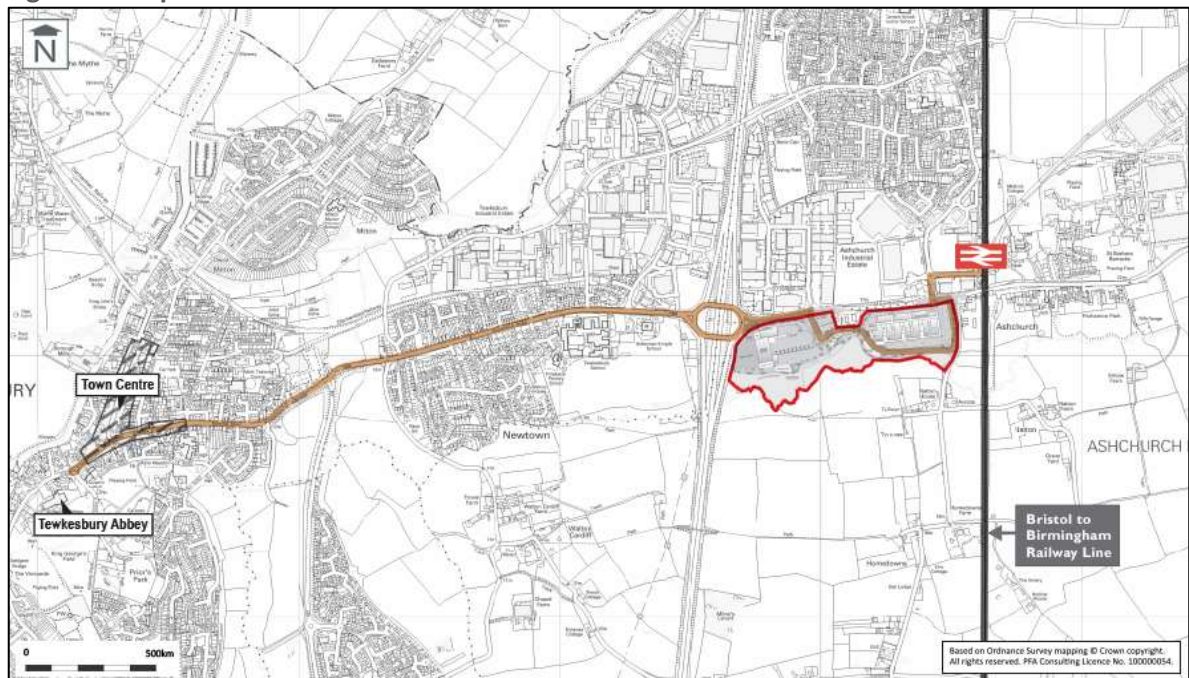


## PROPOSED GARDEN CENTRE AND RETAIL OUTLET CENTRE AT ASHCHURCH, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

### PROPOSED SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE

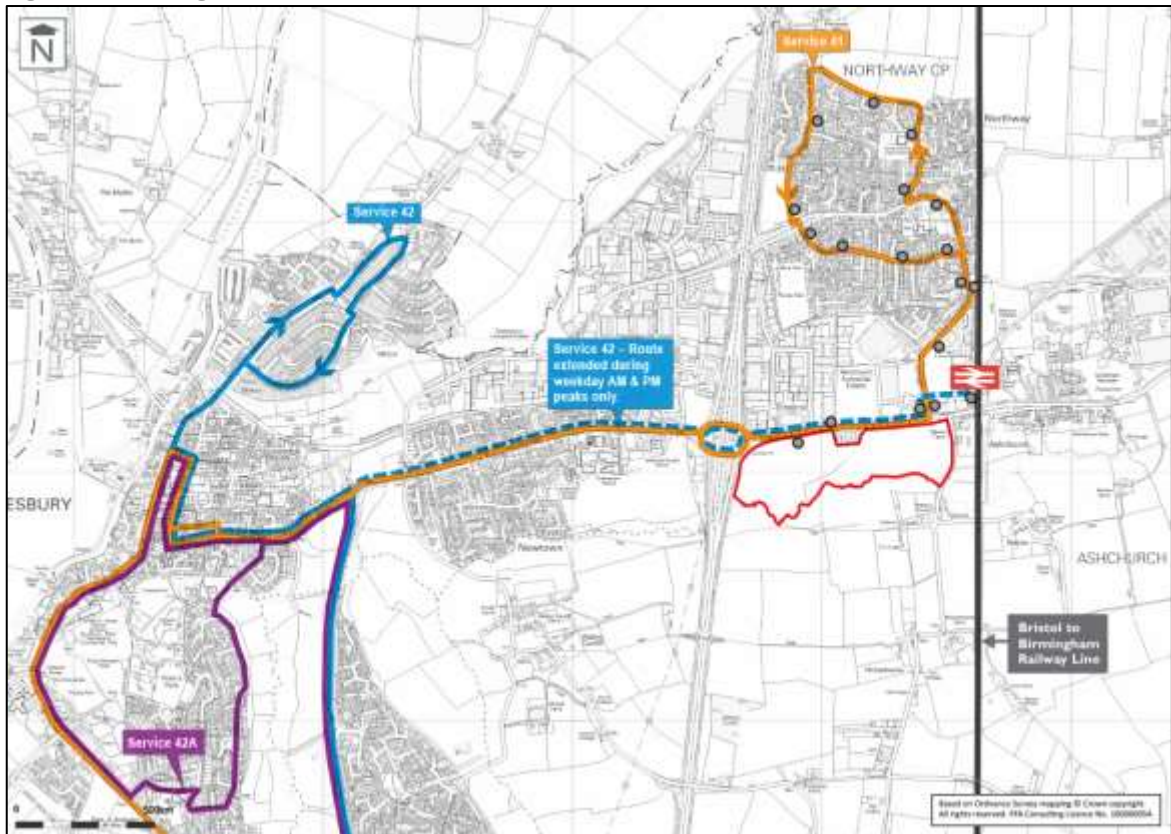
- 1.1. The planning application for the proposed garden centre and retail outlet centre at Ashchurch highlights the potential to operate a shuttle bus service to link the development to Tewkesbury town centre. As part of the consideration of the application, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) as the local highway authority has requested further information about the proposed service. This file note seeks to provide that further information.

**Figure 1: Proposed Route of Shuttle Bus**



- 1.2. The objectives of the shuttle bus service are two-fold:
- to encourage visitors to the retail outlets to travel by rail via Ashchurch station; and
  - to encourage 'linked-trips' for visitors to travel between the retail outlets and Tewkesbury town centre.
- 1.3. GCC recognise the benefits that a shuttle bus service would have in increasing the number of 'linked trips' to Tewkesbury town centre, they are however concerned about whether such a service would have an impact on the viability of existing local bus services.
- 1.4. The shuttle bus service would therefore need to integrate and complement those bus services which route between Northway and Tewkesbury. **Figure 2** shows the routes of bus services 41 and 42/42A with the frequency of service for different days shown in **Table 1**.

**Figure 2: Existing Bus Service Routes**



- 1.5. The extension of bus service 42 along the A438 and A46(T) to Ashchurch station occurs only during the weekday AM and PM peak periods. No services currently operate during weekends or bank holidays.

**Table 1: Frequency of Bus Services**

Service	Weekday Frequency	Saturday Frequency	Sunday Frequency	Bank Holidays
41 (Cheltenham – Tewkesbury – Northway)	Every 20 minutes	Every 20 minutes	Every 60 minutes	Every 60 minutes
41 (Northway – Tewkesbury – Cheltenham)	Every 20 minutes	Every 20 minutes	Every 60 minutes	Every 60 minutes
42/42A (Cheltenham – Tewkesbury)	Every 30 minutes	Every 30 minutes	Every 60 minutes	Every 60 minutes
42/42A (Tewkesbury – Cheltenham)	Every 30 minutes	Every 30 minutes	Every 60 minutes	Every 60 minutes

Note: Information taken from Stagecoach website September 2014.

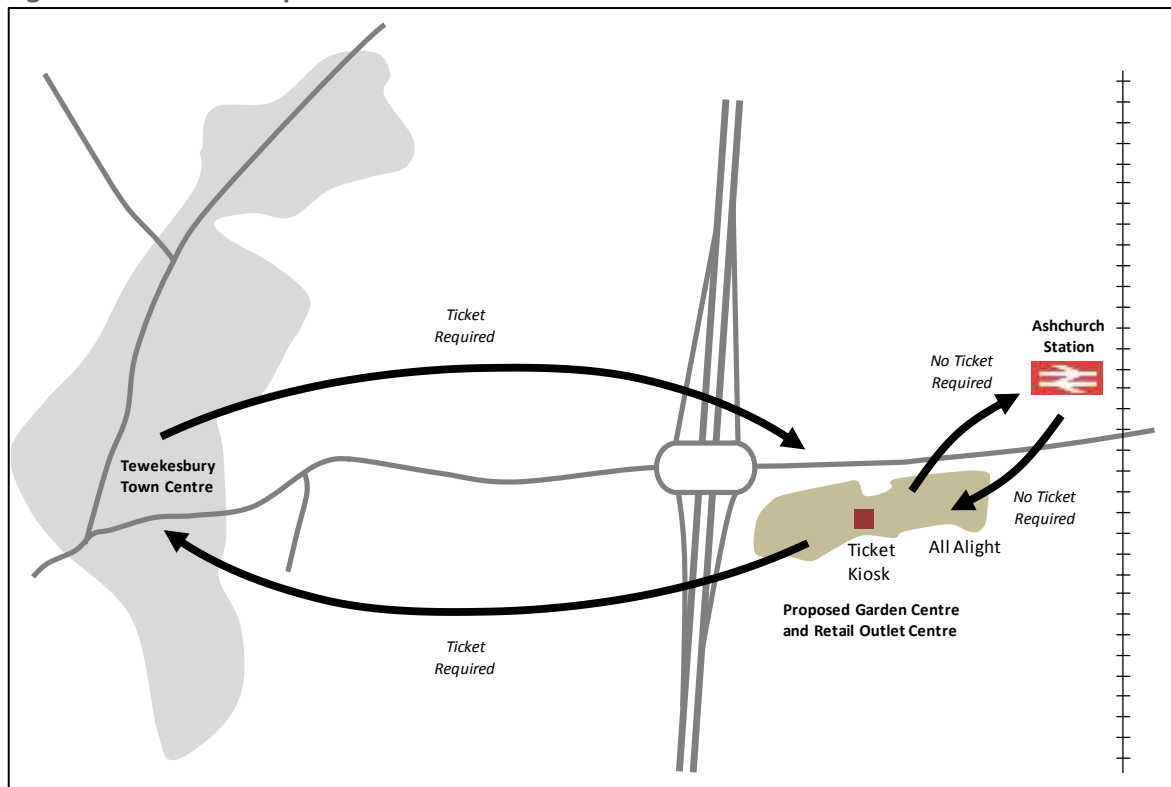
- 1.6. At weekends and on bank holidays the only bus service which could potentially be affected by the provision of a shuttle bus is service 41 which operates an hourly service on these days.

**Operation of Shuttle Bus**

- 1.7. The shuttle bus would be funded by RHL and would operate during the weekends and bank holidays when the number of visitors to the retail outlets would be at their highest. The shuttle bus would operate throughout the day commencing prior to the retail outlets opening times and ending after the retail outlets closing times on each day. It is envisaged that the type of bus would be a low emission midi size ‘optare’ type bus with a carrying capacity of 25-30 seats. To help with the marketing of the garden centre and retail outlet centre the shuttle bus would be suitably branded to make it easily recognisable.

- 1.8. The shuttle bus would be co-ordinated with rail services arriving at Ashchurch station to reduce waiting times and encourage trips by rail. The bus service would only have three stops, Ashchurch station, the retail outlets and Tewkesbury town centre. This would reduce journey times to/from Tewkesbury town centre, and reduce the impact on local bus services given the limited locations at which the shuttle bus can be accessed. The journey time for a 'round-trip' would be approximately 20 minutes thereby providing a service frequency of three 'round-trips' per hour throughout the day.
- 1.9. On arrival at Ashchurch station the shuttle bus would be free with no ticket required for travel to the retail outlets at which point all passengers would be required to alight from the bus. For travel from the retail outlets into Tewkesbury town centre a bus ticket would be required to be collected from a kiosk within the outlet centre (proof of purchase of goods required). The return trip from Tewkesbury town centre back to the retail outlets would also require a ticket to be produced to the driver. For those starting their journey in Tewkesbury a ticket will need to be purchased from the driver with the bus fare redeemed from the outlet centre with a proof of purchase of goods. For the journey back to Ashchurch station from the retail outlets no ticket will be required.
- 1.10. The above shuttle bus strategy is represented in **Figure 3** below:

**Figure 3: Shuttle Bus Operation**



- 1.11. As the shuttle bus is only going to operate at weekends and on bank holidays, the only people that would potentially find it to be an alternative to bus service 41 for travel to Tewkesbury town centre are residents living in Northway. The vast majority of the businesses located in the employment areas north of the A46(T) in the vicinity of the proposed retail outlets will not be operational during weekends.
- 1.12. For Northway residents to benefit from free travel into Tewkesbury town centre they would first have to walk to Ashchurch station to board the shuttle bus. They would then be required to alight from the bus at the retail outlets and obtain a bus ticket following a purchase before boarding a

bus for onward travel into Tewkesbury town centre. This is unlikely to be an attractive alternative to that of using local bus service 41 which routes through Northway providing an hourly service where the cost of travel to/from Tewkesbury town centre is £1.30 for a single and £2.30 for a return.

- 1.13. To encourage 'linked-trips' to Tewkesbury town centre during weekdays when the shuttle bus is not in operation visitors of the retail outlets will be able to use local bus services 41 & 42 for travel to/from Tewkesbury. The bus fare for these journeys will be able to be redeemed from the outlet centre with a proof of purchase of goods. Discussions with GCC and Stagecoach will be undertaken to establish the merits of routeing some of the local bus services into the garden centre and retail outlet centre.
- 1.14. The provision of a shuttle bus service operating at weekends and bank holidays at the proposed garden centre and retail outlet centre will together with the provision of subsidised travel for local bus services during weekdays encourage 'linked-trips' to Tewkesbury town centre without compromising the viability of existing local bus services operating in Ashchurch.