



Transport and infrastructure



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The ability to travel between where we live, work, study and spend our leisure time is an important factor in the quality of lives and health. We know Stockport has long-standing and ongoing problems of congestion, and areas of poor air quality, particularly along major routes. Therefore we need to improve the efficiency and capacity of transportation networks and find ways to get more people using sustainable modes of transport, such as public transport, walking and cycling.

Communities need to be supported by a range of 'infrastructure'. In particular physical infrastructure is needed to support built development by providing fresh water, sewers, sustainable drainage, communication technologies, gas, electricity and opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy.

We need to encourage high quality, sustainable design in new developments, to improve resilience to climate change, and to support opportunities for low carbon energy.

Transport

Current context

7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development and contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives, and recommends that the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel. However it is recognised that different areas will need an appropriate mix of policies and modes to support that area, whilst encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.

7.2 The NPPF recommends that local plans should support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport. The need for transport policies to consider the impacts of wider transport systems is also highlighted and discussion with neighbouring authorities is recommended.

7.3 The council works closely on transport issues with the other local authorities in Greater Manchester as well as Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and has strong links with nearby authorities including Cheshire East, Derbyshire, the Peak District National Park and High Peak.

7.4 There are currently two transport strategies that will guide future transport priorities across Stockport, these are:

- The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, and
- The South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy (SEMMMS).

7.5 The Transport Strategy 2040 does not include details of transport schemes or investment priorities, but provides a vision of what a successful transport system might look like in 2040, to support Greater Manchester's wider economic, social and environmental ambitions. The ambition is to deliver a transport system for Greater Manchester which makes it easier for residents, businesses and visitors to travel to a wide range of different destinations, and for sustainable transport to be a viable and attractive alternative to the car.

7.6 The South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy (SEMMMS) is a 20-year strategy to deal with transport issues across Stockport, parts of Manchester, Tameside, Cheshire East, and

Derbyshire, and was approved by central Government in 2001. The multi-modal plan includes developing integrated transport corridors and bus priority measures, improvements to rail stations and services, proposals for Metrolink and tram-train lines and services, improvements to town, district and local centres, pedestrian and cycle facilities, new roads, and a 'smarter choices' programme to help people to choose to reduce their car use.

7.7 An updated strategy is being prepared to cover the period up to 2040, and is known as the SEMMMS Refresh. The SEMMMS Refresh is important for the future of Stockport's transport network. It will build upon recently developed corridor plans for the A6 and A34, Greater Manchester 'Key Route Network' plans and Stockport's 'Rail Plan', which includes a masterplan for developing Stockport Station. The refresh will review the progress with the existing SEMMM Strategy and consider the existing and future transport requirements and issues in the area. The refresh will consider what transport interventions and schemes would be required to meet existing transport demands and support future development.

7.8 The initial review has also identified a number of issues that will need to be addressed to enable the transportation networks to support the delivery of the local plan and its economic, housing, social and environmental aspirations. It identifies that transportation demands are changing for instance:

- Lifestyle choices are altering previous movement patterns with home working increasing in popularity, and shopping via the internet increasing home delivery services.
- Electric vehicles, car clubs, "uber type" services, cycle loan schemes and autonomous vehicles are all new opportunities that may influence how people choose to travel in the future.

7.9 The emerging SEMMMS Refresh has identified that packages of measures will be required to meet future transportation needs. These measures may include:

- Metrolink/tram train routes to Marple, Stockport town centre, the airport and Hazel Grove.
- Segregated bus routes and bus priority schemes.
- Improved rail services and new/ improved rail stations.
- New roads e.g. A6 to M60 Relief Road.
- New and improved walking and cycling routes and facilities on and off the highway.
- Improved public realm in the district and local centres.
- Creation of connected neighbourhoods that encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transport.
- The provision of transportation infrastructure needs to be supported by the introduction of smarter choices to encourage the use of sustainable transport.

7.10 The SEMMMS Refresh draft strategy will be available for consultation this summer.

7.11 Stockport Town Centre is a key focus for a number of proposed transport improvement schemes including the completion of the Town Centre Access Plan which improves access to and around the Town Centre by all modes, a new transport interchange, substantial improvements to Stockport Rail Station, new tram train/metrolink routes and a masterplan to improve the A6 Corridor through the Town Centre.

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Planning for the future

7.12 Stockport is well connected compared with many towns due to the presence of:

- The M60 motorway running through the town centre;
- A railway station on the west coast mainline providing fast train services to London as well local commuter stopping services;
- One of the longest roads in England (A6) running directly through the town centre; and
- The Trans Pennine Trail, a 215 mile long route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders linking the Irish Sea to the North Sea, passing through Stockport's centre.

7.13 Despite being well-connected, the area suffers from congestion on the roads, with some of this being caused by people travelling through Stockport to get to work or leisure opportunities in other areas. Increasing car ownership and people travelling greater distances to work are expected to continue, and this may worsen congestion. Making sure that we have an effective and sustainable transport system for moving around and getting to and from Stockport is therefore essential for the quality of life of our residents and the town's future development and prosperity.

7.14 Transport infrastructure and accessibility is a key issue for Stockport's Local Plan as capacity issues can affect the amount and location of new development. Although the SEMMMS Refresh is the key transport strategy for Stockport, we would like to know whether there are any other transport issues that need to be considered by this refresh process, or directly within the Local Plan.

Infrastructure

Current context

7.15 One of the core planning principles of the NPPF involves proactively supporting and driving sustainable economic development to deliver homes, businesses, and infrastructure and thriving places. Furthermore it notes that Local Plans should plan positively for the development and infrastructure required in the area to meet the objectives, principles and policies of this Framework.

7.16 The NPPF sets out that we should work with other authorities and providers to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure and its ability to meet forecast demands.

7.17 The Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) requires a co-ordinated and integrated approach to infrastructure planning and delivery to be undertaken. The approach of the draft GMSF includes working directly with infrastructure providers to enable development to be completed, with further information to be set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. It also requires that development must make provision for, and be phased with supporting infrastructure.

7.18 There is currently no Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in Stockport, so infrastructure provision is delivered by negotiated contributions to support new developments. The system is under review by central Government with an update expected in the autumn White Paper, with a further decision on CIL to be made by the council after that.

Planning for the future

7.19 Infrastructure planning work previously undertaken in Stockport has identified a deficit across various types of infrastructure, of the types highlighted in the opening section to this chapter. Since that work was carried out, the draft GMSF has proposed additional development sites to be allocated for development in Stockport, which will need to be supported by further infrastructure. Some types of infrastructure will need to be provided by utilities companies, other types may need to be delivered or funded as part of individual developments. Viability is recognised as an issue for bringing forward development in a sustainable way.

7.20 An infrastructure delivery plan will be prepared in conjunction with the emerging Local Plan. The infrastructure delivery plan will identify what is needed, when it is needed, the likely cost, delivery partners and sources of funding where known. This will identify the different types of infrastructure that are needed to make sure the Local Plan is deliverable.

Sustainable Design

Current context

7.21 The NPPF identifies that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and is part of good planning and consequently should contribute positively to making places better for people.

7.22 High quality and inclusive design is important in all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. The use of environmental design standards can help to achieve this.

7.23 Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;
- optimise the potential of sites to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;
- respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;
- address minimising the environmental impact of buildings including taking opportunities to enhance the natural environment; and
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

7.24 In doing so there is no 'one size fits all' approach to design and local distinctiveness should be promoted.

7.25 The design of homes can be measured and delivered using a range of national or international assessment standards. The 'Home Quality Mark' provides information on overall expected costs, health and well-being benefits, and the environmental footprint associated with

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living in the home. 'Passivhaus' focuses on the thermal insulation of properties. There are other wider ranging schemes for assessing the sustainability of design such as 'BREEAM' and 'CEEQUAL'.

Planning for the future

7.26 There are a large number of policies in the existing development plan dealing with a variety of design matters ranging from shopfronts and advertisements on shops, to extensions and residential development, through to carbon reduction, green infrastructure, open space, and sustainable drainage.

7.27 Good quality design of buildings and spaces can have an impact on the health of people living in those environments. At present there is no explicit reference to that in our current policies.

7.28 The Local Plan provides an opportunity to bring together and strengthen the various design policies into a coherent form. The Local Plan needs to develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics.

Energy and low carbon opportunities

Current context

7.29 The NPPF states that the planning system has a crucial role in securing radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, providing resilience to the impacts of climate change and supporting the delivery of low carbon energy and supporting infrastructure. The council needs to build on earlier work that it has done to identify opportunities where development could draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.

7.30 The Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework sets out that Greater Manchester should see a 60% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions compared to 1990 levels by 2035, and lists a number of measures to help achieve this including supporting the delivery of low carbon energy schemes for all development.

7.31 The Stockport Climate Change and Energy Evidence Study 2009 identified a number of renewable technologies which were relevant to Stockport and the potential locations for these, which are identified in the Energy Opportunities Plan in the Core Strategy.

Planning for the future

7.32 The national commitment to deliver zero carbon new homes by 2016 has been abolished which means the planning system could have an important role in supporting de-carbonisation at a local level. Deployment of small scale renewable generation in Greater Manchester is below the national average and planning policy could support increased uptake within districts. The Greater Manchester Spatial Energy Plan 2016 established that up to 9% of GM's electricity could, technically, be generated locally using renewable sources.

7.33 Stockport Council currently identifies energy opportunities in the development plan using the Energy Opportunities Plan which identifies the opportunities for low carbon technologies

including high energy/heat users. However there is a need to update the evidence to support the preparation of future Local Plan policies and include for additional green infrastructure technologies such as green roofs to cool buildings.

7.34 Stockport Council's existing policy increases energy efficiency in existing housing where an extension is being made to the property. The majority of housing in Stockport is predominantly pre-1980s and of a relatively low energy efficiency rating, resulting in Stockport's domestic carbon dioxide emissions being the third highest in Greater Manchester after Manchester and Wigan.

7.35 The cost of heating older housing stock in Stockport can lead to fuel poverty, so to create more socially inclusive and sustainable communities, it is important to break the link between high levels of deprivation and carbon dioxide emissions. Whilst improvements are required in the level of energy efficiency in new housing, it is also important to seek to improve the existing stock, where the opportunity arises.

7.36 To meet international, national and local carbon reduction targets, there needs to be a significant reduction in the use of gas as fuel. Therefore it is expected that buildings will have to change almost entirely to different sources of energy for heat and hot water, with replacement by electricity forming a key aspect of this change.

Question 17

The SEMMMS Refresh will be looking at all aspects of transport provision in the area. What are the key issues for transport in Stockport and what do you think should be done to improve things across all types of transport use?

Question 18

We believe that new developments should contribute towards extra infrastructure to make sure they are safe and sustainable. What are the priorities for your community?

Question 19

How and where should low carbon and renewable energy development be provided in Stockport?

Question 20

Do you have any other comments about transport and other types of infrastructure in Stockport?