

Cabinet
**CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENTS – A6 CORRIDOR
 IMPROVING JOURNEYS**

Report of the Director of Place Management

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report seeks to present to Cabinet the 'City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) – A6 Corridor Improving Journeys' project for comment. This was subject to a consultation exercise carried out with residents and businesses along the A6 Corridor, has been reported to, and has resolutions from, the Heaton and Reddish and Central Stockport Area Committees and received comments and recommendations from Communities and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

The scheme represents one radial corridor, from a package of six across Greater Manchester, that aim to improve journeys via public transport and active travel between the districts and the Regional Centre.

The A6 Corridor Improvement scheme in Stockport extends from Crossley Road in the north, on the boundary with Manchester to Heaton Road in the south immediately north of Stockport town centre. The corridor is approximately 3.7 km in length. The corridor forms a key radial route connecting people between Stockport and Manchester and vice versa. The key users of the A6 Corridor are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: A6 Corridor (Stockport) Key Statistics (Annual Average Daily Two Way Flow 2022)¹

Pedal Cycles	Motor Cycles	Cars & Taxis	Buses & Coaches	Light Goods Vehicles	Heavy Goods Vehicles	All Motor Vehicles
397	90	12,161	462	2,426	250	15,389

There are three core bus services that use this section of the A6: Services: 191; 192 and x92. Table 2 below shows the average number of bus passengers who use the A6 corridor on the above services between Broom Lane and Belmont Way on an hourly basis in the AM Peak, Off Peak and PM peak periods.

Based on the figures in table 2 and averaging the figures out over a 16 hour day and across the year this indicates an average number of passengers per day (two way) of around 4,000; and an annual average number of passengers per year of around 1.4 million.

¹ Recorded by manual traffic count in 2022 on the A6 close to Heaton Moor Road.

Table 2: A6 Corridor (Stockport) Average Hourly Bus Flows and Bus Passengers²

AM Peak				Inter Peak			
Northbound		Southbound		Northbound		Southbound	
Buses per Hour	Passengers per hour						
23	360	19	396	20	180	20	198

PM Peak			
Northbound		Southbound	
Buses per Hour	Passengers per hour	Buses per Hour	Passengers per hour
21	226	23	157

The services using the A6 benefit from existing peak hour bus lanes (7am-10am and 4pm-7pm) along significant lengths of the corridor. These bus lanes are protected on most of the corridor by 24 hour no waiting and peak hour no loading restrictions.

As part of the development of the scheme, SMBC and TfGM have agreed a joint vision statement to guide the current and future development of the A6 Corridor, recognising its central importance as both a route into, and through Stockport, but also to the Regional Centre:

Future long term vision for the A6 Corridor north of Stockport.

- Well managed and maintained corridor which encourages use of sustainable modes of travel and recognises the needs of residents and businesses.
 - Continuous **bus priority** from Crossley Road to Stockport Town Centre:
 - 12 or 24 hour bus lanes with provision for alternative parking & loading for residents & businesses including enforcement
 - Bus signal priority at junctions
 - Quality bus stop infrastructure, environment & access
 - Well-connected, Bee Network Standard **walking & wheeling** corridor
 - Communities and transport infrastructure connected by crossings on desire lines points
 - Junctions have crossings for all movements
 - Well maintained and accessible pedestrian links on the A6
 - Bee Network standard parallel routes for **cycling**
 - Two parallel corridors on east and west side of the A6 connecting neighbourhoods and local destination points and to Stockport and Manchester
 - Strong links to and across (east west connectivity) the A6 for cycling
 - **Cycling in bus lanes** from Crossley Road to Stockport Town Centre
 - 12 or 24 hour bus lanes with provision for alternative parking & loading for residents & businesses
 - Bus signal priority at junctions
 - Protected junctions where possible along the A6
 - Onward provision, linking to proposals over the Manchester boundary

² Calculated using the Greater Manchester Public Transport Model based on the 2022 bus supply network and 2023 transport demand.

Whilst the above is the long term vision for the corridor it was recognised that it would need to be delivered in stages with the A6 Corridor Improving Journeys scheme as the first phase and later phases being delivered (subject to evidence based need, consultation, approvals) being brought forward when funding becomes available. See appendix 1 for the full vision document.

The A6 Corridor Improving journeys scheme has been in development for just over 12 months and encompasses a series of improvements, on both the A6 and the immediate neighbourhood surroundings, to improve passenger experience on public transport, cycling movements on, and parallel to, the A6 and the pedestrian experience to public transport stops and across the A6 between the neighbourhoods. We have conducted a series of design reviews through the preliminary stages of the TfGM Design Review Process and continue to progress the scheme through TfGM's governance processes. If Cabinet approves the scheme then, subject to a prioritised and affordable set of proposals being agreed, the scheme will progress to the Outline Business Case stage of the TfGM process and onto detailed design. The aim is for the scheme to be on-site in 2026/27.

The scheme was developed with regular discussions with local councillors and was subject to public consultation in February/March 2024 which encompassed leaflet posting, sign posting, three in-person exhibitions and both social media and website publicity. The majority of the proposals were met with a favourable response, with feedback taken on board and incorporated, where possible, into the development of the scheme.

The first phase of proposals for the A6 corridor in Stockport were developed with the following objectives in mind:

- To increase the number of people travelling by bus.
- To increase the number of people travelling using active travel.
- To improve bus journey time and reliability of frequent services.
- To improve the accessibility and quality of bus stops
- To develop cycle routes parallel to the A6.
- To improve A6 crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists.
- To address road safety issues on the corridor.
- To avoid the creation of additional congestion on the corridor for other traffic.

The detailed report and it related appendices which went to the area committees can be viewed via this link - [City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements – A6 Corridor Improving Journeys](#) . The proposed scheme is focused on providing the necessary works to support bus progression, priority and reliability along the A6 corridor. This objective has been balanced against the competing interested of different road users, within the context of the physical and governance restrictions. It should be noted that the bus lanes where provided on the A6 are available to cyclists and do provided an improved level of protection at peak times. The scheme has been developed in the context of an agreed longer-term vision for the corridor, and protects the opportunity to provide and improve protected cycle crossings across and along the A6 junction, whilst improving pedestrian crossing and existing parallel cycling routes.

3. CONSULTATION PROPOSALS

The consultation plans showed four main parts to the proposed improvements:

1. The A6 Bus Corridor: From the borough boundary with Manchester just north of Crossley Road to Sparthfield Road to the south.
2. The Western Cycle Route: This runs from Buckingham Road in Heaton Moor to Mersey Square in the Town Centre and also includes completion of the Heaton's Cycle Link from Leegate Road to Buckingham Road.
3. The Eastern Cycle Route: This runs from Nelstrop Road North (which connects to the Fallowfield Loop) to the Town Centre near Redrock.
4. 20mph Residential Streets: A 20mph speed limit is proposed in residential areas throughout the Eastern and Western Cycle Links

4. CONSULTATION RESULTS

Consultation took place in February and March 2024. Leaflets were sent out to all addresses in the study area, signs were posted on street, 3 exhibitions were held and information was posted on social media and the Council website. Over 300 responses were received including representations from organisations. A comprehensive submission was received from the cycling and walking advocacy group Walk Ride Greater Manchester. Most proposals received a favourable reception from the public although some had more against than in favour and many raised points that needed to be addressed. As a result of the consultation a number of changes were made to the scheme, the most notable of which were:

1. The A6 Bus Corridor: Modification to proposals at the Manchester Rd / A6 junction to better provide for pedestrians and cyclists; addition of improved crossing facilities at the Warwick Rd and Heaton Rd traffic signals to help right turning cyclists.
2. The Western Cycle Route: Re-routing of the proposal at Warwick Road to avoid priority change at a junction; Removal of a proposal to install signals at the Heaton Rd / Alexandra Rd / Ashburn Rd junction; segregation of cycle facilities at Lower Bury Street and amendments to crossing arrangements at Heaton Lane roundabout.
3. The Eastern Cycle Route: Provision of a link from Heaton Chapel to Levenshulme at Simon Freeman Way; Deletion of closure of Carnforth Road to traffic and substitution of a traffic calming scheme on Carnforth Road; Changes at Ash Grove to improve safety; addition of works at Wilkinson Rd to improve linkage to the A6.
4. 20mph Residential Streets: No changes proposed as well received.

In addition two very specific design questions were raised from the walking and cycling campaign group, Walk Ride Greater Manchester, around their desire for a segregated cycle lane on the A6 and for the bus priority on the A6 to extend to either 12-hour or 24-hour bus lanes. The design opportunities to introduce

segregated cycle lanes and CYCLOPS style junctions on the A6 are physically limited, and the implementation timescale for the scheme does not allow for a Public Inquiry process, which would likely be required to deliver the proposal, within the 2026/27 funding window. These concerns will be picked up, however, as part of the longer term scheme development beyond the first phase of incremental improvements.

5. AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS AND RESOLUTIONS

A report on the scheme and consultation results was submitted to the Heaton and Reddish Area Committee on Monday 29th July 2024 and the Central Stockport Area Committee on Thursday 1st August 2024. The Area Committees resolved as follows:

Heaton and Reddish:

'The Area Committee recommended that the Cabinet Member (Economy & Regeneration) approves the implementation of the recommendations contained in Section 6 of this report and that the following 'elements' be reviewed by officers in consultation with ward councillors and that the Area Committee be updated of the discussions and activities accordingly: -

- 1) Elements A and E subject to review of the measures over the extent of the St Thomas' Primary and Infant Schools 'School Street' Schemes on Buckingham Road, Brownsville Road and Tatton Road North.
- 2) Element B - Preference for Option 2A'

Option 2A is for the A6 / Manchester Road junction and includes an additional crossing north of the junction in place of a parking bay offered by Option 1A.

Central Stockport:

'The Area Committee recommended that the decision by the Cabinet Member be put on hold to enable further consideration of the report and proposals by the Communities & Transport Scrutiny Committee. Further, for the report to come back to Central Stockport Area Committee in advance of a decision being made.'

Objections were raised at the Central Stockport Area Committee regarding the provision of the proposed parallel 'quiet route' for cyclists on the eastern side of the A6, particularly along Lower and Higher Bury Street. Concerns were raised by members regarding the lack of segregated cycle lanes being provided on the A6. The technical reasons for not proposing segregated cycling along the A6 are included in the area committee report in the link provided and TfGM, through the Design Review Panel process, are agreed that this is the most appropriate scheme to be progressing at this time, and the principal of delivering parallel routes for cycling is supported in the Streets for All design guidance. The technical reasons for not recommending segregated cycle lanes down the A6 are as follows:

- The focus of the project is a bus priority project, as outlined in the key objectives agreed with TfGM at the start of the project
- The Manchester Road section to Crossley Rd does not have sufficient corridor width to accommodate segregated cycling in addition to balancing the needs of other modes and discharging our statutory duty to expeditiously manage traffic on the public highway as this could require the removal of bus lanes or a reduction in footway widths.

- At junctions where right-turns are required, at bus stops and at areas where parking is located outside local businesses, there would be a requirement to acquire third-party land, that present budgetary, delivery, timescale and reputational risks to the project and the council
- A two-way cycleway option was considered and, with the continued interaction with numerous sideroads and bus stops, we considered on balance for this to be an unsafe option as drivers making turns in or out are unlikely to see cyclists traveling along the cycleway. It should also be noted that the geometry of the side roads on the A6 would not allow for crossings to be set back from the junctions to improve sight lines.
- Investigations into protected cycling facilities at key junctions have been assessed and considered to be unfeasible given current funding constraints and delivery timescales.
- There are timescale, funding and governance restrictions that limit opportunities up to the end of the funding window of March 2027

As noted above, we have received objections from the walking and cycling advocacy group, Greater Manchester Walk Ride, for the same reasons as concerns were expressed by members at Central Area Committee. Through the Design Review Process the design team has investigated the potential for alternative cycle options at junctions but these were not deliverable by the current scheme.

As noted in section 2 we have agreed a long-term strategy and vision for the A6 corridor with TfGM and we are recommending that Cabinet approves the proposals on this basis.

6. COMMUNITY AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2nd of September Scrutiny Committee has resulted in the following recommendation:

- That further consultations take place with bus drivers and associated Trades Unions prior to the design detail stage of the A6 Corridor Improving Journeys scheme.
- That further investigation is undertaken to consider opportunities to create protected junctions either as part of this scheme or as part of related emerging schemes.
- That a clear statement for the future ambition for entirety of the A6 be produced and that this Scrutiny Committee be given the opportunity to contribute to that vision.
- That the scheme takes stronger steps to align with the council's aim to become carbon neutral by 2038, following the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019, by prioritising and encouraging more of a modal shift to active travel methods within the business case and detailed design work.

Officers in consultation with Transport for Greater Manchester Officers have considered these recommendations and will ensure that further consultation takes place with the bus drivers and associated trade unions via colleagues at TfGM.

The junctions on the A6 included within this scheme will have a greater level of

protection for cyclists as toucans are incorporated in the scheme design following consultation. When future funding becomes available opportunities to introduce segregated cycle facilities at these junctions will be explored.

The junction designs for A6 / Heaton Road and A6 / Warwick Road / Glenfield Road include 'Toucan' crossings which will allow a right turning cyclist to leave the carriageway on the nearside, cross the A6 at a controlled crossing and join a side road under signal protection. In addition a new signal controlled Toucan crossing is being provided between Cambridge Road and Heathfield Road as part of the CRSTS S4A scheme and the existing Puffin crossing at Brackley Road is being upgraded to Toucan standard.

Officers and TfGM officers will seek to develop a clear vision for the A6 corridor and this will be brought to a future Scrutiny meeting.

The project includes a large number of interventions to improve active travel and promote bus use. We will seek to ensure that the maximum possible number of these interventions are included in the funded package for delivery. Within the scope of detailed design we will seek to maximise benefits for walking and cycling. Where there is scope to future proof design for future enhanced interventions we will try and incorporate this in the scheme. As part of the business case a carbon management plan will be produced and the active travel elements of this overall program will be delivered with appropriate activation activities to encourage their usage.

It should be noted that the Scrutiny Committee were supportive of the improvements to bus lane provision.

7. AREA COMMITTEE RESPONSE TO THE SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Heaton and Reddish Area Committee on the 9th of September welcomed the recommendations of the Communities and Transport Scrutiny meeting. They expressed that they found the representation by TfGM and the input from a bus driver particularly of interest. They were also reassured by the commitment shown to the ambitions for modal shift.

Please note that the response of the Central Stockport Area Committee on the 12th September will be submitted as an addendum.

8. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

This scheme would be funded through the funding for the Greater Manchester City Region Transport Settlement (CRSTS) allocated for the delivery of a City Centre Bus and Streets for All Connectivity programme within the existing budgetary provision.

9. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Traffic Management Orders would be made under Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The Council is required by the Local Authorities Traffic Order (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 to give notice of its intention to make a Traffic Order (by publishing a draft traffic order). These regulations also require the Council to consider any representations received as a result of

publishing the draft Order.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

Work would be done within current resources.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT

The projects looks to improve equal Opportunities through acting to provide a suitable and safer environment for pedestrians and other road users. The scheme contributes to the Council's vision statement "Promote equal life outcomes for all by tackling known inequalities across the borough of Stockport". An equality impact assessment has been undertaken for the scheme.

12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Council has declared a climate emergency and agreed a target to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. Part of addressing this is to provide improved public transport and active travel opportunities. This scheme contributes to this.

13. RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet are requested to note the commentary in the above report and approve the implementation of the recommendations contained in Section 6 of the [Area Committee](#) report³ (See Appendix 2) and the related appendices and summarised in the scheme elements below:

Element A: (Refer to Sheet 1)

Works to the A6 from Crossley Road to Manchester Road including new bus lanes, a modified signal junction at Crossley Road, improvements to priority junctions and private access points, and improvements to bus stops.

Element B: (Refer to Sheet 2 Viewport 2A)

Amendments to the A6 / Manchester Road junction to include toucan crossing facilities, a segregated cycleway, planting and public art improvements and option 2A including a loading only bay outside shops at 480-486 Wellington Road North and a controlled crossing of the A6 north of Manchester Road (as recommended by the Heatons and Reddish Area Committee)

Element C: (Refer to Sheet 2 Viewport 2B and Sheet 3)

Works to the A6 from Heaton Moor Road to Heaton Road including a new signal junction at Warwick Road / Glenfield Road including Toucan crossing facilities, a modified signal junction at Heaton Road including Toucan crossing facilities, a upgraded Toucan crossing at Brackley Road, improvements to priority junctions and private access points, amendments to footways and parking bays and improvements to bus stops.

Element D: (Refer to Sheet 8 and Sheet 12 Viewport 12A)

Creation of a cross-cycle route and pedestrian improvements from Derby Road to Halesden Road including footway widening on the Warwick Road WCML bridge,

³ (Pages 97 - 698)

traffic calming measures, junction improvements, path widening at Lambs Fold, and installation of a Toucan crossing on Manchester Road between Halesden Road and Orthes Grove.

Element E: (Refer to Sheet 4, 5 and Sheet 6 Viewport 6A)

Improvements to the Heaton Cycle Route and pedestrian improvements between Leegate Road and Buckingham Road including a cycle cut through between the private and adopted sections of Leegate Road, traffic calming measures, junction improvements and segregation of pedestrian and cycle routes on the bridge over the West Coast Mainline.

Element F: (Refer to Sheet 5, Sheet 7, Sheet 8 Viewport 8A and Sheet 9 Viewport 9A)

Creation of a parallel cycle route and pedestrian improvements on the west side of the A6 between Buckingham Road and Bowerfold Lane including traffic calming measures, junction improvements, a permanent closure to traffic at the Derby Road / Heaton Road junction and a modified priority junction at Heaton Road / Alexandra Road / Ashburn Road.

Element G: (Refer to Sheet 6 Viewport 6B)

Upgrading of the current Puffin crossing on Heaton Moor Road at Heaton Chapel Station to a Toucan crossing with associated footway/cycleway connections to Tatton Road North and South.

Element H: (Refer to Sheet 9 Viewport 9B and Sheet 10)

Improvement to a cycle route from Bowerfold Lane to Heaton Lane including path widening between Bowerfold Lane and Higher Bury Street, amendments to the layout on Higher and Bury Street to create cycle and improved crossing facilities, amendments to the George's Road / Travis Brow signal junction to segregate cycle facilities, upgrading of cycle routes and crossings on Travis Brow, installation of Tiger type crossings on the Heaton Lane arms and a Sparrow crossing on the King Street West arm of Heaton Lane Roundabout and path improvements from Junction 1 to Heaton Lane along the River Mersey.

Element I: (Refer to Sheet 10. Note: Part of these works are in the Central Stockport Area Committee area)

Installation of a segregated cycleway on the south side of Heaton Lane between Astley Street and the WCML viaduct and widening and redesignating the eastern footway on King Street West as a footway/cycleway between Heaton Lane Roundabout and Chestergate.

Element J: (Sheet 11 and Sheet 14)

Creation of a parallel cycle route and pedestrian improvements between Nelstrop Road North and Bollington Road including traffic calming works (including the full length of Carnforth Road) and junction improvements including a change to the junction priority at Downham Road / Hulme Road.

Element K: (Refer to Sheet 12 and Sheet 13 Viewport 13A)

Creation of an off-carriageway cycle route and pedestrian improvements between Ash Grove and All Saints Road including a new cycleway on Ash Grove, shared / segregated cycle facilities on Manchester Road, a new Toucan crossing at Denby Road, Toucan-type crossing facilities at the Manchester Road / Whitehill Road West junction, junction improvement at Lloyd Street / Manchester Road and contra-flow cycling on part of Lloyd Street.

Element L: (Refer to Sheet 13 and Sheet 15)

Creation of a parallel cycle route and pedestrian improvements between All Saints Road and Lancashire Hill including traffic calming, junction improvements and path widening from Mendip Close to Quantock Close and at Wilkinson Road in Heaton Norris Recreation Ground.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Sue Stevenson on Tel: 0161-474-4351 or by email on sue.stevenson@stockport.gov.uk