

# TAAG NEWSLETTER # 19 - August 2021

While there's still no news on a public consultation date, we have a few things to update you on.

# Gloucestershire and Worcestershire Parish Councils Association (GWPCA)

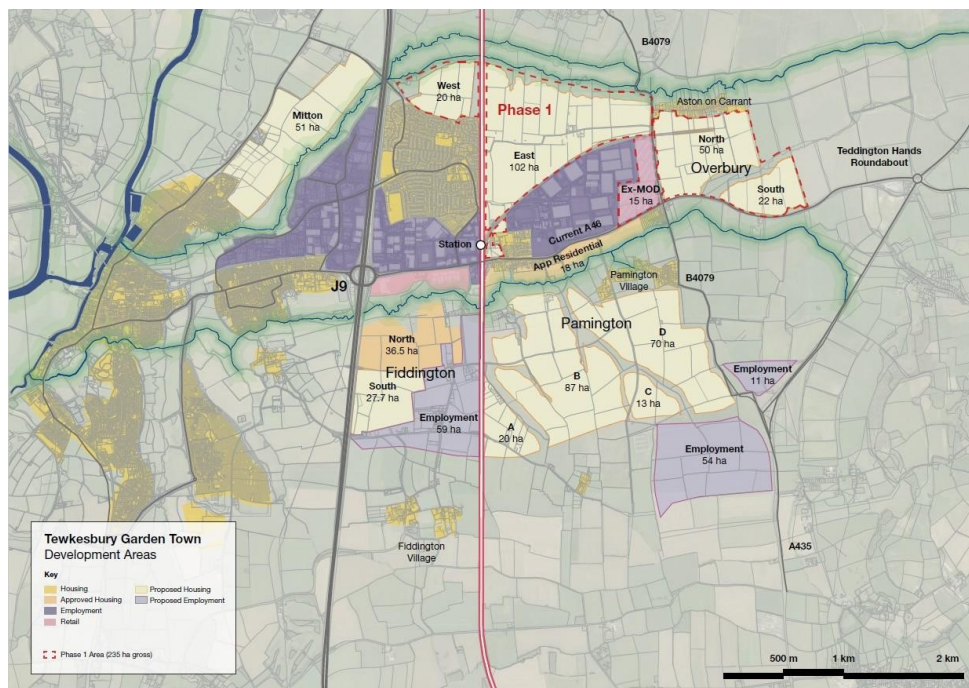
The GWPCA has recently formed in response to mounting concerns with the way in which new developments in and around the proposed new Ashchurch Garden Town are progressing without seeking the views of local residents. Fourteen parish councils have joined (including Teddington & Alstone Parish Council, TAPC) and four action groups (including TAAG).

Our primary interest is how new developments might impact a chosen route for a new bypass.

Following a first meeting, GWPCA are compiling a list of questions to ask Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC). We've provided our input and will separately ask any questions they do not include.

## Ashchurch Garden Town

We have learned from the GWPCA that TBC published and then withdrew a revised drawing of the concept plan originally published in January 2018. We are told it was published "in error" and has not been officially adopted but, it does make for some sobering viewing.



Key differences in this version include new housing to the South of Pamington and to the East of the B4079 by Aston on Carrant, plus new commercial development bordering the junction of the A435/B4079. We assume these are partly to compensate for the lower than expected release of MoD land. However, if adopted, it would move the Garden Town footprint far closer to our villages and, crucially, funnel a new bypass route towards joining the A435.

We intend to raise questions at an upcoming Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) meeting to clarify the status of the revised drawing and when they will be consulting the public on it.

## The A435

We've previously aired concerns that a bypass could join the A435 which is why we welcomed Cllr Vernon Smith's alternative route proposal (see newsletter #17). Unfortunately, there is evidence that the A435 could be strongly favoured, namely:

- A route options report\* published by Highways England (HE) in 2018 as part of the then Road Investment Strategy(RIS2) process which showed all routes joining the A435. This report wasn't taken further but it is the most recent evidence of HE thinking.
- The revised Ashchurch Garden Town concept map (now withdrawn).
- Cotswold National Landscape (CNL) were asked for general feedback to proposed route options using the A435.
- Information that project surveyors have accessed farmland to the East of the A435 near Oxenton.

*\* This was obtained under a freedom of information (FOI\*) request last year and we've now also received HE's traffic projections that match with the 3 route options. These show that traffic volumes using the A435 as it passes the Teddington village junction would double at peak times and, in one scenario, treble.*

Further details of the HE 2018 routes and traffic volumes can be found on our website. [LINK](#)

The possible use of the A435 remains speculation. However, as this would have such a detrimental impact versus many alternative options, we continue to argue our case against this with key contacts and before route preferences are decided.

## New Report from Gerald Kells (Campaign & Policy Advisor for Transport)

In July's newsletter we mentioned we had thoughts on commissioning Gerald to provide us with further expert feedback during the consultation. The main benefit would be in having someone with considerable experience of other road investment proposals, the credibility this brings and the ability to challenge/raise issues we could otherwise miss.

As a first step, we asked Gerald to review new information and key documents received since he produced his first report in October 2019. Without doing this, it would be more difficult to quickly pick up on things once a consultation starts. In case we don't want or can't afford to use Gerald further, we also asked for a brief second report as a tangible output with up to date recommendations.

His latest report is available to read on our website and there are a few points worth highlighting:

- In separate work for the CPRE, he has obtained material from Midlands Connect (MC) that sheds doubt on the role of the A46 as a long distance transport corridor. Challenging the strategic role of the A46 versus local needs is important in trying to avoid a dual carriageway bypass solution.
- He identifies a concern that the most attractive (to HE) solution would be to close the southern slip roads on the existing M5 J9 which would draw much more traffic onto the bypass.
- It appears all options will likely increase accidents, so safety should be a key challenge. There is a poor accident record on the A435 approaching the Teddington Hands roundabout.
- None of the 2018 route proposals scored well on value for money which is slightly encouraging.
- Alternative options to join a bypass with the A46 (and not the A435) could involve elevated sections to separate local and through traffic.
- We should follow up and challenge TBC on the status of the revised Ashchurch Garden Town concept plan.

[LINK](#)

## Fund-raising

In our last newsletter we referred to a potential need for fund-raising to support analysis and feedback to the public consultation. This of course depends on the nature of the proposals but, if these indicate significant adverse impacts on our villages, this would justify spending some money. For example:

- far more road noise
- increased air pollution
- difficulty in entering/exiting the A435
- closure of A435 junction & routing all Teddington traffic through Alstone
- blocked access to or closure of local services
- negative impact on house prices.

How much might be needed? We estimate an amount of £2,500-£3,000 would fund an expert review of the public consultation documentation, a level of communication & printing costs and provide a small contingency for unforeseen expenditure.

Our understanding is that it's unlikely further funding can come from the Parish Council and so we'd be looking at resident crowd-funding. If funds are required there will only be a brief window to raise these once a consultation starts. Therefore, please do think now about whether you are willing and able to provide support should the time and call come.

## Tewkesbury Exhibition

Cllr Smith is co-ordinating a "Future Projects Exhibition" for Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> September at The Watson Hall, Barton Street, Tewkesbury between 10am and 4pm. This is intended to showcase a number of local initiatives and organisations.

TAAG have been asked to participate in this exhibition and as this is another opportunity to publicise our bypass concerns and collect feedback, TAAG have decided to attend and man an A46 stand.

Other stands will include a range of local initiatives which may be of interest, posters have been placed on the Village noticeboards with further details.

We encourage all residents to attend and have your say. If you are unable to attend on the day but would have liked to participate, please get in touch with a member of TAAG before 18<sup>th</sup> September.

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### Note:

Highways England has recently been renamed it is now National Highways.

As always if you have any concerns as to the future of the A46 please do not hesitate to contact us via the contacts page on the website. [LINK](#)