

## Frequently asked questions

[For public engagement \(7 October – 2 December 2024\)](#)

### About the scheme

#### **What is the proposed scheme?**

The M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch) Transport scheme would provide a new M5 Junction 9a south of Tewkesbury and re-route a section of the A46 between the M5 and Teddington Hands roundabout. The existing M5 Junction 9 would be kept open to maintain access to the M5 from Tewkesbury and Ashchurch, but long-distance A46 traffic would largely use the re-routed A46. The existing A46 through Ashchurch would cater for mainly local traffic.

The scheme would provide benefits to Tewkesbury and Ashchurch residents and businesses by improving journey times and reliability on the local highway network to M5 Junction 9. Diverting long-distance traffic - including heavy goods vehicles - from the A46 through Ashchurch onto a new road will provide capacity for housing and employment opportunities, and crucially provide benefits to the existing communities, offering a more pleasant environment for residents and greater opportunities for walking, cycling and sustainable travel along the existing road.

The scheme will rely on securing funding from Government to deliver it. At this early stage, no commitment can therefore be given to funding being secured for the scheme delivery.

#### **Why is the scheme needed?**

The case for improvements to the M5 Junction 9 and A46 through Ashchurch has become more compelling in recent years. Improvements would address the following issues:

- Congestion on this section of the A46 and at M5 Junction 9 means that both local and long-distance journeys are unreliable and take longer than they should
- At peak times queuing from M5 Junction 9 can reach back to the M5 motorway, with queuing vehicles on the hard shoulder creating a safety hazard
- Developments which already have planning permission are increasing traffic in this location
- Provision for walking and cycling at M5 Junction 9 and along the A46 does not meet current design standards. Along with the level of traffic on the A46 (including HGVs), this makes the road difficult to cross and discourages travel by bike or on foot
- Further significant development in the Ashchurch area cannot be delivered without additional capacity on the road network

Upon opening, the scheme would also provide environmental improvements, including noise level reductions and improved air quality along the A46. This would benefit the existing communities along the A46, as well as those travelling through it on foot or by bicycle.

#### **Have you considered encouraging other methods of travelling (e.g. buses/rail/cycling/walking) instead of building a new road?**

Yes, other options have been considered. However, the issues identified above (under '*Why is the scheme needed?*') cannot be addressed through improvements to walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure alone. Traffic surveys carried out in 2022 showed that a significant portion of the traffic on the A46 was through traffic, meaning it was not headed for local destinations in Tewkesbury or Ashchurch. Specifically, 65% of the westbound traffic and 47% of the eastbound

traffic between M5 Junction 9 and Aston Cross was through traffic. By diverting long-distance traffic away from the existing A46 to the new road, opportunities would be created to encourage greater use of sustainable transport. This would support the achievement of the UK's target to make all sectors of the economy carbon neutral by 2050 and encourage greater use of sustainable transport.

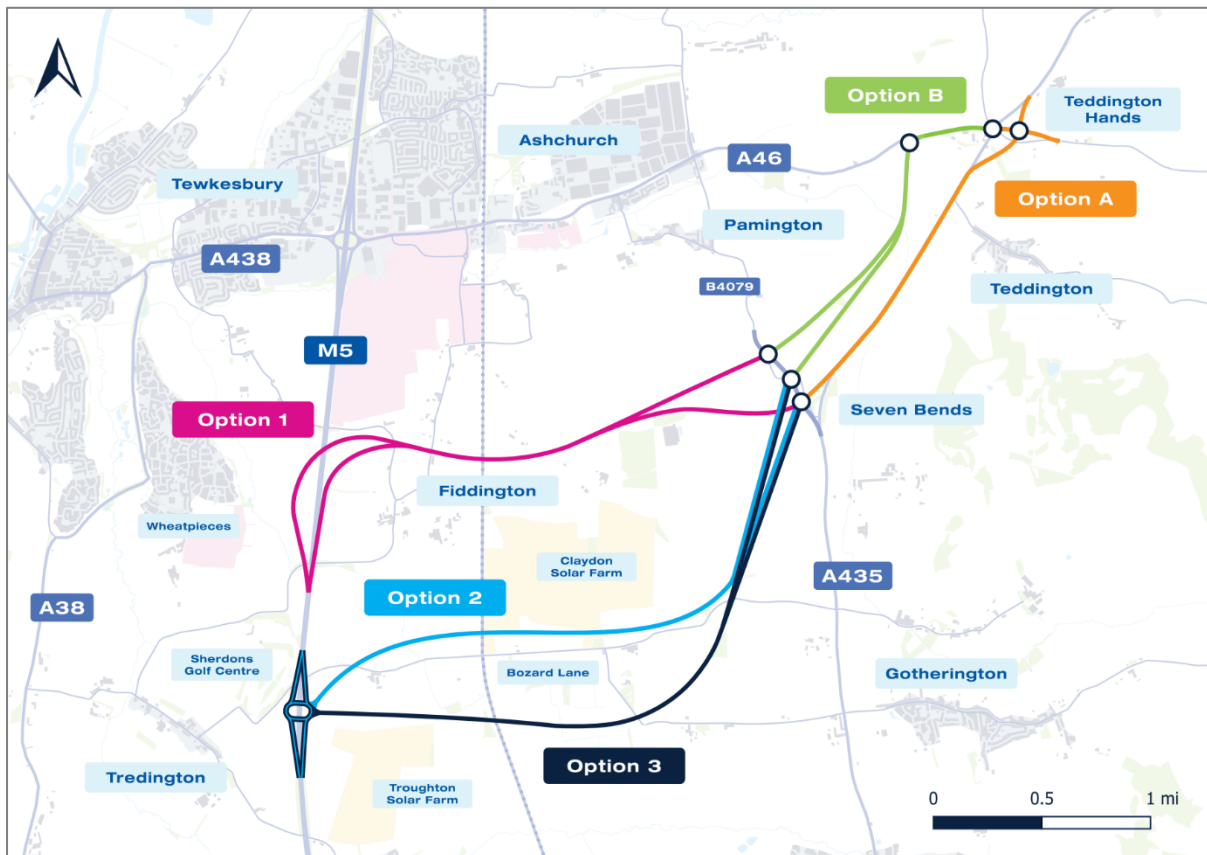
## What are the potential route options and where would they be located?

We are seeking views on three potential route options for the western section of the scheme (Options 1, 2 and 3) and two potential route options for the eastern section (Options A and B). This provides a total of 6 no. individual potential route options, i.e., 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A and 3B.

The potential route options are as follows:

- Western section (Options 1, 2 and 3) connects the M5 to B4079.
- Eastern section (Options A and B) connects B4079 / Seven Bends junction to Teddington Hands roundabout.

They are presented in the map below.



### Western section (M5 to B4079 / Seven Bends)

**Option 1** comprises an additional M5 Junction 9a that provides slip roads to and from the M5 south only, located to the west of Fiddington village / east of Wheatpieces. The new A46 link road would pass north of Fiddington and Claydon to connect with the eastern section of the A46 link road in the Seven Bends area. The eastern end of the route would vary between Options 1A and 1B to connect into the proposals for the eastern section.

**Option 2** comprises an additional M5 Junction 9a with a roundabout that allows movement both north and south to and from the M5, located to the south of Sherdons Golf Centre and Bozard Lane. The new A46 link road would cross Bozard Lane then run roughly eastwards between Bozard Lane and Claydon Solar Farm before turning north to connect with the eastern section of the A46 link road in the Seven Bends area.

**Option 3** comprises an additional M5 Junction 9a with a roundabout that allows movement in both north and south to and from the M5, located to the south of Sherdons Golf Centre and Bozard Lane. The new A46 link road would run roughly eastwards. It would then turn north to connect with the eastern section of the A46 link road in the Seven Bends area, crossing Bozard Lane to the east of Bozard Farm.

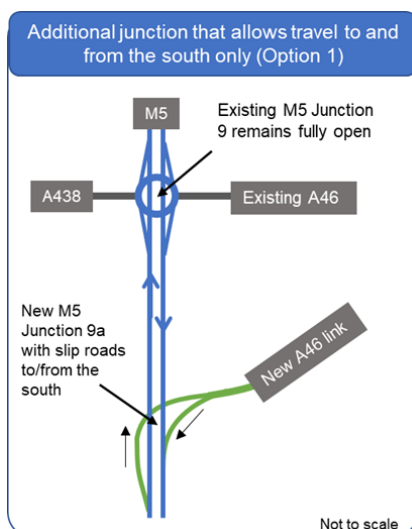
### Eastern section (B4079 / Seven Bends junction to Teddington Hands roundabout)

**Option A** comprises a new roundabout junction with the A435 / B4079 in the Seven Bends area; the new A46 would follow the route of the A435 until just south of Teddington Hands roundabout. This section of the A435 would be upgraded to trunk road standards, with accesses to properties and Teddington village maintained. The new A46 would bypass the existing Teddington Hands roundabout and businesses to the east, with a second roundabout junction to the east of the existing Teddington Hands roundabout. The new A46 would tie into the existing A46 south of Elm Farm.

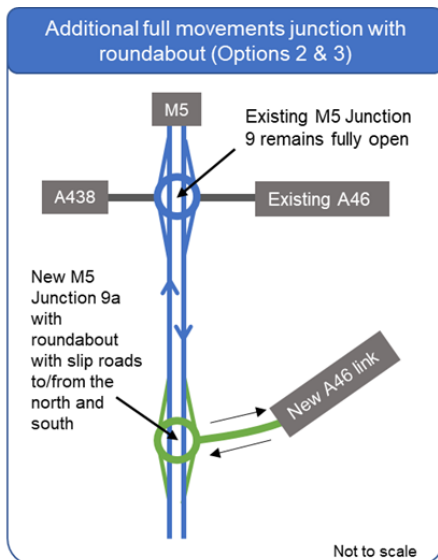
**Option B** comprises a new roundabout junction with the B4079 in the Seven Bends area (to the north of the existing A435 / B4079 junction); the new A46 would take an offline route across the fields to the west of the A435. It would cross the Tirl Brook flood zone on an embankment before connecting to the existing A46 at a new roundabout junction to the west of Teddington Hands roundabout. The section of the A46 between the two roundabouts would be upgraded to dual carriageway and Teddington Hands roundabout would be upgraded.

### How do the western section route options connect to the M5 at Junction 9a?

Option 1 – slip roads to and from M5 south would be proposed at M5 Junction 9a as shown below.



Option 2 and 3 – An all-movements junction with roundabout would be proposed for these options as shown below.



## Why doesn't Option 1 have a full movement Junction 9a with the M5?

The distance between the proposed Junction 9a and the existing Junction 9 is too short to safely accommodate a full movement junction for Option 1. Close proximity of the on and off ramps would result in high risk of vehicle collisions between these junctions.

The proposed restricted movement junction layout for Junction 9a would permit the following:

- Journeys between the M5 south of Junction 9 and A46 north of Teddington Hands would use the new M5 Junction 9a and A46 link, bypassing the Ashchurch area (this is expected to include most of the long-distance traffic including Heavy Goods Vehicles that currently pass through Ashchurch)
- Journeys starting or ending in the Tewkesbury and Ashchurch area would still be able to use the existing M5 Junction 9 to travel between the M5 (in both directions), A438 and existing A46
- Local journeys between Ashchurch and Tewkesbury would also continue to use the existing M5 Junction 9 as at present
- Journeys between the M5 north of Junction 9 and A46 north of Teddington Hands would not be able to use the new M5 Junction 9a and A46 link, so would travel via the existing route through Ashchurch
- Journeys between Tewkesbury and A46 north of Teddington Hands would also continue to travel via the existing route through Ashchurch.

Traffic surveys done in September 2022 showed that 65% of all traffic travelling westbound on the A46 east of Aston Cross joined the M5 motorway via M5 Junction 9 rather than travelling to more local destinations in either Tewkesbury or Ashchurch. Most of this traffic is headed southbound on the M5 towards the southwest. A similar pattern was observed in the reverse direction, with 47% of traffic travelling to the A46 east of Aston Cross originating from the M5 south of Junction 9. This junction arrangement would reroute this traffic from M5 Junction 9 and Ashchurch thereby meeting scheme objectives.

## Would the new road be dual or single carriageway?

Potential route options for the western section of the scheme would be a dual carriageway to cope with forecast growth in long-distance and local traffic using the link road between the M5 and B4079 / A435. Potential route options for the eastern section of the scheme would be a single carriageway. Traffic flows are forecast to be lower in this section (similar to the traffic flows on the A46 north of Teddington Hands which is also a single carriageway road).

## Have you considered other options?

To date, over fifty different options have been considered, including:

- Sustainable transport options  
Sustainable travel measures (such as the provision of better facilities for walking and cycling, or improvements to public transport) would improve travel options for the local community. Our assessment concluded however, that in isolation they would not address the issues caused by the volume of local and long-distance traffic passing through M5 Junction 9 and the A46 and expected housing and employment growth. Sustainable travel measures would be included as part of the overall scheme.
- A46 'online' (along the existing A46) improvement options  
Upgrading the existing M5 Junction 9 and the A46 through Ashchurch would address some of the known congestion and safety issues; however, our assessment concluded that it would not prove an effective overall solution. This is because there are businesses and homes close to the road that would be adversely impacted by the widening of the road and increased traffic, including Heavy Goods Vehicles passing through Ashchurch. It would also impact the ability to deliver future development in the area, vital to achieve its longer-term vision for growth.
- 'Offline' (away from the existing A46) highway options  
Re-routing the A46 away from Ashchurch (with a new M5 Junction 9a) would address all of the issues identified, including reducing congestion at the existing M5 Junction 9 and the A46 through Ashchurch and supporting future development of the area. It would also provide a quicker and more reliable route for long-distance traffic, whilst providing opportunities to improve sustainable travel options, too.

Over 40 offline highway options have been considered to date. They have all been assessed against the scheme objectives and a range of transport planning, economic, engineering, and environmental appraisal criteria. Various options were discounted due to one or more of the following reasons:

- Not being closely enough aligned with the scheme objectives
- Significant environmental (including flood risk) or engineering constraints
- Construction risks
- Negative impacts on future development proposals
- Providing poor value for money

For more information on the option selection process, see the *option generation and sifting report* which is available on Have Your Say ([M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme- Potential Route Options Engagement | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](#)).

### **Why would the new link to the M5 be to the south of Ashchurch? Have routes to the north of Ashchurch been considered?**

We have considered a range of options to the north and south of Ashchurch. Due to the short distance between M5 Junction 9 and M5 Junction 8, a new junction to the north of M5 Junction 9 would require the closure of M5 Junction 9 in order to comply with design standards (a minimum distance of 2km is required between junctions). Traffic modelling has demonstrated that relocating M5 Junction 9 would re-route local traffic through Tewkesbury and cause significant disruption on the local road network, and therefore potential route options include a new link to the south of Ashchurch.

More northerly options such as re-routing the A46 from Evesham to M5 Junction 8 (M50 junction) were not formally considered since this would involve a much longer length of new road passing through environmentally sensitive areas including the River Avon floodplain and Cotswolds National Landscape area around Bredon Hill. The current options presented in the public engagement would involve construction of up to 5 miles of new road to form the re-routed A46. In contrast, to connect the A46 south of Evesham to M5 Junction 8 would require at least 8 miles of new road to route to the north of Bredon Hill, or 9 miles if starting north of Evesham. At least one major crossing of the River Avon floodplain would be required and with other environmental mitigations and upgrades needed to M5 Junction 8, the cost of such options would be around double that of the current options being presented. Furthermore, upgrading the A46 between Teddington Hands and Evesham is beyond the scope of this scheme which seeks to address the issues identified in the Ashchurch area as mentioned in the 'Why is the scheme needed?' section.

For more information on the option selection process, see the *option generation and sifting report* which is available on Have Your Say ([M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme- Potential Route Options Engagement | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](#)).

### **Why not just improve the existing A46 through Ashchurch?**

Upgrading the existing M5 Junction 9 and the A46 through Ashchurch would address some of the known congestion and safety issues; however, our assessment concluded that it would not prove an effective overall solution. This is because there are businesses and homes close to the road that would be adversely impacted by the widening of the road and increased traffic, including heavy goods vehicles passing through Ashchurch. It would also impact the ability to deliver future development in the area.

### **What would happen to the existing A46 as part of the scheme?**

The existing A46 would be downgraded to cater for mainly local traffic offering a wealth of benefits to the existing communities in the area, as well as those travelling through it on foot or by bicycle. This would include providing a more pleasant environment for residents and greater opportunities for walking, cycling and sustainable travel along the existing road. Other changes could be considered to reinforce its role as a local traffic route.

## **Cost and funding**

### **How much would the scheme cost?**

The scheme is estimated to cost between £740m and £930m to construct. This cost estimate includes provision for risk, uncertainty and inflation and are based on the scheme being constructed in the early 2030s.

Further information is provided in the Analysis of Shortlisted Options report.

### **Who is funding the scheme?**

The scheme will rely on securing funding from Government to deliver the scheme. At this early stage, no commitment can therefore be given to funding being secured for the scheme delivery.

In 2019 Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) identified the Department for Transport's (DfT) Large Local Majors (LLM) fund as an opportunity to develop a scheme of improvements at M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch).

GCC have funded options identification and Strategic Outline (Business) Case (SOC) development, which has now been submitted to DfT for approval. Funding was also provided by the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) (now the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government) through Homes England during this stage.

Subject to successful SOC approval, funding would be provided by DfT and GCC for Outline Business Case (OBC) development and the identification of a preferred route.

It is currently proposed that, subject to an approved OBC and funding from the Department for Transport being in place, National Highways will take the scheme on to complete the Preferred Route Announcement and be responsible for detailed design and construction of the scheme.

### **Would developers be expected to contribute to the scheme?**

Planning law requires developers to contribute to transport schemes when the proposed developments impact local infrastructure. This can be through:

- Section 106 (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) agreements between developers and local authorities can be used to provide funding for measures to reduce the negative impact of new developments. For example, building a new road to increase capacity for additional traffic from the new development.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy that local authorities can charge on new developments to fund strategic and local infrastructure needs including transport schemes.

### **Why can't these funds be spent on repairing the existing roads in the county?**

The government-produced eligibility criteria for the Large Local Majors (LLM) fund. This specifies the type of schemes which can receive funding. Repairing potholes is not included in this list. Please see the following website for more information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/major-road-network-and-large-local-majors-programmes-investment-planning/major-road-network-and-large-local-majors-programmes-investment-planning-guidance>.

The revenue spent by Gloucestershire County Council to develop business cases for schemes helps to secure millions of pounds of investment for infrastructure (such as the M5 J9 and A46 Transport Scheme) which GCC would otherwise not have the ability to fund.

### **Why is GCC spending money on this instead of schools, social services etc.?**

GCC are promoting and investing in Stage 1 (options identification and strategic outline business case) and Stage 2 (option selection and outline business case) of the scheme. In addition to date, funding of £3m has been provided by the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (now Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government) through Homes England to support Stage 1. Subject to successful completion of Stage 1 and the Strategic Outline Business Case approval, GCC and the Department for Transport (DfT) would fund Stage 2. Subject to Stage 2 approval, the scheme would be handed over to National Highways, at the end of Stage 2, and funded by DfT during the planning, design and construction stages.

The unlocking of funding from the government for this scheme would reduce the overall costs incurred by GCC while providing direct benefits to the community in terms of reduced traffic congestion along M5 Junction 9 and A46 resulting in improved noise and air quality. The reduction in traffic congestion would also be beneficial in unlocking housing and employment opportunities in the area.

## **Public engagement**

### **Why are you seeking our views now?**

A wide variety of route options have been considered and technically assessed for suitability. The council now plans to share these options with stakeholders, businesses, local communities and the public during the engagement exercise. This is the first stage of public engagement, with feedback being used to inform further options refinement and shortlisting. A preferred route option would only be identified following future public consultations.

Your feedback is really important as it will help us identify and refine the potential route options to take forward for further consideration, should the scheme be progressed.

### **When does the engagement exercise start and end?**

The engagement exercise launches on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October and ends on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024.

### **How can I take part and share my opinion?**

You can provide feedback to us in a number of ways:

- By completing the online feedback survey via [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/J9](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/J9).
- Attending one of our face-to-face engagement events, where there will be the opportunity to complete a paper copy of our feedback survey.
- Request a paper copy of the feedback survey free of charge by contacting [M5Junction9@atkinsrealis.com](mailto:M5Junction9@atkinsrealis.com). Completed paper copies can either be given to project team members at our face-to-face engagement events or returned by pre-paid envelope.

We are holding face to face engagement events where you can meet the project team, ask questions and provide feedback on the potential route options. The event details are as follows:

Watson Hall,  
65 Barton Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 5PX  
Saturday 19 October 2024  
Opens: 10:00hrs Closes: 17:00hrs

Northway Community Hub (Main Hall),  
Lee Walk, Northway, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, GL20 8QG  
Wednesday 23 October 2024



Opens: 11:00hrs Closes: 16:00hrs

## **How are you promoting the public engagement?**

We want to ensure that as many people as possible are able to take part in the public engagement, should they wish to. We are therefore using a range of methods to promote the public engagement, including:

- Public engagement events
- Council briefings
- Press releases to the media
- Social media
- Leaflets
- Surveys
- Posters in public places
- E-newsletter
- Letters and emails to stakeholders and affected landowners

## **What will happen to the engagement responses?**

Feedback received during the public engagement will be recorded and analysed. The content of feedback received will be categorised and broken down by sentiment, themes and respondent profile – helping us understand your comments and why you have made them. Should the scheme be progressed, we will use your feedback to further refine potential route options to ensure that any scheme would meet the needs and wants of as many people as possible.

A summary of feedback received during the public engagement will be made publicly available in a formal report.

## **Scheme impacts**

### **What measures would be taken to limit the impact of the scheme on the environment?**

Studies are ongoing to fully assess the impacts of the options on the key environmental receptors. The results of initial environmental assessments completed to date are summarised in the Analysis of options report.

As each option has limited design detail at this stage, it is difficult to outline specific proposed mitigation for each option. However, where environmental impacts have been identified, a mitigation hierarchy would be adopted to avoid impacts, then mitigate unavoidable impacts, and, as a last resort, compensate for unavoidable residual impacts which remain after avoidance and mitigation measures. Best practice design measure would also be adopted to mitigate any potential environmental impacts.

### **Given that we are in a Climate Emergency, is the proposed new road necessary?**

GCC recognises the climate emergency and is committed to encouraging greater active travel and public transport use as affirmed in [Gloucestershire's Local Transport Plan 2020-2041](#). However, as driving is likely to remain a prominent mode of transport for the foreseeable future, the council also has a responsibility to ensure that the local road network is futureproofed. Gloucestershire is facing rapidly growing housing and employment needs, and the correct transport infrastructure must be provided to support this future growth. This scheme would be brought forward to ensure that the local network can cope with future traffic levels and best serve Gloucestershire's growing population.

The scheme would reroute long-distance traffic away from the existing A46 through Ashchurch on to the new road, the new route would become a strategic route operated and maintained by National Highways. This would enable delivery of an improved street environment through Ashchurch and support a shift to active and sustainable modes. By alleviating the existing A46 the scheme would also support sustainable local growth plans in Gloucestershire, with the old route passing through the Tewkesbury Garden Communities areas.

### **Would the scheme increase greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?**

Carbon emissions for each progressed option have been calculated. In all cases, the impact of the Scheme on the UK Carbon Budgets is negligible. It is considered that the magnitude of emissions from the Scheme would not materially impact the Government's ability to meet its Carbon Budgets and is unlikely to have a significant effect on climate.

For more information on the carbon emissions by option, see the supporting information available on Have Your Say ([M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme- Potential Route Options Engagement | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](#)).

### **What environmental / ecological surveys would be undertaken as a result of the proposals?**

For information on the environmental and ecological surveys undertaken to date, see the supporting information available on Have Your Say ([M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme- Potential Route Options Engagement | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](#)).

Further surveys would be required in future should the scheme be progressed.

### **How have you considered the environmental impacts?**

Studies are ongoing to fully assess the impacts of the options on the key environmental receptors. The results of initial environmental assessments completed to date are summarised in the *Analysis of options* supporting information available on Have Your Say ([M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme- Potential Route Options Engagement | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](#)).

### **How would the scheme impact noise levels in the area?**

Potential impacts of the proposed options on noise and vibration have been considered. For all options, construction activity would result in localised increases in noise. Mitigation measures would be considered to minimise impacts on individual receptors.

Once completed, the scheme is expected to result in reduced noise levels along the A46 through Ashchurch due to diversion of a significant proportion of long-distance traffic including Heavy Goods Vehicles onto the new route. Noise levels would increase along the new route but for all options the route passes through mainly open farmland rather than the urban residential route of the existing A46. Mitigation measures would be considered to minimise impacts on individual receptors.

For more information on the impact of the scheme on noise levels, see the supporting information available on Have Your Say ([M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme- Potential Route Options Engagement | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](#)).

### **How would the scheme impact air quality in the area?**

Potential impacts of the proposed options on air quality have been considered. The initial air quality assessment has identified that no significant adverse effects are identified with regards to air quality.

The reduction in long-distance traffic, including Heavy Goods Vehicles along the A46 through Ashchurch, is expected to improve air quality for local residents and travellers (including walkers and cyclists), including for children that use the route to travel to school at Ashchurch Primary School and Tewkesbury Academy.

For more information on the impact of the scheme on air quality, see the supporting information available on Have Your Say ([M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme- Potential Route Options Engagement | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](#)).

### **How would the scheme impact on protected animal species?**

Potential impacts of the proposed options on protected animal species have been considered as part of a preliminary biodiversity impact assessment. This has concluded that:

- All options may lead to the temporary and reversible damage to protected species and their habitats, which through mitigation is considered to be negligible
- All options may lead to the permanent loss of bat roosts and or important foraging / commuting habitats (impacting the Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC) or the permanent loss of habitats used by an Annex II species (violet click beetle) that form functionally linked land of the Bredon Hill SAC and/or Dixton Wood SAC
- This would be determined by the results of further, detailed survey work. However, through following general and species-specific mitigation measures, impacts would not affect the integrity of these species.

Mitigation measures would be developed in both the construction and design of the scheme to ensure that species remain protected, and biodiversity is preserved. There is a legal requirement for the scheme to provide Biodiversity Net Gain to make sure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development.

For more information on the impacts of the scheme on protected animal species and biodiversity, see the supporting information available on Have Your Say ([M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme- Potential Route Options Engagement | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](#)).

### **How would the scheme impact on local heritage and archaeology?**

Potential impacts of the proposed options on cultural heritage have been considered. The assessment indicates that all options would result in adverse impacts to heritage assets, but which could be mitigated through embedded design and additional mitigation in the form of a robust programme of archaeological investigations and recording. All options would include direct impacts to known and as-yet unknown archaeological heritage and would need more detailed surveys at future design stages.

For more information on the impacts of the scheme on local heritage and archaeology, see the supporting information available on Have Your Say ([M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme- Potential Route Options Engagement | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](#)).

### **How would you deal with the visual impacts for residents living close to the new link?**

Potential impacts and mitigation strategies for the proposed options on landscape and visual impact have been considered. Potential mitigation measures include:

- Limiting vegetation removal.
- Incorporating mitigation features into scheme design.
- Amendments to field boundaries and sizes.
- Planting to provide screening to avoid uncharacteristic large blocks of woodland.

For more information on the visual impacts of the scheme and their mitigation, see the supporting information available on Have Your Say ([M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme- Potential Route Options Engagement | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](#)).

### **How would the scheme impact traffic on the M5?**

Early-stage traffic modelling undertaken for the scheme forecasts a decrease in traffic flow on the M5 at Junction 9 due to traffic re-routing onto the new road via the new M5 junction to the south of Tewkesbury, reducing journey times and congestion. Traffic volumes on the M5 to the south of the new junction are forecast to increase as a result of some journeys diverting from other routes. For example, journeys between Bishops Cleeve and the M5 that currently travel through Cheltenham would be attracted to use the new motorway junction, A46 and A435.

Further detailed traffic modelling would be undertaken in future stages of work to fully assess the impact on the M5.

For a full summary of how the scheme would impact traffic on the M5, see the supporting information available on Have Your Say ([M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme- Potential Route Options Engagement | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](#)).

### **How would the scheme affect local journeys?**

All options are forecast to reduce traffic flows and congestion along the existing A46 between M5 Junction 9 and Teddington Hands roundabout. This would improve reliability of access to the businesses clustered around M5 Junction 9 and the new retail development at the Cotswold Designer Outlet, ensuring this remains an attractive location for economic activity.

As a result, journey time savings for vehicles travelling between Teddington Hands roundabout and Tewkesbury High Street are forecast. For the modelled scheme opening year, in the AM Peak all options achieve savings of at least 3 minutes in both directions. In the PM peak, all options achieve at least 2 minutes of time savings. These are average journey time savings across the AM and PM peak periods. Greater savings are likely to occur at the height of the peak periods and an overall improvement in journey time reliability would also be expected.

Improvements to walking and cycling facilities along the A46 and at M5 Junction 9 are also being considered and along with the forecast reduction in traffic along the existing A46 would make this a more attractive route for travel by these modes.

For more information on how the scheme would affect local journeys, see the supporting information available on Have Your Say ([M5 Junction 9 and A46 \(Ashchurch\) Transport Scheme- Potential Route Options Engagement | Have Your Say Gloucestershire \(engagementhq.com\)](#)).

### **How would the scheme affect businesses at Teddington Hands?**

Options A and B for the eastern section of the route would have different impacts on these businesses:

- For **Option A** the new A46 link would bypass the existing Teddington Hands roundabout and businesses (Truck Stop, petrol station, shop and inn). The A435 would be closed to traffic south of the Truck Stop with access to the Truck Stop and other businesses (including from the new A46) maintained from the existing roundabout. This arrangement would provide some safety benefits by reducing risk of collisions at the business accesses on the A435
- For **Option B** there would be no change to the business accesses as the new A46 link would avoid the A435 and connect with the existing A46 to the west of Teddington Hands roundabout. The A46 would be widened to dual carriageway to the north of the Truck Stop and Teddington Hands roundabout would be upgraded.

For more information, please refer to description of options in ‘*What are the options?*’ section above.

**How would safety of the A46 north of Teddington Hands be improved (noting significant increase in traffic forecast) / why are you not proposing any improvements to the road between Ashchurch and Evesham?**

The focus of the scheme is on addressing the problems experienced on the A46 between the M5 and Teddington Hands roundabout. It is acknowledged that it would likely result in increased traffic flows using the A46 between Teddington Hands roundabout and Evesham. Further analysis of safety on the A46 north of Teddington Hands roundabout would be undertaken at future stages and consideration would be given to safety improvements that may be needed to address any impacts of the scheme.

National Highways are aware of local community concerns regarding safety on the A46 between Teddington Hands and Evesham. Reduced speed limits were introduced at Hinton Cross in 2023 in response to community concerns. National Highways will continue to monitor safety of the route and engage with local communities regarding potential for further safety improvements.

**Would any improvements be made to M5 J9 / A46 prior to the scheme opening to deal with congestion problems and/or improve walking / cycling facilities?**

There are currently no committed plans for further improvements to M5 J9 or the A46 at Ashchurch. GCC and National Highways are keen for improvements to walking and cycling facilities to be made sooner if possible. It is likely that funding for these and any short-term capacity improvements to the A46 would need to be raised from developer contributions in relation to new housing and other developments being proposed in the area. GCC would also seek to apply for any new Government funding that becomes available to support improved walking and cycling facilities along the A46.

**The scheme does not resolve traffic problems elsewhere in Tewkesbury (e.g. A438) which are expected to get worse with new development. What is being done to address this?**

An ‘A46 Working Group’ has been formed which includes membership from GCC, Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC), National Highways and Worcestershire County Council. The Working Group aims to facilitate open communication and mutual understanding regarding development proposals, focusing on sustainable travel needs, infrastructure requirements, and the impact on local road networks. They work collaboratively to ensure consistent responses to developers and address any conflicting priorities.

While this group may identify some solutions (including walking, cycling and public transport), it is likely that funding for these would need to be raised from developer contributions in relation to new housing and other developments being proposed in the area.

## **The area to the south of Ashchurch is important for horse-riding. What would be done to protect and improve horse-riding routes in the area?**

A Walking, Cycling and Horse-riding Assessment and Review has been completed for the scheme and included engagement with equestrian stakeholders. This has identified various opportunities to improve horse-riding routes which would be considered as part of future scheme development.

A summary of the walking, cycling and horse-riding opportunities identified is provided in the supporting information.

## **Won't this just make flooding in the area even worse?**

All options would encroach onto Flood Zones 2 and 3, and accordingly would require a Flood Risk Assessment that demonstrates the scheme would be safe from flooding and, where possible, reduce flood risk overall. It is likely that some element of floodplain compensation would be required to comply with planning policies.

While impacts of each option on flood zones would vary, it is important to note that the scheme would be expected to fully mitigate such impacts by providing floodplain compensation so that there is no overall increase in flood risk.

## **What provision would be made for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users?**

The reductions in traffic volumes, particularly heavy goods vehicles, on the A46 through Ashchurch would provide long term environmental benefits for the local community, including reductions in noise and vibrations. Should the scheme be progressed and a preferred route option identified, we would work with local communities to ensure they have suitable access and provide opportunities for people to cycle, horse ride and walk more easily in the area.

## **Links to other developments**

### **How is the proposed scheme linked to the Tewkesbury Garden Communities programme?**

The Ashchurch area benefits from Garden Town status; it forms part of Tewkesbury Borough Council's Garden Communities programme. The programme's aim is to ensure that housing and employment opportunities are managed in the best possible way by enabling comprehensively planned, connected communities designed to encourage good growth, helping new and existing residents to enjoy the best possible quality of life.

Diverting long-distance traffic - including heavy goods vehicles - from the A46 through Ashchurch onto a new road will be key to the successful development of the Tewkesbury Garden Communities. This will provide capacity for housing and employment opportunities, and crucially provide benefits to the existing communities, offering a more pleasant environment for residents and greater opportunities for walking, cycling and sustainable travel along the existing road.

To find out more, please visit: [www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/garden-communities/](http://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/garden-communities/)

### **Can the Garden Communities be built without this scheme?**

The statutory planning process requires an assessment of transport impacts of proposed developments to obtain planning permission. This process determines the extent of the development that can proceed without conditions on the scheme. If the transport evidence provided is accepted by GCC as the highway authority, the development can proceed.

GCC's position is that due to the existing levels of congestion experienced on both the strategic and local road network around M5 Junction 9, this scheme would be needed before any large-scale development can be started.

### **How will decisions be made about the proposed Garden Communities development, and when will I be able to give my views?**

Tewkesbury Borough Council are working with Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucester City Council to review the Joint Core Strategy (2011-2031) and produce a new Strategic and Local Plan (SLP). The new local plan will allocate land for development up to 2041 to meet future needs for housing and employment land. The Garden Communities proposals will be considered as part of this process.

The current timetable for development of the new Plan including public engagement is outlined at: [strategiclocalplan.org](http://strategiclocalplan.org)

### **Why have new developments in the area obtained planning permission while the M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch) scheme is in the initial phase of development?**

Outline plans for the new Garden Centre and Cotswold Designer Outlet were approved by Tewkesbury Borough Council in 2016 and since then plans for over 1,400 new homes have been approved by Government planning inspectors at the Fiddington Fields site between the M5 and rail line.

The various planning applications were approved in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, which provides limited grounds for refusing planning permission on transport grounds. Mitigations were agreed with National Highways including some capacity improvements at M5 Junction 9 to reduce traffic queues extending back from the junction to the motorway. It was acknowledged that development would give rise to increased congestion and delay on the A46, but not be so severe as to justify the refusal of planning permission.

Tewkesbury Borough Council objected to the first phase of housing proposals (totalling 850 dwellings) at the planning appeal in 2019 on grounds that the proposals did not contribute to solving existing transport problems, but these arguments were not accepted by the Government planning inspectors.

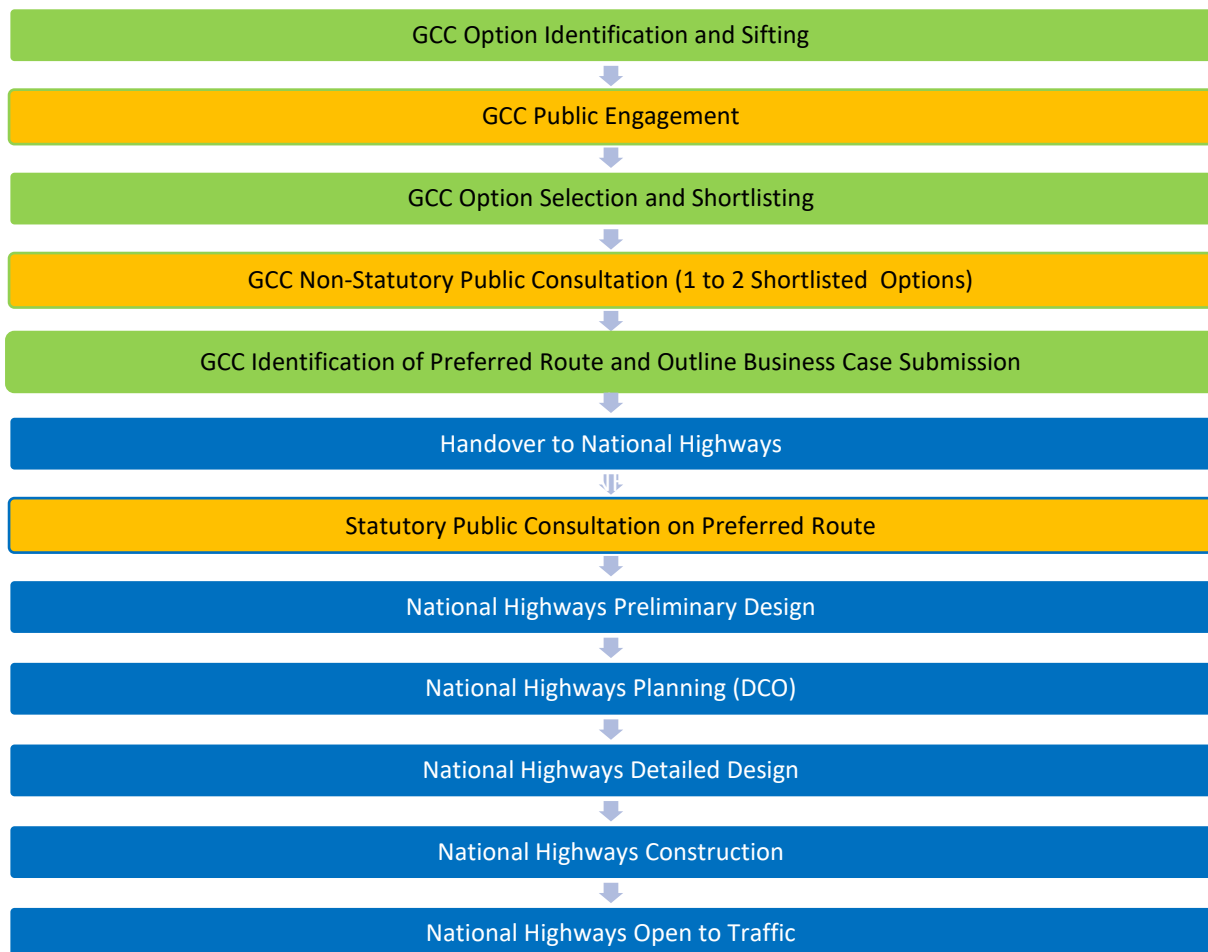
## **Scheme development**

### **What is the current programme for the scheme?**

As this proposal is in the early stages of development, the exact location of the new road and details of the junction are yet to be decided. However technical work to assess suitability and identify a range of shortlisted scheme options has now been completed. We are carrying out a public engagement exercise from early October 2024 to share shortlisted route options and seek the views of the public, stakeholders, businesses and local communities on them. Your views and comments received during the public engagement exercise will be considered and summarised in a public engagement report.

Should the scheme be progressed, this feedback will be used to refine the options and will be combined with the findings from further technical work to create a final shortlist of options. These will be presented at a non-statutory consultation when the majority of technical work has been completed. During the non-statutory consultation, the views of the public, stakeholders, businesses and local communities will be sought again.

The graphic below provides an overview of the stages of scheme development and how/when you will be consulted with in the run up to establishing a preferred route.



Prior to a preferred route announcement, the Department of Transport has agreed the scheme will be handed over to National Highways for further development and completion of the preferred route announcement. You will have a further opportunity to give feedback, this time on the preferred route during a statutory public consultation.

After the statutory consultation National Highways will carry out more detailed assessments to confirm the scheme before applying for planning consent.

For all projects of this nature, known as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, an application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. This is called the Development Consent Order Process (DCO). Consent to construct the scheme will only be given if the Development Consent is granted

You can find out more about the DCO process at: [infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk](https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk).

The earliest that scheme would be completed and open for traffic is 2034.

### **Why can't the scheme be built quickly – we can't wait much longer as A46 is already very congested?**

The optioneering, design and construction of this scheme can't be sped up because it needs to go through several important steps such as public engagement and consultation, planning consent and



funding approvals. We must engage with local communities and stakeholders to make sure that the scheme is well understood and meets the needs of the public. Since this is a major project, it has to go through a detailed approval process called the Development Consent Order (DCO), which takes time. There is also a need to secure funding, which involves applying for and getting approval for the necessary financial resources.

These steps are important to ensure the project is well-planned, legally compliant, and properly funded, which would make it successful. While we understand the congestion on the A46 is frustrating, these processes are in place to ensure that the scheme has the best possible outcome, meets strategic objectives and represents value for money.

### **What is a DCO and why would it take so long?**

The Scheme would be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and would require a Development Consent Order (DCO). The Scheme has been considered against the Section 22 of the Planning Act 2008 and it is likely to be classified as an NSIP given it meets the criteria outlined in the Act. Therefore, National Highways would be required to prepare and submit a Development Consent Order application in order to secure consent for the Scheme.

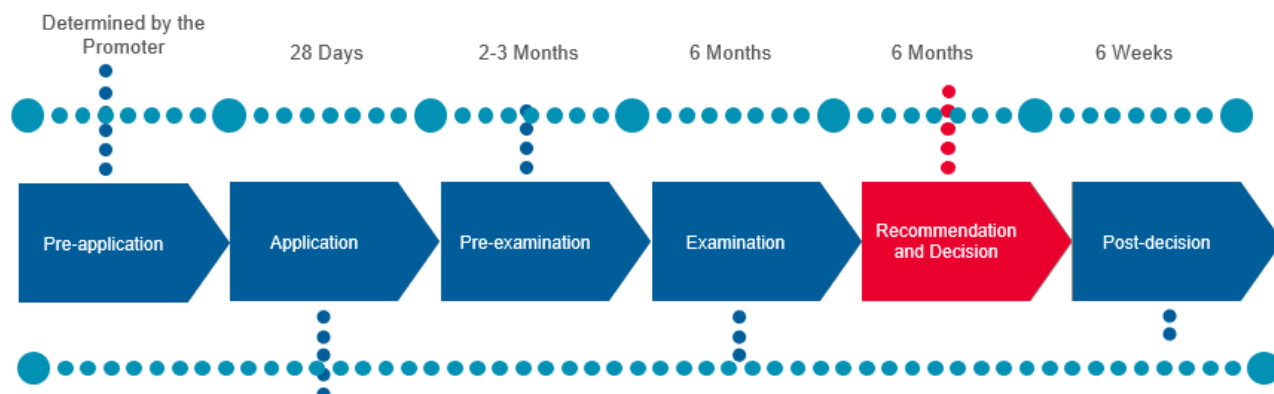
A DCO is a statutory instrument granted by the Secretary of State to authorise the construction and development of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. So once made the DCO in effect becomes legislation. It can provide an applicant with most, if not all, of the consents and powers required to deliver a scheme. As well as granting development consent (akin to planning permission) it can include Compulsory Acquisition powers and can also disapply and modify other legislation, such as the need to obtain an environmental permit, or the statutory provisions relating to compulsory acquisition. DCOs will typically also confer powers to enter and survey land, as well as powers to temporarily possess and use land within the order limits.

A DCO is granted following an extensive pre-application consultation process followed by an examination of the application which is conducted by the Planning Inspectorate. There are also a number of safeguarding provisions incorporated in the Planning Act 2008 to deal with consents that may be required to carry out the works either with statutory undertakers, or other bodies with specific roles and enforcement responsibilities. Some of these consents can be a deemed consent within the DCO, a consent that has to be obtained within the provisions of the DCO, or a consent that is obtained outside the DCO process. At the conclusion of the examination the DCO is granted in an agreed form incorporating an agreed position on the required consents.

The DCO contains a Schedule of Requirements, which are in effect the conditions which govern how the project is to be delivered. In terms of approach and content they are broadly similar to conditions found on a planning consent and seek to govern phasing, design and operation of the project. They also consider practical matters such as landscaping, drainage and lighting.

## DCO Process and timescales diagram:

Pre-application stage – 12-18 months.



## How would the scheme be assessed? Is the scheme likely to be classified as an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development?

Consideration has been given as to whether the scheme is likely to be classified as EIA development through considering how it relates to the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended). Based on the current Scheme options, it is considered likely that the Scheme would be classified as EIA development and an Environmental Statement would be required as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

Through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, the Government was seeking to secure powers to implement a new system of environmental assessment to be known as Environmental Outcomes Reports. The purpose of these was to allow the Government to replace the EU-derived Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment processes with a streamlined system. A consultation on proposals took place in 2023, any plans to amend the existing EIA systems has been delayed until at least 2025, but these may affect the environmental assessment of a future scheme.

## Land acquisition

### Are you going to buy my property / land?

The scheme is at a very early stage: we are sharing potential route options at present. The scheme will rely on securing funding from Government to deliver it. At this early stage, no commitment can therefore be given to funding being secured for the scheme delivery. Should the scheme progress, there is no certainty that any identified preferred option would affect your land, and there is no need to buy any land at this time. The acquisition of land would not start until after a preferred route was identified and announced (following further public engagement), or after development consent was granted for the scheme.

### What if, because of this engagement, I now can't sell my property / land?

The scheme is at a very early stage and does not presently have any commitment to proceed to a preferred route announcement. Until a preferred route is announced or land is specifically designated in a development plan (or other plans as set out in Schedule 13 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990), there is nothing that Gloucestershire County Council nor National Highways is required to do if people decide to withdraw from a sale.

## **How would land and property acquisition processes be managed?**

It has been agreed that if a preferred option is determined and the business case and funding is approved by the Department for Transport, the scheme would be delivered by National Highways. Therefore, land and property acquisition would be managed by National Highways at that time, after a hand over to them by GCC. National Highways would follow their standard processes.

National Highways have published guidance on their processes of land and property acquisition which can be found here - [your-property-and-our-road-proposals.pdf \(nationalhighways.co.uk\)](#). More detail about the compensation outlined in this guidance can be found in the publications found here - [When our work affects your property - National Highways](#)

The government have also produced a series of technical booklets which go into more detail on this topic. These can be found here - <http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/compulsory-purchase-system-guidance>

## **When would my land/property be bought?**

We currently do not know when land/property would be purchased and this is dependent of the scheme advancing beyond the early stages of development and towards the statutory planning process. Should the scheme progress, notices would be sent to all stakeholders for the land National Highways would be acquiring through compulsory powers of acquisition. This confirms which land is to be acquired and invites stakeholders to make a claim for compensation. The most common process to take ownership of the land is using a general vesting declaration which transfers ownership of the land to National Highways, the notice for this must not be less than 3 months.

For more information on the timescales and processes of compulsory acquisition, see page 6 of the National Highways guidance on land and property acquisition.

## **Would there be compensation for residents and businesses?**

Compensation is available for freeholders, leaseholders and tenants when their land or property is being compulsorily acquired as part of a road scheme. The types of compensation available include:

- Market value of the land
- Home loss payment
- Secondary impacts of the purchase of the land (e.g. reducing the value of any remaining land, restricting any right of way that reduces the value of your land, excess maintenance costs from using alternative access to your property as a result of the scheme).

For more information on the available types of compensation, see page 5 of the National Highways guidance on land and property acquisition.

## **What would happen if I refuse to sell my land/property?**

Compulsory purchase is a legal mechanism by which National Highways can acquire the land/property without the consent of the owner. We understand that the acquisition of your

property can be upsetting and stressful, and advice on how to proceed is often confusing. If your property is to be acquired, then you would be compensated appropriately.

For more clear information on the compulsory purchase mechanism please see the website links shown above.

### **What are the impacts of the scheme on my property?**

We currently do not have information of the impact of the scheme on individual properties. If your property is affected in any way outlined in page 5 of the National Highways guidance on land and property acquisition, then you would be entitled to compensation if the preferred route affected it.

## **M5 Junction 10**

### **What is the status of the M5 Junction 10 Improvements Scheme?**

The M5 Junction 10 Improvements scheme proposes significant improvements to the junction, including a new road linking Junction 10 to West Cheltenham and widening of the A4019 Tewkesbury Road. The scheme is currently undergoing the DCO process.

The M5 Junction 10 scheme is being delivered separately from this scheme. Further information on the M5 J10 scheme is available here: [M5 Junction 10 Improvements Scheme | Highways \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](#)