



Teddington & Alstone A46 Advisory Group

INITIAL REPORT
PROPOSED A46 ROAD RE-DEVELOPMENT/REPLACEMENT

Prepared by the Teddington & Alstone A46 Advisory Group

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Endorsed by the Teddington & Alstone Parish Council

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INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

In December 2017 Vernon Smith, Tewkesbury Borough Councillor and Chairman of the A46 Partnership Group (APG), attended an extraordinary meeting of the Teddington & Alstone Parish Council (TAPC). He outlined the current progress and thinking of the APG. There followed a discussion on whether any independent activities should be actioned by the TAPC to feed into APG deliberations: [this, after noting that Beckford Parish Council had sponsored a third party planning report on A46 development in March 2017]. It was subsequently agreed at the January TAPC meeting that no equivalent commissioning of an independent report be undertaken, nor would any A46 working party be set-up until traffic modelling had been completed.

In April 2018, with limited news on APG progress, lobbying by concerned parish residents did result in the setting up of The Teddington & Alstone A46 Advisory Group (TAAG) to consider the implications of proposed A46 and associated developments. A first meeting of the group was held on 21st May with an agreed primary objective **to prevent any enhancement, expansion or redirection of the A46 which would have a negative impact on our villages.**

At the TAPC meeting on 29th May it was agreed that the TAAG should act as an independent advisory body, rather than as a formal working party of the TAPC. This allows a less bureaucratic and more flexible approach.

At the same TAPC meeting of 29th May, Councillor Smith provided a brief update on local A46 proposals ahead of the next scheduled APG meeting on 13th June. At this meeting, a report will be presented by Midlands Connect with a number of proposals on routing that are expected to meet with broad agreement from Worcestershire representatives. It is expected this report will then be subject to wider consultation. Ahead of the APG meeting, Councillor Smith requested a report from the newly formed TAAG.

In view of this request, and notwithstanding that we have not as yet carried out any detailed research or assessment, it was agreed by the TAPC that a brief report should be prepared and provided to Councillor Smith by the TAAG before the APG meeting on the 13th June. What follows, therefore, is a summary of our current position.

BACKGROUND

1. A number of Teddington and Alstone residents remember the previous A46 development proposals that were mooted in 1993. There appears to be limited remaining documentation but we have established that there are conflicting versions of road layout options dating from this time. For example while references are made in separate drawings to a “grey route” and a “brown route”, the drawings themselves are quite different. In itself, this makes reference back to 1993 proposals confusing and potentially misleading.
2. Beckford Parish Council commissioned Foxley Tagg Planning Ltd to produce a written report in response to the Worcestershire local transport plan in March 2017. Reference was made to the 1993 proposals and one version of the 1993 drawings included. While a number of observations were made, a key highlight was a desire for any duelling of the A46 to be on a new, realigned route south of Little Beckford.

3. The APG was formed in 2015 with remit to produce a strategy that will bring forward planned improvements along the entire length of the seventy mile A46/M69 corridor from Leicester to Tewkesbury. Five investment priorities were subsequently published in 2017, one of which is the route from the Teddington Hands roundabout to junction 9 of the M5 at Tewkesbury/Ashchurch.
4. Midlands Connect, who are represented on the APG and government funded, were commissioned in 2017 to carry out traffic modelling of the A46/M69 corridor. The results are due to be presented to the APG on 13th June 2018 before wider consultation and sharing, including with the Department of Transport. Councillor Smith has advised that these proposals are expected to favour a southern by-pass of Beckford/Little Beckford with a new roundabout/junction built to the north of the current Teddington Hands roundabout. Onward routing to an existing (i.e. M5 J9 or J10) or a new (i.e. M5 J9A or J9B) motorway junction is unknown.
5. Independent of the activities of the APG, a press report appeared in August 2016 (and updated April 2017), in which Councillor Smith indicated that a new M5 junction could be built in Gloucestershire, either to the north or the south of the existing J9 at Tewkesbury/Ashchurch. At the December extraordinary TAPC meeting, Councillor Smith elaborated further and added a third option of a strategic link from the A46 at Evesham to J8 (Strensham) of the M5.
6. In August 2017, Tewkesbury Borough Council produced a presentation on the A46 /J9 to feed into their Joint Core Strategy and requested residents to complete an online survey.
7. In March 2018, the government announced that plans could move forward to extend J10 of the M5 to allow entry/exit from both directions. This decision supports the proposed development of a West Cheltenham Cyber Hub.

ROUTE OPTIONS

While there has been verbal reference to possible developments together with a level of speculation based on the original 1993 drawings and more recent infrastructure announcements, it's important to underline that no written or formalised proposals have been produced. At this stage it would appear options include:

1. Some recycling/amendment of the 1993 proposals. It's not known whether any of the original 1993 work and route proposals will form a part of the current assessment. However, it is very likely that these will at least have been looked at by Midlands Connect as background to their current modelling, a view re-enforced by Councillor Smith.
2. A strategic link to a new M5 motorway junction. The potential to provide a link running west from Evesham to junction 8, M5 appears a valid long term strategic solution. However, we understand that Worcestershire have already ruled out a route to the north of Bredon Hill on the grounds this would adversely impact two conservation areas and numerous villages.

This does leave open an option to join up with J8 from a route south of Bredon Hill and north of the MoD camp, possibly utilising the pathway of the disused railway.

3. Upgrading/expanding junction 9 of M5. The feasibility of upgrading J9 or adding a J9A (north of J9) or J9B (south of J9) are also unknown and the recent decision to invest government funds to upgrade J10 would appear to make any of these options less likely due to cost.
4. Improvements to J9 exit/entry congestion. We understand a number of tactical solutions to alleviate the increasing local congestion around junction 9 of the M5 through Ashchurch to the Teddington Hands roundabout are being considered by the Highways Agency. These could include a longer northbound motorway slip-road, a new road link to the west of the junction into Tewkesbury and an upgrade/replacement of the traffic lights at the Aston Cross junction. Actions here may well be independent from recommendations arising from the APG strategic assessment.
5. Midlands Connect proposals. The specific route options and descriptions to be presented to the APG and, we assume, published for wider consultation following the 13th June meeting. These may be based on the options above or be completely new.

CONCERNS

As previously stated, our overriding objective in representing Teddington and Alstone villages is to prevent any enhancement, expansion or redirection of the A46 which would have a negative impact on our villages. While there are no firm proposals, we can articulate our general concerns with regard to new road developments in this area.

1. Any development must fully take into account all requirements arising from existing legislation. For example, the Environment Act 1995 which came into effect after the previous proposals were prepared in 1993.
2. A major concern is the adverse impact caused by noise and air pollution that will arise from additional traffic combined with the location of new road infrastructure. This could well be magnified for Teddington and Alstone given prevailing westerly winds. We would expect that any proposals will fully assess and measure relevant environmental impacts before final recommendations are made. In fact, this is explicitly stated in page 10 of the APG prospectus “Improving the A46 corridor.....has the potential to generate significant benefits including reducing noise and pollution levels for our communities”.
3. It is highly likely that new proposals will necessitate some bridging work to allow separation of local traffic (from existing roads) from through traffic (new road). This heightens noise and pollution concerns and introduces additional concerns of negative visual impact and light pollution.

4. The view of Beckford Parish Council, as stated in the Foxley Tagg report, is that duelling of the A46 should occur to the south of Little Beckford. In addition, by referencing both the original 1993 drawings and a new illustrative route, they suggest possible linking of a new by-pass to the south of or at the site of the current Teddington Hand Roundabout; these would both have a significant detrimental impact on Teddington & Alstone.
5. Any new A46 road development must align with the Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan and Joint Core Strategy, in particular the policies on health & environmental quality and road safety.
6. The area south west of the Teddington Hands roundabout has experienced flooding issues in recent years, particularly 2007, and subsequent remedial work could be adversely impacted depending on routing options. Again, we would expect any proposals to have fully assessed how this will impact and be dealt with.
7. The existing garage, stores and public house at the Teddington Hands roundabout provide important local amenities for the residents of Teddington and Alstone. Continued safe walking and driving passage to these amenities are a key requirement.
8. Our villages are on the edge of an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB). While development itself may not be within this area, it could adversely impact views and ongoing enjoyment from the AONB.
9. New road infrastructure may lead over time to secondary developments such as new housing, retail outlets, light industry and other associated building work which would directly encroach on our villages and ultimately erode their character.
10. Short to medium term funding pressures, together with changes in both local councils and national government, could lead to piecemeal development rather than a longer term strategic solution.

NEXT STEPS

- Share this, our initial positioning summary, with the TAPC and Councillor Smith.
- Produce a communication and distribute to all Teddington and Alstone village residents in order to update them on the formation of the TAAG and the current position.
- Seek a follow up meeting with Councillor Smith after the APG meeting on the 13th June.
- Depending on the nature and level of detail in the proposals presented, make contact with neighbouring parish councils and advisory groups.
- Continue to research environmental aspects of infrastructure development to ensure we are well informed to participate in future consultations.

SUMMARY

The TAAG has been formed as a result of concerns expressed by residents. Our purpose is to prevent any enhancement, expansion or redirection of the A46 which would have a negative impact on our villages.

At this time we are only able to set out historical facts, make reference to possible options we are aware of and highlight our key concerns. We want to ensure that we are ready and able to constructively participate in the immediate consultation expected to follow publication of the Midlands Connect proposals as well as in any future studies.

REFERENCES/LINKS

- A46 Partnership Group Prospectus

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/1517303/a46-partnership-prospectus.pdf>

- Foxley Tagg focused representation report for Beckford Parish Council, “Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 4”

<http://www.beckford-parish-council.org.uk/services-and-information/roads-and-transport/a46/>

- Midlands Connect Strategic Case Summary for A46 Corridor

https://www.midlandsconnect.uk/media/1126/road_a46-tewks-to-leicester.pdf

- March 2017 Press Article regarding Junction 9, M5

www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/news/gloucester-news/could-new-junction-m5-built-29117

- Message from Councillor Smith regarding Junction 9, M5 (20/3/18)

www.teddington-and-alstone-parish-council.org.uk/services-information/roads-and-transport/highways-news/

- A46/J9 Presentation August 2017

www.teddington-and-alstone-parish-council.org.uk/services-information/roads-and-transport/transport-consultation/