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## North West region

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### Targeted programme of improvements

It was announced in July 1997 that the final section of the Manchester Outer Ring Road (M60) would go ahead and this is under construction. The following further schemes have now been included in the targeted programme of improvements:

**A66 Stainburn and Great Clifton Bypass** Will provide a safer and healthier environment for the two settlements and improve access to communities on the west coast of Cumbria.

**A500 Basford/Hough/Shavington Bypass** Will provide a safer and healthier environment for the villages and better access from the M6 to an important European rail freight terminal and other business developments south of Crewe.

**M60 J5-8 Widening** Will keep through traffic flowing on the core route around Manchester in support of jobs and prosperity, minimise diversion to unsuitable local roads and improve access to Manchester Airport and Trafford Park industrial and commercial areas.

In addition, preparation work will continue to progress the following schemes enabling them to be taken forward without delay, subject to full appraisal and the views of the regional planning conference:

- A57/A628 Mottram Tintwistle Bypass
- A66 Temple Sowerby Bypass and Improvement at Winderwath

## Schemes associated with development

The following development driven schemes will be taken forward subject to agreements with the developers concerned:

- M62 New Junction 8 and J8-9 Widening
- M56 J6 and Airport Access Improvement

## Proposed studies

Subject to consultation with the regional planning conference it is proposed to undertake the studies detailed below. The outcome of these studies will inform consideration of transport infrastructure requirements in preparing Regional Planning Guidance, including the need for improvements to the trunk road network.

**West Midlands to North West Conurbation** Study of M6 capacity problems and possible solutions, including scope for modal shift.

**South East Manchester** This study will assess the transport problems in the South East quadrant of Greater Manchester and consider multi-modal solutions.

**Deeside Park Junctions** A study will be undertaken of the three at-grade junctions on the A550 between the M56 and the Welsh Border in order to identify means of keeping traffic flowing on this part of the core network.

**A66 Safety Study** A study to investigate the poor safety record on this route between Scotch Corner and Penrith and to identify options.

In addition, the following studies are underway:

**Trans-Pennine Strategic Environmental Assessment Study** This study, being led by a consortium of local authorities with support from business and Government, is considering sustainable multi-modal transport options in the trans-Pennine Corridor.

**M60 Junctions 12-18** A multi-modal model is being developed jointly by the Highways Agency and Greater Manchester Authorities to assess the transport pressures in this corridor and identify solutions to keep traffic flowing on this heavily overloaded part of the core network.

## Smaller scale measures

- M6 Thelwall Area Roadside Driver Information System (TARDIS) This scheme will introduce motorway incident detection and automatic signalling (MIDAS), variable message signs and closed circuit television on this section of the M6 and adjacent M62 and M56 motorways.
- M60 Roadside Driver Information System The scheme will complete the introduction of MIDAS on the M60 and approach motorways and provide variable message signs to improve safety, manage traffic flows and provide more reliable journey times in the Greater Manchester area. Variable message signing will be provided to assist in managing traffic in the vicinity of the major regional

development at the Trafford Centre.

- A41 No Mans Heath and Macefen Bypass A bypass to improve safety and the environment in the villages.

## **Transport system**

The region includes the conurbations of Greater Manchester and Merseyside, the shire counties of Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire and the unitary authorities of Warrington, Halton, Blackpool and Blackburn. The Mersey Belt stretching between Merseyside and the Pennines is very urban in character and there is a second urban but less densely populated belt along the Ribble and Colne Valleys stretching from Blackburn to Colne. The remainder of the region is generally of a rural nature with the main centres of population and economic activity in the county towns of Chester, Carlisle and Preston and other larger towns.

The region is relatively well served by its trunk road network with a high proportion being of motorway standard including some of the oldest and most heavily trafficked motorways in the country. However, the economic development of towns and businesses in West Cumbria is considered to be disadvantaged by its poor transport links being on the periphery of the region. The north-south transport spine of the West Coast Main Line railway and the M6 and their feeders runs from Crewe in the south through Warrington, Wigan, Preston and Lancaster to Carlisle in the north and provides the main access to southern England, Scotland and Europe. The east-west transport spine of the trans-Pennine rail routes and the M56 and M62 runs from Merseyside, Chester and North Wales through the Manchester conurbation to cross the Pennines in the east and provides the main access route from Wales, Merseyside and the Irish ports to Yorkshire and the Humber ports. The regions main ports and airports are at Liverpool and Manchester.

## **Pressure points on north west regions trunk roads**

Following publication of What role for trunk roads in England? a consultation seminar was held involving delegates representing a wide range of regional interests including local authorities, Passenger Transport Authorities, road hauliers, public transport providers, business, environmental and voluntary groups, National Parks and operators of the regions airports and ports. In addition, over 1,000 written representations were received. The main points and areas for action identified as a result of the regional consultation were:

- Highest priority should be given to the east-west and north-south corridors containing the M6, M56/M62, associated rail routes and access to Manchester and Liverpool Airports and Merseyside and the west coast ports
- High priority should be given to those schemes that will aid the economic regeneration of the region and combat perceived peripherality
- Support for improvement to the A66 and A590 linking the M6 with Barrow, Workington, Whitehaven and other towns on the west coast of Cumbria
- General support for local bypasses on environmental, safety and, in some cases, regeneration grounds|Concern about congestion on the M53
- Need for a further crossing of the Mersey to improve access to Liverpool Airport and assist in regeneration of the south of the city.
- Opposition to the proposed widening of the M60 J5-8 (previously M63 J6-9) and A556(M) M6 to

M56 improvement by those affected by the schemes.

## **Other decisions**

The following schemes are to be the subject of further studies and/or consideration by the regional planning conference:

- M6 J16-19 Widening
- A556(M) M6 M56 Improvement
- A550 Deeside Park A5117 Improvement
- A590 High and Low Newton Bypass
- A5117 M56 A550 Improvement
- M6 Extension Carlisle to Guardsmill

The Highways Agency will be considering lower cost options to upgrade the A74 between Carlisle and Guardsmill to motorway standard. The following schemes are being withdrawn from the national trunk road programme:

- M60 J12-18 Improvements
- M62 J6 Improvement
- A6(M) Stockport North/South Bypass
- A555/A523 Poynton Bypass
- A555 Manchester Airport Link West
- A570 Ormskirk Bypass
- A595 Parton Lillyhall Improvement

## **Proposals for detrunking**

Routes within the North West proposed for transfer to local highway authority management are:

- M65/A646 East of junction with A56
- A6/A523 South of Stockport
- A7 North of M6 at Carlisle
- A41 North of M53 and south of Chester
- A49 South of M56
- A51/A500 Chester to M6
- A54/A556 Chester to M6
- A59 North of M58 to Preston
- A65 East of M6
- A550 M53 to junction with A5117
- A557 South of M62 to Runcorn-Widnes Bridge
- A565 Liverpool to Southport and Southport to A59 south of Preston
- A570 Southport to A580
- A580 Liverpool to Manchester
- A585 M55 to Fleetwood

- A595/A5092 Workington to A590
- A596 Carlisle to Workington
- A59 east of M6

**For related documents, pages and internet links, see the column on the right.**