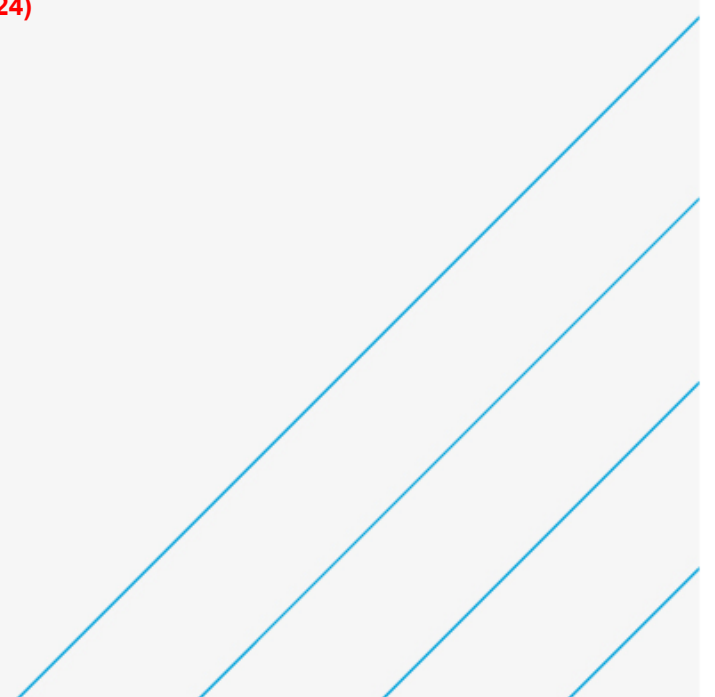


M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch) Transport Scheme

Summary of walking, cycling and horse-riding opportunities

Gloucestershire County Council

For public engagement (7 October – 2 December 2024)



Contents

Chapter	Page
1. Introduction	3
1.1. Overview	3
1.2. Scheme introduction	3
2. Walking, cycling and horse-riding assessment process	5
3. Summary of opportunities	7
Tables	
Table 3-1 - Summary of walking, cycling and horse-riding opportunities	8
Figures	
Figure 2-1 - Walking, cycling and horse-riding assessment study area	5
Figure 3-1 - Key walking, cycling and horse-riding desire lines	7
Figure 3-2 - Locations of walking, cycling and horse-riding opportunities	9

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

This document provides additional background information to support the 7 October – 2 December 2024 public engagement for the M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch) Transport Scheme. It forms part of the public engagement materials which can be found on the Have Your Say website: <https://haveyoursaygloucestershire.uk.engagementhq.com/junction-9>.

Other documents in the series cover:

- Scheme context and existing conditions
- Development of scheme objectives
- Option generation and sifting
- Summary of shortlisted options
- Analysis of shortlisted options.

It provides a summary of the Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Assessment and Review (WCHAR) process. A WCHAR Assessment Report has been produced for the scheme which comprises a mixture of desk-based assessments, site visits, surveys (walking, cycling and horse-riding counts), and engagement with stakeholders.

1.2. Scheme introduction

The M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch) Transport Scheme (referred to throughout as ‘the scheme’) is a proposal to develop a new M5 junction 9a to the south of Tewkesbury and re-route a section of the A46 between the M5 and Teddington Hands roundabout. The scheme aims to help solve long standing traffic issues and provide vital infrastructure to meet existing and future needs, including improving journey times and reliability for journeys between the M5 Junction 9 and Teddington Hands roundabout.

Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) is the promoter for the scheme. However, the A46 and M5 Junction 9 are part of National Highways’ Strategic Road Network (SRN). Consequently, it has been agreed to progress the scheme through the National Highways Project Control Framework (PCF) to align the delivery of the project and the production of documentation with National Highways’ processes. The scheme is currently at PCF Stage 1 (Option Identification) in the National Highways project lifecycle.

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

The case for improvements to the M5 Junction 9 and A46 through Ashchurch has become more compelling in recent years and 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 is inadequate and does not meet current design standards. Along with the level of traffic on the A46 including Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), this makes the road difficult to cross and discourages travel by bike or foot
- Further significant development in the Ashchurch area cannot be delivered without additional capacity on the road network.

Without intervention, the existing traffic problems at M5 Junction 9 and on the A46 through Ashchurch will continue to get worse. The Cotswold Designer Outlet is due to open in 2025 and over 1,400 new homes have been consented at Fiddington Fields to the east of the M5 and accessed via the A46.

Tewkesbury Borough Council is also advancing its 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 additional 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.

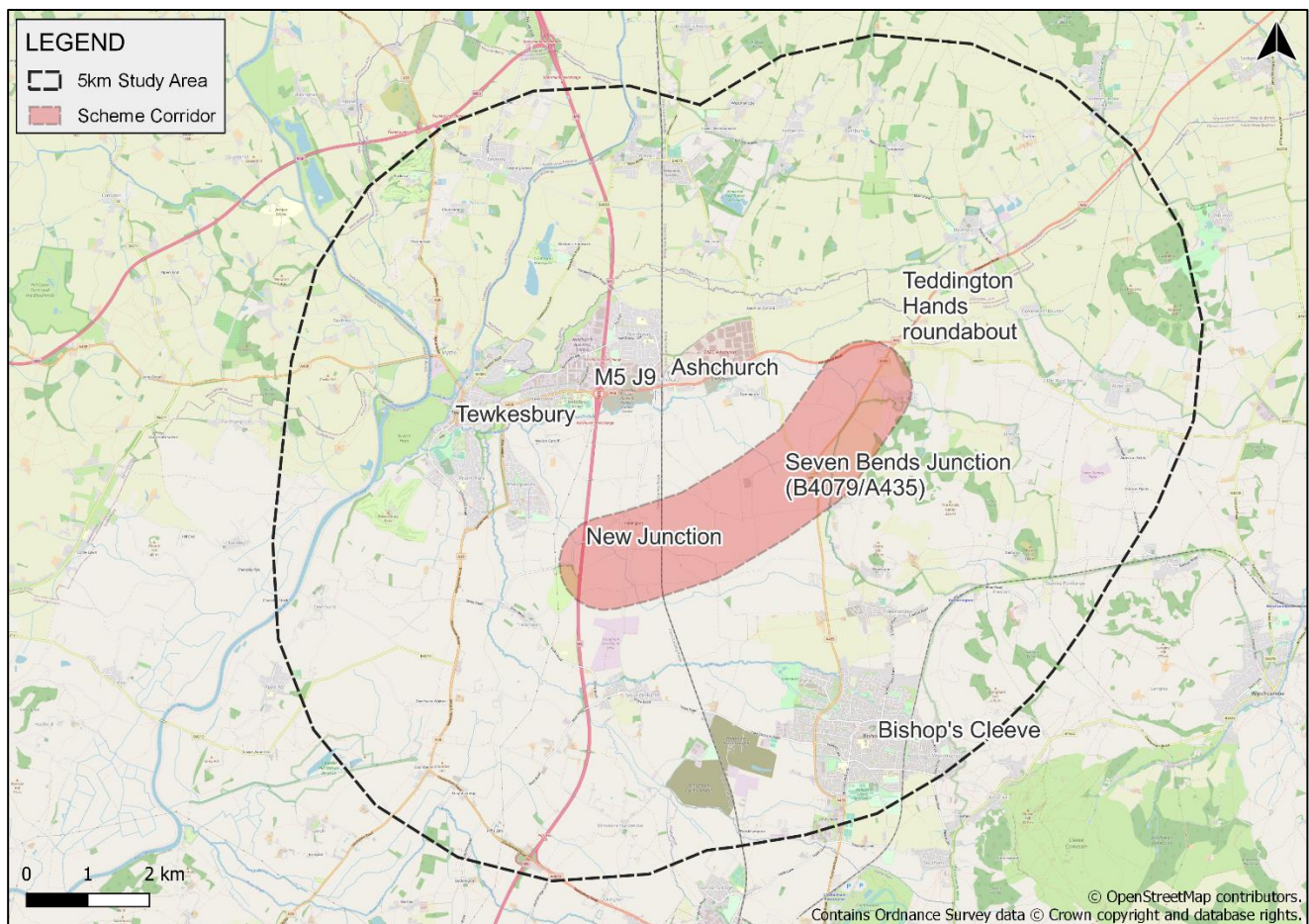
2. Walking, cycling and horse-riding assessment process

For the shortlisted scheme options there are implications for existing walking, cycling and horse-riding routes, including footpaths, shared use paths, long distance walking routes and associated crossings of the A46.

The options could lead to an impact upon pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian journeys for commuting and accessing community facilities. However, walking, cycling and horse-riding facilities would be retained as appropriate and the provision of replacement and additional facilities such as crossings would, at the very least, ensure that severance does not increase for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. All options include proposals to reduce severance and improve walking and cycling facilities at M5 Junction 9 and along the A46 (refer to the 'Summary of shortlisted options' document for details).

The study area for the scheme is shown in Figure 2-1 and is based upon an approximate 5km radius from the scheme options being considered.

Figure 2-1 - Walking, cycling and horse-riding assessment study area



Site visits and walking, cycling and horse-riding surveys were undertaken in May 2022, with a further round of surveys in September 2022.

Stakeholder engagement was undertaken in April-May 2022 and included:

- Local Town and Parish Councils
- Public Rights of Way officer at GCC
- National and local walking, cycling and equestrian interest groups.

Key issues identified from the desk-based assessment and stakeholder engagement included:

- Severance created by the main physical barriers of the M5, A436, A46 and the Birmingham to Bristol rail line
- The A46 shared use path between M5 Junction 9 and Aston Cross does not meet latest design standards and is not viewed by stakeholders as appropriate infrastructure for walking or cycling
- Permeability across the A46 is also poor
- Lack of safe routes for children to cycle school (including the A46 shared use path)
- The area is heavily used by leisure cyclists including large groups of club cyclists, people training for triathlons, family groups and mountain bike enthusiasts.
- The Gloucestershire Way and Sabrina Way regional routes are key walking, cycling and horse-riding routes through the study area that must be protected and improved if possible
- Potential to upgrade the Walton Cardiff Bridleway including bridge over the M5 into a formal cycling route to connect new housing developments at Fiddington Fields with Tewkesbury (an alternative route across the M5 to the south of the A438 / A46)
- Strong presence of equestrians in the study area, which is home to a high density of private and commercial stables but is served by a fragmented network of bridleways.

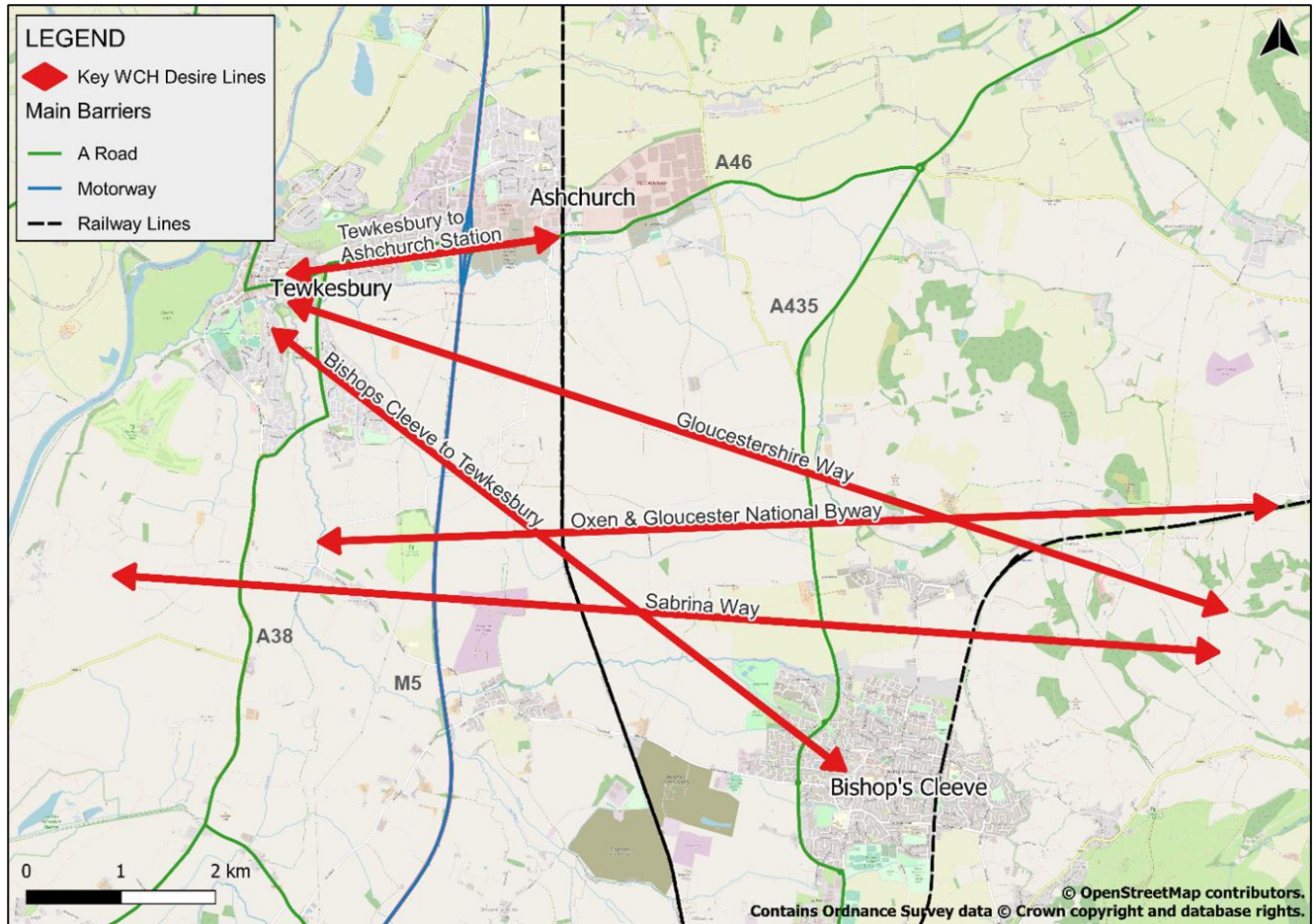
3. Summary of opportunities

Based on findings from the site visit and desktop research, the following opportunities were identified for consideration at the scheme design stage.

The guidance for walking, cycling and horse-riding assessment (GG 142) encourages the identification of opportunities that are associated with the scheme, but which may not be within the geographical scope of the works and thus it may not be possible to deliver some opportunities within the proposals. However, the identification of these opportunities is intended to allow them to be highlighted for consideration in future works.

The issue of severance created by the main physical barriers of the M5, A435, A46 and the Bristol to Birmingham mainline was the main theme through this assessment. The key desire lines within the study area that interact with these barriers have been mapped in Figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1 - Key walking, cycling and horse-riding desire lines



The opportunities identified through this assessment are listed in Table 3-1. Where opportunities have a general or specific location these have been mapped in Figure 3-2.

Table 3-1 - Summary of walking, cycling and horse-riding opportunities

Opportunity	Description
Strategic opportunities	
1	Ensure GCC Local Transport Plan Cycle Desire Lines are supported by the scheme
2	Plan for increases in walking, cycling and horse-riding users due to future strategic developments in study area
3	Improve connection between Tewkesbury and Ashchurch for Tewkesbury Rail Station
4	Improved wayfinding signage
5	Provision of safe crossings of key severance points
Multiple user group opportunities	
6	Upgrade M5 Junction 9 for pedestrians and cyclists
7	Provide better north to south permeability of A46 south of Ashchurch
8	Improve the shared use path along the A438 between M5 Junction 9 and Tewkesbury town centre
9	Walking, cycling and horse-riding user route parallel to the scheme (new A46 link)
10	Integrate walking, cycling and horse-riding route through Teddington Hands roundabout
11	Gloucestershire Way improvements
12	Improve Fiddington to Tredington Road M5 overbridge for walking, cycling and horse-riding users
13	Improve crossing facilities between Little Beckford and Beckford
Walking opportunities	
14	Provide / improve pedestrian facilities along the A435 and B4079
15	Provide / improve pedestrian facilities along Stoke Road
16	Investigate desire line on A435 south of Teddington Hands roundabout
Cycling opportunities	
17	Consider various cyclist types within highway design
18	Improve existing shared use facility along the A46 through Ashchurch
19	Improve cycling provision across Northway Lane M5 overbridge
20	Improve National Byway Oxon and Gloucester cycle route
21	Upgrade footpath from Teddington village to Teddington Hands roundabout for cycle use
Horse-riding opportunities	

Opportunity	Description
22	Improvements to the existing bridleway network
23	Improvements to Sabrina Way bridle route
24	Upgrade Walton Cardiff footpath M5 underpass for use by equestrians
25	Improve connectivity for equestrians across A38 between Tewkesbury and the M50

Figure 3-2 - Locations of walking, cycling and horse-riding opportunities

