

## A6 TO MANCHESTER AIRPORT RELIEF ROAD – 2<sup>ND</sup> CONSULTATION

In its submission on the first SEMMMS A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road consultation, Prestbury Parish Council expressed a desire to understand as much as possible about the potential impacts on our Parish and our community if this road was taken forward - either on its own or as part of the wider network of SEMMMS (South East Manchester Multi Modal Study) roads. We were not convinced then and, in the absence of answers to our questions, we remain unconvinced that the impacts of building one or more of the SEMMMS roads (plus a series of other roads in North East Cheshire and South East Manchester ) have been fully evaluated and understood for the wider area.

Our first response (attached) raised a number of questions about traffic generation and traffic flows, air quality, landscape and other impacts. The Parish Council also have concerns about the infill development that normally follows road-building.

We invited Andrew Ross of Cheshire East Council to come and address our Annual Parish Meeting in May and had an ‘in principle’ acceptance from him. We were looking forward to learning from him precisely what the local implications would be of building the east-west A6-Manchester Airport Relief Road and the intersecting north-south Woodford-Poynton Relief Road, (formerly the Poynton Bypass), allied with the other road-building plans in this sub region. Regrettably, however, he pulled out of the arrangement and instead sent a briefing document which failed to answer almost all of our questions.

Since then, Cheshire East Cabinet have approved a “vision strategy and investment plan” entitled ‘Engine of the North’, setting out its high growth strategy for Cheshire East and have established a development company to drive forward the aspirations in this document.

The high growth strategy outlined in ‘East Cheshire – Engine of the North’ which, it says, will be delivered by 2030, identified a number of ‘key projects’ including “SEMMMS/ A555” and “Poynton Relief Road”. The document makes sweeping claims for economic growth and job creation but it foresees these coming about as a result of developing large areas of Green Belt (and green fields) which include the above two roads plus others to the south of our parish – the Macclesfield South West Distributor Road, which would capture a large area of Green Belt for development, and the Congleton Northern Relief Road which would capture more significant greenfield areas.

We are elected to represent our residents and we believe we have a right to understand what it would mean to the Parish of Prestbury to be wedged between all these strategic roads and developments – not forgetting the proposed Woodford Garden Village to the north of us and the proposed new settlement of Handforth East to the north west of us. Meanwhile, the Woodford-Poynton Relief Road (WPRR) would actually pass through our area. All these plans are surging forward but it is unclear whether the benefits will outweigh the disbenefits. We would like to be fully appraised what the potential disbenefits could be.

Prestbury Parish Council remain to be convinced that a high growth strategy is a sensible or sustainable way forward and we are deeply concerned by the aspirations for so much development. The principal authorities need to understand that it is imperative they carry the first tier of local government (Town and Parish Councils) along with them. To date we have had no more consideration or attention given to us than an individual member of the public

and this is not good enough. The two A6-Manchester Airport Road consultations to date have focused primarily on such matters as the details of road junctions when they ought to have focused on proving that there is still a strong case for the SEMMMS roads in the circumstances that exist today.

The SEMMMS roads were all originally devised when ‘predict and provide’ was the approach to traffic. At the time the SEMMMS study took place, at the turn of the millennium, the traffic modelling that supported it assumed there would be exponential traffic growth. This has not happened. Rather than carrying on regardless, should not the principal authorities be re-visiting first principals as set out by the Department for Transport (DfT) in the New Approach to Appraisal (NATA)? This requires that decision-makers take a “balanced approach” and give “equal consideration” to the three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental considerations.

Key to the decision-making process (according to Unit 1.1 of the DfT’s WebTAG appraisal system) is the requirement to approach any perceived problems with an open mind, first of all identifying what the objectives are and then drawing up a list of possible interventions that might tackle them. These should then be refined down and the last few options should each be worked up in some considerable detail. Road-building may or may not be one of the options that are analysed but it is not supposed to be a first and only option.

The SEMMMS study produced a package of possible options that included heavy and light rail recommendation, quality bus corridors, active travel and a range of ‘soft measures’ or ‘smart choices’. None of these have come to fruition or, in most cases, even been properly explored. Only the road building options are being progressed – and they are based on inaccurate traffic projections.

Also, the SEMMMS final report was insistent that existing road space that was ‘relieved’ by the construction of new roads must be re-assigned for other purposes – cycling, walking and urban regeneration. It stated that this was absolutely fundamental to the SEMMMS strategy. Yet no such proposals have been tabled to date.

What we do know is that feeder roads to new strategic roads invariably bear the brunt of the altered traffic movements which the new roads create. We have seen nothing yet which has convinced us that a solid case exists for building the new roads and that our Parish will not be deleteriously impacted if they are. We reserve our opinions until we see evidence that convinces us that building the SEMMMS roads is the correct way forward.

We would very much appreciate a response to this consultation submission and the previous one. Thank you.