

A6 TO MANCHESTER AIRPORT RELIEF ROAD CONSULTATION

Although no part of Prestbury Parish touches the route of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road, Prestbury has a very significant stake in it because if this section of the SEMMMS network of roads were built it is more likely that others would be, notably the A523 Poynton Bypass (or Poynton-Woodford Relief Road) which would intersect with the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road. The Cabinet of Cheshire East Council recently approved a budget circa £1m. (at their September 2011 meeting) for technical investigations to be carried out into the Poynton Bypass which, it has been confirmed, would include a separate scheme that was formerly known as the A523 Poynton to Macclesfield Improvement.

Whilst the A555 Airport Link Roads that make up the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road and the original Poynton Bypass have protected routes shown on Local Plans, the Poynton to Macclesfield Improvement does not because the SEMMMS study concluded that the case had not been made for it. It was therefore removed from the Macclesfield Local Plan. However, the original 'preferred' route for the Poynton to Macclesfield Improvement as favoured by the Highways Agency (when the A523 was a trunk road) ran from just south of Adlington cross roads - where the Poynton Bypass is shown as ending - to the northern end of the Silk Road and passed through Prestbury. Consequently, the present consultation being conducted by Stockport MBC and the highway investigations being carried out by Cheshire East Council are of very particular interest to Prestbury.

The traffic modelling information released to date for the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road reveals some negative impact on the northern part of Prestbury Parish by altered traffic flows if the road were built (even if this was built in isolation from other SEMMMS roads) due to where the access points would be located. But the remainder of Prestbury is not covered by the model. The model shows that, by 2017, there would be 1,100 more vehicles per day using the northern end of Bonis Hall Lane (the B5358) if the new road is built than if it is not. However, 2017 would be shortly after the opening of the new road and a longer term picture is required. Bonis Hall Lane is a winding country road which is not suited to accommodating any extra traffic.

It is in fact the case that traffic growth nationally has flattened out for several years now and therefore, without any new road building in the vicinity, we would have every expectation that the volume of traffic would not noticeably increase. But, if Prestbury's rural lanes become access routes to strategic new roads that connect to motorways, then surely more of the traffic from the wider area would be drawn along them? Can this be modelled?

We have every reason to believe that the traffic modelling conducted to date has not covered a sufficiently wide area (it ought to encompass Macclesfield) and does not look sufficiently far ahead. It is too Greater Manchester focused and it does not take account of all existing roads, let alone projected new ones. The identified 'area of influence' used by the traffic model appears to stop short of Prestbury village, despite its proximity to the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road, the model does not appear to include the Poynton Bypass/Poynton-Woodford Relief Road and some documentation does not appear to have been updated since prior to the construction and opening of the A34 Alderley Edge Bypass (eg. the Uncertainty Log). This is wholly unsatisfactory. Settlements in the vicinity of major new roads need to be able to understand what the full implications would be if the new roads were built. We are not being provided with a complete picture of what might happen.

Cheshire East Council has published its Local Plan Development Options. These include not only the A523 Poynton Bypass/ Poynton-Woodford Relief Road but also a Congleton Relief Road that would be a new strategic route between Macclesfield and the M6 and a south west distributor road around Macclesfield, the northern end of which would be not far from Prestbury Parish's southern border. Prestbury Parish Council and our residents need to understand what the traffic implications would be on Prestbury if all of these were constructed and if only some of these were built. The same applies to the traffic implications of major new settlements proposed for the Woodford Aerodrome site, Handforth East (on the border with Stockport MBC alongside the intersection of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road with the A34) and Henbury – which is related to the Macclesfield South West Distributor Road.

It seems to us that the model used by Stockport MBC for the SEMMMS roads is focused on Greater Manchester and has nowhere near adequately taken into account settlements a little way outside the Greater Manchester boundaries such as ours. It also is not sufficiently current to take into account major recent infrastructure proposals. It is imperative that these anomalies are corrected without delay.

We note that part of the A523 in Macclesfield already is an Air Quality Management Area (although this is not shown on the SEMMMS maps) and would like to know what impacts, if any, all these infrastructure proposals would have on air quality in our parish and whether the environmental capacity exists to cope with them. We would also like to be appraised as to whether there are any long term plans for infill developments along the Poynton Bypass.

Last but not least we would like to express our concern about the impacts all of the proposals we have alluded to (roads and settlements) would have on the Green Belt. The Greater Manchester/ North Cheshire Green Belt is particularly fragile between Hazel Grove and Poynton and Cheadle Hulme and Handforth.

There is a strong potential for settlements in North East Cheshire to lose their individual identities if so much development is allowed around them. In due course they could morph into the southern extremities of Greater Manchester.

We would very much appreciate a response to this consultation submission. Thank you.