



Chapter 15: The Enhanced Programme - Major Schemes

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15.1 In this chapter we describe our proposals for those major schemes that we believe would greatly enhance the proposals set out in this Plan. We believe additional resources would contribute greatly to our ability to stretch our targets. We also provide support for the proposals of our neighbouring authorities and describe a number of 'emerging' schemes that we will examine during the lifetime of this Plan.

Introduction

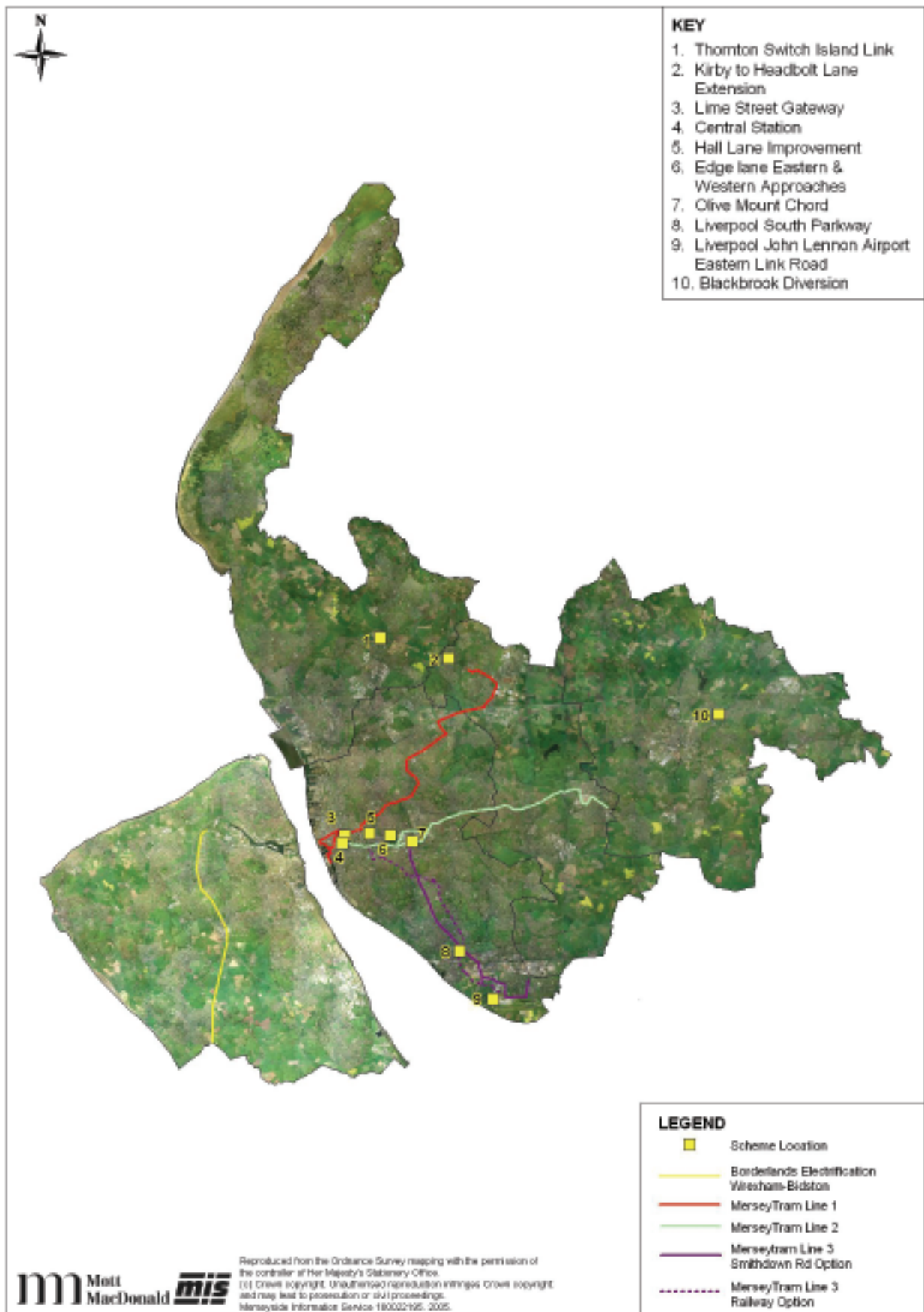
15.2 Our proposals have resulted from an independent review undertaken in Spring 2005, which appraised 35 schemes against local, regional and national policies. This provided a prioritised list which included local road and rail based interventions together with schemes for which the majority of funding is expected to come from sources other than the LTP. Here we summarise:

- What these schemes are.
- How each scheme contributes to the overall long term strategy.
- The influence of regional transport prioritisation on the Merseyside programme scheme status.

15.3 Map 15.1 illustrates the location of the schemes described in this Chapter.

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Map 15-1: Proposed Major Schemes



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Work in Progress

15.4 A number of Major Schemes identified in our first LTP are now well advanced in the implementation process. These are:

- Liverpool South Parkway. This is a new transport hub which replaces the existing rail stations at Garston and Allerton. It will provide an interchange to local bus services and Liverpool John Lennon Airport. It is now under construction and opening is planned for Summer 2006.
- Merseytram Line One. Following a Public Inquiry, Transport and Works Act powers were granted for the construction of Tramline One linking Kirkby and Liverpool City Centre. Merseytram Line 1 provides a significant addition to the aim of creating a Single Integrated Public Transport Network. Connecting Objective 1 pathways areas and Strategic Investment Areas to the major new developments in Liverpool City Centre/Waterfront, Merseytram will provide an attractive alternative to car use for accessing employment, training, shops, and other amenities. The DfT have now refused funding for the scheme, and following a Judicial Review, Merseytravel are reviewing the future of this scheme. This will be the subject of an Addendum report to be submitted to DfT in July 2006.
- Blackbrook Diversion. This proposal for a bypass of a section of the A58 in St Helens will improve environmental conditions and road safety, relieve local congestion, and benefit regeneration proposals. It received Full Funding Approval in December 2005, started on site on 20 February 2006 and has a 15 month contract period.

Local and Regional Priorities

Regional Transport Prioritisation

15.5 Regional and Pan-Northern prioritisation of transport schemes and interventions has been completed through Regional Funding Allocation (RFA), Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) and Northern Way processes. The outcome of these three prioritisation processes has been the production of a list of transport schemes and interventions that will aim to support the objectives and actions of the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Spatial Strategy, Regional Transport Strategy, Regional Housing Strategy, Local Transport Plans and other sub-regional strategies, including the Liverpool City Region Development Plan and Merseyside Action Plan.

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Regional Funding Allocations

- 15.6 As part of the devolving decision making agenda, for the first time, regional transport funding allocations for the three years up to and including 2007/08 have been published, along with indicative longer term planning assumptions for the period 2008/09 to 2015/16.
- 15.7 The total indicative North West allocation for transport for the period 2005/06 to 2015/16 is approximately £1,350 million. This covers capital funding for all major schemes (ie schemes costing £5million or more) submitted by local authorities through the local transport plan process and major Highways Agency schemes, other than those on routes of strategic national importance.
- 15.8 Rail infrastructure projects in Merseyside were submitted for appraisal in the RFA prioritisation process but were not eligible for RFA funding. We are concerned that although there was no rail funding provided for the RFA, the opportunity was not taken to consider using RFA funding for local rail schemes despite this being an option that was available to the Regional Forum. The Merseyside Partners will continue to seek funding for rail schemes particularly those which scored highly in the Merseyside appraisal process.

Regional Transport Strategy

- 15.9 The Regional Transport Strategy within the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England (The North West Plan) presents the region's priorities for major transport investment.
- 15.10 The full list of transport investment priorities within the RTS represents those major schemes and broad interventions in the North West which have regional significance.

Prioritisation of Merseyside Schemes

- 15.11 Over 100 schemes were appraised and prioritised by the RFA process, and 73 interventions by the RTS process.

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15.12 Only the top quartile schemes have been recommended for funding by the Region through RFA Advice (North West Advice to Government). Six Merseyside schemes lie within this top quartile, four in the second quartile and five in the third. Within the RTS prioritisation, six Merseyside interventions were placed in the top quartile and two were placed in the second quartile. Figure 15.1 summarises this position, providing details of the Merseyside schemes and their LTP, RTS and RFA prioritisation.

Figure 15.1 : Regional Prioritisation

Scheme	Delivery Agency	Scheme Type	Funding Mechanism	Likely Start Date	RFA Quartiles	RFA Funding £m	RTS Quartiles	Merseyside LTP Prioritisation
Bidston Moss Viaduct	Highways Agency / Wirral / Merseytravel	Maintenance/ Upgrade	RFA	2010/11	Q1	46	Q1	7
Edge Lane (West) / Eastern Approaches	Liverpool City Council (LCC)	Highway	RFA	2006/07	Q1	15.85		No ranking due to provisional funding approval
Hall Lane Strategic Gateway	Liverpool City Council	Highway	RFA	2006/07	Q1	12.2		6
Merseytram Line 1	Merseytravel	Public Transport	RFA	2006/07	Q1	170		No ranking due to provisional funding approval
Thornton Switch Island Link	Sefton MBC	Highway	RFA	2009/10	Q1	9.3		12
Liverpool Central Station	Merseytravel	Public Transport	RFA	2010/11	Q2	9.8	Q1	8
Merseytram Line 2	Merseytravel	Public Transport	RFA	2007/08	Q2	359.1	Q1	1
Olive Mount Chord + Capacity Enhancements	Merseytravel / Network Rail	Rail	RFA / Northern Way	2007/08	Q2		Q2	5
St Helens Central - Junction Rail Link	Merseytravel / Network Rail	Rail	Unknown	2008/09	Q2			18
Merseytram Line 3	Merseytravel	Public Transport	RFA	2008/09	Q3		Q1	4
Sandhills Lane Link	Liverpool City Council	Highway	RFA		Q3	8		20
Kirkby Headbolt Lane Rail Extension	Merseytravel / Network Rail	Rail	Unknown		Q3			2

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Scheme	Delivery Agency	Scheme Type	Funding Mechanism	Likely Start Date	RFA Quartiles	RFA Funding £m	RTS Quartiles	Merseyside LTP Prioritisation
Bootle - Aintree - Edge Hill Link	Merseytravel / Network Rail	Rail	Unknown		Q3			21
Borderlands Electrification	Merseytravel / Network Rail / Cheshire CC	Rail	Unknown	2010/11	Q4		Q1	11
Lime Street Gateway	English Partnerships / Liverpool Vision / LCC / Merseytravel / Network Rail	Public Transport	Regeneration Monies / LTP Integrated Block	2006/07			Q1	N.A.
Edge Lane/Eastern Approaches (East & Central)	Liverpool City Council	Highway	NWDA / LTP Integrated Block	2006/07				N.A.
Liverpool Airport Link Road	Peel Holdings	Highway	Private	2007/08			Q2	9
Access to Port of Liverpool	Highways Agency	Highway	RFA	2015/16	Q1	45		
Switch Island Improvements	Highways Agency	Highway	HA Monies	2005/06				10
Tarbock Interchange M62 Jct 6	Highways Agency	Highway	HA Monies	2008/09				13

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15.13 The RTS, RFA and Merseyside appraisal systems deliver similar results in many instances but there are some striking differences. These largely result from the high weighting given to deliverability in the RFA process. This penalises some Merseyside schemes which could be delivered in the LTP2 period but for which the preparatory work is still in its early stages. We will continue to develop these schemes where the LTP scoring system has ranked them highly.

Northern Way RFA and CSR2007 Prioritisation

15.14 As part of the Northern Way Growth Strategy, transport interventions which could make a significant contribution to closing the £30 billion gap between the North and the rest of the UK, have been identified and prioritised to inform the RFA advice and Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 2007.

15.15 Access to the northern ports is identified as one of the top priorities and this currently includes two Merseyside schemes:

- (i) A5036 road improvements for port access being promoted by the Highways Agency. This scheme has links to the Thornton-Switch Island improvement scheme promoted by Sefton.
- (ii) Olive Mount Chord rail scheme and associated gauge clearance, being promoted by Merseytravel.

15.16 A package of measures is being developed to improve access to the Mersey ports and these interventions and schemes will then feed into the Northern Way CSR2007 advice.

15.17 The strategic fit and importance of the Merseyside schemes to sub-regional, regional and Northern Way strategies is identified in Figure 15.2. All of the schemes are identified in a range of strategies and this demonstrates the wider context in which the LTP sits and the contribution of the LTP to sub-regional, regional, pan-northern and national priorities and objectives.

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Figure 15.2 Major Schemes - Strategic Fit within Wider Region

Scheme	Promoting Authority	Scheme Type	RFA	RTS	RES	CRDP Action Plan	Northern Way
Bidston Moss Viaduct	Merseyside	Maintenance/Upgrade	✓	✓		✓	
Bootle - Aintree - Edge Hill Link	Merseyside	Rail	✓		✓	✓	✓
Borderlands Electrification	Merseyside	Rail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Edge Lane/Eastern Approaches (West)	Merseyside	Highway	✓		✓	✓	
Edge Lane/Eastern Approaches (East & Central)	Merseyside	Highway		✓	✓	✓	
Hall Lane Strategic Gateway	Merseyside	Highway	✓		✓	✓	
Kirkby Headbolt Lane	Merseyside	Rail	✓		✓	✓	✓
Lime Street Gateway	Merseyside	Rail		✓	✓	✓	✓
Liverpool Central Station	Merseyside	Rail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Merseytram Line 1	Merseyside	Public Transport	✓		✓	✓	✓
Merseytram Line 2	Merseyside	Public Transport	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Merseytram Line 3	Merseyside	Public Transport	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Olive Mount Chord + Capacity Enhancements	Merseyside	Rail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sandhills Lane Link	Merseyside	Highway	✓			✓	
St Helens Central - Junction Link	Merseyside	Rail	✓		✓	✓	✓
Thornton Switch Island Link	Merseyside	Highway	✓		✓	✓	

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Scheme	Promoting Authority	Scheme Type	RFA	RTS	RES	CRDP Action Plan	Northern Way
Liverpool Airport Link Road	Peel	Highway		✓	✓	✓	✓
Access to Port of Liverpool	Highways Agency	Highway	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Switch Island Improvements	Highways Agency	Highway			✓	✓	
Tarbock Interchange M62 Jct 6	Highways Agency	Highway			✓	✓	✓
M56/A5117 Queensferry Road	Highways Agency	Highway		✓	✓	✓	
Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park	Halton MBC	Rail	✓		✓	✓	
Halton Curve	Halton MBC	Rail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mersey Gateway	Halton MBC	Highway	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Silver Jubilee Bridge Maintenance	Halton MBC	Maintenance/ Upgrade	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Burscough Curves	Lancashire County Council	Rail				✓	✓
Ormskirk Bypass	Lancashire County Council	Highway	✓	✓		✓	

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Transport Innovation Fund

- 15.18 The Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) requires transport authorities to bid for funding and has begun with bids for 'pump-priming' funding in 2005/06 and 2006/07
- 15.19 Currently funding will only be available for schemes which support:
- The Government's drive to tackle road congestion.
 - The wider national productivity improvement agenda. Transport - authorities are not invited to bid for this funding – schemes agreed between DfT & RDA.
- 15.20 Congestion in Merseyside has not reached the level of many other conurbations, and it is considered that road user charging may be likely to place undue strain on Merseyside's nascent regeneration. Nevertheless we take the view that with evidence suggesting a period of economic growth and increased demand for travel, it is prudent for us to examine the issue in greater detail. We will therefore be submitting a proposal for the second round of pump priming funding. **This was described in greater detail in Chapter 5.**
- 15.21 A TIF package based on improving national productivity which centres on improving access to the nationally significant Mersey Ports, is also being suggested as a potential Merseyside TIF proposal, and is being discussed with the NWDA. It is considered that this greatly supports the LCRDP strategy set out in Chapter 3.

Schemes Being Appraised

- 15.22 Following an independent review, a number of major investment schemes are currently being examined, that could potentially bring substantial additional benefit to the LTP. These were shown in map 15.1.

Rail Schemes

Liverpool Central Station Capacity Enhancements

- 15.23 Central Station in Liverpool City is the busiest station on the Merseyrail network and the third busiest in the North West. It is an interchange between the Northern and Wirral Merseyrail lines and provides access to Liverpool city centre from Merseyrail stations extending into the wider city region, such as Chester and, Ormskirk and beyond. It is the closest station to the major retail development within the Liverpool One development and this is anticipated to lead to a substantial growth in passenger throughput once the shopping centre opens. It is also expected to be well-used during the Capital of Culture year in 2008.
- 15.24 Merseytravel has developed proposals to improve facilities for existing users (generating time savings and quality benefits), and to make the station fully accessible. Currently Merseytravel has identified an initial package of measures which could be implemented prior to the Capital of Culture celebrations and events in 2008. Integration with proposed developments around the station have also been assessed.
- 15.25 Central Station is served only by the Merseyrail network, for which, Merseytravel acts as the franchise controller. As already outlined, Merseytravel are also examining expansion of both the network and Park and Ride facilities, which together with the major redevelopment of the City Centre will further add to passenger growth. The strategy to expand the Merseyrail network and Park and Ride are key elements of the Merseyside congestion and air quality strategy. The scheme was ranked 8 in the Merseyside LTP scoring system and whilst it was only placed in the second quartile in the RFA appraisal system, it is still regarded as critical to the City Centre particularly in terms of managing congestion, and it is considered suitable for funding as an LTP Major Scheme. Further technical, operational and economic and financial assessment, and discussion with the DfT will therefore continue.

Extension of Merseyrail Services from Kirkby to Headbolt Lane with Park and Ride

- 15.26 Merseytravel is currently assessing the technical feasibility of extending the Merseyrail Electrics network northward by a mile from its terminus at Kirkby to a new station at Headbolt Lane, on the existing rail line between Kirkby and Wigan. The extension would extend the catchment of Merseyrail by serving a larger area of Kirkby than at present (at Tower Hill and Northwood where extensive housing redevelopment is taking place) and would provide for a new strategic park and ride site. Provision of additional park and ride facilities is a central part of our long term strategy, providing an alternative to car travel into Liverpool City Centre and bringing environmental and economic benefits.

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15.27 Merseytravel has completed an appraisal of the physical requirements of extending the electrified network from Kirkby to Headbolt Lane, and is currently in the process of undertaking a demand study. Subject to the findings of the operational, financial and economic case, expected in summer 2006, discussions with the DfT and an assessment of all available funding sources will be undertaken, Merseytravel will consider whether the scheme is suitable to promote for LTP Major Scheme funding.

Mid Wirral (Wrexham-Bidston) Line

15.28 The potential to electrify some or all of the line south from Bidston to Wrexham was identified in our first LTP. Such proposals offer the potential to integrate the line within the successful Merseyrail Electrics network and offer services directly to Liverpool City Centre. The proposal is intended to improve the connectivity of the line's catchment to Birkenhead and Liverpool, offering access to jobs and services as well as an alternative to car travel for those who currently make this journey. It will improve connectivity within Wirral, particularly to Arrowe Park Hospital with new stations proposed at Woodchurch and Beechwood. It will also provide access to new employment opportunities in Deeside and North Wales.

15.29 With its neighbouring authorities and the North Wales local authority consortium Taith, Merseytravel is currently studying the technical, operational, financial and economic case for electrifying the line, providing additional park and ride facilities and integrating services within the Merseyrail Electrics network. The study is expected to report in spring 2006. Subject to the findings of the study, the consideration of all available funding routes and discussions with the DfT, Merseytravel will consider whether the scheme is suitable to promote for LTP major scheme funding.

Reinstatement of Olive Mount Chord

15.30 The reinstatement of the Olive Mount Chord, a link between the Bootle branch and Chat Moss rail routes, would play a vital role in supporting sustainable freight growth at the Port of Liverpool, by supporting modal shift of goods from lorry onto rail.

15.31 While there will be performance benefits for the local, inter-regional and inter-city passenger networks, the primary beneficiaries of this proposal will be rail freight. The importance of the Mersey Ports both to the region and to the Northern Way, have been set out in recent reports on improving access to the Ports. On current forecasts, it is estimated that the present line will be at operational capacity by 2010 forcing further growth onto road.

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- 15.32 The Port of Liverpool Strategic Transport Access Study estimated that the increased rail capacity could reduce the projected growth of port-generated HGV movements from 30% by 2016 to 12-14%. This is equivalent to 500,000 fewer HGV movements per annum. This clearly has significant benefits for the shared priorities of congestion and air quality and for associated mandatory and local targets outlined in the provisional plan.
- 15.33 The necessary work involves a phased programme of gauge and capacity improvements, including the reinstatement of the missing Olive Mount Chord which would remove the need for complex locomotive reversing movements.
- 15.34 Discussions are ongoing with Northern Way, about a possible start under their 'early wins' programme. A detailed cost estimate and business case are being developed. Subject to this being successful, a funding package for the complete scheme will be assembled by the Partners steering the project, but it is likely that this scheme will not be funded via the LTP Major Scheme route. However, given the importance of its role in accessing the Port of Liverpool, it could also be progressed as part of a 'Productivity TIF' package of measures.

Lime Street Gateway

- 15.35 Liverpool Lime Street Station is Liverpool's terminal station for inter-city and inter-regional services as well as many local services via the City Line. The redevelopment of the station is stated as a high priority in the Liverpool City Region Development Plan (LCRDP). The station's links to the local transport network for the 30-40,000 passengers a day are poor and circulatory capacity within the station is expected to be insufficient for anticipated demand during the European Capital of Culture in 2008.
- 15.36 Working together, Network Rail, Liverpool Vision, Liverpool City Council, the train operators and Merseytravel have developed proposals for Lime Street Gateway. These consist of two related projects. The first addresses the need for substantial upgrade of passenger facilities within the station, improved circulation and better and more direct links to local buses. The second involves clearing buildings which mask the main station entrance, and the introduction of public realm works.
- 15.37 At present a package of proposals is being developed for implementation before the 2008 Capital of Culture year. It is believed that this can be funded through local sources, regeneration budgets and from commercial beneficiaries without recourse to Major Scheme funding.

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Other Rail Proposals

- 15.38 Merseytravel is currently considering a number of other rail proposals that are part of the longer term strategy beyond 2011. (They are described in the Rail Strategy attached as Appendix Two) and development work on their technical, operational, economic and financial case will be undertaken during the LTP2 period. These include:
- Reinstatement of the Aintree to Bootle Link.
 - Reinstatement of the St Helens Junction to St Helens Central link.
 - Reintroduction of passenger services on the Edge Hill to Bootle Branch.

Road Schemes

- 15.39 The Merseyside highway authorities have developed a number of road improvement proposals. These proposals have been developed to relieve localised congestion, promote road safety and support economic regeneration opportunities.

Edge Lane/Eastern Approaches (West)

- 15.40 This road improvement on Edge Lane, the main route from the M62 to Liverpool City Centre, between Botanic Road and Hall Lane is being promoted by Liverpool Land Development Company (a joint NWDA, English Partnerships and Liverpool City Council body) in conjunction with Liverpool City Council. A £17m proposal to improve the central and eastern section of Edge Lane is already prepared and about to start on site. Funding from developers, regeneration and other local funding sources are expected to finance these proposals. NWDA recognises the economic importance of improving access along this corridor which aims to reduce traffic congestion and community severance, improve the local town and streetscape and improve the accessibility of local businesses and communities. The scheme is also a vital part of the related regeneration project to support the delivery of the Housing Market Renewal Initiative. The scheme has received Provisional Approval and Orders have been made under the Highways Act and a CPO has been granted. The earliest start for the scheme will be October 2006.

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Hall Lane Strategic Gateway

- 15.41 Hall Lane completes the main route into Liverpool City Centre from Edge Lane and the M62. Liverpool City Council is promoting the Hall Lane Improvement which would widen the available roadspace from single to dual carriageway in both directions between Edge Lane and Kensington. It would relieve localised congestion, as well as improving access to local employment sites and the Kensington New Deal for the Communities area. It forms part of the City Council's strategy to manage the circulation of traffic approaching the City Centre and is critical to the efficient movement of freight into and out of the city centre. The scheme will also support access to the Liverpool One development within the city centre.
- 15.42 Liverpool City Council has secured Provisional Approval for this scheme and has made orders under the Highways Act and a CPO. However, these orders have to be subjected to a Public Inquiry before they can be confirmed by the Secretary of State. The Public Inquiry opened in October 2005 but had to be adjourned in November 2005 because many of the traffic assumptions are linked to the Merseytram Line 1 scheme and will now require re-evaluation. For this reason the Public Inquiry has been adjourned until June 2006. The Merseyside partners remain committed to the delivery of this scheme as an LTP Major scheme. The NWDA recognise the economic importance of the corridor and it complements their existing investment in Edge Lane, and supports their policy of improving strategic access to the regions urban centres on the motorway network, and access to the conurbation cores. It also appears in the first quartile in the Regional Funding Allocation appraisal process.

Thornton-Switch Island Link

- 15.43 Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council has been assessing a single carriageway link road from Switch Island to A565 Southport Road. The scheme is intended to relieve congestion on the A5036 Trunk Road, Green Lane, Lydiate Lane and the Northern Perimeter Road and lead to local environmental improvements. It will also improve access to Southport and the ports.
- 15.44 The scheme is now likely to be reviewed in the light of considering improved access to the Mersey Ports at Seaforth, considered to be a priority by the RES and Northern Way initiative. Policies in support of Port development are anticipated from the NWDA.
- 15.45 Further work on the technical specification of the scheme and its economic case needs to be undertaken before a Major Scheme funding bid can be made. We anticipate a bid for funding being made during the period of this LTP.

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Liverpool John Lennon Airport Eastern Link Road

15.46 The masterplan for Liverpool John Lennon Airport has identified that a new link road from the A5300/A562 junction will improve access to/from the Airport and thus help facilitate the Airport's growth while reducing any congestion problems such growth may bring. This scheme has been described in Chapter 7 and it is anticipated that this proposal will be funded by the private-sector and appropriate public funding sources, but financed with no recourse to LTP or Major Scheme funding.

Emerging Major Schemes

City Centre Low Emission Zone

15.47 Studies by a specialist consultant have identified and quantified the effect of a series of interventions on the current AQMA which covers much of Liverpool City Centre. Several initiatives can be seen to have a positive effect on air quality but the most effective would be the introduction of a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) to include the AQMA. Consideration of this option is still at an early stage but will continue, and if pursued, it is estimated it will cost in the region of £15m and would therefore need to be considered for major scheme funding. See Chapter 8 for further background.

Intelligent Transport System

15.48 Work has been progressing, initially based around Liverpool, to develop an intelligent transport system capable of helping the Merseyside Partners and the Highways Agency to fulfil their duties under the Traffic Management Act and improve conditions for the transportation of people and goods in the Greater Merseyside Region. See Chapter 6 for further background.

The strategic goals of such a system would be to:

- (a) maintain and enhance the vitality and prosperity of the Region as a retail, commercial, employment and leisure centre;
- (b) improve the operation, efficiency and effectiveness of its strategic road network;
- (c) improve the quality and reliability of traffic and travel information to stakeholders, the public and media;
- (d) improve the safety of all road users;
- (e) reduce delays to road users generally and during planned and unplanned events;
- (f) reduce the impact of road based transport on the environment.

15.49 The details of the scheme are still being discussed with potential partners but the total cost involved is likely to be between £5m and £10m.

Access to Mersey Ports

15.50 The regional and national importance of the Mersey Ports has been confirmed through the port studies commissioned by both the NWDA and Northern Way. The reports identify specific shortfalls in access provision over the coming years. Schemes have been developed to overcome some of these shortfalls (A5036 improvements Switch Island – Thornton and Olive Mount Chord). However the Mersey ports comprise various separate sites which range from Seaforth Docks (Sefton) to Garston (Liverpool) and Birkenhead (Wirral). Liverpool John Lennon Airport can also be included in this overall ports grouping, providing the concept of a Merseyside 'superport'. Each contributes to the overall service offer, and each has access limitations which could constrain their growth and regeneration potential. A comprehensive package of access improvements will be developed to deliver the necessary capacity with a balance between road and rail, which will support the growth of Mersey ports in a sustainable manner. As has been described earlier, discussions are ongoing with NWDA about this proposal as a potential TIF scheme under the productivity strand.

Highways Agency Proposals

- 15.51 There are a number of road improvements in Merseyside being promoted by the Highways Agency. While these will be funded by the Highways Agency each will contribute to the attainment of the Partners' long term strategy and their LTP objectives. These are:
- Bidston Moss Viaduct M53 junction 1 - The Highways Agency is working with Wirral Council and Mersey Tunnels to determine the optimum improvement for this strategic highway structure which is currently subject to a 3 tonne weight restriction. It is imperative that funding will be made available to both Wirral and the Highways Agency in order to co-ordinate the jointly funded scheme when appropriate (**further details are contained in Chapter 12**). This scheme is in the first quartile of the RFA appraisal list.
 - Switch Island Highway Improvement – this scheme is to improve the M57/M58/A5036/A59 junction at Switch Island. It will reduce congestion, improve pedestrian and cycle facilities, reduce air and noise pollution and reduce accidents. Draft Orders for the scheme were published by the Highway Agency in August 2004 and work has now started.
 - Tarbock Interchange M62 Junction 6 Improvements – design work is currently underway to reduce congestion at the M62/M57 junction. This junction regularly experiences traffic blocking back onto the M62. As well as reducing congestion with consequent economic and environmental benefits, it will improve road safety. Improvements at Junction 6 would improve road access to the Airport and the Port from the M62.

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- M56/A5117 Queensferry Road – also known as the A5117 Deeside Park Junctions Improvements, this proposal would enhance the A550/A5117 between Deeside Park and the M56. It would involve grade separating three junctions. Draft Orders were published by the Highways Agency in March 2005. The scheme is intended to reduce congestion, improve safety and improve facilities for pedestrians, as well as promote local regeneration.

Proposals in Neighbouring Authorities

15.52 There are a number of other proposals in neighbouring authorities which are supported by the Merseyside Partners as it is considered they will contribute to the LCRDP, the Merseyside Action Plan and our LTP objectives. These are:

- The Mersey Gateway: A second Mersey Crossing at Runcorn.
This scheme is being promoted by Halton District Council. It will relieve congestion on the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge, a key access route to Merseyside and is seen by the Merseyside Partners as important for promoting regeneration in Merseyside and in particular, in improving surface access to Liverpool John Lennon Airport and the Mersey Ports.
- Restoration of the Halton Curve.
A proposal to reinstate a double-track link between the Warrington to Chester Line and the West Coast Main Line. It would facilitate new passenger services to run from North Wales/Chester to Liverpool Lime Street via Liverpool South Parkway. This scheme is located within Halton but the majority of the benefits come to Merseyside. Merseytravel will therefore act as the client for this scheme and work with Halton and its other partners to develop the technical, operational and financial and economic case for the restoration of the curve.
- Ormskirk Bypass.
Lancashire County Council is currently developing the technical and economic case for a bypass of Ormskirk. Poor local access is considered a significant barrier to the revitalisation of Southport. By relieving congestion on the A570, the Merseyside Partners consider that a bypass will improve accessibility to Southport and assist with Southport's aspiration to create a 'Classic' resort.

15.53 We also support examining a number of possible longer term rail proposals:

- Restoration of the Burscough Curves.
This will offer the potential for rail services to run from Southport to Liverpool via Ormskirk and Southport to Preston. Working with neighbouring authorities, Merseytravel will support the development of the operational, technical, financial and economic case for restoration of the Burscough Curves and the introduction of new rail services. Subject to the findings of such work, Merseytravel will work with its neighbours to promote the preferred option.

