

A5 Towcester High Street—Drainage and Carriageway Reconstruction

Project Profile

Client: Highways England Area 7
East Midlands Asset Delivery

Designer: Kier

Value: £1.5m

Overall Scheme Value: £4.0m



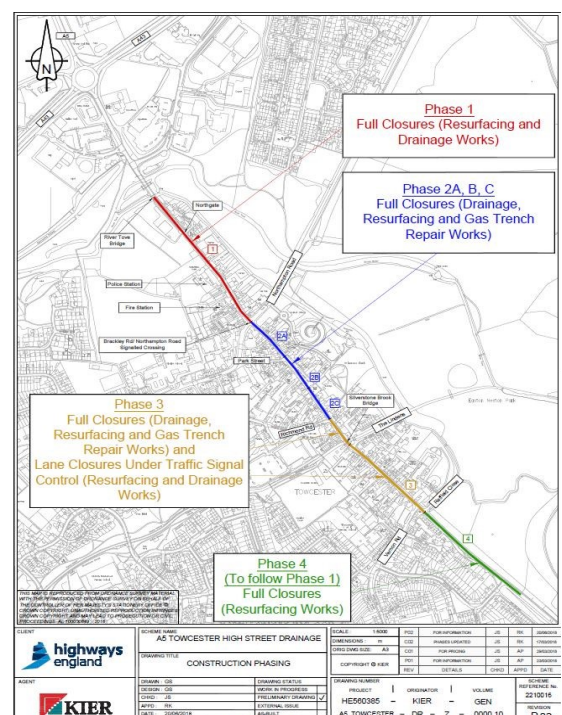
This was a high profile scheme involving essential maintenance work to 1.3km of the A5 Watling Street in Towcester, Northants to address various issues including poor highway drainage, extensive surface water ponding that was causing splash damage to properties and posing a significant risk to pedestrians, cracking and rutting of poor quality reinstatement to a 430 m long gas main trench installed in 2009 together with replacement of kerbs and footpaths damaged by vehicle encroachment.

The A5 in Towcester presented a very different environment to that normally encountered on a trunk road, it is an historic market town, the road is narrow and lined with many shops and offices, residential properties, several busy pubs and restaurants, a church, a museum, two schools, two nurseries, sheltered accommodation for the elderly, a car park and five pedestrian crossings, in addition a large number of the properties in the town are listed buildings. Controlling noise and vibration were critical considerations in planning the work and acoustic fencing was used around all noisy activities.

The scheme required fully closing the A5 to through traffic for a 4 month period with all traffic diverted around well signed diversion routes agreed with Northamptonshire County Council, the closure of this strategic route was given high profile publicity and was included on traffic news and on motorway information signs. Options to minimise disruption to local businesses and residents were discussed with Towcester Council, the preference was to work a 2 shift system and approval was obtained from Cherwell & South Northants District Council EHO to extend working hours to 7am - 12 midnight Monday to Friday with noisy activities suspended at 10pm to mitigate disturbance to residents, 7am - 5pm Saturday and 8am - 12 noon Sunday. To further alleviate disruption the work was carried out in four phases;

- **Phase 1** extended south from the bridge over the River Tove to the A5/Brackley Road/Northampton Road junction, with residential property, several businesses, a funeral home, police and fire stations.
- **Phase 2** extended south from the A5/Brackley Road/Northampton Road junction to the A5/Richmond Road junction with the majority of shops, offices, pubs and restaurants in Towcester, the parish church and museum, residences above shops and business properties.
- **Phase 3** extended south from the A5/Richmond Road junction to the A5/Reffield Close junction, with residential property, businesses, two nurseries, a dental surgery, several restaurants, a laundry, bathroom & kitchen showrooms, sheltered accommodation and allotments.
- **Phase 4** extended south from the A5/Reffield Close junction to 66m south of the A5/Marlow Road junction and was primarily residential.

Towcester is an ancient pre-Roman settlement and archaeologists kept a watching brief during all excavation work below 1m depth and recorded a layer of oyster shells, drainage channels and Romano/British pottery (including Samian ware). All finds were photographed and catalogued before being offered to the town council.



A5 Towcester High Street—Drainage and Carriageway Reconstruction (Cont'd)

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Main elements of work included;

- Saw cut and lift-out the sections of existing reinforced concrete road affected by poorly reinstated gas trench, gully and sewer installation (180m³), thus avoiding excessive noise and vibration from breaking out
- Replace with new reinforced concrete slab with dowelled connections to the existing concrete road slab and expansion/contraction joints
- Plane-off existing carriageway and asphalt resurfacing—2,400m²
- Jetting/CCTV survey of all combined & surface water sewers (2,212m)
- 30 new road gullies and 21 nr surface water drainage connections
- Repair 155m of damaged pipes using re-lining and dig-down repairs
- Replace 15 nr covers, gratings & frames to access chambers and gullies
- Relay existing kerbs, replace damaged kerbs and resurface footpaths
- High friction surfacing at pedestrian crossings and junctions, road markings, installation of road studs and traffic loops
- Other CWF partners involved in the scheme were Kier (designer), HW Martin (traffic management), Tarmac (surfacing), Wilson & Scott Ltd (lining), McCann (traffic sensor loops) and Volker Laser (waterproofing).



The opportunity afforded by the lengthy A5 closure was offered to other stakeholders and was used by Anglian Water (water main diversion and CCTV surveys of existing combined drainage system), Triio Gas (laying a new gas main) and Tove Benefice office (erection of scaffolding to the gable end of Chantry House to carry out long standing repairs to the building).

The disruptive nature of the scheme required cooperation from the community and a comprehensive communications strategy (COMMS Plan) was developed. The concerns of key stakeholders; Local Councils, transport providers, hauliers, emergency services, businesses and residents were dealt with by having a full-time Public Liaison Officer (PLO) as part of the site team, who was involved 4 months before the start date, carrying out face to face meetings with affected businesses, a public information event, drop-in sessions, a notice board in Market Square, letter drops to over 4,000 addresses, newsletters (with progress updates), updating the Council web site and answering queries by dedicated phone number and e-mail address. The PLO arranged for services such as GP home visits, district nurses, physiotherapists and vital medical supplies to continue to be made to vulnerable residents, also ensuring that house moves, deliveries, funerals, weddings and other occasions could go ahead with minimum disturbance. We were also able to close a length of Brackley Road and divert traffic on Remembrance Sunday. As a gesture of goodwill for the disruption caused to the children's nurseries on the high street we resurfaced a car park, provided new lining to parking bays, supplied new play equipment and cleaned and repainted the internal walls of an open plan play area.

The excellent work carried out by the PLO was recognised by the EMAD community receiving both a 'People' Award and 'Customer' Award (as part of the COMMS team). He also received many compliments from the public - 'Congratulations on completing this enormously challenging task and thank you for keeping us so well informed throughout the process'.

The scheme was successfully completed on programme, despite additional work and other changes, which was undoubtedly due to collaborative working between all parties.