of A6MARR has been considered with respect to accident data. Accident rates have been applied to modelled vehicle kilometres with and without the scheme in place to predict the overall number and severity of accidents for the modelled Area of Influence. The total travel distance (kilometres per hour) is forecast to increase following implementation of the scheme and there will also be a slight increase in average network

speed during both traffic peak periods. This is likely with an increase in traffic levels using higher speed routes following implementation of the scheme.

Due to the reduction in traffic flow on routes with high observed accident rates such as the A6 through Hazel Grove and Stockport and Finney Lane through Heald Green, there is forecast to be an overall reduction in accident numbers following implementation of the scheme. However with the forecast increase in total travel distance the predicted reduction in accident numbers is marginal, but even so welcomed.

Road Safety Audit

A Stage 1 / Feasibility Road Safety Audit has been submitted alongside the application. This is an essential requirement for any new or amended road or junction layout and has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's adopted Procedure and DMRB Standards/Advice. The Audit has raised a number of issues, none of which are fundamental to the design and can be addressed as detailed design is progressed. In accordance with requirement, a response to the Audit has been provided by the Designer/Engineer, highlighting how the issues raised will be dealt with.

In the event that planning permission is granted and detailed design of the scheme progresses, process requires the submission of further Safety Audits which appraise in further detail the proposed road scheme, for example constructions specs, markings, lighting, signage etc.

Conclusion

The A6MARR is a key component of the programme of works recommended by the SEMMMS study, objective of delivering:

- The promotion of environmentally sustainable economic growth;
- The promotion of urban regeneration;
- The improvement on amenity, safety and health;
- The enhancement of the Regional Centre, town centres, local and village centres and Manchester Airport and
- The encouragement of the community and cultural life of neighbourhoods and encouragement of social inclusion.

The strategy comprises a series of work packages that could be delivered in the short, medium and longer term, many of which have been completed in the last 10 years.

The A6MARR strategy is for a more appropriate scale road proposal to provide relief to local communities affected by inappropriate through traffic. It

is not to provide a new strategic route of regional and potentially national significance.

By improving access to south-east Manchester and Cheshire East, the A6MARR will benefit communities and the local economy in terms of:

- Economic growth generating additional economic output and new jobs;
- Better access to Manchester Airport and other destinations for employment, education, health, leisure and retail;
- Less traffic and reduced congestion on local roads;
- Shorter journey times for cyclists, public transport users, car drivers and freight;
- Improved road safety and
- Increased investment encouraged Stockport, Cheshire East and Manchester.

A package of mitigation and complementary measures has been proposed to address the predicted change in traffic flow on the local highway network following completion of the A6MARR. The measures aim to ameliorate the scheme's impact on local communities where there are predicted to be traffic increases and seek opportunities to encourage walking, cycling and support to local centres where there are predicted to be reductions in traffic flow.

The scheme is an important part of the refreshed Greater Manchester Strategy 2013-2020, which places connectivity and transport investment at the heart of its economic strategy to focus investment on the city-region's strategic transport network to enhance local, national and international connectivity.

The scheme will significantly improve access from the east to the Airport and surrounding area. It will relieve congestion in the south of the conurbation and support growth in the wider south Manchester corridor.

A parallel shared cycle and pedestrian path and a package of complementary measures will maximise the scope of potential in the areas where there are forecast reductions in car traffic."

The scheme has secured 'Programme Entry Approval' from the Government. This is an important step precedes detailed design and the obtaining of the necessary statutory permissions.

With respect to scheme detail, the links and junctions have been designed in accordance with DMRB standards and where required Departures will be sought from the overseeing authority.

The submission includes a package of mitigation and complementary measures which have been compiled to address the impact of the scheme on various corridors and in local areas. Complementary measures will be delivered where appropriate to encourage sustainable travel choices, improve road safety and generally improve the environment. Measures will be secured by a financial contribution, the detailed mechanism to be agreed.

The scheme delivers road safety improvements particularly for non-motorised users, enhanced accessibility opportunities, reduced journey times and significant congestion relief to local communities, in the 2017 future year conditions. As such I see no reason to raise objection.

Any permission granted will need to be subject to a comprehensive list of planning conditions.

Sport England - The areas of interest to Sport England are:

- a) Woodford Recreation Ground
- b) Moorend Golf Course
- c) Hazel Grove Golf Course

Statutory Objection

Woodford Recreation Ground is a playing field that falls within the statutory definition set out in Schedule 5 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. As there will be a loss of playing field as a result of the proposal Sport England objects to the application because it is not considered to accord with paragraph 74 of the NPPF or any of the exceptions in Sport England's playing fields policy.

Specific reasons for the statutory objection are set out below.

Existing Site

Google Earth (2009) shows a cricket pitch, 4 football pitches, pavilion, car park and a skate ramp.

The pitches have been allocated to following football clubs during the 2013/14 season:

- 1) Bramhall North Juniors
- 2) Bulls Head FC
- 3) Cheadle Hulme Athletic FC
- 4) FC Woodford
- 5) Lostock Rangers FC
- 6) Mountfield Rovers JFC
- 7) Real Sports JFC
- 8) Richmond Rovers JFC

The cricket square is let by the Council to local teams and the skate ramp is advertised on the council's website.

The site is registered on Sport England's Active Places Power2 website (site ID 6010398) and shows changing rooms and 4 pitches available for community use.

The playing field area = 4.8ha

Assessment of Proposal

The proposal is for the construction of the A6 relief road. The recreation ground is shown on block plan sheets 12 and 13. Drawing 1007/3D/DF7/A6-MA/PABP/P/033 (block plan 12) shows proposed engineered earthworks and a proposed bridle way at the southernmost end of the playing field. Aerial photography shows this area is predominantly woodland but there will be encroachment onto the functional part of the playing field affecting 3 of the 4 pitches. A 4m high ball stop fence separating the bridle way from the playing field is shown.

The Planning Statement in paragraph 4.5.42 acknowledges a loss of 7,442sqm of playing field. Although there will be a gain of other types of open space this does not mitigate or replicate the loss of playing field. Although the applicant states the use of the 4 pitches can be maintained there are no plans to show:

- How this will be achieved
- Whether the pitches will be remarked at the required size to comply with FA requirements and if the run offs around and between the pitches can be maintained.
- What the impact on the cricket pitch will be. If the pitches are to be relocated within the site does this mean the cricket wicket will be lost? Can the cricket outfield be maintained to the required dimensions stipulated by the ECB?

The loss of playing field reduces the flexibility to move pitches between seasons or to resize and reorientate pitches over time. Sport England protects the whole of the playing field not just the pitches that are currently or most recently marked out. This is to ensure changes in demand for different pitch sports and different forms of the game can be catered for over time.

Paragraph 7.2.10 of the Planning Statement acknowledges the loss of land which *"will result in an adverse impact on the amenity value of these areas."* There is no acknowledgement of the loss of sporting value and the impact on health and wellbeing.

No information has been submitted to show the actual extent of the encroachment onto the playing field and how the pitches are affected. There

are no plans of the existing pitch layout or what the proposed layout would be. No justification or mitigation has been put forward for the loss of 7,442sqm of playing field in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 74 of NPPF or

Sport England's exceptions to policy.

In this instance the proposal would need to meet the second criterion of paragraph 74 and policy exception E4:

'The playing field or fields to be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced, prior to the commencement of development, by a new playing field site or sites:

of equivalent or better quality and

of equivalent or greater quantity;

in a suitable location and

subject to equivalent or better management arrangements.'

Possible Resolution

The objection may be withdrawn if further information is submitted that demonstrates the proposal can meet paragraph 74 of NPPF and Sport England's policy:

1. Scale plans showing the extent of the encroachment onto the playing field.
2. A mitigation package is proposed to compensate for the loss of 7,442sqm of playing field and to ensure the proposal accords with paragraph 74 of NPPF and Sport England policy exceptions.
3. Phasing plans during the construction process that shows how:
 - a) the playing field will be protected to ensure continuity of use for the 8 football clubs and other users of the site; and
 - b) if a temporary loss of playing field is inevitable then details of how long the loss will occur, where pitch users will be temporarily relocated to, and a playing field restoration scheme.
4. Details of the earthworks to ensure any potential water runoff does not create pooling and drainage problems on the southernmost end of the playing field.
5. Under a memorandum of understanding Sport England has with the main pitch sport national governing bodies on planning applications, the Cheshire FA (CFA) and Regional FA Facilities and Funding Investment Manager (FFIM) have been consulted. They have raised the same issues as Sport England, as detailed above. The applicant is strongly advised to liaise with both the CFA and Regional FFIM to discuss the impact of the proposal and any potential mitigation packages.

Should your Council be minded to grant planning permission for the development then in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, and the DCLG letter of 10 March 2011, the application should be referred to the National Planning Casework Unit.

Non Statutory Objection

Golf is one of the 46 sports Sport England recognises and supports. The proposal affects 3 golf courses (Styal golf course is located within Cheshire East and my comments have been sent to Cheshire East Council). I comment on Hazel Grove and Moorend Golf Courses. Although Sport England does not have a statutory remit to protect non pitch sports we have a non-statutory obligation to raise concerns where sports facilities are adversely affected.

Hazel Grove Golf Course

The proposed road would affect the southernmost end of the golf course. It is not clear from the plans what the full extent of the impact on the golf course will be. A more detailed plan would need to be submitted of the existing golf course to show the extent of the impact.

Moorend Golf Course

The proposed road would affect the northern end of the golf course. It is not clear from the plans what the full extent of the impact on the golf course will be. Aerial photography indicates that several bunkers and part of the fairway will be affected. A more detailed plan would need to be submitted of the existing golf course to show the extent of the impact.

Sport England objects to the application because the two golf courses will be affected. There is no mitigation proposal presented to ensure the proposal accords with paragraph 74 of NPPF.

Sport England may withdraw the non-statutory objection if:

1. Plans are submitted to show the extent of the impact on Hazel Grove and Moorend Golf Courses
2. If the plans show the functional part of the golf courses are affected a mitigation package is put forward that accords with the requirements of paragraph 74 of NPPF.

If this application is to be presented to a Planning Committee, we would like to be notified in advance of the publication of any committee agendas, report(s)

and committee date(s). We would be grateful if you would advise us of the outcome of the application by sending us a copy of the decision notice.

UPDATE – The applicant provided a response to Sport England on both the Statutory and Non-Statutory objection on the 18th December 2013. A formal response was received on 24th December 2013 maintaining the objection for the following reasons:

1. The main reason for the objection submitted in my letter of 26 November 2013 is *“No justification or mitigation has been put forward for the loss of 7,442sqm of playing field in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 74 of NPPF or Sport England’s exceptions to policy”*. The information presented provides no justification or mitigation for the loss of 7,422sqm, which is a significant loss of playing field. If retained, this area could be marked out to meet deficits in pitch provision that have been identified in Stockport’s draft Playing Pitch Strategy. Sport England have been involved in the preparation of this Strategy. As more playing field is required to meet an identified need this proposal cannot meet the first criterion of paragraph 74 of NPPF which states: *“an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings, or land to be surplus to requirements.”*. As this criterion cannot be met then the second criterion of paragraph 74 of NPPF must be met which states *“the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.”*

2. Although the plan submitted shows the existing football pitches can be retained the cricket pitch and boundary is not shown. The England & Wales Cricket Board have minimum standards for the dimensions of the boundary depending on the level of play. Please refer to the ECB website for details or contact the regional ECB Funding and Facilities Manager for advice: <http://www.ecb.co.uk/development/facilities-funding/facilities-guidance-and-project-development/>

3. The reason for asking whether the current pitches can still be accommodated is to ensure the site can still function despite the decreased size. However, the quantity of playing field lost to the development still requires replacement within the locality, either by extending the existing playing field or extending an alternative playing field in the locality. Creation of single/double pitch sites in isolation from any ancillary facilities creates maintenance, management and child protection problems and are not attractive to pitch users. As I explained in my letter, Sport England protects the whole of the playing field not just the pitches that are currently or most recently marked out. This is to ensure changes in demand for different pitch sports and different forms of the game can be catered for over time.

4. None of the queries and points raised in the 'Possible Resolution' section of my letter have been adequately addressed:

"The objection may be withdrawn if further information is submitted that demonstrates the proposal can meet paragraph 74 of NPPF and Sport England's policy:

- 1. Scale plans showing the extent of the encroachment onto the playing field.*
- 2. A mitigation package is proposed to compensate for the loss of 7,442sqm of playing field and to ensure the proposal accords with paragraph 74 of NPPF and Sport England policy exceptions.*
- 3. Phasing plans during the construction process that shows how:*
 - a) the playing field will be protected to ensure continuity of use for the 8 football clubs and other users of the site; and*
 - b) if a temporary loss of playing field is inevitable then details of how long the loss will occur, where pitch users will be temporarily relocated to, and a playing field restoration scheme.*
- 4. Details of the earthworks to ensure any potential water runoff does not create pooling and drainage problems on the southernmost end of the playing field.*
- 5. Under a memorandum of understanding Sport England has with the main pitch sport national governing bodies on planning applications, the Cheshire FA (CFA) and Regional FA Facilities and Funding Investment Manager (FFIM) have been consulted. They have raised the same issues as Sport England, as detailed above. The applicant is strongly advised to liaise with both the CFA and Regional FFIM to discuss the impact of the proposal and any potential mitigation packages."*

United Utilities - We would like to make the following comments to the applicant and for your consideration:

1. We have a number of existing operational assets located within the footprint of the proposed development of which, access must be available at all times; we may undertake planned and/or reactive operational activities on these assets and therefore to protect the service we provide to our customers and the environment, limited notice may be issued in order to provide access to these assets.
2. In addition to the comments above, protection and or diversion of our assets will be required [at the Developer's cost] to support the delivery of this scheme. Detailed discussions and agreements will need to be put in place beforehand in order to provide those adequate protection measures throughout the duration of the whole scheme; specifically, but not limited to:

- a. We will require a 10m easement between the bottom of the service reservoir embankment to the bottom of the bypass embankment;
- b. We will need to agree any proposed land uses over and/or adjacent to the three strategic trunk mains; and
- c. The applicant should secure prior agreement with United Utilities PLC for the protective measures that will be applied to the strategic trunk main that runs from the east to the inlet of the service reservoir.

We have no objections to the proposals highlighted in the planning application documents providing the following specific Conditions are attached to any Decision Notice you deem to grant:

1. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the development hereby approved shall have foul and surface water drained in accordance with the principles outlined in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment which was prepared by AECOM Ltd Ref: 60212470/HIG/001 dated August 2011 and also the submitted Drainage Strategy Report and associated plans (prepared by AECOM Ltd ref: 60212470/HIG/001, dated August 2011). For the avoidance of doubt, any foul must drain separately to surface water and no surface water will be permitted to discharge directly or indirectly into the public foul or combined sewer. Any surface water draining from the site must be restricted to the agreed rates as set out within the submitted Drainage Strategy.
2. Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed landscaping and planting plan must be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with United Utilities PLC providing tree and shrub variety details to demonstrate that existing infrastructure will not be impacted and they are acceptable for use within easements.
3. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, no building shall be erected within 3 metres of any existing public sewer and no development shall occur within 10m of any existing service reservoirs.

Our historical consultation responses to your Local Development Framework consultations; planning applications and pre developer enquiries are still valid and you should consider when reviewing this planning application.

Natural England - Natural England does not consider that this application poses any likely or significant risk to those features of the natural environment for which we would otherwise provide a more detailed consultation response and so does not wish to make specific comment on the details of this consultation.

Nature Development Officer – Having visited sections of the site and considered the available information, I have the following comments to make:

Legislative and Policy Framework

Nature Conservation Designations and Protected Habitats

The proposed route of the road severs and destroys an area of woodland which is designated as a Site of Biological Importance (SBI) which is predominantly deciduous woodland. Some of this woodland is ancient woodland, and is identified as a habitat of principle importance under the NERC Act 2006. Other areas of woodland, hedgerows, ponds, grassland and water courses, all of which offer value to biodiversity are being lost or impacted upon by the proposed scheme.

Currently the proposed mitigation for the loss of the SBI/ancient woodland is not sufficient, especially as ancient woodland is irreplaceable.

The SBI Ox Hey Pastures lies approximately 160m north of the proposed road at the A6 side of the scheme and Ox Hey Brook flows into the SBI/woodland. The plans indicate that Ox Hey Brook will be diverted as a result of the new road, however no assessment of the impact on the SBI or mitigation to avoid impact (figure 11.18) have been proposed.

The species proposed within the landscaping documents (Soft landscaping Plan 1007/5.7/097) for the native woodland, hedgerow and species rich grassland contain species which are not appropriate as they are not locally native.

The habitat management information provided (Landscape Management Plan 1007/5.7/098) makes no reference to pond management.

Legally Protected Species

The habitats impacted upon by the route of the road have the potential to support protected and priority species.

Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 provides legal protection for a suite of species. The latter implements the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. Bats, great crested newts and otters are included in Schedule 2 of the Regulations as 'European Protected Species of animals' (EPS).

Under the Regulations it is an offence to:

- 1) Deliberately capture or kill a wild EPS
- 2) Deliberately disturb a wild EPS in such a way that significantly affects:
 - a) the ability of a significant group to survive, breed, rear or nurture young.
 - b) the local distribution of that species.
- 3) Damage or destroy a breeding place or resting site of such an animal.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) provides protection at a UK level for additional species including water vole, barn owl, kingfisher and reptiles. The nests of all wild birds are also protected under this piece of legislation.

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This makes it an offence to kill or injure a badger, damage or destroy a badger sett or obstruct access to it, or disturb a badger in it.

Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 identifies species and habitats of conservation concern.

A number of ecological surveys have been undertaken as part of the application, however the survey data for these reports has not been submitted with the application and in some cases the actual survey reports (barn owl) have not been submitted or require further information (bats, otter). Some species have been screened out (water vole, brown hare, breeding birds) without detailed discussion as to why this is the case.

Great crested newts

Several meta populations will be impacted upon by the proposed road scheme which will destroy great crested newt breeding ponds, terrestrial habitat and sever populations. Great crested newt surveys were undertaken in 2010 and 2013, and while it is acknowledged that additional survey effort has been undertaken following pre-app discussions in 2012, there are still some issues which need further clarification, which include:

- inconsistencies between the ES and the great crested newt report on the number of ponds assessed
- inconsistencies between the survey results and the figures provided for the results, ecological impact, mitigation figures. For example pond 231 is displayed in figure 11C.1 as a great crested newt pond, however the results table indicates that great crested newts were not recorded. A number of ponds have also been recorded on the figures as great crested newts absent, however they have not been surveyed, for example ponds 153, 163, 169 are displayed as absent on figure 11C.4 yet have not been surveyed according to table 3.2 and 3.4

- Pond 169 was not surveyed as part of this application and has records from 2003 of a medium great crested newt population, which may still be present. No consideration of this has been given to this within the great crested newt report.
- Insufficient mitigation/compensation has been proposed in areas. For example work is proposed along the A34/Stanley Road in close proximity to ponds 105, 108 and 111 which have great crested newts yet no mitigation has been proposed. There are also areas where ponds will be lost as a result of the proposed development but not compensatory ponds have been proposed (Lower Park Road ponds and ponds north of Woodford Road/east of railway line, for example) and also areas where the reptile fencing does not include the EFD function areas.
- Some ponds have records of great crested newts in 2010 but were not recorded in 2013. To ensure adequate mitigation further pre-construction survey work will be required to ensure appropriate mitigation/compensation, for example pond 217.

Badgers

Several badger populations are present along the road scheme, and a number of setts will be destroyed or disturbed as a result of the proposed road scheme. Badger territories will be severed as a result of the road, making road mortality a large threat to the local badger population and also a consideration for road safety. The following issues will need to be addressed:

- Clarification as to the impact of the road on each sett/population as the results in the badger survey do not correlate with the impact/mitigation figures. For example sett OS7 and OS8 appear to be in the path of the road, however they are not recorded as being lost within the badger survey.
- Mitigation appropriate to the survey results needs to be provided, otherwise justification as to why this is not the case is required. There are several examples where badger territories will be severed yet no mammal tunnels provided (for example the setts associated with MS3).
- In areas where there is an unclear picture of the badger population dynamics, further survey work will be required to gain a greater understanding of the likely impact of the proposed road, prior to the works commencing.

Bats

Further to comments made last year regarding a lack of bat survey data, a Bat Tree Survey was undertaken in April 2013 and identified 61 trees which require bat activity survey work, 36 which will be lost if the road scheme goes ahead and 25 which will be indirectly affected. Bat activity surveys were also undertaken in September/October 2013 which is late in the survey season

and ideally would have been spread across the entire activity season (May-October). No bat roosts were identified within the trees that will be impacted upon by the proposed development. The baseline data for these surveys has not been submitted so it is not possible to assess the location of the bat hops in relation to any bat activity data.

At least one building and a number of bridges appear to be impacted upon by the proposed road scheme and no assessment of these structures in relation to bats has been submitted with the application.

Areas of the road will be lit, including close to features such as residential houses that could provide bat roosting opportunities, however these buildings do not seem to have been surveyed. The impact of lighting of the scheme on bats, including any relevant mitigation should be discussed within the bat survey.

Otters

Survey work for otter was undertaken in May 2011 and a potential otter holt was identified, although no other evidence of otter was recorded so it is thought to be disused. The report states further survey work (including motion cameras) was undertaken, however the results of this have not been provided and would need to be submitted as part of the planning application, along with appropriate mitigation work as required. The potential to design the bridge close to the holt to allow safe otter passage has been discussed previously and the outcomes of this should be included within the report.

Barn Owl

The results of the barn owl survey, an assessment of the impact of the scheme on this species and appropriate mitigation/compensation need to be included within the application.

Kingfisher

The ES paragraphs 11.5.43-11.5.49 discusses the presence of a kingfisher breeding site which will be impacted upon as a result of the proposed road scheme, and that further sightings and burrows were recorded.

Invasive Species

Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam are listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to plant or otherwise cause these species to grow in the wild. Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam have been recorded along the route of the road in the phase 1 habitat survey.

LDF Core Strategy Relevant paragraphs:

3.345, 3.346, 3.347, 3.361, 3.362, 3.363, 3.364, 3.365, 3.366, 3.367, 3.368, 3.369

Stockport's Unitary Development Plan (Retained Policy) - NE1.2

Recommendations:

Based on the details provided above and in line with national and local planning policy, the following information will be required before further comments can be made on the ecological impacts of the proposed development.

Survey information:

- Detailed justification as to why brown hare, nesting birds and water vole were scoped out of the survey work
- Baseline survey data should be submitted as part of the application and should include data for amphibians, bats, badgers, otter, UK priority species, kingfisher and barn owl.
- Survey reports for kingfisher and barn owl should be submitted and the existing bat and otter surveys should be updated to include results of further survey work (otter holt investigation and bats building and built structures assessment). As for all survey work this should include detailed methodology including timings of survey work, surveyor experience and discussion of constraints.
- Inclusion of the Ox hey pastures SBI within the ES including assessment of impacts.
-

Based on this information a detailed discussion and revision of mitigation/compensation works will be required and should include clarification of the impact of the proposed scheme, justification of mitigation proposals (or lack of) and assessment of the impact on the local population (for species) for:

- each badger clan to be impacted upon by the proposed road scheme
- each great crested newt meta-population
- bats including the impact of lighting
- barn owls
- kingfisher
- Norbury Brook SBI and Ox Hey Pastures SBI, including potential for off site mitigation.
- other habitats such as water course, grassland/agricultural land, none SBI woodland and ponds

Once this information has been received and has been analysed, further comments and condition recommendations can be made.

UPDATE- The Councils Ecologist has been in discussion with the applicant on the points made above, with many of the areas of concern clarified. Following the discussions the Councils Nature Development Officer is satisfied that the relevant data was included within the Environmental

Statement to allow for the determination of the planning application, with any remaining issues being able to be covered by appropriate planning conditions.

The councils ecologist has requested that they, and the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit are consulted on the pre-commencement site surveys and revision and the delivery of the mitigation/compensation schemes for the proposal.

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit – Whilst acknowledging that significant information has been provided regarding ecological impacts and that some additional information on both the surveys carried and extent of proposed avoidance and mitigation has been provided, nevertheless we would advise further information is required.

Prior to determination please request the following:

1.All Baseline survey data from 2010 - 2013 for and specifically for:

- Amphibians
- Bats including initial assessments of buildings and trees.
- Otter
- Badger
- Invasive species
- Barn Owl
- Casual records of UK priority Species

This information should include timing of surveys, methodology any constraints and information on the experience of the surveyors.

2.Full details of ecological appraisal and scoping report for all species and specifically for why it was determined not to carry out full surveys for:

- Water vole
- Brown hare
- Breeding birds

This should include details of desk top information supplied, level of field assessment and information on the experience of the person carrying out the field assessment and when this occurred.

3.A breakdown of avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures by species population and habitat type. In particular:

- For each GCN meta-population

- For each badger clan impacted upon
- Any Impacts on bats
- Any impacts on Barn owls
- For the loss of part of the Norbury Brook & Middlewood SBI with particular reference to loss of ancient woodland.
- Impacts on other habitats i.e. none GCN ponds, none SBI woodland, large areas of farmland, hedgerows and watercourses.

4. Additional information on the protection and pre-cautionary measures for land outside the current proposed herpetile fencing that will or have the potential to impact upon GCN. In particular:

- The EFD areas north of Buxton Rd.
- The EFD area south of Albany Road and the land taken under license north of the Chester Rd east of Walnut Farm.
- As mentioned in a previously the land NW of the A34 Stanley Road roundabout.
- The EFD land between Wilmslow Footpath 10 and 119 south of Yew Tree Farm.
- The following ponds where full survey did not occur, (some already discussed) or there is confusion between figures and text regarding location or there are recent records of GCN which lie outside current mitigation areas.
 - Pond 233 & P235 appear to have incorrect grid references plus GCN pond to be lost as noted on figure 11.18 does not appear to exist. Clarification is required as this confusion could impact upon the position of the Herpetile fence
 - Pond 217 requires further information because of the failure to survey and historic record of GCN.
 - Ponds 198, 205, 206 & 208 have historic record for GCN.
 - Pond 169 was not surveyed
 - Ponds 139 and 141 (I acknowledge the initial response re. these ponds) which were not surveyed
 - Pond 34 which has historic records for GCN
 - Ponds 18 & 22.

5. Screening report of potential impact of Lighting on Bat roosts and commuting/foraging routes. In particular assessments of previously buildings and trees currently not illuminated for bat roosting potential and importance as foraging/Commuting routes.

6. In addition there are inconsistencies between figures and text which require clarification as well as other ecological issues that could be resolved by condition. These will be dealt with once the information above has been supplied.

The above information is required for us to be able to make a proper assessment of the ecological impacts of the scheme to be sure that ecological issues have been addressed.

UPDATE: The applicant provided a full response and clarification on the comments received from GMEU. GMEU have confirmed that they are satisfied with the level of detail provided, however are concerned regarding when some of the surveys were carried out. They advise that some of the surveys were carried out when temperatures were regarded as too low, however do state that from 'The implications from a planning perspective are probably not critical as we can cover any shortfalls in the survey through pre-cautionary measures'.

The applicant has since rebutted the comment of GMEU stating 'due to seasonal constraints in early 2013 some surveys were undertaken in sub-optimal temperatures, but yet within the accepted survey window, and it is therefore important for the ecologists who are undertaking the survey works to use their experience and judgement in whether the conditions are a constraint. We believe the nature of the guidance with regard to surveying in mid-April to mid-May allows for surveys as we have undertaken and we do not consider it necessary to amend our conclusions or mitigation proposals as a result'.

English Heritage – Do not wish to comment in detail on the planning application but offer general observations in that the impact of the relief road on the setting and visual amenity of historic assets should be considered and in making a decision your authority establishes to its satisfaction the impacts of the proposed relief road upon the setting of listed buildings, schedule ancient monuments, registered landscapes and conservation areas. We do not believe that the relief road causes harm to the setting of highly graded listed buildings or registered parks or gardens or the site of scheduled monuments within the zone of visual influence. Any harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

The relief road is likely to have direct physical impacts along the proposed route. The county archaeologist should be consulted to assess the archaeological potential of the route and in the preparation of archaeological mitigation strategy.

We recommend that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice.

Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit – Archaeological interests are dealt with in Chapter 9 (Cultural Heritage) of the Environmental Assessment produced by Mouchels in support of the new road scheme. This study has recently been brought up to date through consultation with the Greater Manchester and Cheshire Historic Environment Records. GMAAS have liaised with their counterparts in Cheshire on the scheme to make sure we are both content with the archaeological process and mitigation strategy. The greater part of the archaeological mitigation falls within Stockport MBC so GMAAS are taking the lead role as the local authority archaeologist.

GMAAS concur that no archaeological remains have been identified which are of potential national significance. Sites affected by the scheme range from local to regional potential significance and therefore it is acceptable that they can be disturbed by development ground works as long as an appropriate record is made. Whilst the full ES chapter on Cultural Heritage provides a suite of appropriate mitigation strategies, this is not translated into the Non-technical summary chapter (section 2.2) which provides an inadequate summary of mitigation requirements by alluding merely to a 'watching brief.' The mitigation strategy will depend on the nature of each site and will range across evaluation by geophysics and trial trenching, larger-scale targeted archaeological excavations, palaeo-environmental sampling, watching briefs, historic building surveys, post investigation analysis, production of reports detailing the results, deposition of the archive, and publication of the findings in a suitable format (such as a popular booklet along the lines of the Greater Manchester Past Revealed series). The programme of works should be set out in an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation.

The archaeological works should be secured through a condition attached to planning consent. The condition should be worded as follows:

No demolition or development ground works shall take place until the applicant or their agents or their successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The WSI shall cover the following:

1. A phased programme and methodology to include:
 - an agreed scope of mitigation for each historic building and archaeological site affected by the scheme, including as appropriate the following elements
 - archaeological evaluation

- where the above identifies significant remains, targeted archaeological excavation
 - watching brief
 - palaeo-environmental sampling and analysis
 - historic building survey
2. A programme for post investigation assessment to include:
 - analysis of the site investigation records and finds
 - production of a final report on the significance of the heritage interest represented.
 3. Provision for archive deposition of the report, finds and records of the site investigation.
 4. Dissemination of the results through publication and other media.
 5. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved WSI.

Reason: In accordance with NPPF policy 12, paragraph 141, “to record and advance the understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) and “to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible”.

The work should be undertaken by a suitably experienced and qualified archaeological contractor, funded by the applicant, and in accordance with guidance and approval provided by GMAAS who will also monitor the implementation of the works on behalf of Stockport MBC.

Conservation and Heritage – The proposed road affects a number of heritage assets. The GMAAS consultation response deals with the assets that will be invasively affected and I concur with its conclusion that mitigation as currently proposed in the Non-technical summary is somewhat inadequate, and the recommended condition. Assets less directly affected include two ‘undesigned heritage assets’ within Stockport. These are Norbury Hall (site 41), and Mill Gate Farm (site 18). Norbury Hall is on the adopted list of buildings of local architectural and historic interest (Locally Listed), while Mill Gate Farm has an entry on the Historic Environment Record, as a known building of potential interest due to its age.

I have expressed concerns regarding the method of assessment of both significance and impact. The primary guidance has been the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. This document’s advice on the significance of heritage assets does not sit comfortably with the NPPF which gives ‘great weight’ to the conservation of heritage assets and stresses that harm can result from development within the setting of assets.

In response to concerns raised prior to submission, the Cultural Heritage chapter of the ES has been amended. It now states that guidance from

English Heritage on the setting of Heritage Assets has also informed the assessments. However, the submitted documents don't demonstrate this; for example, the guidance recommends that having established the assets that will be affected, the next step is to assess whether, how and to what degree the setting makes a contribution to significance. Paragraph 9.4.36 of the ES includes a single sentence describing the building, and a single sentence describing the situation of the building and its views. There is very slight additional information in the appendices under 10C, visual impact tables. However, this only considers visual impacts, which are not the only factors in an assessment of setting. For example, it is acknowledged that in the C17 the Manor House at Norbury had the highest number of hearths recorded within the modern Borough of Stockport, clearly being a very high status building at the time. This wealth largely derived from the settlement and land of the manor, much of which lay to the south of Norbury Hall and will be severely impacted by the road. There is no consideration within the ES of the role of the Norbury Hall site as the focus of the Manor or its relationship with the settlement, and how this contributes to the significance of the building. Nor is there any meaningful analysis of the impact of the scheme on views from and of the building.

I appreciate that detailed assessments would be time consuming for every site affected, but this is the only Locally Listed building significantly affected within this Borough, and I would have hoped for a little more analysis rather than simple presentation of the outcome of assessments. To be fair to the consultants, they have assigned the Hall a 'medium' value, which allows for the possible presence of exceptional qualities and puts the building in the same category as unexceptional Listed Buildings as far as the DMRB is concerned.

The assessment of the options for the junction with the A523 Macclesfield Road appears rather one-sided, as it doesn't include any benefits of the alternative design, such as the reduced impact on the setting and curtilage of Norbury Hall. However, more detailed discussion with project managers has satisfied me that the practical implications of the alternative design (in terms of complexity of land take issues, environmental mitigation, direct impact on residents) are very significant and the reduced impact on the setting of the Hall is virtually its only wider benefit. While I would wish the lesser impact on the Hall to be given due consideration, it seems unlikely that on its own this would be felt to outweigh the other benefits of the favoured option.

The proposed impact therefore appears to be necessary for the completion of the scheme. In accordance with the NPPF the public benefits of the scheme and the potential reduction of these by not having the junction, need to be weighed against the harm. Although the scale of the harm is perhaps

underestimated by the submitted assessment, it is unlikely to be reassessed as being of such a level that it would affect the outcome of that balanced judgement. There is also scope for some reduction of the harmful incursions into the Hall's curtilage when the detail of bunds and other mitigation measures are designed.

I would expect that as part of the mitigation measures secured by the condition recommended by GMAAS, further appropriate investigation of the settlement of Norbury and the site of the Hall, possibly including the building itself, will take place, and the results be disseminated.

I therefore do not object to the application, subject to a condition requiring submission of further details on the physical mitigation measures, and the condition requested by GMAAS.

Public Rights of Way – I am satisfied that the applicant has worked to ensure that where rights of way are severed alternative routes are provided. It is of particular note that efforts will be made to ensure that there is no overall loss of paths as recorded on the definitive map. I would hope to see conditions attached that would ensure that the path network was maintained throughout the term of the development.

Suggested Condition – “Prior to the commencement of each phase of the development, details of the temporary measures to maintain designated and permissive Rights of Way that are affected by the construction work have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The alternative access routes and/or diversions shall be provided in accordance with the approved details, or any subsequent revisions that have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All permanent crossing arrangements for Rights of Way shall be implemented before the road is open to the public unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.”

Director of Public Health- I am the Director of Public Health for Stockport. I also have an acknowledged expertise in transport and health being internationally an Associate Editor of the Journal of Transport & Health, nationally the Co-chair of the Transport & Health Study Group and regionally the Lead DPH for transport and spatial planning for Greater Manchester. I mention these only as evidence of personal expertise and not to imply that these present comments derive from any other office or role than that of DPH for Stockport.

Sustainability Appraisal

I have read, agree with, and will not repeat, the comments of Angie Jukes, the Health & Environment Adviser.

General View of the Scheme:

1. Support
2. Request for a Condition Requiring Implementation of the Complementary Measures by the Opening or Not Long After the Opening of the Road.

This road scheme has been in the planning for all of the 23 years that I have been The Director of Public Health for Stockport – indeed it was already a scheme locally regarded as overdue at the time that I arrived.

I have presented my views on this scheme repeatedly through the time that I have held this office. I have consistently advised that if this road were to be built in a way which allowed the road capacity that it released to be freed up for general traffic then it would have a seriously detrimental effect. The idea then arose of complementary measures to take that capacity and ensure its reuse by sustainable transport modes such as public transport and cyclists. This seemed to me to respond in a constructive way to the advice that I had given. Since this idea emerged I have consistently advised that if the road scheme were to be built with complementary measures it would be beneficial. The scheme as proposed embodies complementary measures. I see these as an essential part of the proposal – essential to the degree that with them the scheme is beneficial and without them it is harmful.

I therefore support the application but request the attachment of a planning condition requiring the complementary measures to be completed to a specified timescale.

I have had some discussions about the drafting of the condition. My original request was for a condition that the complementary measures in the application should be completed by the time the road opens. Where they involve the reuse of roadspace I envisaged that they come into force on the day the road opens – for example bus lane and cycle lane signs could be unveiled at the same time that the tape is cut on the new road.

I understand however that there is still a need for consultation on the detail of the measures and that there might be a preference to carry out some of the work after the new road has opened taking advantage of the consequentially reduced traffic levels. Indeed it has been suggested that the preference might be to carry it out the following summer, when the holiday dip also occurs.

I would still prefer the condition to be that the measures are implemented concurrently with the opening of the road. I appreciate that it would be appropriate to allow leeway in that for reasons of practicality but not to the point at which it would cast doubt on the effectiveness of the condition. It may well be sensible to modify the detail of the complementary measures in the

light of consultation but the consultation must be about detail not about whether the measures are going to happen. If the road opens in Spring it may well be fine to do the work the following Summer but if it opened in Autumn nine months would be a long gap in which traffic would start to become accustomed to the use of the released roadspace and the link between the measures and the new road might become blurred. I do not see the reason to await the holiday season when traffic levels will fall substantially immediately the road is open.

The literature on the health impacts of new road schemes is well (albeit briefly) reviewed in the Health Impact assessment.

I agree with the author of that report that relief roads, new roads in areas of poor transport infrastructure have economic, social and health benefits and additions to unsaturated road infrastructure might have.

I agree with the author of that report that a caveat must be attached that there is controversy about road improvements in areas of established saturated infrastructure and that regard must be had to the work of Downs and of Mogridge, mentioned in section 7.4, which points out that increasing capacity can worsen congestion. This has, of course, been the basis of the advice that I have always given against building this road without complementary measures.

The theory of suppressed demand which is the essence of the work of Mogridge and of Downs is often criticised because people do not see widespread evidence of people abandoning journeys and because temporary improvements in road capacity, such as that which occurs in the school holidays, can result in improved traffic flow. However there is not only suppressed demand for immediate travel but, perhaps more importantly, there is also suppressed demand for relocation, and this takes time to manifest itself.

My personal professional conclusion is that these negative impacts are now well established and the main reason for continuing controversy is the reluctance of certain commercial interests to accept the conclusion and the inertia of professional assumptions.

I would therefore go further than the author of the report in qualifying the first bullet point of para 7.6.1. The report attaches a caveat about an academic controversy. I would go further and make the caveat an exclusion.

Benefits flow from relief roads and from new roads in areas of poor transport infrastructure. However increased road capacity in areas with established

transport infrastructure and saturated road capacity is generally harmful by releasing suppressed demand for relocation and thereby exposing a greater number of people to the equilibrium level of congestion.

The problem is that this road has a mixed nature.

As a new road linking Stockport, Cheshire and Derbyshire to the new Airport City it will bring economic and social benefits. As a relief road it will bring clear health benefits to the areas bypassed. But the road capacity that it releases on Stockport roads will have negative impacts by generating replacement traffic. In order to reap the beneficial effect of the road without the negative impacts it is necessary to seize the increased capacity within Stockport before it fills and assign it to sustainable transport uses such as buses and cycles. This is the reason that I have always advised against building the road unless complementary measures are put in place.

Comments on the Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

1. I think the presentation of quintiles in figures 6.17 and 6.18 of the Health Impact Assessment is based on local quintiles in the area of study. Whilst this is an entirely legitimate analysis it may confuse Stockport councillors who will be used to presentations based on national quintiles.
2. Whilst I acknowledge that I agreed to the level and scope of the HIA I was nonetheless disappointed that it did not include an in depth analysis of the impact on the cohort of residents who were sent consultation letters.
3. The conclusions of the HIA are based on an acceptance of the Transport Assessment and Modelling and Business case being accurate and have not included a sensitivity analysis.
4. Para 2.49 HIA– I assume that I will be consulted about the Health Management Plan referred to in this paragraph.
5. Para 3.12.1 HIA - I agree with the acknowledgment of the limitations of the data but feel that para 3.12.2 might be a bold statement.
6. In general the HIA sets out a picture of the communities from routinely available sources (PHE's Local Authority Profiles and 2011 Census Key Statistics for wards). However despite stating that the impacts will be felt differently by three different communities:
 - Those within 200m
 - Those between 200m-1km
 - Those beyond 1km

There is no assessment of the number of people who live in these zones; neither is there any mapping to describe where these areas are (I've done one – see below).

Analysis of 2011 Census population information at Output Area level would enable these population sizes to be assessed.

My very rough estimate – which would need to be refined, is:

- In Stockport 25 LSOAs in 1km = 25,000-30,000 people
 - In Stockport 4 LSOAs in 200m = 4,000-5,000 people / 13 OAs 2,600-3,900
7. There is also no estimate in the community profile of the number of people with the chronic health conditions most likely to be effected by increased traffic, i.e. number of people with asthma, COPD, depression – data is available from HSCIC at a GP practice level – so an approximation for the area could be reached.
 8. There is also no assessment of levels of physical activity or mental wellbeing in these areas, a key feature of the sustainability
 9. Para 6.1.3 of the HIA has been rendered inaccurate by NHS reorganisation. It might have been useful to list the GP practices, health centres in the vicinity of the scheme and whether they will be adversely impacted during the construction phase and what impact on accessibility will be once the scheme is complete
 10. I note that the data presented in the HIA suggests an overall fall in pollution levels with more receptors showing a decrease than increase. There is no assessment however of how many residents within 200m are likely to experience increase in noise / air pollution / nuisance versus the number experiencing a decrease. Linking the receptor data to the population data suggested above may enable this assessment to be strengthened.
 11. It is noticeable that Section 9 contains numerical data only for road safety impacts and is otherwise generally qualitative.
 12. Para 9.10 says it will make it easier for unemployed people with access to a car or van to get to employment and education opportunities” but a lot of people who are on unemployed or on low income don't own a car
 13. I find it difficult to follow the logic of para 9. 6.2.1; surely an improved ambience for journeys by car to school will increase the attractiveness of the school run. The evidence for a reduced number of road incidents is not stated
 14. The comments about inequalities are not detailed or substantiated.

15. The statement in para 9.11.2 about the impact on the Green Belt is a matter of general opinion on which there will be debate. It is not an expert health comment nor is it sustained by any health analysis.
16. In the section on chronic disease there is no quantification, no mention of relationship to older population, no mention in relationship to children with asthma, no mention of obesity and no mention of hospital admissions. In this list there are both benefits and disbenefits and their omission is unfortunate.
17. It is disappointing that there is no assessment of the impact of pedestrian, cycle and bridle way provisions on the increase in physical activity as this could be a significant benefit of the road.
18. It is especially disappointing that there is no assessment of the benefits to health from complimentary measures.
19. In the section on injury, some local roads are likely to have reduced traffic flows and some could have increased traffic flows. It is said that where traffic is reduced then there is likely to be a reduction in traffic incidents and where there is an increase in traffic flows there is likely to be an increase in road traffic incidents, but account also needs to be taken of the impact of traffic flow on speed. It is not stated which roads fall into each category, how many people see benefit or how many people see loss? The same comment could be made about the section on mental health and the impact of noise.
20. There is no assessment however of how many residents within 200m are likely to experience increase in noise / air pollution / nuisance versus the number experiencing a decrease. Linking the receptor data to the population data suggested above may enable this assessment to be strengthened.
21. There is no statement about the impact of community severance. In fact, as the road runs between communities and there has been meticulous attention to the impact on rights of way, the community severance effect will be much less than for most road schemes and this could have been said.
22. Subject to these comments, and to the comments made in the preceding section, and to the caveat that I have not been able to check all of the analyses, I welcome the HIA as a competent analysis.
23. I would not disagree with any of the additional mitigation measures proposed by the HIA.

Other Comments

24. It is always valuable if roads contribute to wider sustainable transport objectives. That is why I particularly welcome the cycle facilities along the road and the complementary measures. In the same way I welcome the statement that discussion has taken place about bus routes along the road. It isn't clear however what the outcome was.

25. In this connection it is important that the 199 is not re-routed as this would adversely affect the commitment referred to in my next comment and links from Stockport to the Airport.
26. I welcome the commitment of the three Councils to work on a modal shift strategy for the A6 to Derbyshire. This could legitimately be included in the Stockport Health Promise.
27. It would be beneficial to health if steps could be taken to ensure that the employment opportunities benefit disadvantaged areas.
28. The proposal to develop a housing development of 1800 homes at East Handforth has not been considered by any of the assessments and could be disruptive – it represents a further change in the nature and purpose of the road. It should be noted that it might undermine the mitigation measures in Handforth Town Centre although this is a matter for Cheshire East not Stockport.
29. It would have been helpful if the application or one of the assessments had detailed how the scheme fits in with the Manchester Airport Ground Transport Strategy and in particular to the commitments given to Stockport Health Authority as part of the Second Runway HIA (commitments which the Council, as the public health successor body to the health authority, is now the beneficiary).
30. I am conscious that there has been a debate about the adequacy of the cycle provision and particularly the nature of the junctions. I have been copied into correspondence on this matter by cycle groups both in my role as DPH for Stockport and in my role as Chair of the Transport & Health Study Group. I am aware that a great deal of attention has been paid to this matter. There has been a series vulnerable road user group (VRUG) meetings at points during the design process, and two COPECAT (concise pedestrian and cycle audit) reviews undertaken at design freeze 2 and 7 stages. Significant changes have been made as a result. There has been a clear steer that the walking and cycling improvements were to be delivered, and that there needs to be a concerted effort to keep as many opportunities open for the future as possible, in respect of the route alongside the road linking in to the larger public right of way network. There has been considerable thought given to achieving the best balance of surface and the requirements of the different user groups. I normally take the view that it is the job of a Director of Public Health to be dissatisfied and that there is always something more that can be done to improve health. Nonetheless I have not felt it appropriate to add my voice to the demands being made for further improvement of this route.
31. Promotion of the cycle route through destination signage will be necessary, so that which areas can be connected to via the new route is clear to the public. This may possibly include specific locations such as schools

32. There are many road schemes around the country which are ill-considered, will undermine sustainable travel, and will generate traffic that will undermine the very benefits they were intended to deliver. This scheme is not in that category. It is almost unique in the extent to which it has considered and addressed the problems and difficulties of new road construction in saturated road systems.

ANALYSIS

The proposed development seeks consent for the construction of a relief road between the A6 in Stockport and Manchester Airport. The scheme is located within three local authority areas, and as such, the elements of the scheme falling within each authority jurisdiction will be assessed against their own development plan policies. Each local authority has carried out their own consultation and will determine their own application.

Concern has been raised by members of the public that insufficient time was provided for members of the public to comment on the scheme. The LPA exceeded all statutory requirements with regards to the consultation of the application, and whilst comments were requested to be submitted by 5th December 2013, all comments received up until the writing of this report have been included. Members of the public have also been advised that all comments received up until the report being presented to Planning and Regulatory Committee will be considered and reported verbally. Members will appreciate the need for planning applications to be dealt with in a timely manner in accordance with the NPPF and as such, it is not considered that the period for public consultation should be extended.

Need

Objections received from local residents and interested parties have cited that there is no need for the scheme and that the money earmarked for the scheme would better be spent on sustainable transport measures. They further identify that the business case behind the scheme is flawed and that the expected increase in congestion has not materialised. It is further argued that the scheme will not meet with its objectives, and therefore should be refused. Letters of support have also been received which state that the scheme is long overdue, all the remaining SEMMMS schemes should be introduced and that the scheme is vital for the local and regional economy.

On assessment of the submitted application and in taking account of the representations lodged, the A6MARR is considered to be an integral component in the delivery of a twenty year integrated transport strategy for the area which is aimed at addressing transport problems in the locality. The lack of a direct east to west transport link across south-east Greater

Manchester and Cheshire East is contributing to traffic congestion on major and minor roads and resulting in constraints to people and goods which cannot move easily, directly or efficiently. The existing situation is considered to be constraining the local economy, affecting air quality in local areas and reducing access to key destinations. The existing problem needs addressing and A6MARR has been identified as the best solution as part of the overall SEMMMS Strategy.

In 2001 The SEMMMS study identified that traffic congestion was the biggest single problem with the transport system of South East Manchester, and whilst there were many other problems, one of the recommendations of the study was that a road be designed to provide relief for the study area communities.

The A6MARR is considered critical in delivering the long-term objectives of the SEMMMS study and has been designed to alleviate:

- poor connectivity along the south Manchester Corridor;
- congestion on the local and strategic network;
- poor environmental conditions; and
- unsatisfactory conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

Whilst objections have been received which suggest that alternatives to the A6MARR should be implemented such as widening other existing routes and increasing facilities for non-motorised transport and sustainable transport, it is recognised that the A6MARR is only one element/project of the wider SEMMMS and its construction would not prevent or negate any of the other recommendations. It should also be noted that over the past ten years SEMMMS has delivered a range of public transport and sustainable transport measures to local communities across south-east Manchester in accordance with the long-term objective.

Whilst key benefits of the A6MARR would be to deliver improvements in road infrastructure and help to relieve congestion on the current highway network, the proposal would also improve the pedestrian and cycle network through the provision of a new dedicated cycleway/footpath along its entire length and provide links to existing facilities in the area. The retrofitting of a cycleway/footpath to the existing A555 is also supported as a benefit. Despite the objections received, the A6MARR would not adversely affect or jeopardise the delivery of improvements for other non-motorised modes of transport as promoted by the SEMMMS, and which are set out in CS10 of the Core Strategy. The scheme would also play a part in helping achieve the objectives set out in the Local Transport Plan and Greater Manchester Strategy.

Concerns regarding flaws in the proposed business case are not a material consideration in the assessment of the planning application. The role of the Local Planning Authority is to assess the acceptability of the scheme as submitted, and although parts of the community may not agree with the business case, the business case has been through assessment by DfT prior to the submission of the application. With regards to concerns highlighted by objectors that the scheme is not needed as the expected increase in traffic has not materialised, the application has been submitted with a transport assessment which had assessed traffic conditions for a 12 year period from 2000. The proposed assessment of the scheme is therefore being carried out against current relevant data.

The A6MARR has been identified by Central Government as one of a number of nationally important infrastructure projects which are required to revitalize the economy as part of the Governments initiative to 'Keep Britain Moving'.

Members of the public have further advised that this scheme should not implemented without the Poynton Bypass, and as such the scheme is premature. It is considered that the applicant has clearly demonstrated the need for the scheme, as a standalone route, which is supported by the relevant data. The application as a whole provides at length the justification for the current route and how the proposal has been developed. The objections raised, although appreciated, on investigation cannot be supported or justified as a reason for refusal.

Use of Public Money

Objectors to the scheme have cited that public money should not be used for the scheme, however this is not considered to be a matter which can be dealt with through the planning application process. As previously discussed there is considered to be an established need, and the scheme has gained Government Funding. The allocation of funding will therefore not be discussed further.

Development within the Green Belt

Concern has been raised by local residents and interest parties that the proposed route of the scheme would destroy the Green Belt and lead to the corridor of the route being opened up for development. Friends of the Earth further advise that they have concerns that the scheme would attract fracking into the area

The scheme routes through the Green Belt located to the south of Stockport, and as such, an assessment of its acceptability is therefore critical and essential in the determination of the proposal. When considering any

planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt and 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

The NPPF highlights that the Government attaches great importance to the Green Belt with paragraph 87 identifying that 'inappropriate development' is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. The Councils own policies seek to protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development and align with those stated in the NPPF.

The NPPF para. 90 further states that certain forms of development are not inappropriate development provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. The forms of development specified include both 'engineering operation' and 'local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location'.

The applicant has given consideration to whether the proposed development would constitute inappropriate development, and whilst there are strong arguments that the proposal could fall within paragraph 90 of the NPPF, and therefore justification of 'very special circumstance' would not be required, on balance, it was considered that the development as a whole would be harmful to openness and would not safeguard existing areas of countryside from encroachment by definition of development. The applicant has therefore concluded that the development is 'inappropriate development' and as such, provided very special circumstances which they believe outweigh any harm to the Green Belt.

The applicant has cited that:

- the proposed new road facilitates important economic growth;
- building the new road ensure the delivery of key components of SEMMMS; and
- development within the Green Belt is considered to be the only option for the A6MARR component of SEMMMS.

The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, with their essential characteristics being their openness and permanence. Whilst the proposal would result in development within the Green Belt, and as such, the road would have an urbanising impact, concerns relating to the scheme opening up development land cannot be

supported or justified. The NPPF and Council policies are such that further development along the route would be discouraged, and would need to be assessed on their own merits. The philosophy of the scheme is to promote economic growth by providing transport infrastructure, and not to promote development along the route. The scheme is considered to have been sympathetically designed to follow the general contours of land, and is partially located within cuttings, limiting where possible the visual impact above ground. Visual impacts and concerns will however be discussed later in the report.

The proposed scheme has been designed to address existing high levels of congestion on the local road network, and would lead to shorter journey times for all modes of transport and improved road safety, especially for pedestrians and cyclist within the existing residential areas. Existing transport links across south-east Greater Manchester and Cheshire East are contributing to traffic congestion on major and minor roads resulting in inefficient, indirect and difficult movement of people and goods. The existing situation is considered to be constraining the local economy, affecting air quality and limiting access to key destination.

The applicant further explains that the building of the road would deliver a key component of SEMMMS, and whilst not a justification in its own right to allow development in the Green Belt, it is considered to add weight to the argument especially as it supports the Governments initiative to 'Keep Britain Moving' and support the delivery of the Local Transport Plans in the area and Greater Manchester Strategy.

The location of the scheme within the Green Belt has been considered as the only option to facilitate meeting the aims and objectives of the scheme, and providing the required need. A significant proportion of land located towards the south of Manchester is designated Green Belt, and therefore, by definition, any road alignment in the locality to serve the need would be located within the Green Belt. The route of the development has been enshrined in the Councils Development Plan and safeguarded from further development by policy ST2.2.

The main alignment of the route has been carefully considered taking account of the neighbouring communities and existing infrastructure, and whilst unfortunate to be proposed within the Green Belt, there is no viable alternative which would meet the needs of the development.

Having regard to the NPPF and policies GBA1.1 and GBA1.2, and whilst accepting the development should be classed as inappropriate development

due to its impacts, it is considered that the applicant has demonstrated 'very special circumstance' for development in the location.

It is not considered that the development would set a precedent for future development along its corridor, and therefore the remaining Green Belt can be protected in accordance with policy. There is also no evidence that the development could attract fracking into the area.

Taking account of the above, the scheme would represent development which by definition is harmful to the Green Belt, however, due to the very special circumstances identified would not justify refusal of the application. Whilst not being able to mitigate in full the development, the applicant has designed the scheme to be of minimal impact. Further measures with regards to landscaping would also minimise harm within the Green Belt. On balance, the scheme is considered to accord with the NPPF and saved policies GBA1.1 and GBA1.2 of the Stockport UDP review.

Water Environment and Flood Risk

The NPPF, saved Policy EP1.7 and Core Strategy Policies SD-6 and SIE-3 together with SPD Sustainable Design and Construction all seek to ensure development does not impede the risk or flow of flood water or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and that development proposals include measures to safely manage surface water run-off derived from them. They highlight the need to adapt to the impact of climate change and identifies that development on greenfield land must not increase the rate of surface runoff.

The ES contains a detailed assessment of the potential impacts of the development on the water environment including surface waters, groundwater and flood risk. The ES also reports the finding of the Flood Risk Assessment(FRA) which was submitted as part of the application and which assesses the potential risks of flooding to and from the development and identifies the measures to be taken to mitigate and manage any risks arising from the development.

The proposal has been designed to avoid impinging on the floodplain wherever possible, although it is acknowledged this has not been achieved in all cases.

The application also identifies the measures to be adopted to manage surface waters derived from the bypass and to protect groundwaters during both the construction and operational phases. Such measures include the provision of compensatory flood storage areas, construction of a dedicated Sustainable Urban Drainage System(SUDS) to manage surface waters derived from the bypass, realignment of Ox Hey Brook and Norbury Brook, carrying out of all

construction works in accordance with best practice standards and culverting of watercourses which currently cross the proposed alignment of the bypass.

The Environment Agency have confirmed that they have no objections to the development subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions to ensure that the mitigation measures that have been identified as part of the development are secured. This would include limiting the surface water run-off generated by the proposed development so that it will not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site and mitigating and remediation works for dealing with known and unknown contamination. The Councils Environmental Health officer has also assessed the scheme and requested conditions relating to contamination and flood risk be included on any decision notice.

The Environment Agency(EA) have requested further work with regards to the Water Framework Directive be carried out, and as such, the current response from the EA does not cover this element. The applicant has provided the assessment as requested to the Environment Agency, however at the time of writing the report the final response was not available. Members will be updated verbally on the final response from the EA and any potential conditions.

Taking account of the proposed mitigation works included within the application and recommended conditions, it is considered that any potential impacts of the development on the water environment can be satisfactorily addressed and/or managed. The proposed scheme does not give rise to any significant adverse impacts and therefore would not conflict with the objectives or requirements of the relevant policies cited above.

Cultural Heritage

The NPPF and Policies SIE-1 and SIE3 seek to ensure that the impacts of development proposals on heritage assets are assessed and appropriate mitigation measures put forward. The Cultural Heritage chapter of the ES examines Cultural Heritage assets including archaeological and built heritage features together with historic landscapes. The ES has identified that 29 known archaeological assets of low value would be damaged, destroyed, or removed during the construction of the whole scheme.

English Heritage advise that they do not believe that the scheme causes harm to the setting of highly graded listed buildings and that any harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. They further state that the scheme is likely to have direct physical impacts along the route, and that the county archaeologist should be consulted in the preparation of an archaeological mitigation strategy.

Both the Councils Conservation and Heritage Officer and Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) were consulted on the application, both of whom made comment on various aspects. GMAAS concur with the ES that no archaeological remains have been identified which are of potential national significance and that the sites affected by the scheme range from local to regional potential significance and therefore it is acceptable that they can be disturbed by development ground works as long as an appropriate record is made. The ES provides a suite of appropriate mitigation strategies depending on the nature of each site with strategies ranging across evaluation by geophysics and trial trenching, larger-scale targeted archaeological excavations, palaeo-environmental sampling, watching briefs, historic building surveys, post investigation analysis, production of reports detailing the results, deposition of the archive, and publication of the findings in a suitable format with any programme of works being set out in an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation. GMAAS believe that archaeological works should be secured through a condition attached to planning consent.

The Councils Conservation and Heritage Officer raises no objection to the scheme subject to a condition requiring mitigation. They concur with the comments of GMAAS and identify further that the scheme would also (but less directly) affect two 'undesigned heritage assets' within Stockport. The sites are Norbury Hall and Mill Gate Farm. Norbury Hall is on the adopted list of buildings of local architectural and historic interest (Locally Listed), while Mill Gate Farm has an entry on the Historic Environment Record, as a known building of potential interest due to its age.

Although not raising objection, the Conservation and Heritage Officer raises concern with regards to the information provided relating these buildings as the ES focuses on visual impacts and setting. They believe that the study should go further and a detailed assessment of the building carried out. It has been cited that 'in the C17 the Manor House at Norbury had the highest number of hearths recorded within the modern Borough of Stockport, clearly being a very high status building at the time. This wealth largely derived from the settlement and land of the manor, much of which lay to the south of Norbury Hall and will be severely impacted by the road'. Whilst it is acknowledged that Norbury Hall is a Locally Listed Building of great interest, the ES has identified the impacts pertaining to the proposed route of the road and visual impact and setting on the site and building. As the fabric of the building is not being impacted by the development it is not considered appropriate to require the applicant to do a full detailed assessment of the building and it is not considered that further investigation of the settlement of Norbury and site of the Hall is required. To do so would not inform the assessment of the application further, and would not meet the tests of Circular 11/95 in imposing a planning condition. Norbury Hall is also within private

ownership and not within control of the applicant to carry out any works. It is considered that the Local Planning Authority has sufficient information to determine the application and will not be requiring a full assessment of the building by condition, contrary to the recommendations of the Conservation and Heritage Officer.

In accordance with the NPPF the public benefits of the scheme needs to be weighed against any harm. The ES has clearly identified the areas of harm arising from the scheme, and has fully assessed its implications. Whilst the Conservation and Heritage Officer has identified two specific sites of interest, he does acknowledge that further work is unlikely to affect the outcome.

GMAAS supported by the Conservation and Heritage Officer have requested that suitable planning conditions be imposed to ensure that the mitigation measures proposed to be implemented as part of the development are secured and/or that further details of these are required to be submitted for further approval. Such conditions would cover matters including the need to submit and a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI). It is considered that the WSI should include the following:

1. A phased programme and methodology to include:
 - an agreed scope of mitigation for each historic building and archaeological site affected by the scheme, including as appropriate the following elements
 - archaeological evaluation
 - where the above identifies significant remains, targeted archaeological excavation
 - watching brief
 - palaeo-environmental sampling and analysis
 - historic building survey
2. A programme for post investigation assessment to include:
 - analysis of the site investigation records and finds
 - production of a final report on the significance of the heritage interest represented.
3. Provision for archive deposition of the report, finds and records of the site investigation.
4. Dissemination of the results through publication and other media.
5. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved WSI.

It is considered that inclusion of such a condition would provide both GMAAS and the Council opportunity to ensure that such details adequately take into account and address some of the comments and issues raised. The

conditions would also ensure that the necessary excavation works and recording of features encountered during the works are carried out in an acceptable manner and would satisfactorily address the impacts of the development on heritage assets therefore not conflict with the objectives or purpose of the relevant cited paragraphs contained within the NPPF or Policies SIE-1 or SIE-3.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

The NPPF and saved policies NE1.1 and NE1.2 seek to protect sites of nature conservation interest (including SSSI's, SBI's and locally designated sites) and local wildlife and protected species from inappropriate development. Concerns and objections to the scheme have been made by members of the public and interested groups due to the proposed impact on the natural environment, impact on wildlife habitats, ancient woodland, bats, badgers, Great Crested Newts and damage to SBI..

The proposed development although being designed to as far as possible to minimise the impacts on ecology and the natural environment, the development would result in the inevitable loss and severance of a number of different habitats which support a range of flora and fauna. Its alignment would also have impacts upon locally designated sites of nature conservation importance, the most significant of which being Norbury Site of Biological Importance(SBI) and ancient woodland at Carr Wood. The ES submitted in support of this application contains an assessment of the potential impacts of the relief road and identifies mitigation measures that would be incorporated as part of the development to minimise, off-set and compensate for them.

The scheme as proposed would initially result in the loss of 3.5ha of fragmented areas of predominantly woodland, would result in the permanent loss of 0.08ha of ancient woodland at Carr Wood and would introduce a corridor of woodland comprising of 14.5ha of native species.

It is acknowledged in the ES that the loss of ancient woodland as Carr Wood cannot be mitigated, something which the Councils Sustainability Officer has acknowledged and which constitutes a significant effect at Local Level. Due to the nature of ancient woodland there is no mitigation which would outweigh the harm, and as such, members should make a judgement whether the overall benefits of the scheme outweigh the loss of 0.08ha of the ancient woodland.

The ES identifies that significant planting and mitigation is proposed to offset the loss of existing planting and woodland and concludes that following the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures the significance of the pre-mitigation adverse impacts would be reduced. However, due to the nature

of the development it is accepted that some minor adverse impacts would remain even with the proposed mitigation measures in place.

The ES includes full assessment with regards to protected species and habitats. There has been much discussion between the applicant, the Councils Nature Development Officer and the Greater Manchester Ecological Unit during the application process, and whilst there remain some areas of concern with regards to protected species, it is considered that there is sufficient information provided by the applicant to enable the determination of the application. Although not generally questioning the surveys undertaken or the outcomes of those surveys, clarification of how the findings have been reported appear to of needed clarification. GMEU and the Councils Nature Development Officer are generally satisfied that any outstanding matters could be fully conditioned.

The scoping opinion issued for the application identified all of the fauna which needed to be assessed based on evidence held by the Local Authorities. As can be imagined, a scheme of such scale attracted a wide range of species. The ES has assessed the impact upon:

- Badgers
- Bats
- Otters
- Hedgehogs
- Brown Hares
- Great Crested Newts
- Common Toads
- Common reptiles
- Kingfishers; and
- Breeding birds

Badgers

Detailed information regarding the location of badger sets has been made available to the Local Planning Authority for the determination of the application. This information is confidential relating to the protection of the species under the Protection of Badgers Act and as such has not been released to the general public.

The studies and surveys carried out along the whole route identified:

- 3 main setts;
- 2 annex setts;
- 3 subsidiary setts; and
- 13 outlier setts

Additional evidence of badger activity was also recorded including snuffle holes (indicating foraging areas, latrines (making edge of territories), runs and paw prints (commuting routes) and hairs on fences.

It is noted that the proposed scheme could result in potential loss or injury of badgers during construction works by virtue of inadvertent encroachment of individuals into the construction area. In addition, should planning permission be granted for the main alignment there would be certain loss of one main sett and six outlier setts. There would also be potential for disturbance of a main sett, two annex setts and five outlier setts outside of the main working areas as a result of construction activities.

The ES identifies mitigation measures to both avoid potential death, injury or disturbance during construction and to mitigate the loss of the main sett.

The applicant proposes that in mitigation for the loss of the main sett, an artificial sett would be formed and the existing sett would be closed, both of which would require a license from Natural England.

Concern was raised by the Councils Nature Development Officer that the data provided appears to indicate that the scheme would destroy two main setts, and yet only one is to be mitigated. On closer inspection of the reports, the reports have confirmed that whilst the presence of two main setts were found in 2010, a subsequent survey in 2013 identified that it had been abandoned and therefore there was no requirement to provide for two artificial setts or include additional mitigation in the form of mammal tunnels. The determination must therefore be made on the understanding that one sett would be lost and mitigation provided. The applicant is proposing that all findings would be clarified by additional field surveys prior to construction. Construction would therefore occur against up to date knowledge of habitats.

Natural England has raised no objections to the scheme, and it is considered that the applicant has satisfactorily clarified the position with regards to badgers. Whilst unfortunate that the scheme impacts on the badger population, it is considered inevitable on such a large site, and that the mitigation proposed and protection afforded to them under Act would result in an acceptable outcome. It is therefore recommended that conditions are placed on any decision notice to require the mitigation works as proposed.

Bats

The survey work for bats has identified that along the whole route there would be a loss of 35 trees which have bat roosting potential, there would be disruption to the population as a result of construction related noise and vibration, disturbance of known and potential roost sites and severance of

commuting routes. The ES has identified that the scheme would have a potentially significant effect on local pipistrelle populations by virtue of loss and fragmentation of established roosts and habitat and severance of established commuting corridors and access to roosts.

Design and construction measures have been incorporated into the proposed scheme in light of the impacts, and mitigation measures proposed.

Concern was raised by both GMEU and the Councils Nature Development Officer with regards to the potential impact of the lighting scheme on the bat population to inform the location of potential bat hops. The applicant in their response made reference to the locations within the report that the information was available, and have clarified that given the location of the proposed scheme within the urban fringe where there is significant existing light pollution that there is unlikely to be a significant effect upon bats as a result of lighting. The lighting scheme as included within the application is constrained to the junctions as required by safety requirements. The location of bat hops has been informed by the presence of existing vegetation on site and the applicant has stated that they will endeavour to place bat hops as close as possible to the original vegetation line.

Further concern was raised that the bat survey did not cover all structures impacted by the scheme, and that the survey had not assessed the building to be lost. The applicant has clearly stipulated that all structures (buildings and bridges) that lie along the route of the scheme have been assessed and have not identified any that are suitable for bat roosts. They were therefore scoped out of roost survey.

The conclusions and mitigation measures as proposed are considered to reduce any negative impacts on bats such that they will not be significant. The information available is considered appropriate to enable determination of the scheme, with conditions attached to any planning permission requiring the mitigation measure to be implemented, and where required, additional surveys carried out.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

The scheme as a whole would result in the permanent loss of 8 ponds occupied by Great Crested Newts, the loss of terrestrial habitats including grassland and hedgerows and the fragmentation of habitat.

There is also a risk that GCN and common toad may be killed during clearance works as they use the habitat to forage and find refuse. As a linear structure, the proposed scheme will split hedgerows and grasslands preventing breeding migrations.

The ES has identified mitigation to reduce impacts of the proposed scheme including:

- Ring fencing ponds(if works proceed in the GCN breeding season Feb - June);
- Catching and moving common toad;
- Creation of new ponds;
- Fencing of the working width of the scheme;
- Vegetation manipulation;
- Recording of number of animals caught; and
- Works undertaken under licence from Natural England.

Concern was initially raised by GMEU and the Councils Nature Development Officer regarding data provided. The applicant provided further clarification to both parties which has been accepted. The main outstanding matter is concern by both parties that some of the surveys were carried out when temperatures are regarded as too low. They do however state that *'implications from a planning perspective are probably not critical as we can cover any shortfalls in the survey through pre-cautionary measures'*.

The applicant has further advised that *'Due to seasonal constraints in early 2013 some surveys were undertaken in sub-optimal temperatures, but yet within the accepted survey window, and it is therefore important for the ecologists who are undertaking the survey works to use their experience and judgement in whether the conditions are a constraint. We believe the nature of the guidance with regard to surveying in mid-April to mid-May allows for surveys as we have undertaken and we do not consider it necessary to amend our conclusions or mitigation proposals as a result'*.

Taking account all of the data available, the mitigation measures proposed and the ability to undertake further surveys to protect the species it is considered that there is sufficient evidence to undertake a full assessment of the impact.

It is considered that the mitigation measures proposed are acceptable taking account of the impact, and planning conditions should be attached to any planning decision ensuring the mitigation is implemented. Natural England will also be fully involved in the process due to the requirement for GCN to be moved under license.

Breeding Birds

The removal of trees, scrub, hedgerow and other habitat will risk killing breeding birds or damaging nests. The applicant has therefore advised that

any habitats to be lost would be cleared outside of the breeding bird season. Areas where there are GCN habitat, clearance is proposed outside of the nesting season with handtools.

Any clearance work to be undertaken within the bird nesting season would require the habitats to of first been netted and an ecologist to be onsite during works.

Standard practice relating to breeding birds is to condition the timings of the clearance works and/or ensuring the habitats are netted. It is considered that breeding birds will not be impacted due to mitigation.

Otters

With regard to Otter, a report in January 2012 identified that a potential resting site is present along the route of the scheme, at Lady Brook. A camera trapping survey was carried out, however, as stated within the ES, a 3 month survey provided no evidence of otter on the proposed scheme.

No mitigation is therefore proposed.

Barn Owl

With regard to Barn Owl, it has been presented within the Environmental Statement that a Barn Owl has been identified during survey works and as a result the applicant has proposed additional planting in the form of a low-flight prevention screen along the section of the scheme near Woodford Road. The Councils Nature Development Officer raised concern that the location of the siting was not recorded in the application, and clarification on this matter has been provided.

The screen will comprise a hedgerow planted on the roadside 2m from the edge of the carriageway and grown to 3m in height to prevent low flight of barn owls over the carriageway. This installation of the low flight screen in the Woodford Road area would be secured through the imposition of a planning condition.

Based on the information provided, it is considered that the mitigation measures for the Barn Owl are acceptable.

Kingfisher

A Kingfisher breeding site was found 10m from the proposed scheme crossing at Lady Brook. The site would be disturbed by the construction works, and with the Kingfisher being a shy species it may not fish or breed in areas of disturbance. Noise, vibration and visual disturbance from movement

of people and machinery would be a significant source of disturbance to the species.

Once the scheme is open for use, continued movement along the watercourse would be available and the movement of cars and people through and around the scheme is unlikely to deter continued use. The breeding burrow as identified would be closed prior to site clearance, and further survey works proposed prior to commencement. Although the loss of the burrow is unfortunate, there are further burrows and habitats available throughout the adjacent habitat.

Brown Hare

GMEU provided evidence of one record of brown hare along the study area, however, no individuals were observed during species surveys in 2011 and 2013. The status of the brown hare is therefore uncertain. The applicant's ecologists have undertaken ecological surveys on the route of the proposed scheme for hundreds of days of input since 2011 on all of the surveys which support the application. All of the ecologists undertaking the surveys are experienced in the signs of Brown Hare, and yet none have recorded any sightings. It is noteworthy therefore that no Brown Hare have been identified.

The applicant also advises that the habitat is unlikely to be suitable for the Brown hare, and for these reasons it was scoped out of the assessment.

Water Voles

Following the Phase 1 survey it was deemed that suitable habitats for water vole were not present along the entire scheme corridor and no field signs had been identified. For this reason the need for surveys was scoped out of the assessment.

Whilst both GMEU and the Councils Nature Development Officer raised initial concerns with regards to the scheme, the applicant has provided clarification on many of the points raised, and whilst further surveys may be required on specific species, it is considered that an appropriate level of detail has been provided to assess the impact of the scheme and enable conditions to be included on an planning permission. The mitigation measures as proposed in the ES address some of the more detailed concerns.

Subject to such conditions, it can be concluded that appropriate provision has been made to minimise, mitigate and compensate for the impacts arising from the development and these would help to reduce the significance of the impacts of the development to an acceptable level. Therefore the development would not be contrary to the general principles of the development plan policies identified above.

Landscape and Visual Impact

Policies LCR1.1 and SIE-3 seek to protect the open countryside, landscape character and visual amenity of the local landscape from inappropriate forms of development.

Concern has been raised by local residents that the scheme would unduly impact on the character and visual appearance of the area and detrimentally impact on view and property values.

No one is entitled to a view, and therefore comments regarding individual loss of view are not a material consideration in the assessment of a planning application, however, the impact on the open countryside, landscape character and visual amenity are.

With regard to property values, they are not a material consideration in the assessment of a planning application, and as such cannot be considered.

The ES contains a detailed consideration of the impacts of the A6MARR on the landscape and visual amenity of the area. The nature of such a development is always going to have an impact, and it is accepted that a dual carriageway would give rise to inevitable visual impacts on the local landscape. The ES has included assessment of the scheme from visual receptors.

The proposed scheme would generally integrate into the receiving landscape, although there would be localised impacts to landscape character which would remain significant in the longer term. The most adverse would be:

- North of Norbury Brook;
- Where the proposed scheme crosses Ladybrook Valley;
- At Bramhall Oil terminal; and
- At the West Coast Mainline.

The assessment has concluded that the effect on landscape character would be significant in the short term, remaining so into the medium to long term. Adverse and long term visual impacts would occur to two receptors at the southern end of Old Mill Lane, with moderate to large adverse effects to 13 residential receptors in the longer term during the winter, reducing to 6 in the summer.

A single public right of way would receive long-term visual impacts, with an additional 3 receiving moderate adverse impacts.

As a result of impacts, a range of mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design and layout of the bypass as well as measures proposed such as landscaping and planting which (once mature) would help to integrate the development into the local landscape. Street lighting along the route is also proposed to only be restricted to those areas where it is considered necessary for highway safety reasons (e.g. at all junctions) with the approach aiming to ensure that there is a reasonable balance between the need to maintain highway safety whilst protecting the visual amenity of the area from excessive night-time light pollution.

English Heritage have made no detailed comments on the scheme and the Councils Arboricultural and Habitat Officer has advised that there is a need for improved landscaping design to include a detailed landscaping scheme that includes a greater number of new trees to improve the amenity and aesthetics of the site, making sure a high percentage of these are native large species, as well as increased native hedgerows at every opportunity.

Such elements of detailed design can satisfactorily be achieved by the imposition of planning conditions and would provide an opportunity for the Local Planning Authority to ensure that such details adequately take into account and address some of the comments and issues raised by those bodies/organisations as well as consultees and objectors. For example, a condition relating to the proposed street lighting details would ensure that all lighting associated with the development is restricted to only that which is necessary for purpose and therefore minimise the impacts of glare and light spillage on the local landscape and amenity of local residents (in accordance with policy SIE-3). Landscape conditions would ensure that the proposals are appropriate in terms of character of the area and would, in time, help to integrate the development into the landscape in accordance with the principles of SIE-3 and LCR1.1.

Concern has been raised by residents with regards to the impact on the visual amenity of the area from bridges with many advising that the scheme should be put in a cutting. As you will appreciate, the proposal does proceed through cuttings at various points along its route, and the applicant in their submission has provided full details with regards to options considered and why particular options have been proposed. Although the submitted information for the design of bridges and structures is generally considered acceptable, a planning condition should be attached to any planning permission requiring details of the final design of the bridges and their finishes to be submitted for formal approval of the authority. This would ensure that their design, scale and appearance are appropriate and that the development does not adversely detract or impact upon the setting or character of the area.

Overall, whilst the proposal would have an inevitable adverse impact on the visual appearance of the existing landscape, the A6MARR and its benefits are considered to be of strategic importance for the area and, on balance, any adverse impacts on the local landscape are outweighed by the benefits the development would have in terms of contributing towards the continued and future economic success and growth of the area and the reduction in congestion on the existing highway network. Whilst the long-term visual impacts cannot be entirely mitigated or off-set it is considered that appropriate measures have been proposed which could be secured as part of the development which would, in time, help to minimise and reduce the significance of these impacts. Consequently, subject to the imposition of conditions the development is considered acceptable and would broadly not conflict with the relevant planning policies identified above.

Community and Residential Amenities

Noise

Policies SIE-3 and CDH1.2 seek to ensure that development proposals take into account the character, appearance and amenities of neighbouring land and do not adversely affect the amenities of residents. SIE-3 reflects the general amenity protection policies and states that development proposals should not adversely affect or give rise to pollution by virtue of factors such as noise, dust or vibration.

Objections have been received from local residents living close to the proposed A6MARR route with the main focus of these objections being the potential impacts resulting from increased traffic noise, reduction in air quality and visual impacts from the development, together with increased congestion. The concerns have been received both from individual properties, interested parties as well as concern with regards to Queensgate Primary School which bounds with the proposal.

The ES covers in full impacts of the scheme relating to noise and vibration and air quality and the Councils Environmental Health department has assessed the scheme and made comments.

In all cases the ES identifies the magnitude of these impacts and, where appropriate, identifies the mitigation measures to be adopted to minimise and off-set these.

In respect of noise and vibration, potential impacts identified include those associated with both the construction phase and from traffic using the A6MARR once it is operational/in use. Noise impacts associated with the construction of the relief road are largely associated with the movement of

plant and machinery and general construction activities (e.g. excavation, drilling, engine noise, etc.). Although the exact construction methods have yet to be determined, the ES states that the impacts associated with these activities could be satisfactorily addressed through the adoption of good site management practices including regular maintenance of plant and machinery, programming of works so as to limit working to normal hours of working, etc. The EHO has raised no objection to the development but recommends that further details of the measures to be adopted to minimise and reduce any noise be agreed as part of the 'Construction Environmental Management Plan' which could be secured by way of a condition. This approach would enable the Local Planning Authority to ensure that appropriate measures are adopted to minimise the potential impacts on residents living close to the development.

In terms of the impacts associated with traffic noise once open, the ES identifies that 85% of properties within the study area would experience a negligible/minor noise impact, with 11% anticipated to experience a moderate/major increase to traffic noise.

Dwellings which are predicted to experience a major adverse impact are generally located in close proximity of the proposed scheme, principally around southern areas of Cheadle Hulme and Bramhall, southern extent of Heald Green, south of Norbury Moor, southern Wythenshawe north western areas of Handforth and north western areas of Poynton.

Dwellings which would experience decreases in traffic noise are located in the southern Heald Green Area, Woodford Road and Chester Road at Woodford, the A6 between Hazel Grove and High Lane, and Moss Nook.

It should be noted, that without the proposed scheme, the majority of receptors are predicted to experience a negligible increase in traffic noise.

Along the entire route there are 55 residential properties which may potentially qualify for noise insulation under the Noise Insulation Regulations 1975(Amended 1988) based on the modelling and predicted noise levels.

Mitigation measures have been proposed and incorporated into the design of the scheme including the use of low noise surfacing and construction of noise embankments and barriers along the route. Due to the alignment of the scheme some sections of the route would also be situated in cuttings and therefore the associated embankments would help to provide noise screening along these sections. To ensure that these proposed mitigation measures are suitable and effective, conditions would be placed on any decision requiring further details to be submitted for approval of the Local Planning Authority in

consultation with Environmental Health. These conditions would require the applicant to identify the locations and specification of noise barriers and low noise surfacing to be used along the route and details of the locations and heights of the noise/landscape screening bunds.

In respect of concerns on the visual impacts of the development (including from street lighting) the measures proposed to mitigate and minimise these have already been discussed and would be addressed through the carrying out of landscape planting, construction of screen embankments restricting street lighting to only those areas where it is necessary and use of directional lighting.

Conditions have been recommended to secure the specific details of these matters and would be appropriate to satisfactorily address these concerns.

Air Quality

In respect of impacts on air quality the ES has identified the potential risks and impacts associated with the A6MARR. Concern has been raised by local residents with regards to potential increase in pollution and reduction in air quality at both residential properties and at Queensgate School.

The assessments have concluded that approximately 79% of receptors within the study area are predicted to experience a reduction in annual mean NO₂ 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 NO₂.

Adverse and beneficial changes in NO₂ concentrations are greater than the upper guideline bands provided in the guidance. However, the number of receptors in exceedance benefiting from the scheme outnumber those adversely affected by a factor of over 20.

The large, medium and small improvement in annual average NO₂ objective exceedances at 548, 446 and 3033 receptors respectively, compared with the large, medium and small adverse changes of 95, 49 and 31 receptors respectively. Consequently, far more receptors which are already in annual average NO₂ objective exceedance will benefit from the scheme than will be adversely affected by it.

The study shows that 83% of sensitive receptors either benefit or are unchanged in terms of PM₁₀ particulates as a result of the implementation of the proposed scheme.

With existing guidance on long term trends, adverse and beneficial changes associated with the scheme will continue over extended periods.

The applicant proposes a suite of proposed mitigation measures and focus on the mitigation of dust during the construction phase. Good site management practices would be adopted to minimise the incidence and impacts of dust and should form part of the wider 'Construction Environmental Management Plan' which would be required by condition.

The predicted increase in pollutants, and taking account of the strong bias towards beneficial reductions compared to adverse increase, it is considered that the proposal scheme would overall be beneficial in relation to levels of NO₂ and PM₁₀'s arising from the scheme.

Objectors to the scheme, and especially relating to Queensgate School have identified that PM_{2.5} levels should have been assessed in the ES. The assessment of PM_{2.5} levels is not a statutory requirement, and although it may be considered to be good practice, the evaluations of PM_{2.5} are usually based upon a percentage contribution of PM₁₀ values. PM₁₀ values in the vicinity of the scheme are approximately 50% of the Air Quality Standard, and on no affected links are PM₁₀ concentrations greater than 30ug/m³.

In conclusion, whilst the concerns and objections of local residents are noted it is considered that appropriate mitigation measures (where feasible) can be adopted which would help to minimise the adverse impacts of the development to within acceptable standards and levels. Therefore, on balance, the development is considered to accord with SIE-3.

Impacts on Agriculture and Other Land-Uses

Concerns have been raised that the proposed scheme would involve the loss of a substantial amount of agricultural and recreational land which should be protected. The Councils Health and Environment Advisor also sought clarifications with regards to the potential for loss of best and most versatile land. Saved Policy GBA2.1 (Protection of agricultural land) of the Stockport UDP emphasises that development which involves the permanent loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land(Grades 1,2 or 3a) will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the agricultural value of the land is outweighed by other factors. On assessment of the data, it would appear that the route of the scheme is classified as grade 3 with some areas of grade 4. There is an area classified as grade 2 (within the Cheshire East Council boundary) located south of Norbury Brook. However, this area will not be lost as part of the proposed development.

The ES confirms that the majority of the route is agricultural land, with 23 agricultural holding being impacted by the scheme, the majority of which has a land classification of 3, with some areas of grade 4 to be lost.

Whilst unfortunate that the delivery of the scheme would lead to the loss of grades 3 (and 4) agricultural land, the proposed development within the specified corridor is considered to be the only option for the A6MARR road component of the SEMMMS. Within this corridor, options for the alignment of the proposed road have been carefully considered, including junction arrangements and impacts on neighbouring communities. It is considered that there is no viable alternative route for the proposed road that avoids passing through areas of grade 3 (and 4) agricultural land.

Objections to the scheme have been received from interested parties whose land and/or business would be impacted by the scheme. The applicant has been in close discussions with all interested parties affected, and on the main, have reached satisfactory outcomes. There are however a number of concerns outstanding, the majority of which relate to proposals to provide continued access to land but perhaps not always to the level wanted by landowners.

The ES identifies 21 individual commercial properties and 16 residential properties along the entire route which would be subject to landtake which would compromise, but not preclude existing use. One property, a Kitchen Showroom and Outbuildings at Woodford Road sits on the main alignment of the scheme. Whilst unfortunate that the building would be lost, the current commercial tenants took the tenancy of the building in the knowledge of the forthcoming planning application. The building is not considered of merit to require refusal of the application for its retention.

Properties along the route have identified individual site circumstances to enable the future release of land along the route for housing. As previously mentioned, it is not the intention that the location of the scheme would open up development land or land for future housing development. It is therefore advised that should any landowners wish to pursue this matter it should be taken through due process and not attached to this planning application. The application before you is to assess the acceptability (or not) of the proposed scheme, and not to look at future development which may or may not be forthcoming.

Sport England has highlighted both statutory and non-statutory objections to the scheme taking account of the impact of the scheme on Woodford recreation land, Moorend Golf Course and Hazel Grove Golf Courses. The applicant has further provided a response to Sport England on these matters,

however Sport England have further advised that they maintain their objection. Discussions are therefore on-going with Sport England at the time of writing the report. Members will be updated verbally at committee on the latest position, however should take the following information into account.

Sport England have objected to the scheme on the grounds that there would be a loss of facilities and an area of 7,442m² at Woodford Recreation Ground due to the construction of the exit slip road heading east on the A555 as it approaches Woodford Road, Bramhall.

It should be noted that whilst there is a reduction in size to the recreation area, the scheme would only result in the change in the position and size of the existing pitches, and not the loss of the pitches. The pitches are proposed to be remarked to ensure the facilities remain, and the differences between the existing and proposed pitches are negligible. It should be noted that existing pitches are not compliant to FA standards and it is not proposed to replace the pitches in compliance with FA requirements.

The table below highlights the existing, proposed and the FA standards.

Pitch Number	Existing size	Proposed size	FA standards
1 (this pitch will not be moved)	L89.7m x W58m	L89.7m x W58m	FA recommended for a Senior and Youth (U17/U18) pitch size is L100m x 64m (without run-off), which is larger than the previous standard.
2	90.6m x 58.3m	90.1m x 59m	
3	90.1 x 58.9m	90.1 x 59m	
4	88 x 56m	88 x 56m	

Sport England also raised concern regarding the location of the existing cricket pitch, however the applicant has advised that the existing location will not be altered.

The responses of the applicant provided to date to the matters raised by Sport England are considered appropriate, and would not lead to a net loss in pitch provision. It is considered that whilst an area of recreation land would be lost, the applicant has ensured that there is no net loss of formal playing pitches, and therefore all existing facilities are retained.

With regards to Moorend Golf Course, this site has a long history of temporary planning permission for use as a golf course due to being located along the

safeguarded route for the A6MARR. The applicant was well aware of the temporary nature of the planning permissions granted, with the most recent temporary planning permission having expired without the applicant complying with the planning conditions. The Local Planning Authority has therefore take steps under The Town and Country Planning Act to rectify this in accordance with its duty.

The driving range at the golf course will not be affected by the proposed development.

The second non statutory objection relates to Hazel Grove Golf Course. The application clearly identifies that the proposed development would not result in the loss of any of the playing holes at Hazel Grove Golf Course. As such, it is not considered that an objection relating to loss of recreational facilities could be sustained.

It is considered inevitable that a scheme of such magnitude would require a substantial amount of landtake, and whilst unfortunate that some recreational land would be lost, it is considered that the route of the scheme has been designed as far as possible to reduce the impact. Whilst members of the public may have ideas of how the scheme could have better been aligned, the scheme as submitted is considered to be acceptable. Furthermore it is considered that the wider benefits of the A6MARR scheme justify the loss of land along the route.

Members need to balance the concerns of Sport England, the fact that all pitches would be replaced and the overall benefits of the scheme. If Sport England maintain their objection, the scheme would need to further be referred to the Secretary of State due to the statutory objection,

Congestion and Transport Implications

Concern has been raised by objectors that the proposed scheme is flawed, that the scheme should not gain planning permission or be implemented as the impacts are too great and there is no need for the scheme. Specific highway matters relating to detail design have also been raised by members of the public. The element relating to need has been covered at the start of the analysis section, it is not therefore considered necessary to reiterate these comments.

The application as submitted has been accompanied by a full Transport assessment which has taken account of the proposed scheme and potential impacts.

The strategic highway traffic modelling carried out in relation to the Relief Road has been carried out using the SATURN modelling software, an industry approved tool for area wide modelling. SATURN (Simulation and Assignment of Traffic to Urban Road Networks) is a model which predicts route choices and resulting traffic flows on road networks, based on the generalised costs of travel. The model was developed jointly between Transport for Greater Manchester and consultants and was created to cover three periods of the day, 0700-1000, 1000-1600 and 1600-1900. The model is fully compliant with national guidance, and has been validated and subjected to review by the Department for Transport as part of the business case for the scheme. The A6MARR scheme has secured entry level approval from the Government.

Concern has been raised by local that data for 2032 has not been provided for the scheme, and whilst the business case assessment for the scheme has included upto 2032, traffic modelling has not been provided. Due to the overall philosophy of the scheme, the applicant has primarily used modelling to predict traffic movement in the forecast opening year of 2017. The overarching SEMMMS Philosophy is not to provide a road intended to release development opportunities, it being to, inter alia, stimulate local economic growth, reduce congestion in local areas and improve transport links, accessibility and safety. Whilst it is typical practice to produce a model for a design year 15 years post opening, this would not accord with the overall SEMMMS strategy. The data provided is considered to be acceptable to enable the application and its impacts to be determined in accordance with policy.

The A6MARR has been designed in accordance with 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges'(DMRB) documents, and whilst the majority of the scheme meets with standards, there are a few junctions which incorporate variations to standards, and, as such, would require relevant 'Departures from Standard' from the overseeing authority (Stockport MBC as Local Highway Authority).

Detailed assessment of the scheme shows that design of the scheme on the existing section of the A555 between the A34 and B5358 would require a Departure from Standard. The proposed layout is an over-provision compared to standard, and is reflective of the relative close proximity between existing junctions.

Spath Lane over-bridge constrains the provision of a ghost-island diverge (or parallel) at the proposed westbound taper diverge at the A34 Handforth Bypass junction. It should provide adequate queuing capacity within the confines of the slip road but requires a Departure from Standard.

The Councils Highway Engineer has assessed the proposed scheme in detail, looking at each of the proposed junctions within Stockport and has taken account proposed mitigation measure. Whilst there is an exceptional level of detail included within the Highway Engineers comments, this is not unsurprising on a scheme of this size.

Comments on each of the proposed junctions and alignment are included with the consultation section of the report. All the comments of the Highway Engineer will therefore not be reiterated in this section, however have been fully considered in the assessment.

The Highway Engineer has concluded that the design of the scheme has had due regard to relevant DMRB Standards and assuming Departures can be obtained from the Overseeing Authority, the A6MARR will be fully in accordance with design requirements and standards.

The local junction modelling assessment confirms that the A6MARR scheme is able accommodate 2017 future year traffic forecasts and is in-line with the SEMMMS design philosophy and strategy recommendations for a more appropriate scale road proposal to provide relief to local communities affected by inappropriate through traffic, but not to provide a new strategic route of regional and potentially national significance.

The A6MARR would improve access to south-east Manchester and Cheshire East, result in less traffic on local roads providing for a safer environment and shorter journey times for vehicular traffic.

A package of Mitigation and Complementary Measures are proposed to address the predicted change in traffic flow on the local highway network. The Director of Public Health, whilst supporting the proposed scheme, has done so on the understanding that mitigation measures and complementary mitigation measures are secured and implemented. The aim of these measures is to ameliorate the scheme's impact on local communities where there are predicted to be traffic increases and to seek opportunities to encourage walking, cycling and public transport use in general and where there are predicted to be reductions in traffic flow.

Whilst mitigation measures are proposed as part of the application, it is expected that following the issue of any planning approval, further extensive consultation would be required to ensure that the mitigation measures as proposed are acceptable and fully consulted upon with the general public. It is reasonably anticipated that most mitigation measures would be implemented prior to the opening of the A6MARR, although some of the complementary measures on the existing highway network would be best

placed to be completed once the scheme is operational, thereby reducing impact on the network further. The comments of the Director of Public Health are supported, and any planning conditions requiring mitigation will be time limited.

Concerns highlighted during public consultation focussed on the potential impacts and mitigation for the A6 at High Lane. They also raised concern that the A6MARR as a whole should not be being considered without a bypass to High Lane too.

The traffic modelling predicts significant increases in traffic flow by up to 30% on the A6 through High Lane, both in terms of background traffic growth and the reassignment of longer distance traffic as a result of the introduction of the A6MARR. There is also the potential risk of increased traffic flows on Windlehurst Road.

The A6 Buxton Road is part of the National Primary Route Network and performs an important role for the Greater Manchester City Region carrying a mix of general and freight traffic from the Peak District and beyond into Greater Manchester and providing a strategic link between Greater Manchester and North Derbyshire. Extensive improvements have already been undertaken however the constant high level of traffic movement creates a potentially intimidating environment for vulnerable road users. The nature of the A6 through High Lane means that it is neither possible nor desirable to significantly increase network capacity along this corridor thus it is considered that the package of measures on the A6 corridor through High Lane should focus on improving non-motorised user facilities.

Initially the applicant advised that they were proposing to include the following mitigation for the A6 at High Lane:

- cycle lanes on sections of the A6 between Hazel Grove and New Mills Newtown where practicable;
- a new pedestrian refuge on the A6 Buxton Road at Wellington Road;
- a new Puffin crossing on the A6 Buxton Road outside the Church/ War memorial in High Lane;
- new uncontrolled pedestrian crossings with refuge islands on Windlehurst Road;
- a new pedestrian refuge on the A6 Buxton Road West outside Lyme Park to link bus stops and the park entrance; and
- a new cycle link between Disley and High Lane/ Poynton through Lyme Park.

However, following a second phase of pre-application consultation, further analysis was carried out with the strategic A6MARR SATURN highway model. This identified residual junction 'hot-spots' following completion of the A6MARR scheme as well as junctions expected to receive congestion relief. On the basis of this evidence it was determined that enhanced measures were required along the A6 corridor.

The enhanced mitigation measures seek to:

- better manage traffic flows for local residents at the A6 Buxton Road/ Windlehurst Road junction through a local junction improvement scheme;
- limit the attractiveness of the A6 to longer distance traffic which would otherwise switch from other cross-county routes with the A6MARR in place. This will be achieved through a combination of gateway treatments and reduced speed limits.

Traffic modelling of the A6MARR with the original mitigation predicted an increase in traffic of up to 30% on the A6 through High Lane, however taking account of the introduction of enhanced mitigation measures the impact markedly reduces this increased traffic flow to between 11% and 16%.

Much of the discussion from residents in High Lane is that they do not believe that the measure as proposed would reduce the potential impact to such a degree. Whilst there may be some scepticism from the public, the traffic modelling and impacts have been verified, and as such members should balance the data before them, especially taking account of the benefits of the wider scheme.

It has also been cited by objectors that the applicant should introduce a 30mph limit on the A6 prior to the determination of the application to prove whether or not the mitigation would work. Whilst the concerns are appreciated, the mitigation measure would only be required if the A6MARR were to be introduced, and therefore the introduction of a 30mph speed limit prior to the determination of the application would not inform the application.

In addition, it should also be noted that without the A6MARR, growth on the A6 would be expected on the corridor between the M60 and Disley.

With the A6MARR in place, the A6 through Hazel Grove and Stockport Town Centre is predicted to experience reduced traffic levels (below 2009 base year levels), resulting in journey times over this section of A6 markedly improving.

Therefore whilst there may be some junction delay at particular locations on the A6, through High Lane and further at Disley, these delays are considered to be more than offset by reduced junction delays elsewhere along the A6.

Accessibility and movement for non-motorised users

Alongside road construction, an essential part of the SEMMMS strategy, and by definition for the A6MARR is promoting and improving accessibility and movement for non-motorised users. The focus is on encouraging modal choice, reducing journey times and improving safety of those most vulnerable.

There is an extensive network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways in the vicinity of the proposed A6MARR scheme alignment, a number of these are near to or will be affected by the road construction.

A comprehensive survey of non-motorised users on routes altered or impacted by the A6MARR scheme was undertaken by TfGM to establish indicative levels of use for each route. There is a broad spectrum of users and for differing purposes, both for formal in terms of commuter trips or informal/recreational. The amenity value of these routes is high and needs to be retained.

Concern has been raised by a local resident with regards to the absence of provision for non-motorised users at the A6MARR/ Realigned A6 Junction. This is a matter which the Highways Engineer has also raised, however, following discussion with the applicant it is considered that a minor amendment in this location would provide for the facility.

The proposal delivers a comprehensive package of pedestrian and cyclist improvements in the form of maximising the provision of controlled crossing facilities and other crossing facilities at strategic junction and on the adjoining network alongside provision of a shared footpath/cycleway/bridleway along the full extent of the A6MARR. The design of the route and crossing facilities are in accordance with relevant DMRB Standards and will deliver shorter journey times for pedestrian and cyclists. Remote from the A6MARR scheme there will be appreciable safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in built up areas by virtue of the reduction in traffic and reassigned vehicle movement. It is therefore considered that non-motorised user needs have been given full and proper consideration and have been reasonably and satisfactorily accommodated for within the overall scheme design.

During construction works, public rights of way will need maintaining where possible with upgrade works undertaken sensitively. Necessary diversions and closures would also be required to go through a due legal process in advance of implementation. The final design, construction detail and delivery

management will be the subject of a planning condition in the event that permission is granted.

The opening of the A6MARR provides a good opportunity for new or rerouted bus services to use the new road which will result in reduced journey times and improved accessibility. There are good prospects for new services to link the Airport with Stockport Town Centre, the new Park and Ride of the A6 and with areas in Cheshire East. Discussion is on-going with Transport for Greater Manchester with respect to bus service provision and routing and ensuring the impact of construction works do not disrupt existing services.

Poynton and High Lane Bypasses

Member of the public, including interest parties have identified the scheme should not be implemented without the Poynton Bypass or a High Lane Bypass. As previously explained, the scheme before Members is one section of a wider strategy, and whilst individual sections of the community may give greater weight to certain proposal, an assessment on the acceptability of the current scheme and its benefits needs to be made. Weight therefore should not be given to objections which seek additional schemes.

Road Safety

The effect of completion of A6MARR has been considered with respect to accident data. Accident rates have been applied to modelled vehicle kilometres with and without the scheme in place to predict the overall number and severity of accidents for the modelled Area of Influence. The total travel distance (kilometres per hour) is forecast to increase following implementation of the scheme and there will also be a slight increase in average network speed during both traffic peak periods. This is likely with an increase in traffic levels using higher speed routes following implementation of the scheme.

Due to the reduction in traffic flow on routes with high observed accident rates such as the A6 through Hazel Grove and Stockport and Finney Lane through Heald Green, there is forecast to be an overall reduction in accident numbers following implementation of the scheme. However with the forecast increase in total travel distance the predicted reduction in accident numbers is marginal, but even so welcomed.

Road Safety Audit

A Stage 1 / Feasibility Road Safety Audit has been submitted alongside the application. This is an essential requirement for any new or amended road or junction layout and has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's adopted Procedure and DMRB Standards/Advice. The Audit has raised a number of issues, none of which are fundamental to the design and can be addressed as detailed design is progressed. In accordance with requirement,

a response to the Audit has been provided by the Designer/Engineer, highlighting how the issues raised will be dealt with.

In the event that planning permission is granted and detailed design of the scheme progresses, process requires the submission of further Safety Audits which appraise in further detail the proposed road scheme, for example constructions specs, markings, lighting, signage etc.

Whilst the concerns of the residents and interested parties are noted and have been considered, on balance, the development makes suitable provision for mitigation and enhanced mitigation together with ensuring that new opportunities and facilities for NMUs and sustainable transport have been included. The route, design and detail of the proposed scheme is considered acceptable, and taking account of mitigation measure, detailed design and proposed conditions is considered to accord with policies, T-1, T-3, L1.1 and ST2.2. The scheme is a key component of the wider SEMMMS Strategy, would benefit communities and the local economy and would provide for enhanced sustainable transport measure and facilities for Non-Motorised users. There are no considerations of weight which would justify refusal of the application.

Sustainability

The NPPF and policies CS1, SD-1 and SD-6 articulate guidance with regards to sustainability and whilst as an authority we would generally require an applicant to undertake a sustainability checklist, for a scheme of such a scale the checklist was not considered appropriate. The applicant has therefore submitted a sustainability statement, based on the general standards of the checklist and demonstrates the applicant's adherence to sustainability principals, including gaining 'Excellent' CEEQUAL accreditation.

Whilst the Health and Energy Advisor raised a number of initial concerns, discussions have been held with the applicant. Although accepting that the current proposed lighting and power would be taken from existing structures, the advisor considers that a planning condition should be placed on any planning permission requiring future lighting and signage to be powered through renewable energy. Whilst it is accepted that renewable energy should be used where possible, it is not considered that a condition in this instance would be reasonable or meet with the tests of placing a condition on any planning permission. The Authority as a whole where possible would ordinarily look to use renewable sources of energy, however, members should be considering the scheme before them, and not what may potentially be needed into the future. A condition requiring any future signs or lighting to be powered through renewable energy is not therefore proposed to be included.

The applicant has clearly demonstrated that scheme has been designed with sustainability in mind and complies with policies CS1, SD-1 and SD-6.

Right to determine

Concern has been raised by members of the public, and interested parties alike that the three local authorities should not be determining the planning applications, and that the decision should either be 'called in' or should have been determined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and therefore determined by the Secretary of State.

Under the Planning Act 2008 and subsequently The Highway and Railway (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project) Order 2013, it clearly shows that the Local Planning Authorities have the right to deal with the planning applications in accordance with normal practice. The proposal at no point exceeds or meets the criteria thresholds at which the scheme would need a Development Consent Order, and therefore be classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and determined by the Secretary of State. Members should therefore proceed to determination in accordance with due process.

Once a recommendation has been made by Planning and Highways Regulation Committee, and as the proposal has been advertised as, and is being determined as a 'Departure' due to development within the Green Belt, the Local Planning Authority must inform the Secretary of State under The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 if they intend to approve the application.

In this instance, and subject to further discussions with Sport England, if Sport England further maintains their objection the Secretary of State would also be informed of the intention to grant planning permission following a statutory objection from Sport England.

Once notification of the application has been received by the Secretary Of State, they have 21 days in which to decide whether to call in the application. The local authority cannot grant planning permission until that time is up unless notified before the expiry of 21 days that the application will not be called in.

If the Secretary of State decides that no involvement is necessary then the local planning authority is advised that it may determine the application.

If the Secretary of State decides to 'call in' the application, then the application will be considered at a public inquiry, led by a planning inspector who will then make recommendations to the Secretary of State.

Whilst members of the public have sought for the application to be called in, the above clearly shows the due process which the application should take. The Secretary of State will therefore make the final decision on whether the scheme should be 'called in'.

Conclusions

In conclusion, although the application represents a departure from the development plan, the justification made for 'very special circumstances' that outweighs the potential harm to the Green Belt is considered to be compelling and would not justify refusal of the application. It is considered that the proposed development would be sensitively sited and designed in order to ensure limited adverse impact on the character of the area, visual amenity of the area or on the residential amenity of surrounding properties. Subject to the imposition of conditions, on the whole no objections are raised to the proposal from statutory consultees, however, Sport England maintains their current objection and discussions are on-going in terms of impact on sports facilities. No objections are raised by the Highway Authority or Highways Agency in terms of impact on highway safety, design or route alignment and the Arboricultural Officer raises no objection in terms of impact on trees. The scheme has been fully assessed by the Environment Team with regards to land contamination and pollution and concerns raised by GMEU and the Councils Nature Development Officer can be conditioned satisfactorily. Manchester Airport has provided a suite of conditions to ensure safeguarding of the airport.

The A6MARR is considered to be a major and important highway scheme for the area and would improve the effectiveness of the transport network in and around Stockport and south east Manchester. The scheme would help to remove traffic from the existing network therefore reducing congestion and traffic levels up the existing A6 to the benefit of residents and commuters. The A6MARR would provide better links between communities, provide new and extended cycle and pedestrian facilities and ensure sustainable transport methods are maximised. The scheme would facilitate economic growth and provide important infrastructure to enable wider environmental and social benefits in accordance with the overall aims of the NPPF and sustainability policy.

The application has been assessed against the NPPF and adopted local development policies contained within the Core Strategy and Saved policies from the UDP. It is considered that on balance the scheme accords with policy, and where there may be conflict there are benefits which would outweigh harm. Whilst it is appreciated that there is a substantial amount of

information, it is considered that 'very special circumstances' have been demonstrated to justify a departure from the development and the application is recommended for approval.

Due to the extent of plans submitted with the application it is not feasible for all plans to be included at the end of the report. Members are therefore advised that all plans are available for viewing on the A6MARR website (www.a6marr.stockport.gov.uk) or the application file.

Recommendations

Members are advised that following the recommendation of the Planning and Highway Regulation committee the scheme will need to be referred to the Secretary of State under The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009.

It is recommended that:

(A) This report forms part of the Council's Statement pursuant to Regulation 24 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 – which requires the Council to make available for public inspection information regarding the decision. Pursuant to Regulation 24(1) (c) the Council must make available for public inspection a statement which contains:

- the content of the decision and any conditions attached to it;
- the main reasons and consideration on which the decision is based,
- including, if relevant, information about the participation of the public;
- a description, when necessary, of the main measures to avoid, reduce and if possible offset the major adverse effects of the development;
- information recording the right to challenge the validity of the decision and the procedures for doing so.

(B) Planning permission be granted subject to conditions.





