

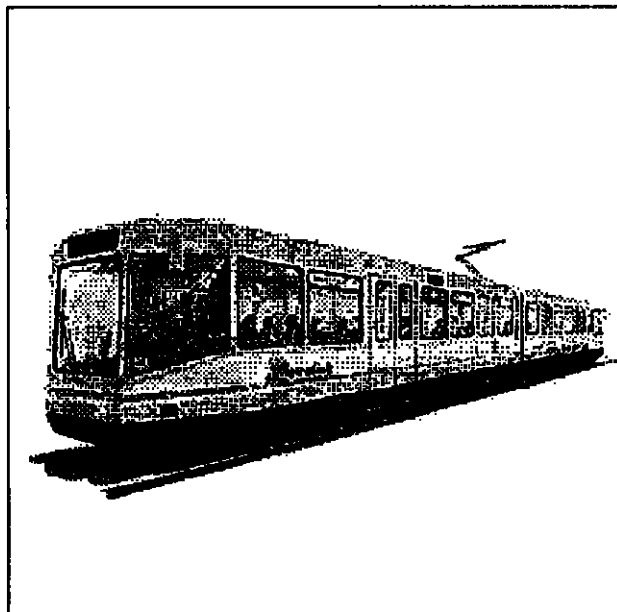
METROLINK PHASE 3

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**Greater Manchester
Passenger Transport Executive**



**Greater Manchester
(Light Rapid Transit System)
No.5 Bill.
*Environmental Statement***

June 1990

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Manchester's Metrolink system has been authorised by three separate Acts of Parliament passed in 1988 and 1990. Phase 1 of the project will convert existing British Rail services to Manchester from Bury and Altrincham to light rail operation. It will also provide a new light rail link between Piccadilly and Deansgate stations running on-street in the City Centre.

In October 1989, the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive submitted further Bills to Parliament to extend the Metrolink light rail system in Manchester. This Environmental Statement (ES) assesses the environmental impacts associated with the proposals contained in one of these, the Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) No.5 Bill 1989. The Bill provides for:

- *a new line between Chorlton-cum-Hardy and East Didsbury running along the line of the dismantled Manchester South District Railway;*
- *an extension to the existing Victoria to Rochdale BR line into Rochdale Town Centre.*

The two schemes are shown in Figures 1 and 2, respectively.

Environmental Assessment

Environmental Assessment (EA) is a recognised procedure for studying environmental impacts of major development projects. As well as identifying potential impacts, it also provides a way of introducing mitigation measures to minimise these. Although now well-established in the U.K., EA became a routine part of project planning only two years ago.

The Projects

The Bill proposes two extensions to Manchester's Metrolink system, which can be described as follows:

o Didsbury Extension

The proposal is for a double and single line tramroad approximately 4km in length. This will start at a junction with that part of the Metrolink already authorised at Chorlton-cum-Hardy. The proposed route then runs, as a double line tramroad, along the line of the dismantled Manchester South District Railway for approximately 2.8km. A single line tramroad then continues along the dismantled railway line to a terminus in East Didsbury.

o Rochdale Town Centre Extension

The scheme is for a double line tramroad and tramway, just over 1km in length. It starts at a junction with the existing Manchester to Rochdale line and runs north alongside Maclure Road and then along the east side of Drake Street as far as Milnrow Road. It then runs along Drake Street and terminates in Smith Street.

Both proposed lines will carry light rail vehicles, which will be two-section, articulated units. These will operate singly or in two-unit trains. They will be powered by overhead electric cables at 750 volts, with a maximum operating speed of 80 km/h. On street-running sections a normal speed limit of just under 50 km/h (30 mph) will be observed.



Figure 1
The Proposed Route for the
Didsbury Extension

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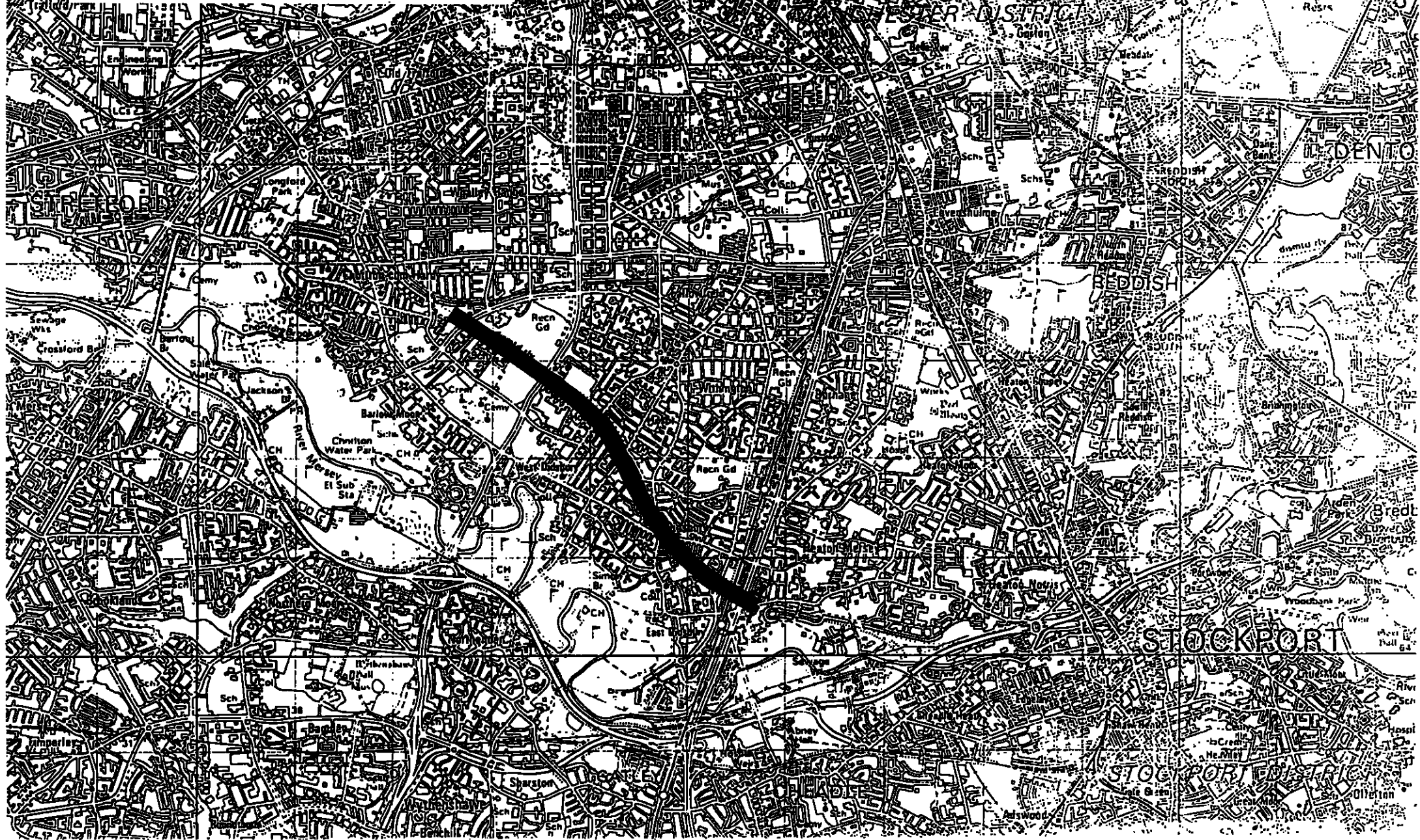


Figure 2
The Proposed Route for the
Rochdale Town Centre Extension

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Organisation of the EA

The Environmental Assessment of the No.5 Bill proposals had two principal aims:

- o To identify the nature and scale of the environmental effects (both adverse and beneficial) that are likely to result from the construction and operation of the proposals.*
- o To identify measures that should be considered to minimise the adverse effects.*

For clarity and convenience, the issues addressed by the EA were considered under three broad categories:

- o Impacts during construction:*
 - loss of land and property during construction, and the effect of temporary road closures;*
 - temporary changes of amenity during construction;*
 - disturbance from noise, dust and vibration, affecting local residents, other sensitive land uses and environmental resources;*
 - impacts arising from the transport and disposal of spoil, and from the delivery of construction materials.*
- o Impacts of the completed proposals and their operation:*
 - permanent loss of land and property, and reductions in road-space;*
 - permanent changes to amenity and other community effects;*
 - disturbance from noise and vibration due to light rail vehicle movements;*
 - impacts arising from changes in road traffic flows and patterns.*
- o Benefits of the completed proposals and their operation:*
 - improved accessibility and greater reliability;*
 - modal shift from road to light rail;*
 - employment benefits;*
 - opportunities for regeneration and improvement of visual quality.*

For each of these categories, the ES describes the predicted impacts of the proposals, together with measures which should be considered to minimise adverse impacts. In the remainder of this summary, the key findings of the ES are presented.

Impacts During Construction

i) Didsbury Extension

Direct impacts, in terms of demolition, will be minimal. The following are the key points to note in relation to this:

- o No residential properties will be demolished, as the route utilises an existing former transport corridor.*
- o One commercial property will be demolished in Warburton Street.*

The key impacts predicted to occur during construction are:

- o A number of residents will be affected by slight noise disturbance, especially at station locations and particularly at or near Vixen Close.*
- o Ewing School will experience a significant noise impact for a very short period.*

- o There will be no perceptible impacts arising from construction traffic, apart from at the proposed station site alongside Vixen Close.*
- o There will be significant tree loss and some loss of wildlife habitats and plant communities.*

These effects may be largely mitigated by adherence to the mitigation measures which are identified in relation to construction impacts in Annex A of the ES, although the noise impact for Ewing School will remain. It is recommended that works at this location be carried out in the school holidays. GMPTe have indicated to ERL that the contractors likely to be involved in the construction of the proposed scheme will be willing to implement these measures.

ii) Rochdale Town Centre Extension

The proposed route runs through Rochdale Town centre, which is a busy commercial and residential area. The following are the key points to note:

- o No residential properties are to be demolished, although footways and/or kerblines may be set back.*
- o Six commercial properties will be demolished in Drake Street, including the former ambulance station.*

The key impacts predicted to occur during construction are:

- o Residents in Maclure Road, Drake Street and adjoining side streets may experience journey time delays due to road closures and diversions. These delays have not been quantified.*
- o Local businesses may experience similar delays due to road closures and diversions.*
- o St. John's School will experience a significant noise impact for a very short period.*

These effects may be largely mitigated by adherence to the mitigation measures identified in Annex A of the Environmental Statement. The noise impact for St. John's School will remain, although it is recommended that wherever possible works at this location be carried out in school holidays.

Impacts During Operation

i) Didsbury Extension

The key findings identified as arising from the presence of infrastructure and the operation of the Didsbury extension are:

- o If jointed or badly worn rail is used then there may be a significant noise impact for some 73 properties.*
- o There will be no significant impacts arising from changes in road traffic flows and patterns.*
- o Lighting from vehicles and stations will be visible to those residents living close to the alignment.*

The magnitude of the impacts identified may be reduced through the adoption of mitigation measures recommended in the ES.

ii) **Rochdale Town Centre Extension**

The key findings identified as arising from the presence of infrastructure and the operation of the Rochdale Town Centre extension are:

- o Residents may suffer a loss of amenity due to the demolition of buildings and the introduction of the tramway into views from adjoining properties.*
- o Noise impacts will not be significant, other than on short-radius curves.*
- o Lighting from vehicles will be visible to those residents living close to the alignment.*

The magnitude of the impacts identified may be reduced through the adoption of mitigation measures recommended in the ES.

Potential Benefits

Benefits for both schemes are likely to accrue as follows:

- o Accessibility for all potential users, including those people with a transport handicap, will be improved overall.*
- o Road traffic volumes may be reduced through a modal shift to light rail use; it should be noted that neither scheme will go ahead without Section 56 Grant Aid from the Department of Transport. For this to be obtained it must be demonstrated that there will be a net reduction in traffic congestion. This issue is currently being fully addressed by the Passenger Transport Executive.*
- o Access to and from both Didsbury and Rochdale Town Centre will be improved.*
- o Businesses and retailers, especially in Rochdale, are likely to benefit from improved access and increased recruitment opportunities.*