



Report to:	Climate and Environment Advisory Committee 13 July 2021
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cllr Bridget Smith
Lead Officer:	Rebecca Weymouth-Wood

A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet – update on securing a positive environmental legacy

Executive Summary

1. This report responds to a request from the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee for an update on progress with work to secure a positive environmental legacy in South Cambridgeshire from the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet (BC-CG) improvement works.

Recommendations

2. The committee is invited to review and comment on the update provided and agree the recommendation that officers continue to work with Highways England with the aim of securing a positive environmental legacy from the A428 improvement works.

Details

3. Highways England are proposing to upgrade the route between the Black Cat roundabout and Caxton Gibbet roundabout with a new 10-mile dual carriageway and several junction improvements.
4. As a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), the scheme requires a Development Consent Order (DCO) from the Secretary of State following an examination process conducted by the Planning Inspectorate. Highways England submitted the DCO application in February.
5. Council officers have made initial 'Relevant Representations' indicating areas of concern in the proposed scheme relating to Biodiversity, Landscape, Air Quality, Cultural Heritage, Flooding and Drainage, Climate Change and other matters. An initial meeting with the Planning Inspectorate is expected to be scheduled for late

July or August. Following this Cambridgeshire County Council will co-ordinate and submit 'Written Representations' from the Cambridgeshire local authorities. These are detailed accounts of objections to the DCO application as it currently stands with evidence to support these. The Cambridgeshire local authorities will also prepare a joint Local Impact Report which the Planning Inspectorate will request at some point during the examination.

6. The examination period usually lasts six months from the date of the preliminary meeting, with then up to three months before a formal recommendation is made by the Inspectorate, and another up to three months before a final decision on the application is issued.
7. As well as their investments in operating, maintaining and improving roads, Highways England also invest so-called 'designated funds' in making improvements in four broad areas: Safety and Congestion, Environment and Wellbeing, Users and Communities, and Innovation and Modernisation. £936 million has been allocated on a country-wide basis for these four areas for 2020-25.
8. Officers are working with Highways England's Legacy and Benefits Project Manager for the A428 BC-CG scheme to submit a bid to the Environment and Wellbeing Designated Fund. This stream of the Designated Funds has nine themes: Biodiversity, Noise, Air Quality, Flooding, Water Quality, Carbon, Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Environmental Legacy.
9. A proposal is being developed for feasibility funding under the Carbon theme to work with a specialist consultant to identify potential landowners and stewards in the proximity of the A428 project to manage land to maximise carbon sequestration (for example, but not limited to tree-planting).
10. Officers from Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Natural Environment team are also engaging in a separate process, co-ordinated by consultants working for Highways England to explore biodiversity options beyond scheme mitigation to be considered for development and potentially supported under the Biodiversity theme of the Environment and Wellbeing Designated Fund.
11. There is also engagement with colleagues at Cambridgeshire County Council to support efforts to secure the best outcomes possible so far as non-motorised user routes, (eg cycle and pedestrian ways).

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Being green to our core

12. The action plan outlines work by the Council with the aim of mitigating climate change and improving outcomes for local nature.

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**South
Cambridgeshire**
District Council