



TAAG NEWSLETTER #34

November 2024

M5 J9 & A46 Transport Scheme – Public Engagement

7th October – 2nd December 2024

Local Drop-in event 1st November

Thank you to everyone who attended the drop-in event at the village hall. We had 68 people attending (possibly more because not everyone signed-in); 60 from our villages and 8 from Oxenton, Gotherington and Woolstone. So, a really great turnout. Everyone said how useful it was to see the enlarged maps of the routes and be able to talk to the project team themselves about the rationale for the 6 routes chosen and to voice their concerns. We captured some questions on the day which we've forwarded to the project team for their response.

We also shared our views on the Pros and Cons of Option A versus Option B including what we believe has been missed in the Public Engagement brochure. This table will be incorporated into our Public Engagement submission to Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and a copy can be viewed [here](#). If you have any feedback on these or think we have missed anything critical to our case, please let us know by dropping us an email.

Q&As

As mentioned in our email 31st October, we are now sending questions to the project team and have started receiving their 'official' responses. We have set-up a new tab on our website [here](#) where these can be viewed. They will be regularly updated as we receive more responses, so do keep an eye on this page. We do hope that these Q&As will be useful and help clarify the route options for residents.

You can still send us any further questions you may have by emailing us. We will endeavour to get as many answered as possible in the time left.

We understand that the FAQs that were published on 7th October on the Public Engagement [website](#), will also be updated, so worth keeping an eye on that too.

TAAG Questionnaire

Thank you to everyone who completed our internal questionnaire. We had 111 responses which is brilliant and this will really help us understand residents' concerns and your views on the route options. It also provides us with some statistics we can include in the submission we will be sending to GCC later this month to add weight to our argument. For example, the highest areas of concern are, not surprisingly, access to the A435 from our villages and the disruption during construction.

Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of respondents said that they would very likely or sometimes use an alternative route to leave their village, if access to the A435 became difficult. This suggests an increase of traffic using the quiet lanes such as the Alstone Road.

A large majority of respondents believed that Option A would have a greater impact on the Cotswold Natural Landscape (CNL) than Option B and that additionally Option A cuts through the local Special Landscape Area. Option A would actually have to encroach on the CNL due to the need to widen the A435 to bring it up to trunk road standard.

We are reviewing all the comments made and will incorporate as many of these as possible to demonstrate the strength of feeling.

Cameron Thomas MP

We are pleased to report that we have managed to get some time to speak with our new MP on Friday 7th. We will of course let you know how this goes but we hope this will be the start of an ongoing dialogue with him to share our concerns and seek his support.

Completing the Public Engagement Survey and TAAG's submission

As previously mentioned, TAAG intend to submit a report to GCC as our feedback on the route options. We understand that Teddington & Alstone Parish Council also intend to submit their own response. After much deliberation, we have decided for now to focus our feedback on the Eastern Sections only; Routes A and B as they have a far greater impact on our villages than any of the Western Section Routes 1, 2 and 3. Also these 3 routes have differing detrimental effects on our neighbouring villages, so TAAG would prefer to remain agnostic and not feedback a preference to GCC. However, should it become evident that any one of these routes does have a significant impact or benefit to us, then we will include it of course with our rationale.

We intend to have a draft ready in time to share with residents for feedback, before submitting our final report by the deadline of 2nd December.

Of course, it is equally if not more important that as many residents as possible complete the Public Engagement survey. Although this isn't a vote, we believe that a

significantly high response selecting Option B as the preferred Eastern section route and explaining why Option A is totally unacceptable, cannot be ignored.

From our analysis to date and from your feedback, we would highlight the following key reasons why option A should be taken off the table altogether;

- Impact of increased noise on the CNL
- Incursions into the CNL due to widening of the A435 and impact on hedgerows and trees adversely affecting biodiversity
- Safety issues accessing Teddington and Alstone villages
- Safety issues mixing fast-moving strategic traffic with slow-moving local traffic
- Huge diversions and disruption during the build
- No contingency in the event of an incident on the A435 for diverting traffic
- Increased traffic on our quiet village lanes as traffic tries to avoid a busy junction on the A435
- Increased noise, light and air pollution for residents to the east of the A435
- Access to village facilities at Teddington Hands roundabout severed

We will of course expand on these in our submission.

Gerald Kells – Strategic Policy & Campaigns Adviser

To add further weight to our case and also provide an impartial and expert view, we are hoping to commission Gerald Kells again. We have provided him with a brief and he has taken an initial look at the public engagement documentation and indicated a fee of between £1,600 - £2,000.

Unfortunately, we don't have time to go through the process of applying for a Parish Council grant (and no guarantee it would be approved) and although we have some funds remaining from a previous grant, these were meant for our ongoing costs.

So, we need to ask for your help. Would you donate to help cover Gerald's fee?

You can donate by either making a BACS transfer direct to TAAG's bank account or by cheque made payable to TAAG. Bank details below;

Sort Code	30-90-09
Bank	Lloyds (Aldershot Branch)
Account Name	TAAG
Account Number	47521168

Thank you.

For those reading on Notice Boards the links above can be found on our website and GCC's 'Have your Say page'.

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