



TAAG NEWSLETTER 21 - December 2021

Please find below our closing update for 2021.

Public Consultation on M5 J9 & A46 Transport Scheme

The unexpected announcement from Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) in October that the public consultation had again been delayed, seemingly caught everyone by surprise. At the Tewkesbury 2030 Exhibition in September the talk was still very much about this being imminent. There have been some small changes to the wording of the initial announcement although there is little on timelines beyond the intention that the consultation will be “in 2022”. This is the link to GCC’s current statement. [M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme - Highways \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/m5-junction-9-and-a46-ashchurch-transport-scheme-highways)

We have sought to clarify how this delay impacts their intention to seek funding under the Large Local Majors Scheme (LLM) given we had previously been told that the deadline for submission of an outline business case (which follows a public consultation) was Spring 2022. It seems this is not as fixed as implied and so we have to assume this funding option remains. There is also the potential to submit a proposal for funding under the Road Investment Strategy Phase 3 (RIS3) and further comments are made later in the newsletter.

What were the reasons for the delay? There has been mention of a scarcity of National Highways resource to complete the pre-consultation work. It is also unclear whether agreement could be reached on where to position a new bypass to join with the M5 (e.g. an extended J9, J10 or a new junction). Whatever the cause, our feelings of frustration on yet more delay are tempered by a slim hope that it may increase the chance to minimise adverse impacts while pushing a start date further into the future.

Finally, under a Freedom of Information request we have been advised that £4m has been paid to Atkins and other third parties for analysis work to date. They are unable to provide a forecast of future costs.

Tewkesbury 2030 Exhibition Feedback

Thank you to all those who provided feedback to the A46 bypass route options we shared at the recent Tewkesbury 2030 Exhibition. A summary report of feedback received on the day and afterwards for all 13 of the projects displayed have been collated by Cllr Vernon Smith: this can be viewed on our website. A few headline comments relating solely to the feedback on A46 route options:

- Of 161 survey forms completed, 46 (c30%) related to the bypass proposal.
- There was strong support for Vernon’s route proposal. In particular, many respondents were clear in opposing any use of the A435 as part of the road scheme.
- The key concern with using the A435 was safety. Flooding, noise pollution and the adverse impact on the Cotswold National Landscape were also highlighted.

The full report was presented to Tewkesbury Town Council (TTC) on 29th where Vernon emphasised that the public did not want the A435 to be included in a bypass route. The report was formally adopted by TTC.



Feedback on Road Investment Strategy Phase 3 (RIS3)

We have made reference to this in a previous newsletter and under the “Public Consultation” comments above. This is the main planning process used by National Highways to set strategic road priorities: RIS2 covered 2020-25 and RIS3 will cover 2025-2030. While RIS2 didn’t include the A46 Ashchurch bypass it’s possible it could be included within RIS3, should GCC’s current approach to seek funding under the separate LLM process fail. Even if it doesn’t, it’s likely that other sections of the proposed 70-mile Trans Midland Trade Corridor (TMTc) which tracks the length of the A46, will.

When we contacted National Highways earlier this year to question why a route running to the north of Bredon Hill has not been considered for the TMTc, they suggested we should raise this when the public was invited to provide feedback to the RIS3 process. This is now open (until 31 December 2021) and we have taken the opportunity to outline the arguments why a more northerly route should be considered as an alternative to the A46 route from Evesham to Tewkesbury. A copy of this can be viewed on our website.

This doesn’t change the local imperative to ease congestion and support a new Garden Town but challenging the strategic rationale is aimed at seeking a decision that adopts a single rather than dual carriageway solution.

New Tewkesbury Garden Town Concept Plan

In our August newsletter (#19) we included a drawing of a revised Concept Plan that had been posted on the Garden Town website and since withdrawn. As a result, we raised a number of questions with Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) and they have pointed us to the minutes of an Executive Meeting held on 6th October where the Evolved Tewkesbury Concept Plan was presented. A copy of their latest public document “Evolution of the Concept Plan” can be found on our website. This includes the overall plan drawing we shared in our August newsletter.

The progress on the proposed Garden Town is not TAAG’s focus although we recognise this is likely to have a strong influence on the path of a new bypass. TBC have appointed specialist community engagement consultants to develop an engagement strategy for the Garden Town. They hope to have a completed strategy by February 2022 and they will then take forward their strategy for engagement over the coming months and years. Residents may want to keep an eye out for updates from TBC in due course.

Finally, we would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.