

Item

A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Preferred

Route consultation: key response points

To:

Councillor Nicky Massey, Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety

Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee 16 July 2019

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cambridge City Council's response to the current A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Detailed Alignment consultation, by setting out response points to inform discussion and agreement of key issues to inform a full response being agreed by the Executive Councillor in an out of cycle decision in consultation with Chair and Spokes and submitted ahead of the consultation deadline.
- 1.2 The A428 does not pass through Cambridge, however the scheme has potential transport impacts on the city. Highways England has identified the Council as a relevant local authority, and has asked it

to comment on the scheme as part of the public consultation process.

- 1.3 This report sets out key response points for discussion, to be refined following the meeting, with final sign-off by the Strategy & Economy Manager in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety, Chair and Spokes, for submission ahead of the consultation deadline. Discussion with South Cambridgeshire District Council suggests that there is potential to include Cambridge's comments within a joint response, potentially also with other partners.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to:
 - (a) To note the key response points to the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Preferred Route consultation.
 - (b) Agree the wording of a final joint response and/or any individual response published through an out of cycle decision, in consultation with Chair and Spokes.

3. Background

A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements scheme

- 3.1 The A428 between the A1 junction near St Neots and the A1198 Caxton Gibbet is single carriageway with a series of roundabouts and give-way junctions. It experiences major delays during peak periods, resulting in delays and reduced speeds. With few available diversions, incidents and accidents result in disruption over a wide area.
- 3.2 Highways England states that the A428 is an important route in an area of the country where considerable growth in housing and employment is planned. It provides a connection between the M1 and East Coast ports, and is sited within the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc which is an area of focus for government, seeking to build upon existing economic strengths.

Scheme objectives

3.3 Highways England state in the consultation material that the scheme is intended to:

- Reduce congestion and delays
- Increase road capacity
- Improve journey time reliability
- Support the growth identified in local plans
- Improve safety
- Provide alternative access to local roads
- Help the transport network to better cope with road maintenance and with incidents such as collisions, breakdowns, maintenance
- Improve the environmental impact of transport on communities along the existing A428 route
- Provide improved routes between communities for cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians
- Reconnect communities
- Improve safe and effective access for public transport users

Project timeline

3.4 The project timeline is as follows:

Date	Event
March – April 2017	Consultation on Route Options
February 2019	Preferred Route Announcement and further engagement with local community representatives and landowners
2019	Site surveys including topographical studies, traffic modelling, ecological surveys and ground investigation at key locations along the route
3 June – 28 July 2019	Current stage: Public consultation takes place on the developed route option
2019	Further develop the scheme incorporating input from all consultees
2020	Submit application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) & DCO Examination
2021/2 to 2025/6	Start of works – subject to the necessary approvals, construction is expected to proceed in 2021/22

Previous stages: Preferred Route consultation

- 3.5 While, as referred to above, the route does not pass through Cambridge itself, it is notable that in the 2017 consultation the South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Council, through whose areas the A428 goes, supported the route option which has now been selected as preferred (albeit with some minor revisions).

Current stage: detailed alignment consultation (3 June – 28 July 2019)

- 3.6 Following the announcement of a preferred route in February 2019, Highways England launched an eight-week consultation on the preferred route on 3 June 2019 and is seeking views on the detailed alignment, junction designs, enhanced routes for non-motorised vehicles and plans for environmental mitigation. The deadline for responses to the consultation is 28 July 2019.

Approach to responding to the consultation

- 3.7 Cambridge City Council's constitution sets out that the Executive Councillor can be given delegated authorisation to sign off the Council's response to consultations such as these. While the A428 improvement works themselves will not have a direct impact on Cambridge, the completed A428 scheme may impact on traffic flowing into Cambridge (see below). The purpose of bringing this report to Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee is therefore to allow for open debate by Scrutiny Committee of the principle of the scheme and key response points to consultation.
- 3.8 In preparing suggested responses to the current consultation, Greater Cambridge Planning Service officers are engaging with local partners, including South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Greater Cambridge Partnership and the Combined Authority.
- 3.9 South Cambridgeshire District Council discussed initial response points to the consultation on 1st July, with the intention that the Deputy Leader will take an out of cycle decision on a response before the consultation deadline (as per the recommendation in this report). Decisions from the Cabinet meeting will be available on the South Cambridgeshire website following the publication of this report but ahead of the Scrutiny Committee meeting; officers will provide a verbal update within the meeting.

- 3.10 It is likely that there will be many common response points with local partners, and, it is therefore currently recommended that some or all of these partners produce a joint response, to be agreed by respective portfolio holders for the relevant authorities, including by the Executive Councillor subsequent to the Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee meeting. Points that the Council wishes to make that are not shared by partner authorities could be made separate to that joint response.
- 3.11 Given the above, it is proposed that the Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee discusses the key response points set out below, adding or amending points raised as appropriate, and a full response is agreed by the Executive Councillor in an out of cycle decision, in consultation with Chair and Spokes ahead of the close of consultation on 28 July, potentially as part of the proposed joint response together with local partners.

Suggested points to make in response to the consultation on behalf of Cambridge City Council

- 3.12 Support the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements project in principle, subject to:
- (a) clarification on the transport impacts of the road, in particular in relation to the Government's and Cambridge's net zero carbon ambitions. Outstanding questions include but are not limited to:
 - (i) drawing on the information provided in the consultation booklet p45, how much of the assumed increase in vehicles per hour associated with the new road is redirected traffic, removing vehicles from rat-running on local roads; assumed growth; or does the creation of the road induce more trips?
 - (ii) what are assumed origins and destinations of the traffic using the new road?
 - (iii) How much of any new traffic is expected to reach Cambridge and what will it do when it gets there?
 - (iv) What is the assumed inter-relationship of trip generation in relation to the proposed East West Rail Central Section project?
 - (b) Clarification that the new road and associated road network improvements will support the efficient flow of public transport provision.

Options

3.13 The Executive Councillor may decide to:

- Note the key response points without amendment or addition, ahead of finalizing the wording in an out of cycle decision in consultation with Chair and Spokes.
- Note the key response points with amendment or addition, ahead of finalizing the wording in an out of cycle decision in consultation with Chair and Spokes.

4. Implications

a) Financial Implications

None. This is a nationally funded road scheme.

b) Staffing Implications

Currently anticipated to be within current budgets. This will be kept under review alongside other work priorities.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

None

d) Environmental Implications

Construction and use of the new road may have significant local environmental effects on the localities through which it passes. For Cambridge, the potential environmental effects relate to additional traffic using the road. Given the limited information provided to support the current consultation, the effects are uncertain, as noted in the questions set out above. However, significant additional traffic travelling into Cambridge could have significant local air quality, noise and congestion impacts, and could contribute to green house gas emissions.

e) Procurement Implications

None

f) Community Safety Implications

None

5. Consultation and communication considerations

None

6. Background papers

Current A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Preferred Route
consultation documents:

<https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a428-black-cat-to-caxton-gibbet-improvements/>

7. Appendices

None

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Bruce Waller, Senior Planning Policy Officer, tel: 01223 457171, email: Bruce.Waller@cambridge.gov.uk