



# Strategic Transport Forum

27<sup>th</sup> September 2019

## Agenda Item 9: A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet

*Recommendation:*

**It is recommended that the meeting:**

- a) **Considers the update from Highways England on progress with the scheme.**
- b) **Provides feedback as appropriate on the Forum's key priorities for delivering the scheme.**

### 1. Context

- 1.1. The Strategic Transport Forum will recall that in February 2019, Highways England announced the preferred route for the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvement scheme – a significant scheme for the Heartland region.
- 1.2. In June 2019, Highways England began the next stage in the development of the scheme: a public consultation. At its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019, the Strategic Transport Forum considered and agreed its proposed response to the consultation.
- 1.3. As the Sub-national Transport Body, the response addressed issues of a strategic nature. Individual members of England's Economic Heartland also submitted their own, more detailed responses as part of the consultation.
- 1.4. The primary focus for the EEH response was to ensure that the scheme is being developed with due consideration to the wider connectivity requirements of the region. The scheme itself has consistently been identified by the Forum as a regional priority.

### 2. Next Steps

- 2.1. Highways England will present the Forum with next steps in the development of the scheme. Forum Members will want to ensure, during the presentation, that the following issues are considered:
  - a) **Delivery** - The public consultation marked the next milestone for the scheme. Given earlier delays in its development, it is essential that the scheme maintains a focus on delivery and pace.
  - b) **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.
  - c) **Infrastructure for freight** – the Forum's Freight and Logistics Study (published on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019) included in it some key recommendations on the measures required to support the freight and logistics sector, these should be considered in the development of any major new infrastructure in the Heartland region.

- d) **Integration** – 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 a key consideration throughout, working with local partners and key organisations to ensure this is achieved.
- e) **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.

**Naomi Green**  
**Head of Technical Programme**  
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