

SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Response To M5 Junction 10 Consultation (Dec 21 – Feb 22)

Summary

Swindon Parish Council in principle support the improvement to the M5 Junction 10 and Tewkesbury and associated roads as a key deliverable to the significant expansion of residential and commercial development in this area. We raise the below points that must be considered.

We would like to invite Gloucestershire Highways and the ATKINS team to meet with the Parish Council at the soonest opportunity so we can explore the application in greater detail to ensure our most accurate response.

1. Transport Modelling Evidence

Given the lack of traffic modelling and assessment information provided in the consultation, it has been impossible for us to assess whether the proposed scheme (specifically the junctions) have sufficient capacity to support the longer-term growth in NW Cheltenham. We are concerned the design only considers development set out in the current JCS period that ends in 2031 (less than 9 years' time). Beyond this period, NW Cheltenham is likely to see continued development, both in terms of housing and commercial properties, specifically the safeguarded area.

We would like to understand what consideration has been given to this, and what level of development the scheme could support beyond that immediately proposed within the JCS, while still providing acceptable journey reliability and times. It is essential the scheme considers this, as the development proposed in the JCS will make future upgrades to junctions highly undesirable due to the development of currently available land adjacent to the A4019 corridor.

2. A4019 Towards Knightsbridge

We welcome that the widening of the A4019 through to the Gallagher Retail Park is now included within the scheme. However, we are concerned the scheme does not include the junction between the A4019 and the road north to Stoke Orchard, located adjacent to the Gloucester Old Spot, noting this junction is within the scheme's Red Line boundary. This junction needs to be enhanced as the current wait time to onto the A4019 from the direction of Stoke Orchard can exceed several minutes. Additionally, the dedicated right turn lane should be extended, as this is often full leading to congestion for traffic travelling West on the A4019. This should be considered considering the approved housing development at Coombe Hill, and further south on the A38, at Twigworth.

3. Withybridge Lane

Regarding Withybridge Lane, we would support closing to through traffic at the northern end of Withybridge Lane, but still providing access for cyclist and pedestrians. We would also suggest that the ability to open Withybridge Lane to through traffic temporarily should be retained, to provide a sensible alternative route, in the event the link road is unavailable (e.g., emergencies, or essential roadworks).

4. Link Road Long Term Future

With reference to the link road, we propose that a suitable corridor is maintained to upgrade the link road to West Cheltenham to dual carriageway in the future at minimal cost. This area of Cheltenham is likely to see significant development post 2031.

5. A4019 Pedestrian crossing

There should be provision for pedestrians to safely cross A4019 at the existing Withybridge Lane, noting that it's an important connection between the bridal way north of the A4019 to Elmstone Hardwick and the pathways along the River Chelt, that are accessed via Withybridge Lane.

6. Gallagher Retail Park West End Junction

The removal of right turns from A4019 into the side roads in the 2031 scenario is highly undesirable. This is the main access route from the M5 for 1000 approx. existing homes, located in NW Cheltenham (see Figure 1). This does not include the proposed development of ~0.2km west of the blue boundary below in Figure 1.



Figure 1 – location affected by removal of right turn off A4019 onto the B4634.

If the right hand turning is removed, the nearest access from the M5 to these houses would be:

- Via the junction between the A4019 and Hayden Road (see Figure 2, red line). This route would add 0.8km to a typical journey from the M5 to this area. The route includes three minor junctions in addition to the junction with the A4019, a 3-way mini roundabout, a 4-way mini round about, and a T junction as well as disabled parking on the road. The route provides direct access to houses, with some properties being less than 3m from the road curb.
- The next nearest would be via the new link-road which would add on average 3.5km to a journey from the M5 to this area. This involves utilising portions of the B4019 that are bendy and narrow as it climbs over Holmesdale.

Given that (b) represents a significant increase in journey time and length compared to (a), without traffic modelling, it is reasonable to assume that most traffic would use route (a). This would result in:

- A significant increase of traffic using the junction between Hayden Road and the A4019. This would likely result in congestion on the A4019 to the new Gallagher Retail Park junction due to tailbacks, reducing its capacity and increasing journey times, while reducing journey reliability.
- A significant increase of traffic using Hayden Road. The 3-way mini roundabout, with the junction between Hayden Road and Village Road is of particular concern, noting that during peak times these experiences congestions.
- Reduction in accessibility for pedestrians crossing the road, noting that the link with Village Road is a major pedestrian route as it links the Gallagher Retail Park with Springbank. Additional Hayden Road is a popular pedestrian route for accessing central Cheltenham from NW Cheltenham (either via Tewksbury Road or parallel to the Chelt, via Princess Elizabeth Way).

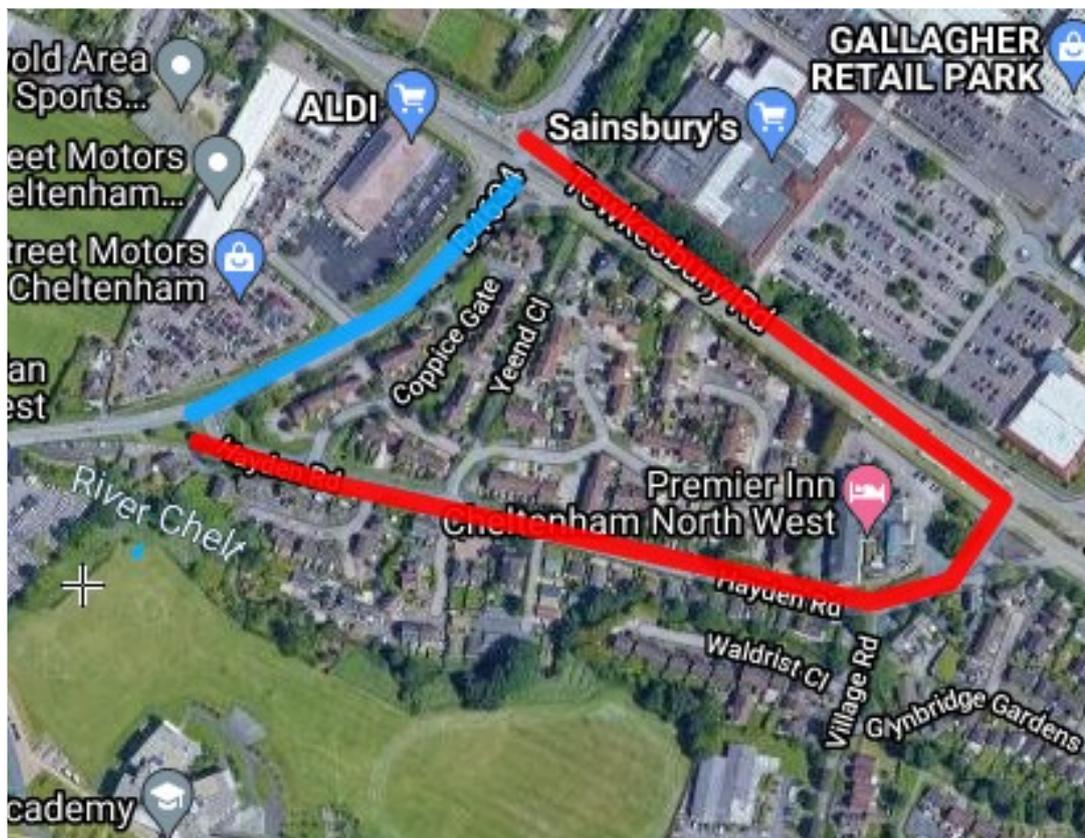


Figure 2 – shortest alternative route from the M5 to the B4634 via Hayden Road.

- A significant increase in noise, which given the nearby residential properties (that should be considered sensitive receptors) would likely be unacceptable. The PEIR 2 information provided in GCCM5J10-ATK-ENV-ZZ-RP-LN-000001 shows that these receptors have not been considered. It is also noted that the noise modelling shows no increase in noise levels along Hayden road, suggesting the topic has not been considered properly.
- A significant decrease in air quality, which given the nearby residential properties (that should be considered sensitive receptors) would likely be unacceptable. The PEIR 2 information provided in GCCM5J10-ATK-EAQ-ZZ-RP-LA-000003, pg. 27 demonstrates this impact has not been considered as part of the scheme.

As such, access onto the B4364 from the east bound A4019 must be maintained and an alternative junction design must be proposed. There is significant land immediately to the

north of the current junction that would enable for a larger, high-capacity junction to be developed (see Figure 3). It is noted that there is limited available space between the B4634 and A4019 to enable a revised alignment to service a new high-capacity junction. It may be necessary to utilise existing developed land, or for the scheme to incorporate grade separation.



Figure 3 – available land for development of a high-capacity junction.

7. Extension of the Active Travel Corridor

The active travel corridor currently terminates into the junction at the North end of Gallagher retail park. To link up with existing (blue) and planned cycleways (red) it needs to continue down Tewkesbury Road to link up with the junction with Manor Road / Hayden Road (green) ().

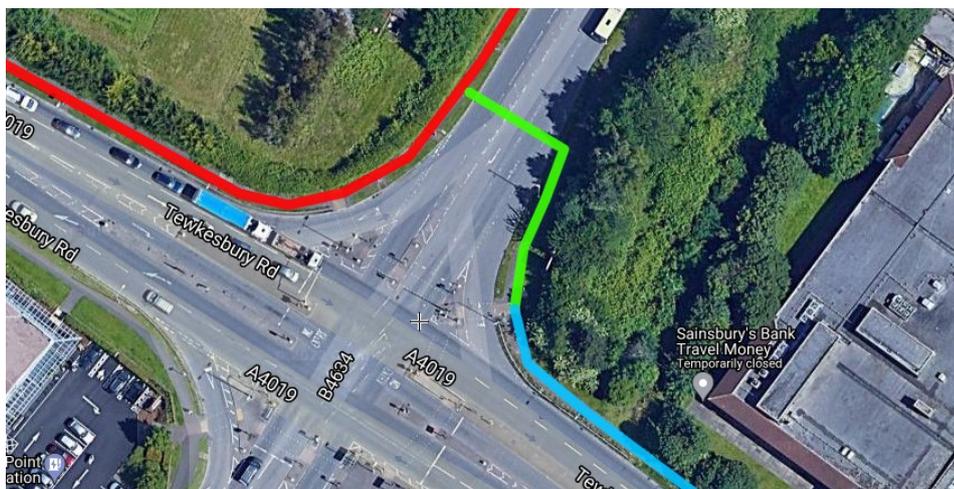


Figure 4 - Priority access requirements for non-vehicular traffic (proposed in red, suggested connection in green).

8. Crossing for Pedestrians and Cyclists

The proposals do not show sufficient provision for safe crossing of pedestrians and cyclists at the North End of Gallagher retail park. There must be appropriate provision of crossings close to the junction / crossing / other active modes going straight on the A4019, in line with recent changes to the Highway Code.

9. Park and Ride scheme

We note that our previous comments on the park and ride being dropped from this scheme have not been addressed. As detailed in the Joint Core Strategy and the Cheltenham plan, a Park and ride facility is expected to deliver sustainable transport from close to the M5 junction into Cheltenham town centre and other key areas. It is not the intention that the Park and Ride would provide direct benefit to the Elms Park development at NW Cheltenham.

This proposed scheme for M5 and Tewkesbury Road should clearly show the link with the expected Park and Ride facility which should be positioned on the North side of the A4019 as part of the North West Cheltenham strategic area for development. It is essential that detailed scheme for the M5 junction show the connections onto the park and ride and demonstrate that the road network can support such a facility.