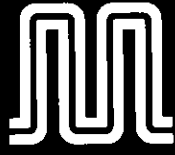


METROLINK PHASE 3

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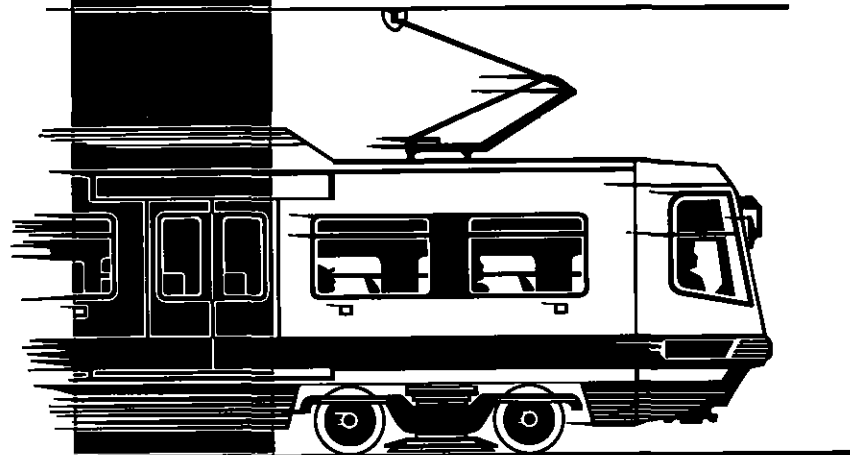
Transport & Works Act 1992



The Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) (Ashton Moss Variation) Order

Environmental Statement

(12)




Metrolink
2000

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**The Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System)
(Ashton Moss Variation) Order**

Non Technical Summary

February 1999



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1 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPT) enjoys powers to construct and operate a Metrolink line between Manchester and Ashton-under-Lyne. It is proposed to modify the powers across Ashton Moss to integrate the line into a new development. An Environmental Statement has been prepared examining the likely impacts of the proposed modification. This summary of the findings illustrates that the variation across the Moss will have a neutral environmental impact, when compared with the alignment for which GMPT already enjoys powers.

1.2 The Proposed Scheme

1.2.1 The proposed scheme would allow an optional variation to the authorised order alignment near the Snipe Inn to Ashton Town Centre.

1.2.2 The proposed line runs between Milton Road, Audenshaw and Wellington Road/Cavendish Street, Ashton-under-Lyne. It bends away from Manchester Road to run between the Snipe Inn car-park and garden, behind the pub building and Milton Road residences. At this point the line emerges onto Ashton Moss and turns to run north, parallel to Milton Road. The line runs alongside and is combined with the route of the proposed Ashton Northern Bypass. The line will cross the proposed M60 on a bridge, construction of which was underway in January 1999. Construction activities associated with the Ashton Northern Bypass and business park development on the Moss have also commenced. A Metrolink stop between Robinson Lane and Richmond Street will serve the new development.

1.3 The Construction Phase and its Impacts

1.3.1 The construction of the Metrolink line will inevitably result in disturbance to the area through which it passes, though the duration of any disturbance will be relatively short. The Code of Construction Practice prepared for the Ashton-under-Lyne Metrolink Extension will apply to this.

1.3.2 The most significant engineering works on Ashton Moss are those associated with the construction of the bypass, along which Metrolink will run.

1.3.3 The Metrolink line will cross one footpath adjacent to Milton Road. Measures will be taken to ensure pedestrian and cyclist safety. Other footpaths across the Moss are

affected primarily by the bypass and will be diverted accordingly. The proposed Metrolink variation has no more construction impacts than those identified for the Ashton-under-Lyne Extension.

1.4 Operational Phase

1.4.1 It is expected that services on the Ashton-under-Lyne Metrolink Extension will operate to a similar pattern as the existing Metrolink Phase 1 (Altrincham to Bury via Manchester City Centre).

1.4.2 Issues of public safety have been addressed in the design of the vehicles and the route proposed. Trams are designed to provide drivers with better visibility than bus drivers. The design of the vehicles also makes it very difficult for pedestrians to go under the vehicle. For the majority of the line there will be restricted access to pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles.

1.5 Land Use, Planning and Property

1.5.1 The line has been designed taking the developments on Ashton Moss into account and will only be built if these go ahead, and so will not obstruct their progress. The area to the north of Wellington Road will be substantially changed by the Ashton Northern Bypass, and the Metrolink impact is therefore considerably reduced. The proposed variation has no more land use impacts than those identified for the Ashton-under-Lyne Extension, and indeed results in less land take through its use of the bypass for much of its length.

1.6 Cultural Heritage

1.6.1 No Conservation Areas or Scheduled Ancient Monuments are affected by the line. The proposed developments scheduled for Ashton Moss will affect the remaining cultural heritage of the area. It is therefore unlikely that the proposed Metrolink line will result in an impact over and above that which is to result from the other major developments and those already identified as resulting from the Ashton-under-Lyne Extension. Cultural heritage issues are the subject of a planning condition.

1.7 Ecology and Conservation

1.7.1 The ecology of Ashton Moss will be substantially affected by all the proposed developments which have received planning permission. The proposed Metrolink variation will result in the loss of hawthorn hedges and other plants of no more than local importance. The importance of the Ashton Moss is therefore as an area of peatland which provides open space within the urban area, and the proposed line

would not diminish this.

- 1.7.2 The proposed Ashton Northern Bypass will destroy over half of a Site of Biological Importance within the Ashton Railway Triangle off Richmond Street. Metrolink on its own, without the bypass would remove or affect less than one tenth of the site. The proposed variation has no more ecological impacts than those identified for the Ashton-under-Lyne Extension, although it slightly reduces the land available for mitigation planting adjacent to the bypass.

1.8 Landscape and Visual

- 1.8.1 The landscape and visual impacts across Ashton Moss will be slight in the context of the other development proposals, such as the Ashton Northern Bypass and the office, industrial and leisure development.
- 1.8.2 Landscape and visual impact issues are the subject of a planning condition. The proposed variation has no more landscape impacts than those identified for the Ashton-under-Lyne Extension.

1.9 Noise

- 1.9.1 Trams produce noise in different ways. They produce relatively little engine noise, since they use electric motors. Thus the main contribution to background noise will result from the interaction of the tram wheels with the rails. This can be reduced through both design and maintenance.
- 1.9.2 Noise will arise during the line construction. Its impact will depend upon the specific activity and the proximity of houses. The Code of Construction Practice will include a number of provisions for areas where noise is likely to be a problem. The proposed variation has no more noise impacts than those identified for the Ashton-under-Lyne Extension.

1.10 Vibration

- 1.10.1 Vibration is a complex mechanism by which mechanical movement of a source is transmitted to a receiver. For the Metrolink scheme, the source of vibration is interaction between the rail and wheel of the moving tram.
- 1.10.2 Slight, perceptible vibration impacts during the construction phase have been predicted. These short term impacts will result from road breaking operations. The proposed variation has no more vibration impacts than those identified for the Ashton-

under-Lyne Extension.

1.11 Traffic and Related Safety Issues

1.11.1 The implementation of the proposed scheme may have a number of effects on the local traffic, pedestrians and cyclists. Slight impacts have been identified at one junction along the proposed Ashton Northern Bypass - Richmond Street, where Metrolink will contribute to the traffic flow through the junctions.

1.12 Contaminated Land and Waste Disposal

1.12.1 Contaminated land and waste disposal impacts will arise principally during the construction of the bypass, and not Metrolink. Contaminated land issues are the subject of a planning condition.

1.13 Water Quality

1.13.1 During construction, a watercourse could be affected by the work adjacent to it. However, the Code of Construction Practice will ensure good site management. Operational impacts on water quality are anticipated to be minimal as the tram vehicles do not emit any pollutants. The proposed variation has no more water quality impacts than those identified for the Ashton-under-Lyne Extension, and in fact has less, through the removal of many ditches on the Moss as a result of the other developments.

1.14 Air Quality

1.14.1 Tram vehicles do not emit air pollutants directly. The air quality impacts of the proposed Metrolink variation arise principally from its effects on traffic movements and traffic management. Additional impact is caused by dust created by construction activities, although this can be controlled by careful site management.