



A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet
Consultation Response Team
FREEPOST, A428 Black Cat to Caxton
Gibbet
United Kingdom

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Dear Sir/Madam

A428 BLACK CAT TO CAXTON GIBBET CONSULTATION RESPONSE

I write as Chair of the Strategic Transport Forum for England's Economic Heartland, the Sub-national Transport Body for the area. Membership of the Forum covers the area from Swindon, through Oxfordshire, Milton Keynes and across to Cambridgeshire, and from Northamptonshire across to Luton and Hertfordshire.

The Forum provides the focus for a single conversation on strategic transport issues and maintains the overview of strategic investment priorities in the Heartland region. The Forum works closely with the Department for Transport, Network Rail, as well as Highways England, all of whom are members.

The A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvement scheme has been consistently identified as a scheme of regional significance: it's delivery a priority for all members of the Forum given its position on the Strategic Road Network.

The delay in the delivery of the scheme (originally programmed to be completed during RIS1) created uncertainty to local people, businesses and investors, including house builders. We therefore welcome this consultation on the basis that it represents a significant step towards delivery of the scheme. It is essential that this momentum is maintained.

ALIGNMENT WITH ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC HEARTLAND'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

As the Sub-national Transport Body for the region, England's Economic Heartland is responsible for setting a strategic vision, supported by a long term strategy for the area.

On 16th July 2019, England's Economic Heartland published its Outline Transport Strategy. The vision set out in the Outline Transport Strategy is:

'Connecting people and places with opportunities and services'

Underpinning the vision for the Outline Transport Strategy are three strategic priorities:

- a) Economy;
- b) Accessibility and Inclusion; and
- c) Quality of Life and Environment.

The proposal for the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Improvement is supported by the Strategic Transport Forum on the basis that it is consistent with both the vision and strategic priorities as set out in the Outline Transport Strategy.

In taking scheme forward Highways England is requested to take into consideration the following issues:

- a) **Environmental Net Gain** – the Government, and local partners, have committed to ensuring that economic growth is achieved whilst delivering environmental net gain. This means that the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet must form part of a wider integrated transport system that enables and supports transport journeys to be undertaken in the most environmentally sensitive way.
- b) **Infrastructure for freight** – the Forum’s Freight and Logistics Study (published on 16th July 2019) includes in it some key recommendations on the measures required to support the freight and logistics sector. The design of the improvement scheme must take into consideration the recommendations of this study. EEH would like to work with Highways England on this particular issue.
- c) **Connecting People: unlocking the first and last mile** – Highways England plays a key role in ensure strategic road infrastructure connects in, and does not act as a barrier to, local journey choice. The A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvement scheme must ensure that integration is an integral consideration throughout, workin with local partners and key organisations to ensure this is achieved.
- d) **Future Proofed** - the delivery of new infrastructure must be designed with sufficient flexibility and adaptability to accommodate the fast-paced changes in travel behaviours and travel technologies. The extended timescale associated with designing and delivering major new infrastructure runs the risk of making it vulnerable to becoming outdated in this regard. EEH would like to work with Highways England throughout the design and delivery of this improvement scheme to ensure this risk is mitigated.



Mayor Dave Hodgson
Chair, EEH Strategic Transport Forum