

TEN YEAR TRANSPORT PROGRAMME FOR THE NORTH WEST

Travellers and businesses across the North West will benefit from a ten-year programme of transport improvements to tackle congestion, improve safety and invest in public transport, the Government announced today when it responded to regional advice about the transport priorities for the region.

In July last year the Government asked the Regional Assembly, the Regional Development Agency and other partners for its advice on transport priorities for the £1.245 billion it has provisionally allocated for transport investment in the region up to 2015/16.

The Government's response broadly accepts the region's advice and means that the Government plans to fund 36 transport schemes in the North West over this period.

The improvements include:

- Approval to planned extensions to the Manchester Metrolink system to Oldham, Rochdale and Charlton and a programme of track renewals on the existing Metrolink lines
- 2 further new schemes given approval for the first time today
 - £11.8m scheme for emergency works for the Blackpool Tramway
 - £13.5m to improve traffic management technology in the Greater Manchester area and help tackle congestion

This is in addition to five schemes already underway, twelve schemes which are already approved and currently in development and, as identified by the region, a further fifteen schemes that the Government will consider for approval in the future, once further work has been satisfactorily completed.

Transport Minister Gillian Merron said:

"The Government is investing record amounts in transport putting right decades of underinvestment. This money is delivering real improvements but we have been clear - lasting progress will only be made by sustained investment.

By giving regions a long term funding guideline and involving them in the decision making process, we have for the first time given them a bigger say in which transport schemes are delivered locally. Having considered their advice, I'm pleased we have been able to broadly accept it."

Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. In July 2005 the Government published *Regional Funding Allocations: Guidance on preparing advice* in which the English regions outside London were invited to provide advice on spending priorities on transport, housing and economic development, against indicative funding allocations.
2. The regions provided advice in January 2006, including a programme of spending on specific transport schemes. In the North West's case, a revised the sequencing of priority schemes was submitted to the Department in June 2006.
3. The process includes Highways Agency schemes on routes of regional importance and major Local Authority schemes that require central Government funding (generally those over £5 million). The RFA process does not include schemes on motorway and trunk roads of national importance or railway schemes other than those promoted by Local Authorities.
4. The schemes which are expected to be funded, will be subject to meeting the Department's funding approvals processes in the normal way. Provision of funding will also be subject to the schemes securing all necessary statutory powers for their delivery. Scheme promoters will be expected to liaise with the Statutory Environmental Bodies (English Nature, Countryside Agency, Environment Agency and English Heritage) to ensure that environmental impacts are satisfactorily addressed and appropriate mitigation measures introduced.
5. The A628 Mottram - Hollingworth -Tintwistle Bypass is included in the 12 schemes approved and currently in development. The Highways Agency will continue to progress the scheme through the statutory procedures so that it is ready to start works at the earliest date possible, but recognising that the greater priority the region has given to other schemes in the region will delay this scheme from its previous timetable. We expect the Public Inquiry to start in summer 2007.
6. The following schemes are today being granted Programme Entry:-

Blackpool Tramway Emergency Works (Gross Cost £11.800m, DfT contribution £10.700m)

The scheme involves a programme of emergency works for the Blackpool Tramway, including track replacement and the replacement of an electrical sub-station in Fleetwood, which will ensure that the system can keep operating for a number of years. This work is part of a larger upgrade proposal for which the promoters are seeking Programme Entry. A decision on this is expected to be made in due

course. The emergency works and the remaining elements are considered as two separate schemes for the purposes of this note.

Greater Manchester Urban Traffic Control (Gross cost £13.526m, DfT contribution £13.526m)

This scheme builds on an existing LTP major project and would continue to implement an urban traffic management control system across the Greater Manchester area. It will replace existing obsolete traffic control equipment and introduce new technology that will improve transport provision by reducing congestion and allowing for better and more efficient bus services.

7. Full scheme list attached

**MINISTERS ARE AVAILABLE FOR BROADCAST INTERVIEW -
PLEASE CONTACT THE DFT PRESS OFFICE ON 0207 944 3066**

Schemes for funding within the next three years (2006/07 to 2008/09)

Schemes underway

- A66 Temple Sowerby & Improvement at Winderwath (Highways Agency)
- A595 Parton - Lillyhall Improvement (Highways Agency)
- A58 Blackbrook Diversion (St Helens)
- SEMMMS Quality Bus Corridor (GMPTE)
- Northern Orbital Quality Bus Corridor (GMPTE)

Approved schemes not yet underway

- A590 High and Low Newton Bypass (Highways Agency)
- Metrolink Phase 1&2 Renewal (GMPTE)
- Metrolink Extensions (GMPTE)
- Carlisle Northern Development Route (Cumbria)
- Freckleton St Bridge (Blackburn and Darwen)
- A34 Alderley Edge and Nether Alderley Bypass (Cheshire)
- Edge Lane/Eastern Approaches (Liverpool)
- Hall Lane Strategic Gateway (Liverpool)
- Leigh-Salford-Manchester Quality Bus Corridor (GMPTE)
- Blackpool Tramway Emergency Works (Blackpool/Lancashire)
- Greater Manchester Urban Traffic Control (GMPTE)

Schemes which do not yet have approval

- Blackpool and Fleetwood Tramway Upgrade – Phase 1 (Blackpool/Lancashire)
- Completion of Heysham to M6 Link (Lancashire)
- Rochdale Interchange (GMPTE)
- East Lancashire Rapid Transit (Blackburn with Darwen)
- Silver Jubilee Bridge Major Maintenance Scheme (Halton)
- Greater Manchester Authorities Highway Retaining Walls Strengthening (Greater Manchester authorities)

Indicative list of schemes from 2009/10 to 2015/16

Approved Schemes

- A57/A628 Mottram in Longdendale, Hollingworth and Tintwistle Bypass (Highways Agency)
- Mersey Gateway (Halton)
- Ashton Northern Bypass Stage 2 (Tameside)
- M60 JETTS Quality Bus Corridor (GMPTE)
- A57 Glossop Spur (Tameside)

Schemes which do not yet have approval

- A556 (M6 to M56) Improvement (Highways Agency)
- Access to Port of Liverpool Improvement (Highways Agency)
- South East Manchester Relief Road (Stockport, Manchester and Cheshire)
- Crewe Green Link Road (Southern Section) (Cheshire)

- Crewe Rail Gateway (Cheshire)
- Bidston Moss Viaduct (J1 of the M53) (Wirral)
- Thornton to Switch Island Link (Sefton)
- Bolton Town Centre Public Transport Strategy (GMPTE)
- Yellow School Buses (GMPTE)