

M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch) Transport Scheme

Potential route options engagement
7 October – 2 December 2024

New infrastructure to address long-standing traffic issues at M5 Junction 9 and the A46 (Ashchurch) and to enable new housing and employment opportunities around Tewkesbury



About this brochure

The purpose of this brochure is to explain the public engagement that Gloucestershire County Council will be carrying out from 7 October 2024 to 2 December 2024 and to outline potential route options for the M5 Junction 9 and A46 (Ashchurch) Transport Scheme.

This is the first stage of public engagement on potential route options. Further refinement of these options is subject to Ministerial approval and the release of further funding. Should the scheme be progressed, a preferred option will only be identified following future public consultations. The potential route options will be subject to refinement following feedback received during this public engagement exercise.

Images from September 2024.

Top image, from left to right:

Cllr David Gray, Gloucestershire County Council Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

Cllr Cate Cody, Tewkesbury Borough Council Councillor for Tewkesbury South

Cameron Thomas, MP for Tewkesbury

Cllr Richard Stanley, Leader of Tewkesbury Borough Council

Cllr Vernon Smith, Gloucestershire County Council Councillor for Tewkesbury East



Have your say

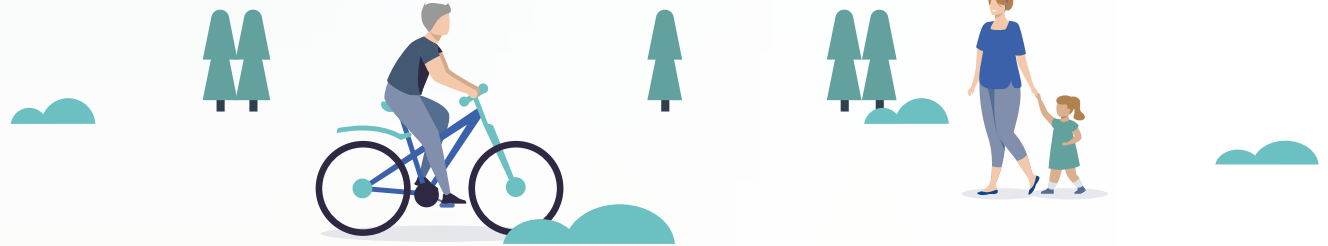
Your feedback is really important as it will help us identify and refine the potential route options to take forward for further consideration. You should read this brochure before completing the feedback survey as it will help you prepare your response.

All responses received as part of the engagement will be anonymised, stored and handled in accordance with Gloucestershire County Council's policy on General Data Protection Regulation. More information can be found at:

Planning, Transport and Highways Services Privacy Notice.

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

- › By completing the online feedback survey via: 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
Completed copies can either be given to project team members at our face-to-face engagement events or returned by pre-paid envelope.



For any other scheme related queries, to request paper copies of engagement documents, or if you are unable to access a digital or a paper copy of the survey, please get in touch:

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:

	www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/J9
	M5Junction9@atkinsrealis.com
	01454 667490 (Please leave a voicemail)
	M5 J9 Engagement Team AtkinsRéalis Ltd, 2 Chamberlain Square, Birmingham, West Midlands, B3 3AX

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

Scheme background

Proposals for improvements to the M5 Junction 9 and A46 at Ashchurch have been subject to extensive study since 1993 when the Department for Transport (DfT) consulted on a proposal for a new dual carriageway between the M5 at Junction 9 and Evesham and an extended motorway junction.

In recent years, the case for improvements to the existing M5 Junction 9 and the A46 at Ashchurch has become more compelling due to increased traffic growth and the associated negative impacts on the existing communities in this area.

Both the M5 and the A46 are strategic routes with national economic significance. Improving capacity and re-routing long-distance traffic away from the existing A46 onto a new road would create opportunities to reduce the impacts of increased traffic levels on the existing A46 through Ashchurch. It would also support the vision for the Ashchurch area as part of the Tewkesbury Garden Communities programme, which seeks to enable new housing and employment opportunities around Tewkesbury.



Previous studies and public engagement

National Highways, the Government-owned company which operate, maintain and improve motorways and major A roads in England, has undertaken a number of studies starting with the A46 Scoping Study (2015). This identified the need to re-route the section of the A46 between the M5 near Tewkesbury and Teddington Hands roundabout in order to reduce existing congestion and help support predicted future levels of traffic and future development.

Gloucestershire County Council carried out a public consultation exercise in 2017 consisting of a number of promotional events with local businesses and residents.

When consulted on the existing local road network:

- › 55% of respondents were concerned about traffic delays
- › 48% avoided the M5 Junction 9 and the A46 at peak times
- › 40% said that they would support improvements to M5 Junction 9 and a bypass for Ashchurch

In 2019, Central Government awarded Garden Town status to the Tewkesbury-Ashchurch location.

In Spring 2021, the Department for Transport (DfT) approved the concept of a transport scheme at M5 Junction 9 and the A46 (Ashchurch).

In Summer 2022, Gloucestershire County Council submitted an initial business case (a Strategic Outline Case) to present a more in-depth case for the



scheme and to request funding to develop an Outline Business Case (the next step before Full Business Case development). An Outline Business Case would include recommendations for a preferred route option.

Gloucestershire County Council submitted further information to DfT in early 2024, including the potential route options that are now being presented for public engagement.

The Strategic Outline Case is still being considered by DfT. Progression of the scheme to the Outline Business Case stage will be dependent on Ministerial approval and release of funding.

Tewkesbury Garden Communities

The Ashchurch area benefits from Garden Town status as 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 about the Tewkesbury Garden Communities please visit:

www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/garden-communities/



Scheme overview

The 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.



Why is the scheme needed?

The case for improvements to 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 onto the M5 motorway. Queuing vehicles on the hard shoulder create a safety hazard
- › Developments which already have planning permission are increasing traffic in this location
- › Walking and cycling facilities at M5 Junction 9 and along the A46 do not meet current design standards. Along with the level of traffic on the A46 (including heavy goods vehicles), 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

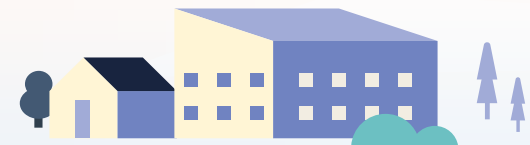
Upon opening, the scheme would also provide environmental improvements, including noise level reductions and improved air quality along the A46. This would benefit the existing communities along the A46, as well as those travelling through it on foot or by bicycle.

What will happen if nothing is done?

Without the proposed improvements, traffic conditions at M5 Junction 9 and along the A46 through Ashchurch will continue to get worse and impact the daily lives of local residents and businesses.

The aim of the Tewkesbury Garden Communities programme could not be achieved – risking a less consistent and coherent approach to future development in the area with continuing negative impacts on existing communities.

The scheme would also provide environmental improvements, including noise level reductions and improved air quality along the A46.



Supporting existing and future communities

The scheme would provide vital infrastructure to support both existing and future communities.

High traffic and congestion levels along the A46 through Ashchurch are long-standing issues, directly affecting the daily lives of local residents and businesses. Traffic and congestion levels are expected to increase as a result of approved development and more long-distance traffic including heavy goods vehicles using the A46 to travel between the Midlands and the West Country.

Upon opening, the scheme would provide a significant reduction in traffic using the existing A46, with quicker and more reliable journeys for both local and long-distance traffic. The scheme would also offer immediate safety and community benefits along the existing route. The scheme would support environmental improvements to the existing A46 route through Ashchurch to meet local needs by making it more pleasant to walk and cycle. With less traffic, fewer heavy goods vehicles and better sustainable travel options, new developments could be accommodated more easily without adding to congestion levels.

In the longer-term, the scheme would support and enable the vision of the Tewkesbury Garden Communities programme. This vision sets out to ensure that housing and employment opportunities are managed in such a way that both new and existing communities enjoy the best possible quality of life, through well-designed environments, more walking, cycling and public transport facilities, and better-connected communities.

The scheme would sustain the reduction in long-distance traffic including heavy goods vehicles using the existing A46, enabling a more pleasant environment. The new M5 junction and A46 would offer an effective bypass route with quicker and more reliable journeys between the M5 and Evesham. The potential junction at Seven Bends would provide a new southern access to the Ashchurch area, reducing the need for journeys to be made along the old A46 route.

Sustainable travel

The reduction in traffic on the existing A46 would provide environmental, health and wellbeing benefits for the local community, including reductions in traffic-related noise and improved air quality. Potential route options would also support sustainable travel, including better walking and cycling facilities at M5 Junction 9 and along the A46 through Ashchurch. The needs of walkers, cyclists and horse riders would be considered in the overall design, including where existing routes may be impacted by the new road.

Gloucestershire County Council will work closely with Tewkesbury Borough Council to ensure high quality sustainable travel links are coherent and connect with any development as part of the Tewkesbury Garden Communities programme.

The reduction in traffic on the existing A46 would provide environmental, health and wellbeing benefits for the local community, including reductions in traffic-related noise and improved air quality.



Scheme objectives

Scheme objectives have been developed based upon the need for the scheme and the issues identified at M5 Junction 9 and along the A46.

The objectives are to:

- › Improve local journey times and reliability during peak periods at M5 Junction 9 and on the existing A46 corridor between M5 Junction 9 and Teddington Hands roundabout
- › Improve the overall performance of the A46 strategic corridor between the M5 to the south and the A46 to the north of Evesham, ensuring the route provides a reliable connection between the Midlands and South-West England
- › Improve safety performance at M5 Junction 9 and the A46 between M5 Junction 9 and Aston Cross for all users
- › Reduce severance and improve the experience for walking and cycling journeys at M5 Junction 9 and along / across the A438 and A46 between Tewkesbury Academy and Aston Cross
- › Ensure the Strategic Road Network meets likely future development needs in the Ashchurch area considering potential for long-term growth

Further information regarding the need for the scheme and development of objectives is available in the following documents:

- › Scheme context and existing conditions
- › Scheme objectives



Queuing on the approach to and from M5 Junction 9 along the A46, September 2024

What options have been considered?

To date, over 50 different options have been considered, including:

- › Sustainable travel options
- › A46 'online' (along the existing A46) improvement options
- › 'Offline' (away from the existing A46) highway options

Sustainable travel 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 both now and in the future. However, sustainable travel measures were identified as a means of improving the environment along the A46 for local people and would be included as part of any overall scheme that is developed.

A46 online 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 with the associated noise, pollution and safety concerns. It would also impact the ability to deliver sustainable travel options in any final scheme and accommodate potential new development in the area. It would therefore fail to achieve the scheme objectives of addressing traffic and environmental problems and allowing for growth.

Offline 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 in the area. It would also provide a quicker and more reliable route for long-distance traffic, whilst providing opportunities to improve sustainable travel options, along the existing A46 corridor.

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. Over various stages of assessment, the number of potential scheme options has been reduced to those which are being presented for public engagement in this document. Gloucestershire County Council has worked with National Highways and Homes England during the appraisal of the options.

Other options were discounted for one or more of the following reasons:

- › Not being closely enough aligned with the scheme objectives
- › Engineering, environmental (including flood risk) and planning constraints
- › Construction risks
- › Negative impacts on future development proposals
- › Providing poor value for money

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 in the area.

Further information regarding the full range of options considered, how options have been assessed and why options were discounted is available in the following documents:

- › Option generation and sifting
- › Summary of walking, cycling and horse-riding opportunities

Potential route options (Overview)

The potential route options are presented on this page. There are three options (1, 2 and 3) for the western part of the route, and two options (A and B) for the eastern part. This provides a total of 6 no. individual potential route options, i.e., 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A and 3B. The route alignments presented for the purpose of this public engagement are indicative and will be subject to refinement and further technical assessment following public feedback.

For all options for the western part of the route, transport modelling indicates that the new A46 between the M5 and B4079 would need to be a dual carriageway to cope with future traffic growth.

For both options for the eastern part of the route, transport modelling indicates that traffic volumes on the eastern section would be lower and that the main part of the new A46 between the B4079 and Teddington Hands would only need to be a single carriageway.

Further information about the transport modelling undertaken is available in the following document:

- › Analysis of shortlisted options

Further information about the potential route options is provided on the following pages.

Key considerations

Potential route options have been developed with a number of key considerations in mind; they include the impacts on:

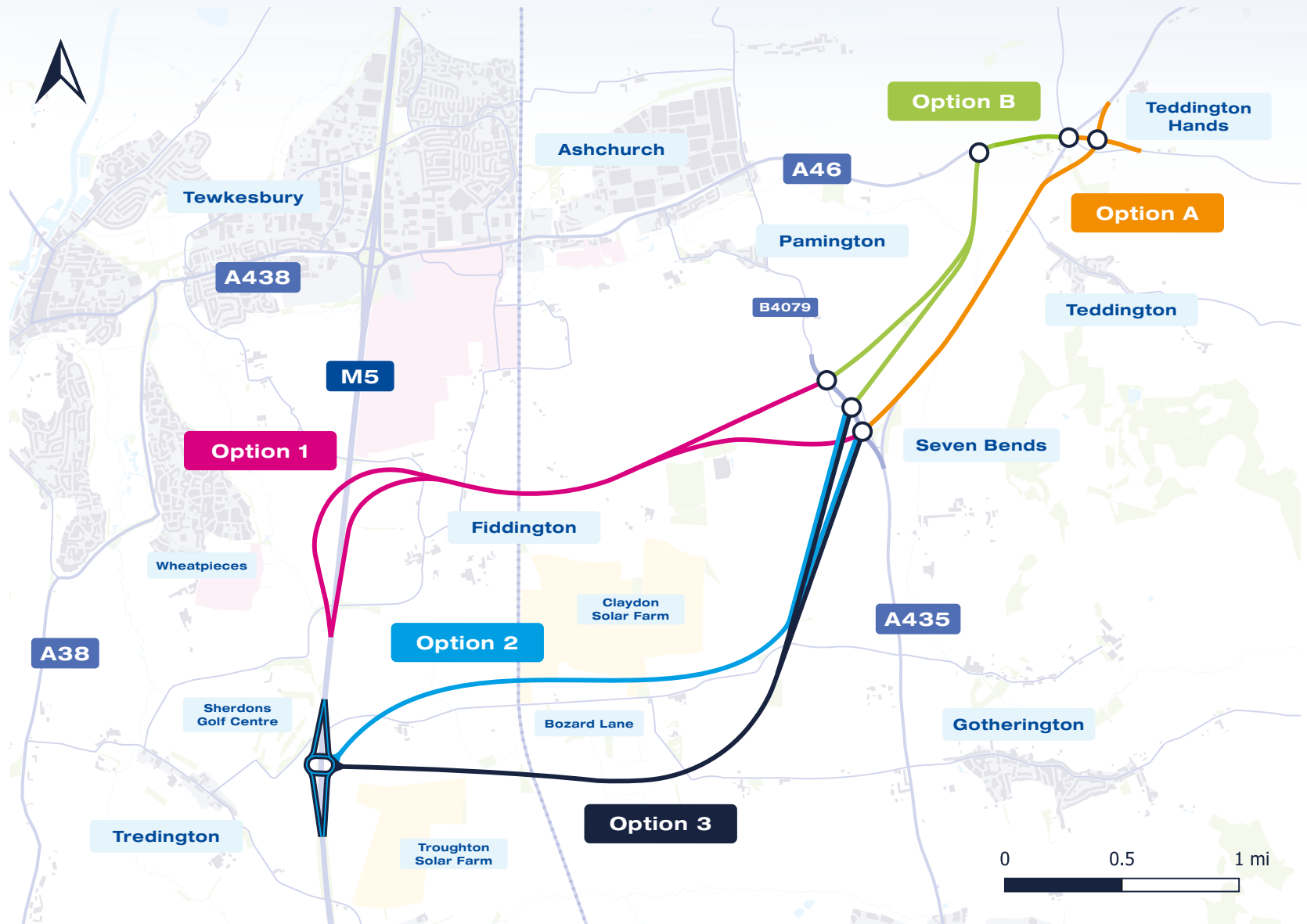
- › Homes and businesses of the local communities along the route
- › The existing road network and the Birmingham to Bristol rail line
- › Tirlle Brook and its flood zones
- › Cotswolds National Landscape
- › Historic features, including Listed Buildings
- › Priority habitat areas
- › Solar farms
- › High-pressure gas mains

As potential route options are refined, Gloucestershire County Council will continue to assess these impacts.

“More than half of the traffic currently using the existing A46 through Ashchurch during peak periods is longer distance through-traffic. Our proposals would provide an alternative more suitable route for these vehicles, especially heavy goods traffic. This would benefit local residents and businesses by reducing traffic volume, noise and pollution on the existing A46 through Ashchurch. The scheme will also support sustainable travel options, with the needs of walkers, cyclists and horse riders considered in the overall design, and provide essential connectivity for the proposed garden communities, boosting sustainable growth and housing supply.”

**Councillor David Gray,
Cabinet Member for
Environment and Planning**

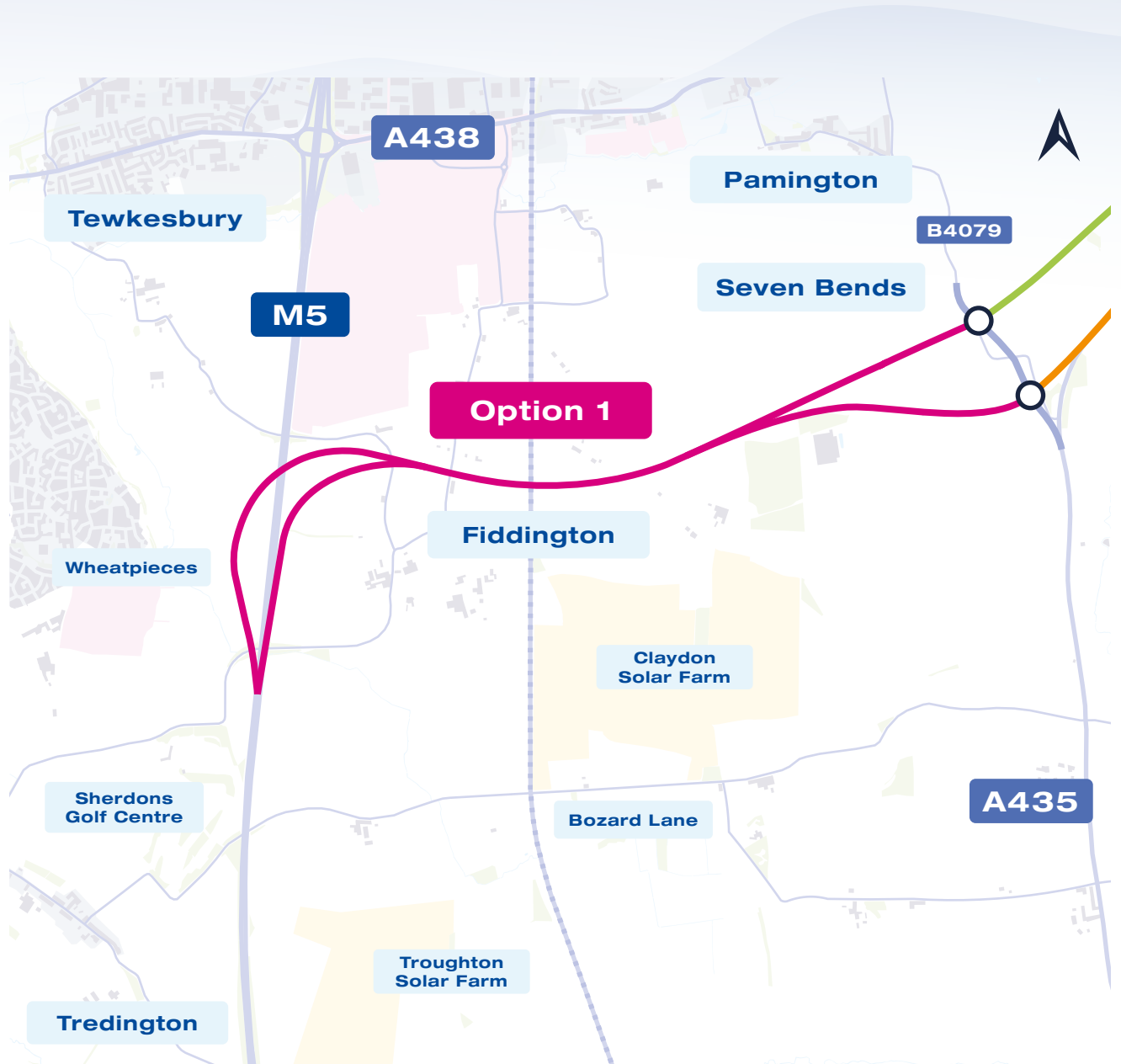
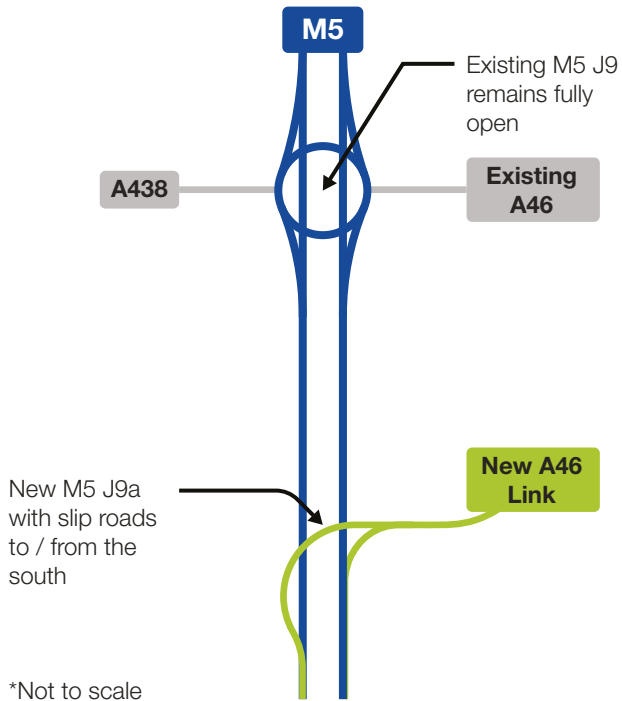
Each option presented is at an early stage of development and will be developed further taking into account stakeholder feedback and further technical work.



Option 1 - 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.

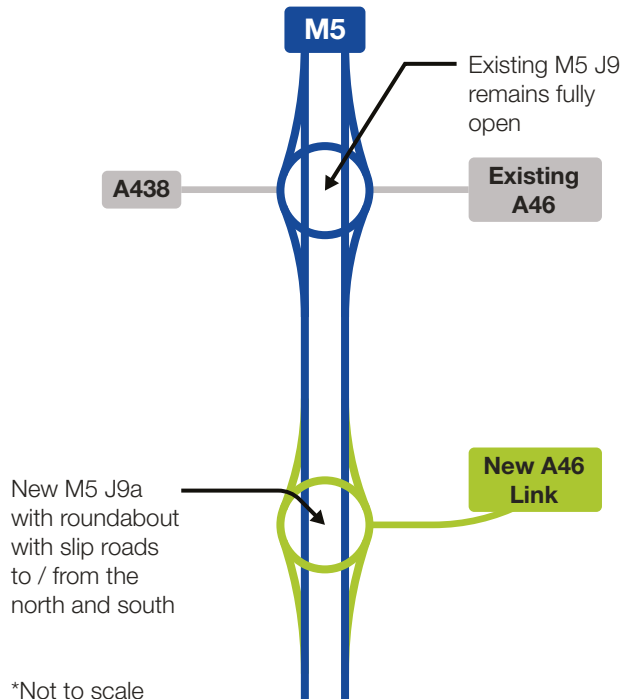
Additional junction that allows travel to and from the south only



Option 2 - Western section (M5 to B4079 / Seven Bends)

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.

Additional full movements junction with roundabout



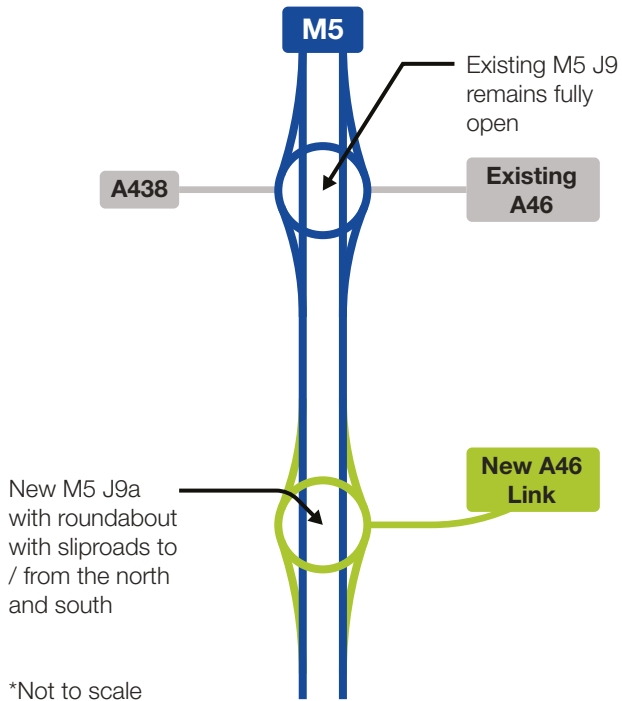
*Not to scale



Option 3 - Western section (M5 to B4079 / Seven Bends)

Option 3 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 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.

Additional full movements junction with roundabout



*Not to scale



Western section options comparison

The table below presents the pros and cons for Options 1, 2 and 3 that have been identified through the technical assessments completed to date.

Further information regarding the options is available in the following documents:

- › Summary of shortlisted options
- › Analysis of shortlisted options
- › Detailed plans

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Meets objectives in relation to safety, journey time savings and sustainable travel › Avoids impact on properties along Bozard Lane and Claydon Solar Farm › Lower forecasted cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Meets all objectives › Maximises potential traffic relief to existing A46 › Supports scope of future Garden Communities development › Avoids impact on properties in Fiddington area › Fewer crossings of high-pressure gas mains than Option 1 (same as Option 3) › Better Value for Money than Option 1 (similar to Option 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Meets all objectives › Maximises potential traffic relief to existing A46 › Supports scope of future Garden Communities development › Avoids impact on properties in Fiddington area › Avoids impact on Claydon Solar Farm › Fewer crossings of high-pressure gas mains than Option 1 (same as Option 2) › Better Value for Money than Option 1 (similar to Option 2)
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Provides less traffic relief to existing A46 than other options › Unlikely to support the level of traffic growth as part of future Garden Communities development as well as other options. › Impacts residential, farming and equestrian properties north of Fiddington, and diversion of Fiddington to Tredington Road would be required › More crossings of high-pressure gas pipelines than other options › Poorer Value for Money than other options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Land take required along southern boundary of Claydon Solar Farm › May impact on residential and farming properties along Bozard Lane and diversion of Bozard Lane could be required › Higher forecasted cost than Option 1 (slightly lower than Option 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Diversion of Bozard Lane required and may impact on residential and farming properties along Gotherington Fields Lane › Longest route overall with more land take than other options › Higher forecasted cost than Options 1 and 2

Option A - 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 - Eastern section (B4079 / Seven Bends junction to Teddington Hands roundabout)

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 (away from the existing road) to the west of the A435. It would cross the Tirlle 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.



Eastern section options comparison

The table below indicates the various pros and cons for Options A and B that have been identified through the technical assessments completed to date.

Further information regarding the options is available in the following documents:

- › Summary of shortlisted options
- › Analysis of shortlisted options
- › Detailed plans

	Option A	Option B
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Meets all objectives › Safety improvements provided to A435 junctions including business accesses at Teddington Hands › Avoids need for a larger section of new road and crossing the Tirlle Brook flood zone west of the A435 › Lower forecasted cost than Option B (but similar Value for Money) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Meets all objectives › Avoids impact to properties, hedgerows and trees along the A435 › No impact on businesses accesses at Teddington Hands
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Impact on hedgerows and trees along the A435 › Visual impacts along the Cotswold National Landscape boundary (but less than Option B) › Properties along the A435 would experience greater traffic noise than Option B › Changes to businesses accesses at Teddington Hands › Crossings of high-pressure gas mains to the south, east and northeast of Teddington Hands (same number in total as Option B) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Visual impacts along the Cotswold National Landscape boundary (more than Option A) › Longer length of new road required, including crossing the Tirlle Brook flood zone west of the A435 (design features would ensure no adverse flooding impacts) › No safety improvements to A435 junctions, including businesses accesses at Teddington Hands › Crossings of high-pressure gas mains to the southwest and west of Teddington Hands (same number in total as Option A) › Higher forecasted cost than Option A (but similar Value for Money)

What happens next?

Subject to Government approval of funding for the next stage, the feedback we receive during this public engagement will inform further technical work to refine the potential route options.

Further technical work is expected to include:

- › Further engagement with key stakeholders including statutory bodies, affected energy utilities and landowners
- › Refinements to the alignments and design of potential route options
- › Updating transport modelling to use the latest suite of models that have been developed for the area
- › Updating scheme appraisals to take account of consented planning applications, the evolving plans for future development of the Ashchurch and Tewkesbury area and potential changes to Government planning guidance and policies

- › Further development of environmental assessments
- › Further sifting of potential route options based on feedback received during the public engagement and subsequent technical analysis.
- › Co-ordination with the preparation of plans for the Tewkesbury Garden Communities programme, as well as the Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Strategic Local Plan (SLP).

It is expected that the number of potential route options would be reduced prior to a formal public consultation regarding the selection of a preferred option.



Find out more & have your say

To find out more and have the opportunity to share your feedback during our public engagement, please go to www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/J9.

All of the documentation for our public engagement exercise is available online. However if you require a paper copy or an accessible format of any of our engagement documents or have a general query about the scheme, you can contact us using any of the following details:



www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/J9



M5Junction9@atkinsrealis.com



01454 667490

(Please leave a voicemail)



**M5 J9 and A46 (Ashchurch)
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