

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Date of Meeting: | 15 th October 2013 |
| Report of: | Strategic Infrastructure: Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity |
| Subject/Title: | A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road – Planning Submission and Outcome of Public Consultation Process (Forward Plan Ref: 13/14-56) |
| Portfolio Holder: | Councillor David Brown, Strategic Communities |

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report seeks authorisation to submit a Planning Application for the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road and progress necessary legal agreements, based on the Plan of the proposed scheme attached as Appendix A.
- 1.2. The scheme is being jointly promoted by the three local authorities of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC), Cheshire East and Manchester City Council (MCC) and all three authorities will need to consider the planning application when it is submitted.
- 1.3. Members are asked to note the attached consultation report at Appendix B outlining the results of the second phase of SEMMMS consultation undertaken in June/July as part of the development of a preferred option for the scheme. The key phase two consultation results relating to Cheshire East residents are highlighted in this main report. Members will recall that the outcome of the previous phase of consultation was reported at the May 2013 Cabinet.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That approval is given for the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road planning application to be submitted to the Council Strategic Planning Board based on the scheme plan in Appendix A.
- 2.2. That delegated authority is granted to the Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to authorise the Section 8 Agreement with Stockport MBC required to develop and deliver this road.
- 2.3. That the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal be instructed to negotiate and enter into a legal agreement between the Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) regarding the circa £4.75m funding package inclusive of CEC £1m match funds

towards highway improvements in the Borough, in particular the Poynton Relief Road.

- 2.4. To note the summary report (Appendix B) outlining the results of the second phase of consultation undertaken in June and July and the approach taken by the SEMMMS project team in responding to the consultation.
- 2.5. To note that there are still some outstanding issues around traffic mitigation measures for the A6 corridor which are being considered by officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, and are close to being resolved.
- 2.6. To note detailed draft plans for sections along the proposed A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road within the Cheshire East boundary are attached as Appendix C.

3. Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1. The proposed scheme has been under development for many years and the current proposal is the result of extensive consultation. The previous phase one consultation process, undertaken between October 2012 and January 2013 and reported to Cabinet in May 2013, identified a high level of public support for the scheme with over 80% of those expressing a preference stating they were in favour.
- 3.2. The proposed scheme is identified as a priority within the National Infrastructure Plan and will support the Council's key objective to deliver new and improved infrastructure to support economic growth.
- 3.3. The road is being developed and funded by the Government and GMCA. SMBC would take responsibility for its delivery.
- 3.4. Analysis of network congestion and journey patterns justifies the need for a road scheme. The proposed scheme is the most appropriate solution to cater for the dispersed, orbital journeys currently occurring across the scheme corridor, albeit using north-south routes in order to make east-west journeys.

4. Wards Affected

- 4.1. Disley, Handforth, Poynton East and Pott Shrigley, Poynton West and Adlington, Prestbury, Wilmslow Dean Row, Wilmslow Lacey Green, Wilmslow West and Chorley, Wilmslow East.

5. Local Ward Members

- 5.1. Cllr Harold Davenport (Disley).
- 5.2. Cllr Barry Burkhill and Cllr Denis Mahon (Handforth).
- 5.3. Cllr Jos Saunders and Cllr Howard Murray (Poynton East and Pott Shrigley).
- 5.4. Cllr Roger West and Cllr Philip Hoyland (Poynton West and Adlington).
- 5.5. Cllr Paul Findlow (Prestbury)
- 5.6. Cllr Paul Whiteley (Wilmslow Dean Row).
- 5.7. Cllr Don Stockton (Wilmslow Lacey Green).
- 5.8. Cllr Wesley Fitzgerald and Cllr Gary Barton (Wilmslow West and Chorley).
- 5.9. Cllr Rod Menlove (Wilmslow East).

6. Policy Implications

- 6.1. The proposed A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road (A6MARR) will provide a high quality highway link between the A6, A523 and A34 and Manchester Airport and the M56.
- 6.2. The proposed scheme was identified by the Coalition Government in the National Infrastructure Plan in November 2011 as a priority for delivery.
- 6.3. The existing local road network passes through residential communities and local and district centres currently suffer from congestion and severance as traffic uses a variety of unsuitable roads to make this orbital journey.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. There are no direct financial implications for the Council regarding the planning submission of the A6MARR. The Council is not contributing funding to the development or delivery of the Scheme and will therefore not be bearing any of the associated financial risks. However, the Council, in its capacity as the highway authority, will be liable for the future maintenance of the stretches of road within Cheshire East upon the expiration of a 12 months maintenance period following the completion of the scheme.
- 7.2. In November 2011, the scheme was identified as a priority in the Budget and included in the National Infrastructure Plan with a funding allocation of £165m from central funds and the rest to be identified locally.
- 7.3. In July 2013, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority agreed a £290m funding package comprising; £165 million of specific Department for Transport (DfT) capital grant, £105 million of additional capital grant funding being made available by

Government in the context of the Manchester City Deal 'Earnback', and £20 million of existing LTP top slice allocation.

- 7.4. Negotiation between the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the Council resulted in a written commitment from the Leader of the GMCA to contribute £3.75m towards the delivery of the Poynton Relief Road and other highway improvement works as part of a £4.75m funding package inclusive of Cheshire East monies.
- 7.5. Over £1m of this funding will be spent on this project delivery by providing an upgraded junction capable of accommodating the Poynton Relief Road.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1. There are no direct legal implications related to authorising the submission of a planning application on behalf of the three SEMMMS local authorities.
- 8.2. There are two related legal implications: the legal agreement being drafted with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council under Section 8 of the Highways Act; and the need to enter into a legal agreement with GMCA regarding the offer of funding towards Poynton Relief Road and the evaluation of transport requirements, as per the Manchester City Council letter dated 7th September 2012.
- 8.3. The Section 8 legal agreement is currently being drawn up between the three legal teams representing the SEMMMS authorities of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, Manchester City Council and Cheshire East Borough Council. Under Section 8 of the Highways Act, it is proposed that Cheshire East and Manchester City Council, subject to the provisions of the Section 8 Agreement, will authorise Stockport to exercise all its functions as Highway and Traffic Authority insofar as required for the purpose of the carrying out the Works related to the SEMMMS scheme. This draft agreement is with the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and is undergoing legal review and will only be considered for authorisation once agreement in principle is reached between the three legal teams.
- 8.4. The Council should seek a separate legal agreement to confirm the payment terms and funding offer from the GMCA as set out in the letter from the Leader of Manchester City Council dated 7th September 2012.

9. Risk Management

Delay in the authorisation to submit a planning application would result in one significant risk to the project. The Council may be seen

as delaying the critical path for the project, impacting on the planning application process and the likely construction date.

- 9.1. Opportunities for the Council to maximise improved connectivity as a result of SEMMMS are linked to receipt of the GMCA funding contribution agreed through the negotiated deal, currently only confirmed by letter. A formal legal agreement would mitigate the risk and guarantee this funding.

10. Background

- 10.1. The scheme has been developed in partnership with SMBC and MCC, with SMBC taking the lead Project Sponsor role. The scheme is being fully funded by the Department for Transport and GMCA.
- 10.2. The A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road (A6 MARR) is a 10 kilometre dual carriageway connecting the A6 near Hazel Grove to Manchester Airport and utilising a further four kilometres of the existing A555 to the north east of Handforth and south of Bramhall (the central section of the scheme). An outline plan showing the broad location of the scheme is attached as Appendix A. The scheme travels east to west along the Cheshire East, Stockport and Manchester local authority boundaries and is adjacent to several areas within Cheshire East, including Handforth and Poynton.
- 10.3. The new road would include seven new junctions and four improved junctions as well as associated traffic and environmental mitigation and complementary measures. There are four rail crossings in the new sections including the Hazel Grove to Buxton Line, West Coast Main Line (Stockport to Stoke), Styal Line and the Styal Line Northern Airport Spur. A pedestrian and cycle route is proposed for the whole length of the scheme, including the four kilometre existing section of A555. The A6MARR interfaces with the proposed Poynton Relief Road at Chester Road.

Additional footpath and bridleway provision as well as that above will be provided along parts of the scheme and it is proposed to upgrade a number of existing public rights of way from footpaths to bridleways to improve linkages into the existing networks.

Business Case

- 10.4. A business case was submitted for the proposed scheme in November 2012 to support the funding case. The business case identified that the BCR (benefit to cost ratio) is 5.06 and offers very high value for money.
- 10.5. The objectives of the proposed scheme as set out in the Business Case are to:

- Increase employment and generate economic growth: -provide efficient surface access and improved connectivity to, from and between Manchester Airport, local, town and district centres, and key areas of development and regeneration (e.g. [Manchester Airport Enterprise Zone](#));
 - Boost business integration and productivity: - improve the efficiency and reliability of the highway network, reduce the conflict between local and strategic traffic, and provide an improved route for freight and business travel;
 - Promote fairness through job creation and the regeneration of local communities: - reduce severance and improve accessibility to, from and between key centres of economic and social activity;
 - Reduce the impact of traffic congestion on local businesses and communities;
 - Improve the safety of road users, pedestrians and cyclists: reduce the volume of through-traffic from residential areas and retail centres; and
 - Support lower carbon travel: reallocate road space and seek other opportunities to provide improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.
- 10.6. As part of the scheme development a number of assessments have been undertaken. These assessments include environmental, transport, health impact and socio-economic and sustainability. The completed assessments will be submitted as part of the planning application. The assessments have influenced the design of the scheme so that any negative impacts are minimised and the benefits are maximised.
- 10.7. The consultation process described below has also been used to inform the design process.

Outcome of A6 MARR Consultation

- 10.8. A two stage consultation process has been carried out to inform the design of the preferred scheme. The issues raised during the first phase were reported to the May 2013 Cabinet meeting and detailed responses from the second phase (undertaken from June to July 2013) are incorporated within the Phase 2 Consultation Report attached as Appendix B.
- 10.9. The consultation approach for both phases included delivery of leaflets to 85,000 properties, a website and dedicated phone line, public exhibitions along the route and meetings with key stakeholders.
- 10.10. Local Liaison Forums for people living adjacent to the scheme have also been held to allow for more detailed discussion on local issues.

- 10.11. The first phase of consultation between October 2012 and January 2013 focused on whether people supported the scheme and asked for views on junction options and the overall scheme. Over 9,000 people responded to the consultation. Approximately 70% of all respondents stated they were in favour (6,208). When the respondents who did not know or did not provide an answer were excluded from the results (1,318), the percentage in favour was 6,208 out of 7713, or more than 80%.
- 10.12. The phase one consultation also asked for preferences regarding options at six junction locations along the scheme. Consultation preferences which were taken forward as part of the on-going design for the scheme.
- 10.13. The response to identify the preferred option at the Chester Road Link, Poynton was less clear cut and further work has been undertaken to identify the preferred option at this location.
- 10.14. The design of the emerging preferred scheme used for the second phase of consultation was also informed by comments received during the phase one consultation. This resulted in changes to the design proposals along the length of the scheme which included:
- Further reducing the noise and visual impacts of the scheme with additional noise fencing and low noise surfacing, extended earth mounds (noise bunds), lowered road level and mitigation landscaping along the route;
 - Where possible, the road was moved further from residential properties;
 - The proposals to accommodate the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and public rights of way were developed in more detail.
- 10.15. The second phase of consultation concentrated on the detail of the scheme including proposed landscaping, rights of way changes and the incorporation of the junction options and changes identified by the phase one consultation. Further comments were received on the proposed rights of way changes and cycle facilities, landscape and detailed design of the scheme at the junction of Macclesfield Road north of Poynton. These comments have been reviewed and where practical have been incorporated into the final proposed preferred scheme.
- 10.16. The phase two consultation also aimed to identify local community views with regards to whether the emerging preferred scheme is likely to address its environmental impact and is going to address the access / traffic issues. The latter point relating to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, public rights of way and the accommodation of any changes to traffic flows in the local area through complementary and mitigation measures.

10.17. Appendix B provides more detailed information on the results from the second phase of consultation. Approximately 1340 of the 5,481 respondents who provided postcode details came from residents in Cheshire East areas. The key issues are as follows:

Traffic and Access Issues

- There was a broad geographical distribution of respondents that both agreed or strongly agreed that the scheme design would address the different traffic/access issues.
- Of note, a slightly higher percentage of Cheshire East residents were in strong agreement that the scheme addressed each of the four traffic and access issues covering pedestrian and cyclist needs, public rights of way and changes to traffic flows than the results for ALL respondents which included Stockport and Manchester residents.
- With regards to whether the scheme 'addresses changes to traffic flows in the local area through complementary and mitigation measures' Poynton and Disley residents were least likely to agree. Almost a quarter (25%) of the 537 Poynton respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement compared to approximately 16% of all 5,481 respondents to this question. However, 59% of Poynton respondents agreed with the statement.
- The 141 Disley respondents were also more likely than other areas to disagree or strongly disagree the scheme addressed changes to traffic flows through complementary and mitigation measures with 62% agreeing and just over 21% disagreeing.

Environmental Issues

- Overall, the majority of Cheshire East respondents agreed *"that the emerging preferred scheme for the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road addresses the following environmental impacts: Noise; Visual; Landscaping; and Ecology"*.
- Almost two thirds (65%) of Cheshire East respondents agreed the scheme would address the noise impact, and 69% agreed it addressed the visual and landscaping impacts.
- However, there was less agreement overall (all respondents) and by Cheshire East respondents that the scheme addressed the impact on ecology (58% of Cheshire East respondents and only 55% of all 5,481 respondents).

10.18. In addition to addressing specific questions, respondents were invited to make comments on the scheme. A summary of the main concerns raised during the Phase 2 consultation of particular

relevance to Cheshire East is provided below along with the SEMMMS Project Team response:

- **Likelihood of increased traffic on the A6 in High Lane and Disley:**

SEMMMS Team Response: It is recognised that a package of mitigation measures are required to address areas which are forecast to experience changes to traffic flows as a result of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road scheme, including High Lane. Mitigation measures are proposed for the A6 through High Lane and Disley that will manage traffic flow, support the local centres and improve non-motorised user facilities. Discussion is on-going between Stockport Council and Cheshire East Council on what the most appropriate form of measures would be on the A6 corridor where an increase in traffic levels is forecast. There is a commitment as part of the scheme that mitigation measures will be implemented, and their detail will be determined through further analysis and consultation. Support for the final package of measures will be agreed in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the local ward member.

A separate study is also being undertaken to look at wider transport improvements on the A6 corridor by Stockport Council, Cheshire East Council, Derbyshire County Council, High Peak Borough Council and Transport for Greater Manchester.

- **A6MARR will only bring benefit if Poynton Relief Road is constructed at the same time.**

Comments were received relating to the Poynton Relief Road (PRR), including that the A6 MARR scheme would not bring any benefits unless the Poynton Relief Road was constructed at the same. Cheshire East Council's intention, now that the A6-MARR scheme is fully funded, is to progress the Poynton scheme as soon as possible to limit the time between the opening of the A6-MARR scheme, programmed for 2017, and the opening of PRR.

Poynton Relief Road has been prioritised within the Cheshire and Warrington Local Transport Body (CWLTB) 4 year funding programme with an allocation of £9.78m, around 50% of the overall estimated costs, and an anticipated start in 2017.

- **Concern about road safety on Chester Road.**

SEMMMS Team Response: Improvements to the Chester Road are not proposed as part of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road because, in 2017, the year of the scheme's opening, traffic flows on Chester Road, both east and west of the proposed junction, are forecast to decrease as a result of the scheme. Cheshire East

Council has been made aware of concerns about road safety on Chester Road.

CEC Response: Cheshire East is currently conducting a borough wide cluster review of road safety, focusing on high collision locations. Following the review, a programme of works will be drawn up at priority locations. Concerns about road safety along Chester Road within the Cheshire East borough should be addressed to the Cheshire East Traffic and Road Safety Team or emailed to roadsafetyeast@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

10.19. CEC still has some concerns about the impact the new road may have on the local road network and these are not yet fully resolved. Officers are working in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to ensure satisfactory mitigation packages are built into the scheme.

- **Noise and visual impact of the scheme on Glastonbury Drive.**

The road should be deeper in cutting, the road alignment moved further from Glastonbury Drive and the bunding in the area extended in length and increased in height.

SEMMMS Team Response: The project team has considered relevant aspects of the emerging preferred scheme in order that sufficient, appropriate and proportionate visual and noise mitigation can be provided - these aspects include distance of the road from the residential properties, the existing topography within that distance, the road being in a cutting and the proposed landscaping.

- **Concern about the impact of the scheme on Mill Hill Hollow.**

SEMMMS Team Response: Following comments received during the Phase 2 consultation, in order to further mitigate the impact if the scheme, we have made the following changes to the design: Reducing the height of the bridge over Norbury Brook in the vicinity of Mill Hill Hollow; extending the lengths of environmental fencing to further mitigate noise impacts; Updating landscape mitigation in this area; and Increasing the depth that the road is in cutting west of Norbury Hollow.

A meeting with Mill Hill Hollow residents was held on 15th August 2013 in order to discuss their concerns about the scheme in more detail.

- **More bunding and visual mitigation is needed for properties on London Road North.**

SEMMMS Team Response: The existing landscape provides visual mitigation. Noise has been assessed and mitigation is not deemed to be required.

- **The road should go underneath the West Coast Mainline.** If it is to go over the West Coast Main Line, increased visual screening is required.

SEMMMS Team Response: Environmental and engineering aspects have been assessed when considering the design for the West Coast Mainline crossing, the outcome of which indicate that the road over rail option to be the most appropriate design. A review of the visual and noise mitigation proposals has been undertaken which demonstrates that additional mitigation is not required.

11. Access to Information

- 11.1. The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting:

Name: Sophie Kelly
Designation: Senior Strategic Advisor
Tel No: 01270 685961
Email: Sophie.kelly@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendix A Outline Plan of Proposed Scheme

Appendix B A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road- Phase Two Consultation Final Report

Appendix C Detailed Plans of Manchester Airport Relief Road in Cheshire East