

October 2019 Update (Newsletter 6)

Expert Report

The independent report we commissioned Gerald Kells to produce is now complete.

You should have separately received a Summary we have produced to highlight the key points from the report with a link to the full report on our website.

We will now need to identify the key people/organisations to engage with and lobby e.g. Laurence Robertson MP, Cotswold Conservation Board, etc. This may involve providing them the entire report, just extracts from it and a covering summary from TAAG, or arranging to meet-up with an appropriate representative.

Environmental Impact Project

One of the key recommendations from the report is to seek further expert help to clarify the environmental and landscape impacts. To this end, we intend to start a project to look into this. Anyone with an interest, or better still a passion, for this subject who would like to join the project, please contact Gin Kirkham on 07825 216364 or on our website via the contacts tab.

Western Gateway (WG)

WG have recently submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) their proposed scheme for M5 J9/A46 (a link to their submission is on our website). Their scheme is supported by Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) as they see it supporting the Ashchurch Concept Masterplan.

The scheme has indicative costs of £170-£180m to include a new junction on M5 south of J9, 5km of dual-carriageway from M5 to Teddington Hands roundabout, a new bridge over the railway, a viaduct to carry the road over flood plains and a new roundabout arrangement at Teddington Hands.

GCC are now working on building the business case for this scheme which should be published this December.

They anticipate construction starting 2023/24 (**subject to getting funding**).

The routes shown in their submission are once again the 1993 brown and grey routes (see Figure 12 in Gerald Kells' report). However, Councillor Vernon Smith has assured us that these are merely place-holders used to get the funding for the design phase, at which time *all* potential routes will be considered.

We have established contact with the GCC representatives for WG to enable us to ask questions and clarify issues.

Midlands Connect

MC have also recently submitted their priorities to DfT for Major Route Network (MRN) and Large Local Major (LLM) schemes. Their submission does not include the A46. However, Stage 2 of their A46 corridor study is expected later this year and we are told they are supportive of Western Gateway being the lead organisation to pursue funding.

Ashchurch Concept Masterplan

Paul attended a meeting with the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and TBC. The purpose of the meeting was to update CPRE on the Masterplan.

An official launch is expected this Autumn and there is now a dedicated website <https://www.tewkesburygardentown.co.uk/home>

The next iteration of the Masterplan is expected to be completed by the end of Q1 2020. TBC have indicated there will be public consultation during this period and we urge village residents to engage with this process, as will TAAG, to ask questions and provide challenge to assumptions being made.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

We have now made contact with the Cotswold Conservation Board (CCB) who are responsible for managing the Cotswold AONB) - John Mills is their Planning & Landscape Officer.

He wasn't aware of Midlands Connect or Western Gateway, so we have updated him on their latest work and offered our help with any background material and progress updates.

In his communication with us, he has confirmed that legislation applies outside of the boundary of the AONB if the AONB is "affected" by developments. This is a useful insight as the Cotswold AONB boundary, runs through both of our villages.

We are now trying to find examples of this being used successfully to influence road building decisions.

A46 Renewable Energy Innovation Scheme

You will have no doubt seen the letter recently distributed by our Parish Council Clerk from Kier/Highways England about overnight road closures of the A46 just north of the Teddington Hands roundabout, starting on 21st October. This letter has generated much speculation and suspicion, not surprisingly when the information in the letter is far from clear. TAAG contacted HE to try to obtain more details and I'm pleased to say, we received a response from them which does provide some clarification and a map of the works. You can see the original letter and their response on our website taagroup.co.uk in the reports section.

Tewkesbury Borough Plan Consultation

We have been made aware that the local Plan is now available for public consultation until 18th November 2019. The plan itself is available on our website on the Newsletters and Reports page. Details of the consultation process and how to make comments, can be found on their website <https://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/pre-submission-tewkesbury-borough-plan>. This is largely housing related but has some reference to transport as well as conservation areas which may be relevant to us. We haven't yet had time to fully digest the plan but we do intend to make a response. We would encourage all residents to read the plan as well and provide feedback.

New Members

TAAG has now been in existence for 18 months and over that time, have lost 3 of our members which means we are now down to only 5 people. So if anyone is interested in joining us, please contact any member of TAAG or use the comments section on the contacts page of the website.

And Finally - With the continuing government distractions, there is much uncertainty over when we will receive any news on RIS2 funding decisions. Work on the Ashchurch Masterplan may be the most tangible activity that we see between now and early 2020. As ever, we will continue to monitor the situation and communicate with key organisations to ensure they are aware of our concerns.