

A5 Towcester FAQs

November 2022

1. About our proposals

What are your proposals to improve Towcester?

We have a number of proposals, which include, a weight restriction and reduced speed limits through the town. You can find more detailed information in our brochure our website:

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/east-midlands/towcester-improvements/>

Following the consultation, we're reviewing the feedback received to identify a preferred package of measures to progress forward into the preliminary design phase.

Where can I see maps and drawings of your proposals?

You can find this on our website: <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/east-midlands/towcester-improvements/>

2. Traffic through Towcester and the new link road

The traffic is already slow through the town because of the congestion – how will reducing the speed limit help?

Congestion is not present at all times of the day and when vehicles move through at higher speeds, they have a greater impact on the surroundings due to the noise and vibration. By lowering the speed limit we're aiming to make the town centre a much more pleasant environment for those who live and work alongside it and create a space where walking and cycling is much safer and more attractive.

The project is also aiming to re-route through traffic to the new link road and the A43 via a combination of measures such as the 7.5t weight restriction. This will reduce the congestion levels in the town that could otherwise lead to increases in vehicle speeds, which is contrary to the aims of the project.

We've asked for a weight restriction on the A5 before and it was refused. What's changed?

The new link road gives us a suitable alternative route for heavy vehicles. Previously there was no suitable alternative route.

Surely the M1 was a suitable alternative route for vehicles?

The length of the diversion to the M1 made it unsuitable as a permanent alternative route.

How do you propose to make sure that heavy goods vehicles use the new link road? Can you reduce the weight limit to exclude all vans from coming through Towcester as well?

We're proposing a 7.5t environmental weight restriction from the Towcester side of the new link road roundabout to Old Tiffield Road. This means that vehicles exceeding this weight will not be allowed to drive through the limit unless they're delivering in the town. This is a

mandatory restriction and will be in effect 24 hours a day. The lowest weight we're permitted to use is 7.5t, which means we're not able to exclude the smaller vans such as supermarket delivery vans and box type vans. However, the weight restriction will remove the large articulated lorries.

We don't have any powers to enforce traffic regulations however, we'll engage with West Northamptonshire Council and the Police to explore options for enforcement of the proposed weight limit.

Will the construction of the new link road be adequate to accommodate these additional heavy goods vehicles?

The link road is a single carriageway (one lane in each direction) with a 40mph speed limit. The construction of the road will be adequate to take the additional heavy goods vehicles. We're currently in discussions with the developer, Persimmon Homes, to ensure that the design of the roundabouts on the link road will be safe and suitable for all vehicles to use them.

Are there any proposals to restrict deliveries in the town centre to certain times of the day?

There are no legal routes we can pursue to forcibly restrict delivery times except at places vehicles need to stop on a public highway to load and unload. Where possible we'll consider time restrictions on loading and unloading along the A5.

We'll also engage with local businesses and West Northamptonshire Council about other options to manage delivery times.

3. Car parks

What about parking? You're proposing to remove spaces from outside the Town Hall. These spaces are well used and obviously needed.

Removing the car parking is one of our options, however the proposals keep the disabled spaces.

West Northamptonshire Council operate several other car parks in Towcester, both long and short stay spaces that are very close to the shops. None of our proposals change these car parks however all our options are proposing additional signing to them from the A5. We'll consider all of the feedback received during the consultation before deciding which option to take forward.

Will the removal of the parking spaces in the town square have an adverse effect on business through a loss of passing trade?

There will still be several car parks within the town centre which we're proposing to provide improved signing for on the A5. Removal of the car park outside the Town Hall supports our vision to enhance the experience of walking and cycling around the town make it a more attractive and popular place to visit.

4. Pedestrian and cycle facilities

What will you be doing to make the A5 safer for pedestrians?

We have options to improve the facilities for pedestrians and cyclists between the new link road, through the town centre and to the Old Tiffield Road junction to the north of town. We're looking to widen the pavements and enhance or implement new crossings points to make it safer to walk into town and for children to walk to and from school. The weight and speed restrictions should divert lorries to use the new link road which will make the centre of town a calmer, safer and more pleasant place to be.

Will Towcester ever be safe enough for cyclists?

Our proposed measures which include reducing speed limits, restriction of heavy goods vehicles and changes to the road environment, will create a safe place for cyclists to ride through the centre of the town.

On either side of the town centre, where there's more width, we're proposing to create shared use walking and cycling facilities to enable cyclists to ride safely. These would be in accordance with the necessary design standards to ensure that sufficient space is given to both user types.

We're also proposing additional crossing points along the A5 to improve connectivity to destinations and other walking and cycling routes.

Are there any proposals to improve the pedestrian facilities and footway widths in the narrow section of the A5 adjacent to the Town Hall?

We're unable to widen this narrow section due to the location of the buildings however, we'll add more crossing points and reduce traffic speeds through here to improve safety for pedestrians at this location.

Will the pedestrian/cycle facilities be combined or separate? I don't want to share the footway with cyclists.

We'll look to provide separate facilities where we can, but this depends on the space that is available. If we need to provide shared facilities, these would be in accordance with the necessary design standards to ensure that sufficient space is given to both user types.

5. Other developments

The A43 is already suffering from congestion at peak times, particularly at the roundabouts. With the increase in traffic from the link road and proposed new developments / distribution depots, are there any improvements planned to alleviate these problems?

While we recognise the challenge of the congestion along the A43 this is not within the scope of the A5 Towcester improvement scheme. We're only considering changes to the A43, where we need to take account of the revised traffic routing that will arise from the A5 changes.

The capacity and congestion issues on the A43 are identified in our initial Route Strategies which is one of the key components of our research informing the long-term planning of the Strategic Road Network. Publication of these documents is expected in the coming months.

Upon publication of our initial route strategies, there will be further opportunity to engage via an online feedback form where you can share your views. This round of engagement will then inform the final route strategy reports which will be published alongside the Strategic Business Plan and Delivery Plan by the end of this Roads Investment Strategy period in 2025

6. Next steps

How can I see the results of the questionnaire?

The consultation closed on 11 September 2022, we're currently reviewing all the feedback and producing a consultation report which will summarise the consultation events and feedback received.

The report will be published by the end of 2022 on the scheme website, individuals can sign up for updates to be notified whenever the page is changed or added to.

(<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/east-midlands/towcester-improvements/>)

What will happen next?

Once the preferred solution has been identified, we'll further develop the chosen option to create a business case for funding around Autumn 2023. The provisional target date for the start of construction is late 2024 to early 2025.

How do we contact you if we have further questions?

For specific enquiries about the A5 improvements you can:

Email us at a5towcester@jacobs.com

Write to us at

*FREEPOST RTUK – RBL Y – XUBT
A5 Towcester Improvement
5 First Street, Manchester
M15 4GU*

For general enquiries about National Highways and our roads you can:

- Email us at info@nationalhighways.co.uk
- Call us on 0300 123 5000