

**A428 Black Cat to
Caxton Gibbet improvements**
Report on public consultation
February 2019



Report on public consultation

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1. Executive summary

1.1 Context

Highways England's Project Control Framework sets out the methodology for delivery of a major highways scheme. The process is split into 8 stages, of which this scheme is currently in Stage 2, as follows:

- **Stage 0** (strategy, shaping and prioritisation) – problem definition, scheme requirements and strategic business case;
- **Stage 1** (option identification) – option identification and sifting out of options that are likely to perform less well compared to others;
- **Stage 2** (option selection) – detailed option assessment and selection of the Preferred Option, including detailed public consultation of the options;
- **Stage 3** (preliminary design) – scheme development including design of the Preferred Option in sufficient detail to produce draft orders and preparation of the Environmental Assessment;
- **Stage 4** (statutory procedures and powers) – gaining authority to construct the scheme through the normal statutory processes as laid down in legislation;
- **Stage 5** (construction preparation) – procurement of the construction contractor and detailed design of the scheme;
- **Stage 6** (construction) – construction of the scheme;
- **Stage 7** (handover and close-out) – project close out.

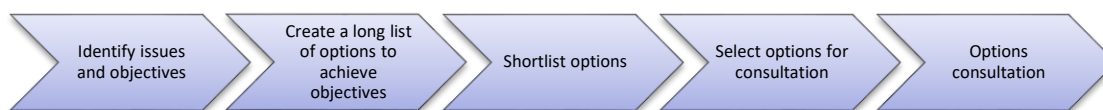
The development of improvements to the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet were announced as part of the Government's Road Investment Strategy 1 (RIS1).

1.2 Report purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the public consultation held from 6 March to 23 April 2017 and the responses gathered during the process. The report presents how the public were informed of the public consultation events, how the options identified were presented, the responses received from members of the public as well as statutory stakeholders and other bodies and consideration of the consultation responses. In addition to factors such as value for money, constructability, safety and meeting the scheme's objectives, these responses assist in identifying the preferred option as well as design requirements as the scheme approaches statutory consultation and application for development consent.

1.3 2017 Consultation options

The flow chart below shows the process used to get to the 4 options presented at consultation in 2017 (see section 2.2).



1.3.1 Orange Route

The Orange Route would upgrade Black Cat roundabout to improve connections between the A1, A421 and the new A428 and will improve the junction at Caxton Gibbet connecting the existing A428 and the A1198. This option is 11.7km in length and runs along parallel to the North of the existing A428, creating a new junction at Cambridge road to link to the existing A428 and Cambridge Road/B1428.

1.3.2 Purple Route

The purple route, one of the two southerly route options, would upgrade Black Cat roundabout to improve connections between the A1, A421 and the new A428 and will improve the junction at Caxton Gibbet connecting the existing A428 and the A1198. This option is 11.4km in length and runs to the North of Abbotsley.

1.3.3 Pink Route

The Pink route, one of the two southerly route options, would upgrade Black Cat roundabout to improve connections between the A1, A421 and the new A428 and will improve the junction at Caxton Gibbet connecting the existing A428 and the A1198. This option is 11.4km in length and runs to the South of Abbotsley.

1.3.4 Option A

Option A is a three-tiered roundabout, removing the current Black Cat roundabout and the construction of two roundabouts to the west of the current roundabout would be undertaken. A new free-flow continuous link from the A421 eastbound towards the A1 northbound would be created along with slip roads to and from the A421, the A1 and the A428. With this option the A1 would become a free-flow continuous road going under the slip roads.

1.3.5 Option B

Option B is a two-tiered roundabout, retaining the existing Black Cat roundabout and creates a new free-flow continuous link from the A421 eastbound towards the A1 northbound. The addition of slip roads would provide a free-flow link, bypassing the roundabout traffic moving southbound onto the A421 with the A1 remaining the same.

1.3.6 Option C

Option C is a three-tiered roundabout, enlarging the existing Black Cat roundabout and creates a new free-flow continuous link from the A421 eastbound towards the A1

northbound. Slip roads would be built from the A421 to the A1, and the A428 and the A1 would become a continuous free-flow road under the widened Black Cat roundabout.

1.4 2017 Non-Statutory Consultation on Options

The public consultation period ran from Monday 6 March 2017 to Sunday 23 April 2017, a period of 7 weeks. During this time, 7 public information events, including a landowner specific event were held in towns and villages affected by the scheme.

We used a range of communication channels to reach the community. This included:

- Producing brochures
- Delivering brochures to centralised locations in towns and villages
- Posters in key locations along the current A428
- Updates to the scheme website
- Emails to stakeholders and forum attendees
- A press release issued to local press

In addition to the general requirements of consultation, we:

- Sent letters to 28,000 households within 500m of the proposed routes
- Advertised on two different local radio stations

The consultation material consisted of a consultation brochure and questionnaire, exhibition boards available to view at the events, as well as the *Options Assessment Report* and *Traffic Data Collection Report*, with key documents being available on our website.

Eight deposit locations were identified along the route where copies of the consultation brochure were available, as well as posters advertising the consultation.

Responses to the consultation were accepted through a number of channels:

- Online using the electronic feedback form
- By email to a428blackcattocaxtongibbet@highwaysengland.co.uk
- By freepost to Freepost A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet

1.5 Effectiveness of the consultation

The public consultation exhibitions received 2,028 visitors over the 7 public information events, with 89% of attendees giving positive feedback on the events.

A total of 4189 responses were received during the consultation period.

1.6 Consultation findings

Of the 4189 responses that were received, 3807 responded to having a preference for a route option, 3616 respondents expressed a preference for 1 of the 3 route options. Consultation Orange route option received the most support from respondents with 3019 of the 3616 (83%) expressing it as their preferred route option. The second most

popular consultation option was the Pink route option with 376 of the 3616(10%) expressing it as their preferred route option. Some of the reasons given for supporting the Orange route option were:

- Route alignment is close to existing road
- Additional connectivity is provided for St Neots by Cambridge road junction
- Improve traffic and congestion
- Will have the least impact on the environment, wildlife, designated sites, visual impacts, heritage sites, agriculture and local community out of the three options
- It would be the most beneficial to the local economy out of the three options

Of the 4189 responses that were received, 3718 responded to having a preference to the Black Cat roundabout options. 2538 respondents expressed a preference for 1 of the 3 Black Cat options. Consultation Option C received the most support from respondents with 1533 of the 2538 (60%) expressing it as their preferred route option. The second most popular was consultation Option A with 693 of the 2538 (27%) expressing it as their preferred route option.

Some of the reasons given for supporting Option C were:

- Create free-flowing traffic at Black Cat roundabout
- Least impact on the local environment, surrounding area and land take
- Improve traffic and congestion
- Most practical option economically
- Has the most capacity and flexibility to cope with any future increases in traffic or road use out of the three options

The consultation also asked for views on the need to improve the A428 based on three different factors: reduce congestion, improve safety and reduce traffic from local roads. It also asked for views on the need to improve Black Cat roundabout. The majority of respondents felt that improvements were needed at both the A428 between Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet and Black Cat roundabout. Improvement to the A428 in order to reduce congestion was supported by 3405 out of 3823 (89%). Improvement to the A428 in order to improve safety was supported by 3033 out of 3824 (79%). Improvement to the A428 in order to reduce traffic from local roads was supported by 2982 out of 3819 (78%). Improvement to the Black Cat roundabout was supported by 3213 out of 3824 (84%).

1.7 Next steps taken

The results of the consultation are considered in the selection of the preferred option, along with other factors such as value for money, constructability, safety and meeting the scheme's objectives.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background to the scheme

The A428 connects communities between St Neots and Cambourne and links the East of England to important regional, national and international hubs such as the Felixstowe and Harwich ports. It also connects Bedford, Milton Keynes and the M1 to Cambridge and the M11.

Improvements will support local growth plans by reducing congestion related delay, improving journey time reliability, increasing the overall capacity of the A428 and improving traffic flow.

The A428 between St Neots and Cambridge is the only stretch of single carriageway along this route. Motorists are subject to regular delays and congestion, particularly at the Black Cat roundabout. There are also a high number of incidents, especially at junctions along the route. Delays on the A428 directly affect the overall journey time. The diagrams overleaf show the additional time that drivers currently need to take to ensure that they arrive at their destination on time.

The road suffers from a number of problems. By tackling these problems, we will be:

- Enabling economic growth;
- Creating a safe and serviceable network;
- Creating a more free-flowing network;
- Creating an improved environment;
- Creating a more accessible and integrated network; and
- Improving customer satisfaction

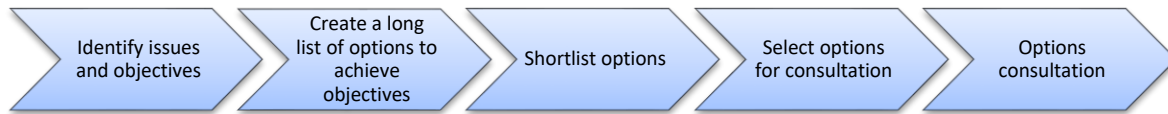
2.2 Developing options

In March 2015, the Government published its first Roads Investment Strategy (RIS1) with the simple premise: “a modern country needs modern roads”.

The strategy states that England’s strategic road network requires upgrading and improving to ensure it can support the nation in the 21st Century. The strategy announced over £15 billion investment in England’s motorways and major A roads.

Since the Government’s announcement, we have been looking at suitable solutions to address the problems on the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet.

The flow chart below shows the process we used to get to the options presented at the 2017 consultation.



2.2.1 Identify issues and objectives

The notable issues on the A428 between Black Cat roundabout and Caxton Gibbet are:

- Congestion.
- Safety for road users and road workers.
- Resilience (the ability to cope with incidents such as accidents and extreme weather) and reliability of the road network.
- Poorly performing junctions.
- Potential to restrict future economic growth.
- Lack of provision for non-motorised users (pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians).

Against these issues 6 initial objectives for the scheme were set:

- Enable economic growth
- Create a safe and serviceable network
- Create a more free-flowing network
- Create an improved environment
- Create a more accessible and integrated network
- Improve customer satisfaction

2.2.2 Long list of options

We started with over 50 potential solutions to explore. Once we understood the issues and objectives, we started to develop solutions with technical specialists and local authorities in summer 2015.

2.2.3 Shortlisting options

We assessed each option against the objectives to see which ones performed best. The first sift eliminated unsuitable options. While these options could compliment any scheme taken forward, they did not meet the scheme objectives in their own right. The remaining options were then assessed in more detail against further criteria such as:

- Is it the right strategic fit?

-
- Does it show value for money?
 - Is there a financial and commercial case for doing it?
 - Can it be delivered?

We eliminated the options that did not give the whole route the necessary improvements. The full sifting exercise can be viewed in the *Options Assessment Report* which was published with this consultation. The report identifies the best performing options that provide good value for money, improved journey times and overall benefits for our customers.

2.2.4 Select options for the 2017 consultation

As more information became available, we reviewed and updated the scheme objectives:

- **Enabling economic growth** – Connectivity enables economic growth. Improved journey times and reliability brings people and businesses closer together, creates job opportunities and long-term sustainable growth. Increasing road capacity now will also help to meet predicted demand in the future.
- **A safe and serviceable network** – The scheme would improve safety for all road users and road workers. Tackling congestion helps to reduce the risk of accidents.
- **A more free-flowing network** – A free-flowing network with less congestion benefits local residents, daily commuters and businesses. The increased resilience would help the road network cope with incidents including collisions, breakdowns, maintenance and extreme weather, creating more reliable journey times for everyone.
- **An improved environment** – By focusing on the environment at the design stage, the scheme would seek to improve the environmental impact on local communities in areas such as air quality and noise pollution. It would also mitigate any impacts on cultural heritage.
- **A more accessible and integrated network** – Ensuring the safety of cyclists, walkers and equestrians improves access and integration with neighbouring communities for everyone. The scheme also aims to improve connections between communities and villages for those who travel by public transport.
- **Customer satisfaction** – Listening to what is important to our customers will deliver a better road for everyone and improve customer satisfaction.

We identified new options which we assessed against the objectives. From the sifting process, 3 route options and 3 Black Cat options came out.

2.3 Consulted options

The consultation outlined 3 route options and 3 Black Cat options which meet the scheme's objectives:

2.3.1 Orange Route

The Orange Route would upgrade Black Cat roundabout to improve connections between the A1, A421 and the new A428 and will improve the junction at Caxton Gibbet connecting the existing A428 and the A1198. This option is 11.7km in length and runs along parallel to the North of the existing A428, creating a new junction at Cambridge road to link to the existing A428 and Cambridge Road/B1428.

2.3.2 Purple Route

The purple route, one of the two southerly route options, would upgrade Black Cat roundabout to improve connections between the A1, A421 and the new A428 and will improve the junction at Caxton Gibbet connecting the existing A428 and the A1198. This option is 11.4km in length and runs to the North of Abbotsley.

2.3.3 Pink Route

The Pink route, one of the two southerly route options, would upgrade Black Cat roundabout to improve connections between the A1, A421 and the new A428 and will improve the junction at Caxton Gibbet connecting the existing A428 and the A1198. . This option is 11.4km in length and runs to the South of Abbotsley.

2.3.4 Option A

Option A is a three-tiered roundabout, removing the current Black Cat roundabout and the construction of two roundabouts to the west of the current roundabout would be undertaken. A new free-flow continuous link from the A421 eastbound towards the A1 northbound would be created along with slip roads to and from the A421, the A1 and the A428. With this option the A1 would become a free-flow continuous road going under the slip roads.

2.3.5 Option B

Option B is a two-tiered roundabout, retaining the existing Black Cat roundabout and creates a new free-flow continuous link from the A421 eastbound towards the A1 northbound. The addition of slip roads would provide a free-flow link, bypassing the roundabout traffic moving southbound onto the A421 with the A1 remaining the same.

2.3.6 Option C

Option C is a three-tiered roundabout, enlarging the existing Black Cat roundabout and creates a new free-flow continuous link from the A421 eastbound towards the A1 northbound. Slip roads would be built from the A421 to the A1, and the A428 and the A1 would become a continuous free-flow road under the widened Black Cat roundabout.

3. Non-Statutory Consultation

3.1 Information events

On Monday 6 March 2017, we launched the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet consultation at the Training Centre in Wyboston Lakes, Wyboston. As part of the consultation 6 public information events were arranged in towns and villages affected by the scheme. The locations of the events were established by searching for accessible locations within the vicinity of the proposed routes, which when estimating the numbers likely to attend was fairly limited. At each location a building risk assessment was carried out by Jacobs. The information points were established in the same way, but with some locations added as suggested by local MPs.

3.1.1 Locations and dates of public events held in 2017

The times of the events varied depending on whether they were weekend or week day events. Weekday events ran later into the evening to ensure that members of the public were able to attend after work. A risk assessment of each location was produced.

Location	Date	Time	Address
Launch event, Wyboston	Monday 6 March 2017	12pm-3pm	Training Centre, Wyboston Lakes, Great N Rd, Wyboston MK44 3AL
Wyboston Training Centre	Tuesday 21 March 2017	2pm – 8pm	Training Centre, Wyboston Lakes, Great N Rd, Wyboston MK44 3AL
Cambourne Hub	Thursday 23 March 2017	2pm – 8pm	Cambourne Community Centre, High Street, Cambourne, Cambridgeshire, CB23 6GW
Abbotsley Village Hall	Saturday 25 March 2017	10am –4pm	High Street, Abbotsley, Cambridgeshire, PE19 6UJ
St Neots Priory Centre	Monday 27 March 2017	2pm – 8pm	Priory Lane, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 2BH
Stuart Memorial Hall	Friday 31 March 2017	2pm – 8pm	Church Street, Tempsford, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2AN

Newton Primary School	Saturday 1 April 2017	10am – 4pm	Caxton End, Eltisley, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 6TL
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3.1.2 Event attendance

In total 2028 people attended the events over the two week period.

3.1.3 Feedback of the events

On exiting the events, attendees were asked to rate the event on a 'smiley face' terminal. Those that rated the event were able to rate the event very positively, positively, negatively or very negatively. The chart below shows the number of people who rated the events and how they rated them.

Event	Date	Attendance	Number of exit terminal responses	% Very Satisfied	% Satisfied	% Dissatisfied	% Very Dissatisfied
Landowners event, Wyboston	20/03/2017	71					
Wyboston Lakes	21/03/2017	411	127	54	35	4	7
Stuart Memorial Hall, Tempsford	31/03/2017	275	86	52	31	7	10
Newton Primary School, Eltisley	01/04/2017	199	69	67	28	1	4
St Neots Priory Centre	27/03/2017	421	206	51	43	4	2
Abbotsley	25/03/2017	434	138	45	38	5	12
Cambourne	23/03/2017	217	80	69	26	1	4
Total/Avg.		2,028	706	56	34	4	7

In total 706 attendees provided event feedback across the 6 events, with 67% of those providing positive feedback.

3.2 Publicising the 2017 consultation

3.2.1 Media engagement

A press release was issued on 13 January 2017 advertising all regional RIS scheme consultations. A further press release specifically for A428 was prepared for issue on the day of the launch, 6 March 2017; however as this fell on budget week it was sent in advance, on Friday 3 March. We also monitored the coverage of the press.

3.2.2 Online engagement

Dedicated web pages were set up in advance of the consultation period on the government's website and Highways England website.

3.2.3 Social media

Multiple tweets were issued by the Highways England regional press office on the day of the launch and throughout the consultation using the handle @HighwaysEAST.

3.2.4 Poster campaign

Posters were delivered to local business locations such as shops and petrol stations along the A428 and surrounding villages, to advertise the consultation events.

3.2.5 Advertising campaign

A full colour half page advert was placed in the Bedfordshire on Sunday, Huntingdonshire post, Bedfordshire Times & Citizen and Biggleswade Chronicle.

As an additional form of advertisement, a radio advertisement was created for the consultation events. Huntingdon Radio covered Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots, Godmanchester and all surrounding villages. Cambridge 105 covered Cambridge and surrounding villages. Each station had up to 8/9 plays a day for a period of

3.2.6 Letter

A mailshot letter was sent to 28,000 homes within 500 metre boundary of the three proposed routes.

3.2.7 Deposit locations

8 deposit locations were selected along the A428. The deposit locations received 100 copies of the consultation brochure, copies of the leaflet and a 1 x metre pull up banner advertising the consultation. Of the 9 locations, 6 requested more copies of the brochure due to the popularity of people using the deposit sites. Additional copies were sent to them.

Location	Address
St Neots Library	Priory Lane, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 2BH
Papworth Library	Lower Pendrill Court, Ermine Street North, Papworth Everard, Cambridgeshire, CB23 3UY
Cambourne Library	Sackville House, Sackville Way, Cambridge, CB23 6HL
South Cambridgeshire District Council	South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridgeshire, CB23 6EA

Central Bedfordshire Council	Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ
Huntingdonshire District Council	Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 3TN
St Neots Town Council	St Neots Customer Service Centre, The Priory, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 2BH
Bedford Borough Council	Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP

3.2.8 Additional communication channels

The following communication channels were publicised as an alternative method for interested parties to contact the project team:

- Email: A428blackcattocaxtongibbet@highwaysengland.co.uk
- Telephone: Highways England Customer Contact Centre 0300 123 5000.

3.2.9 Forums

Stakeholder engagement forums were set up in July 2016. The purpose of these forums is to provide an overview of the scheme and any relevant updates. The membership of the forums is as follows:

Members – Members of Parliament, council members and officers from Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire.

Bedford Community forum – Parish council representatives from Bedfordshire.

St Neots Community forum – Parish council representatives from St Neots and surrounding villages in Bedfordshire/Cambridgeshire

Cambourne Community forum - Parish council representatives from Cambourne and surrounding villages in Cambridgeshire.

Environmental forum – local authorities, and local and national environment groups

Economics forum – local authorities, Chamber of Commerce, local enterprise partnership and local business interests.

Strategic Road Users – representatives from professional hauliers, such as Road Haulage Association.

As well as the initial forum, a further forum was held prior to the consultation in November 2016. This involved discussions about the aims of the consultation, additional works to date and programme timescales going forward.

3.3 Consultation materials

3.3.1 Consultation brochure and questionnaire

A consultation brochure (Appendix B) was produced that provided concise information about the project, including the scheme background with the work done to date (“sifting”), a summary of the 3 routes and Black Cat consultation options, including the impacts and benefits known to date, and information on the safety. The brochure also included the consultation questionnaire which was used to understand the preferred option of respondents and views that respondents had on the current junctions. It also helped to measure the success of the consultation and to guide future engagement with the local and wider communities.

Interested parties were encouraged to complete the questionnaire and provide their views and opinions on key aspects of the consultation. The brochure and questionnaire were available online, at the public consultation events and at the 8 deposit locations.

3.3.2 Exhibition panels

9 exhibition panels were displayed at the 6 public consultation events we held from Monday 6 March 2017 to Saturday 1 April 2017. The panels displayed can be found in Appendix C. They showed the following:

- Welcome
- Why improvements are needed
- Route Options
- Environmental features of the route options
- Black Cat roundabout Option A
- Black Cat roundabout Option B
- Black Cat roundabout Option C
- Next steps
- Responding to the consultation

3.3.3 Technical reports

- *Options Assessment Report* shows the work that has taken place to identify the transport problem and identify the need for a scheme. The report then describes how a range of broad scheme options have been generated, assessed and prioritised into a short-list of better performing options. These options were the basis for the further development of the scheme.

- *Traffic Data Collection Report* describes the collection and analysis of the traffic data that is required for the development of the scheme. The report summarises the data that has been obtained, its quality, and how it is being used to develop a traffic model.

4. Effectiveness of the public consultation

4.1 Public event attendance

Event	Date	Attendance
Landowners event, Wyboston	20/03/2017	71
Wyboston Lakes	21/03/2017	411
Stuart Memorial Hall, Tempsford	31/03/2017	275
Newton Primary School, Eltisley	01/04/2017	199
St Neots Priory Centre	27/03/2017	421
Abbotsley	25/03/2017	434
Cambourne	23/03/2017	217
Total/Avg.		2,028

4.2 Social media

On consultation launch day, tweets were sent by the press team to raise awareness of the consultation. Further tweets were issued throughout the consultation, particularly in advance of and throughout the public events.

4.3 Press

Richard Hofton, Senior Responsible Officer for the Project took part in two media interviews on the launch date of 6th March 2017. We also monitored the coverage of the press.

5. Methodology

The consultation was managed by Jacobs and Highways England. Dialogue by Design (DbyD), an independent, specialist analysis agency, was commissioned to receive, analyse and report on responses to the consultation.

There are 4 stages to the processing and analysis of the consultation responses, which are discussed in more detail below:

- Data receipt and digitisation of all submissions
- The development of an analytical framework
- The implementation of the analysis framework
- Reporting

5.1 Data receipt and digitisation of all submissions

Submissions to the consultation were received via 3 different channels:

- **Online** - Respondents could submit responses via an online platform, 'CitizenSpace', developed by 'Delib' and managed by Highways England. DbyD accessed the web platform at regular intervals during the consultation period to securely download submissions received. These were then imported directly into the analysis database.
- **Email** - Consultation responses could also be submitted by email via the address a428blackcattocaxtongibbet@highwaysengland.co.uk. These responses were forwarded to a dedicated inbox at DbyD along with a weekly log used to confirm that all emails were received. From here, responses were processed and imported into the analysis database.
- **Freepost** - Consultation questionnaires and letters submitted via the freepost address were delivered directly to DbyD's offices. These responses were logged upon receipt before being scanned, data entered and imported into the analysis database.

5.2 Limits of information

This report and the independent *Consultation Summary Report* from DbyD (Appendix A) is based on the responses received to the consultation and therefore cannot be considered a technical assessment of the proposed route options or the Black Cat roundabout options. The reports analyse the opinions stated by those who responded to the consultation, and as such is a self-selecting sample. Therefore, the information in this report is representative of the local residents and stakeholders who responded to the consultation. The value of the consultation is in identifying the issues and views of those who have responded and their perceptions of the proposals.

The responses are taken as written, and while responses were analysed to draw together themes we have not interpreted the responses further than this.

5.3 Next steps taken

The results of the consultation are considered in the selection of the preferred route option, along with other factors such as value for money, safety, constructability and meeting the scheme's objectives.

A statutory consultation on the preferred route is expected to take place in summer 2019.

6. Responses to the 2017 Non-Statutory Consultation

A total of 4189 responses to the consultation were received.

The feedback captured some analytical data from respondents to provide some background information about the residents and stakeholders who responded to the consultation. Shown below are key findings from this.

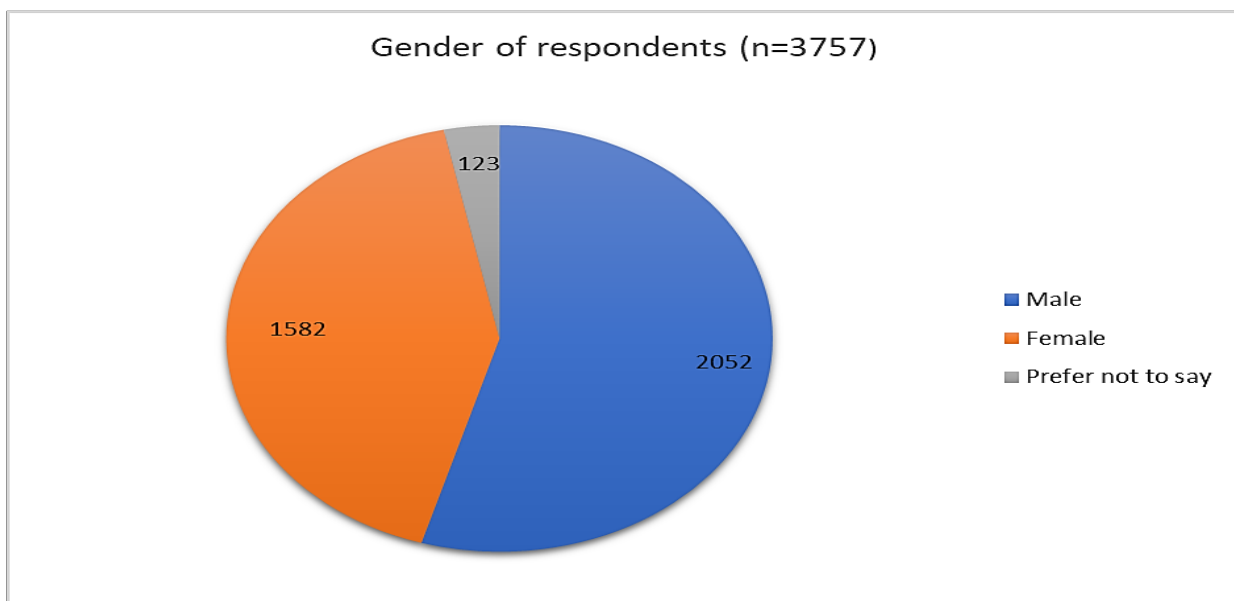
6.1 Responses by channel

- Online questionnaire
- Paper questionnaire
- Email/Letter

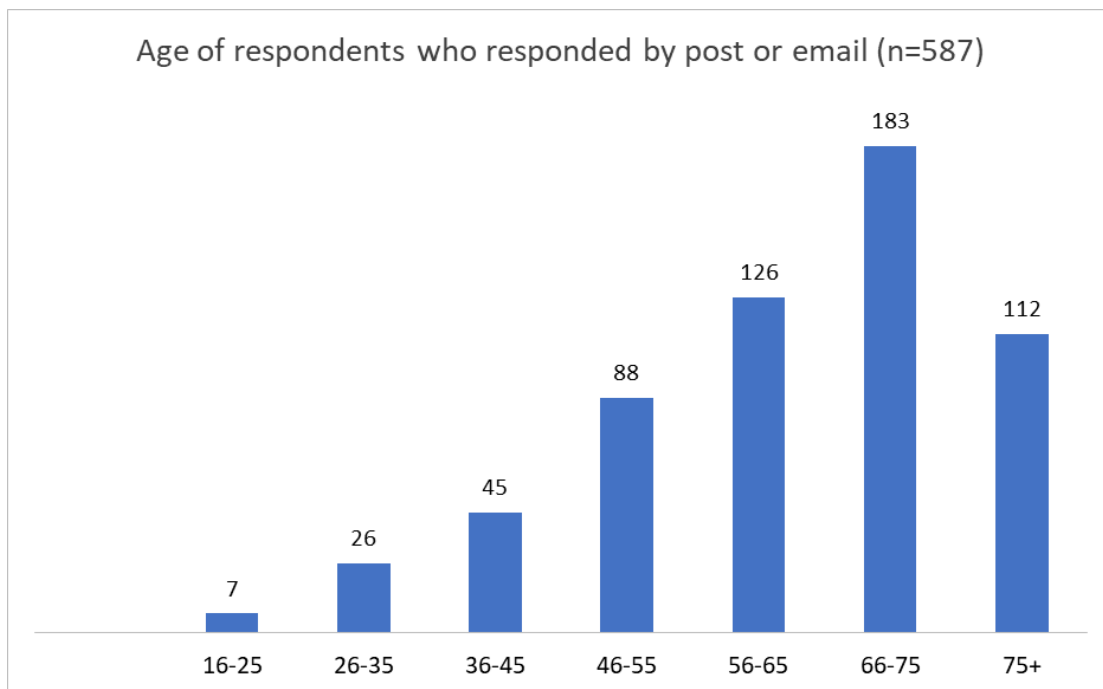
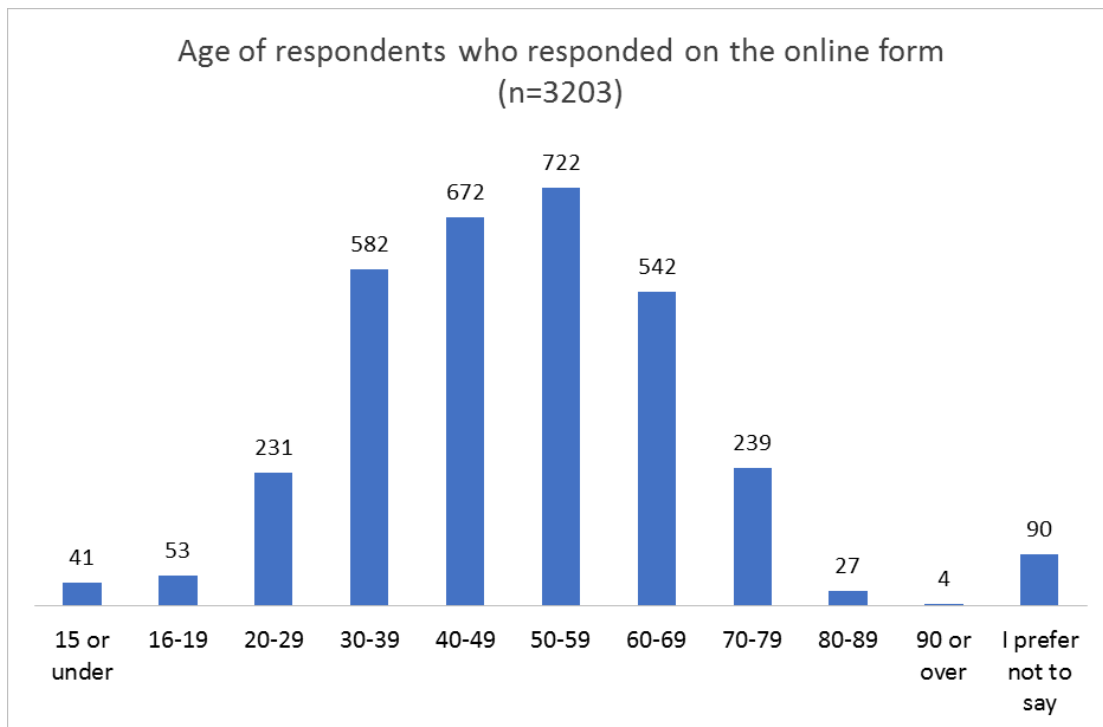
6.2 Demographic information

Our consultation asked respondents to answer a number of equality and diversity questions. This section outlines the responses we received.

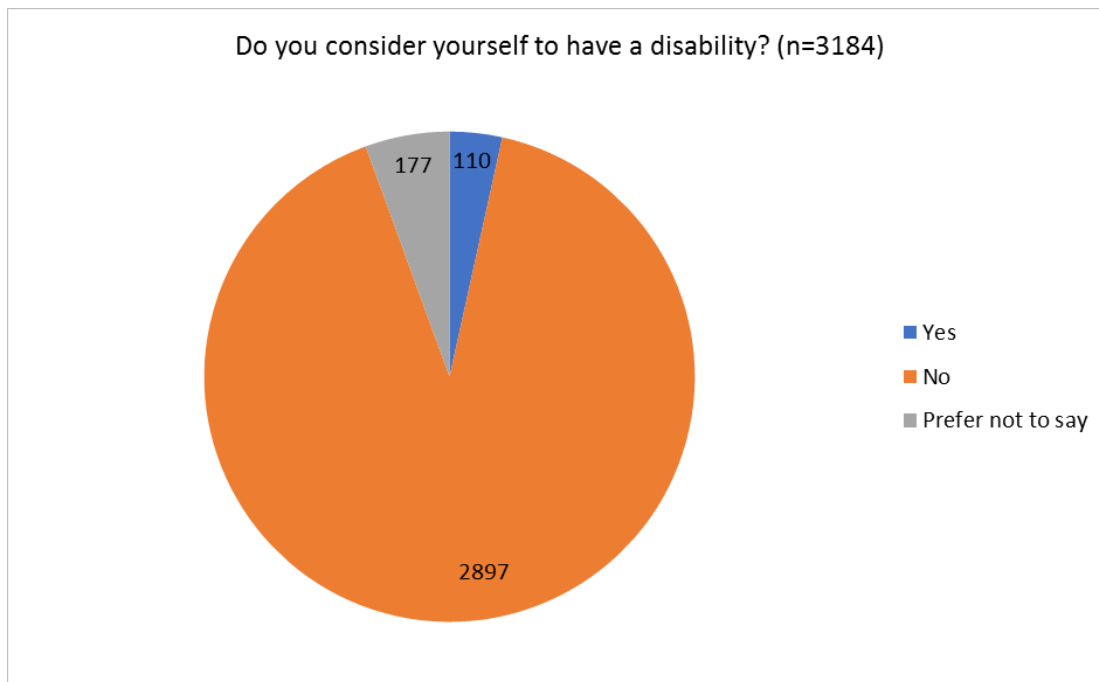
6.2.1 Gender



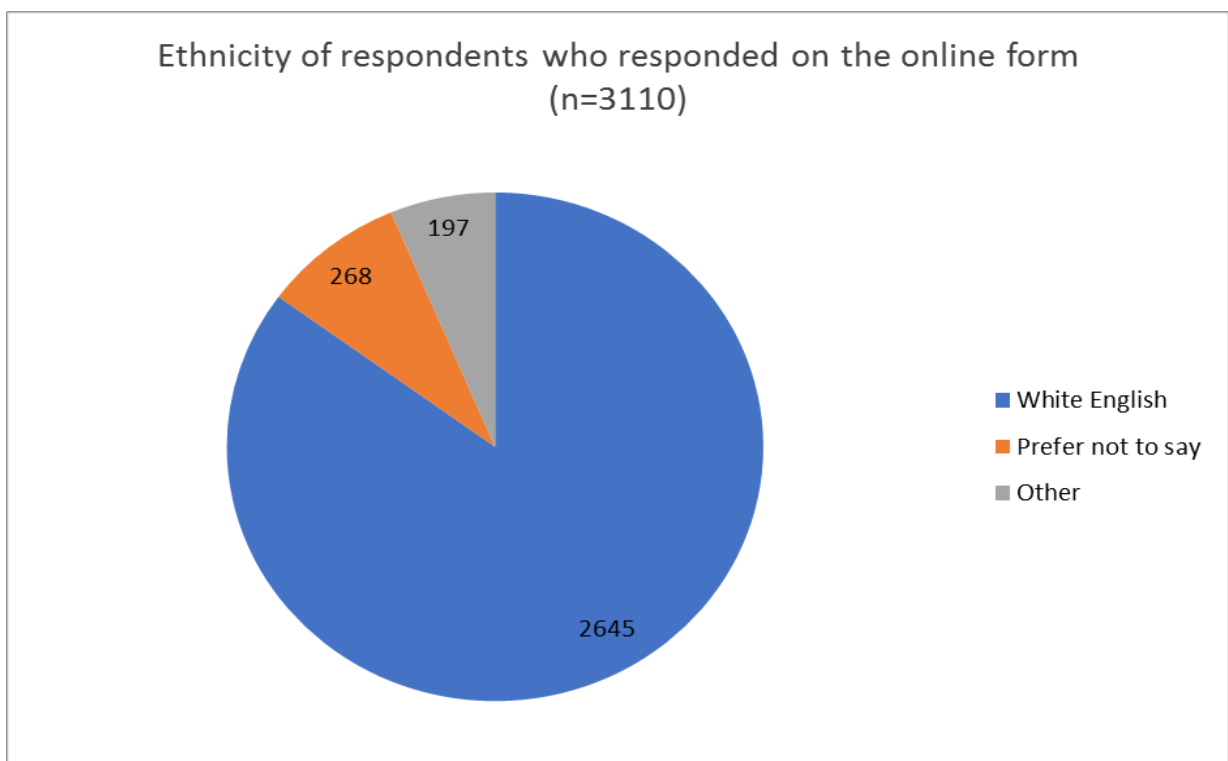
6.2.2 Age



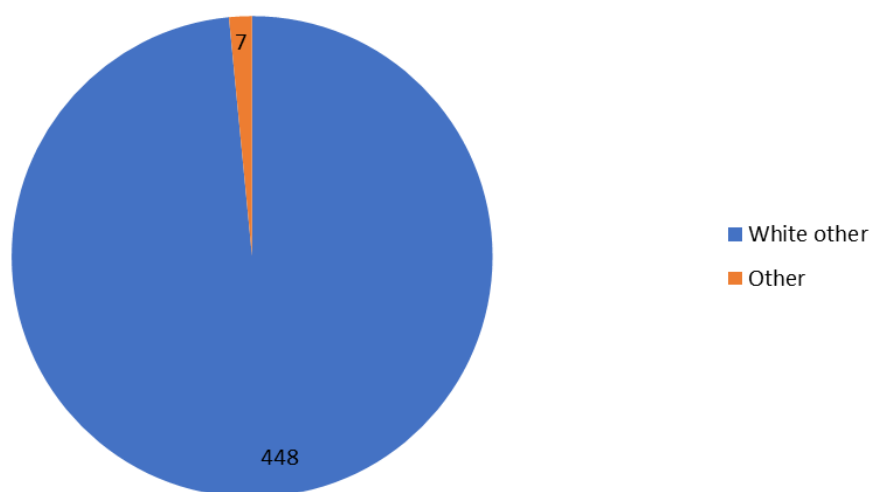
6.2.3 Disability



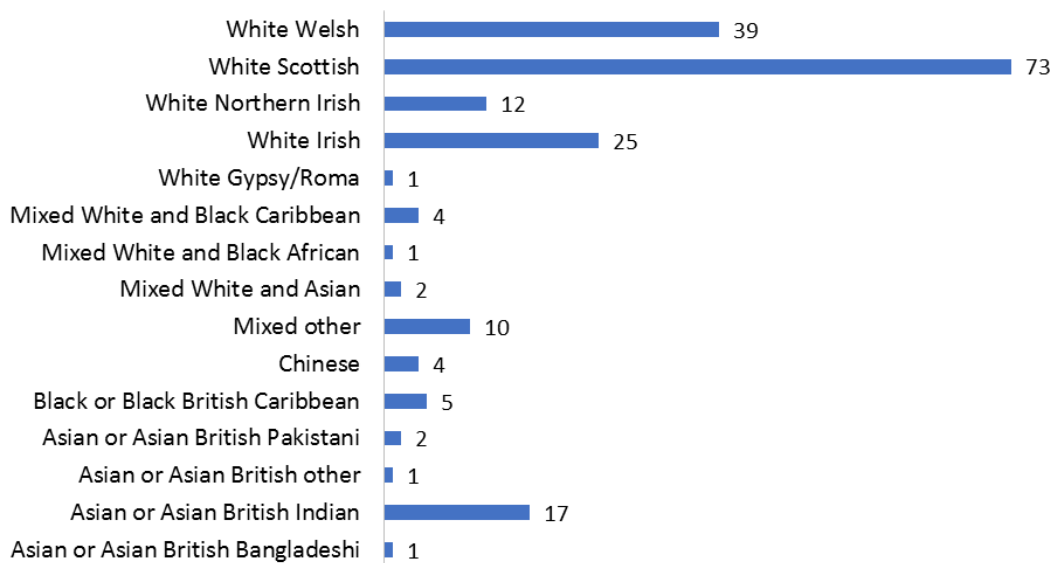
6.2.4 Ethnicity



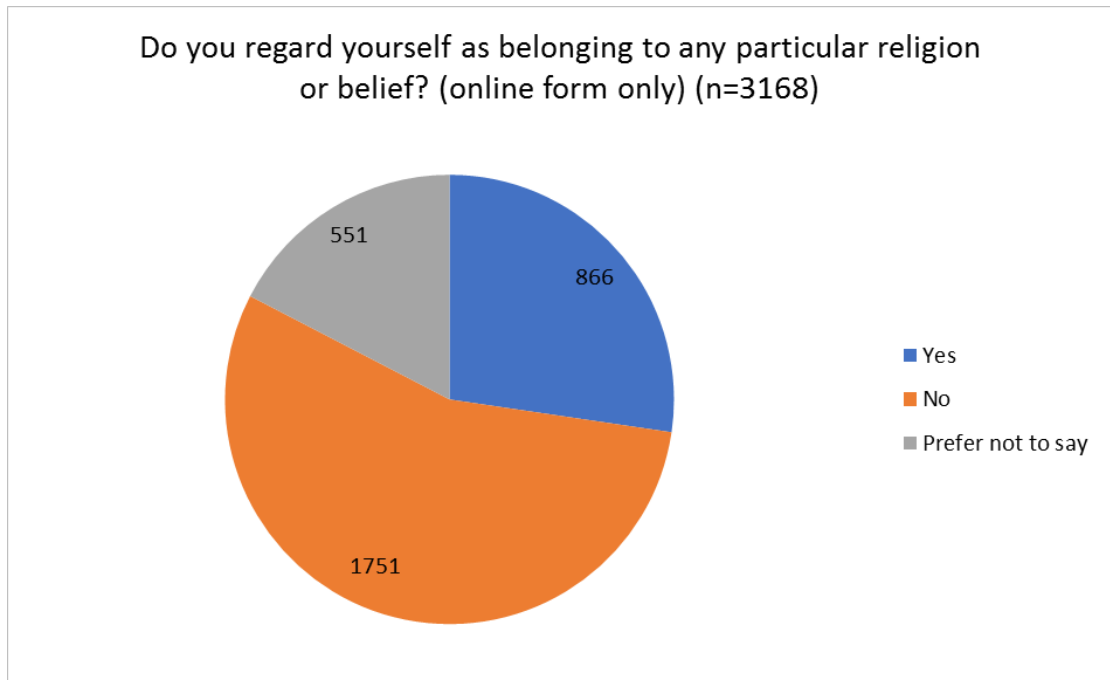
Ethnicity of respondents who responded by post or email
(n=455)



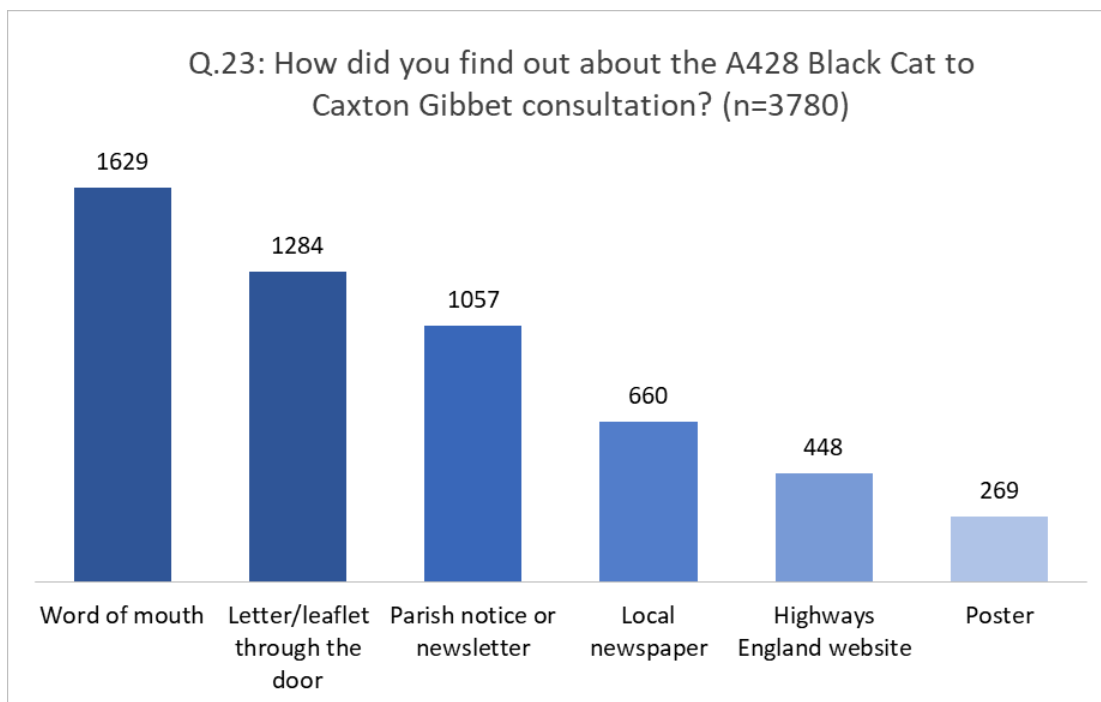
Ethnicity of respondents who responded on the online form
(n=197)



6.2.5 Religion



6.2.6 How respondents heard about the consultation



In addition to the options listed in the consultation, a number of respondents stated that they had heard about the consultation through social media. Most of these respondents said it was Facebook where they had heard about it either through posts from friends or on community or village Facebook pages.

6.3 Feedback from consultation

6.3.1 Channels of communication

As part of the consultation questionnaire, we asked respondents to suggest how we can communicate better and the largest number of responses identified email as a preferred form of communication. Other forms of communication included:

- Letters
- Social media
- Local press
- Public events
- Local council
- Telephone
- Website

6.3.2 The consultation process

A small number of respondents provided feedback on the consultation and the consultation materials. A few of those respondents provided positive feedback on how the consultation and engagement to date had been conducted. A few others outlined dissatisfaction with the amount of information provided and the clarity of the consultation brochure.

A number of those respondents provided suggestions on how the consultation process could be improved such as extending the area that letters advertising the consultation are sent to.

6.3.3 Our response

We are grateful for the feedback and appreciate the positive comments that we received. We do recognise there is always room for improvement, so we will consider how to incorporate the suggestions as the scheme progresses.

7. Analysis of responses

This section provides an overview of the consultation responses received. The full independent *Summary Report* undertaken by DbyD is published alongside this report. (Appendix A)

7.1 A428 route and Black Cat roundabout improvement options - general

7.1.1 Comments in support

Many respondents are supportive of the improvements to the A428 between Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet and improvements to Black Cat roundabout, with local authorities being particularly supportive mentioning, amongst others, the following:

- Improve the local economy
- The need to increase traffic flow and reduce congestion
- Reduce rat-running through local villages
- Driver/user satisfaction and improved journey times

Some respondents refer to current issues, such as congestion and rat-running, on the A428 and Black Cat roundabout for why improvements are needed.

Safety is another major concern raised, particularly accidents and safety issues, caused by congestion and potential confusion at roundabouts. Finally, the environmental impact caused by congestion caused by the current A428 and Black Cat roundabout where concern is expressed.

7.1.2 Comments in opposition

A smaller number of respondents expressed opposition to improvements. Those who oppose widening mention, amongst others, a number of reasons for their opposition:

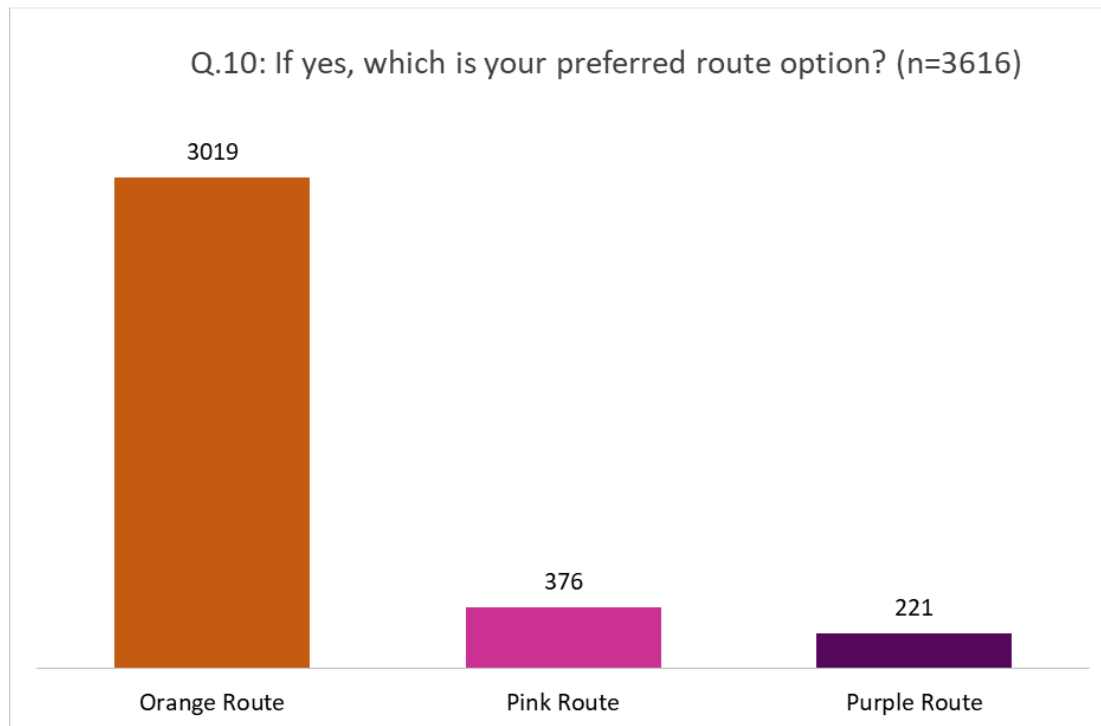
- A negative effect on a community
- Environmental impacts, such as the noise and air pollution, the character of Brook Cottages
- Compulsory purchase and impact on property value
- Impact on historic buildings
- Visual impacts of a three-tiered roundabout

A few respondents felt that improvements would not solve the current issues as it would push the problem elsewhere. In addition, some felt that improvements would encourage more traffic and another small number felt that improvements would encourage development and more traffic.

7.2 Analysis of options

Route Options:

Of the 4184 responses that were received, 3807 responded to having a preference for a route option, 3616 respondents expressed a preference for 1 of the 3 route options. Consultation Orange route option received the most support from respondents with 3019 of the 3616 (83%) expressing it as their preferred route option. The second most popular consultation option was the Pink route option with 376 of the 3616 (10%) expressing it as their preferred route option.



7.3 Consultation Orange Route

Orange route – this option provides a new dual-carriageway between Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet, running east of Black Cat across the River Great Ouse, changing to a north direction after crossing the East Coast Mainline, past Cambridge Road where it crosses the existing A428 and runs east towards Caxton Gibbet. This route also includes additional improvements at Cambridge Road junction.

Orange route is the most popular consultation option amongst those that expressed a preference, with 3019 of 3616 (83%) expressing it as their preference.

7.3.1 Comments in support

The route alignment being close to the existing road and the additional connectivity is felt to provide for St Neots and surrounding areas was far the most prominent reason respondents gave for supporting the Orange route. Those who support the Orange route also mention, amongst others, a number of reasons for their support:

- It would provide improvements in traffic and congestion

-
- It would have the least impact on the countryside and local communities
 - Would provide a benefit to St Neots with the Cambridge Road Junction
 - It would improve reliability and journey times

7.3.2 Concerns

Some respondents commented the Cambridge Road Junction would constitute an unnecessary disruption to the flow of traffic on the new road, or that it would cause congestion. Those who have concerns about the Orange route mention, amongst other things:

- Cambridge Road would create rat-runs
- Detrimentially affect journey times
- Cambridge Road Junction would cause congestion and reduce speeds
- The environmental impact on the countryside

7.4 Consultation Purple Route

Purple route - this option provides a new dual-carriageway between Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet, running east of Black Cat across the River Great Ouse, bypassing Abbotsley in a northeast direction, continuing northwest of Great Gransden, south of Eltisley, and joins the current A428 at Caxton Gibbet.

The Purple route is the least popular consultation option amongst those that expressed a preference, 221 of 3616 (6%) expressing it as their preferred route option.

7.4.1 Comments in support

Respondents that chose the Purple route option do so as they believe that that it takes traffic away from St Neots and that it is likely to be the fastest route. Those who support the Purple route option also mention, amongst others, a number of reasons for their support:

- It would be the shortest and most direct route and therefore have the shortest travel time
- It would have less impact on SSSIs over the Pink Route

7.4.2 Concerns

Respondent's traffic and road concern is that the Purple route runs through an area often affected by fog which may be hazardous. Those who have concerns about the Purple Route Option also mention, amongst others, a number of concerns:

- It would disturb rural countryside and villages nearby
- Villages would be affected by air, noise and light pollution

- It would affect the largest amount of designated areas, woodland and wildlife habitats
- It would have the greatest effect on access for Non-motorised users (NMUs)

7.5 Consultation Pink Route

Pink route - this option provides a new dual-carriageway between Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet, running east of Black Cat across the River Great Ouse, towards Little Gransden, moving north-east where it bypasses Abbotsley to the south. The route then continues in a north-east direction between Great Gransden and Eltisley where it changes to a north direction towards Caxton Gibbet.

Pink route is the second most popular consultation option amongst those that expressed a preference, with 376 of 3616 (10%) expressing it as their preferred route option.

7.5.1 Comments in support

Respondents who indicate support for this option do so primarily because it is the most direct route, which takes traffic away from St Neots. Those who support Pink route option also mention, amongst others, a number of reasons for their support:

- It would improve travel times
- It would be the most direct route and therefore improve connectivity
- It would be beneficial as part of the Oxford – Cambridge development corridor
- It would reduce traffic on the existing A428 would mean the local bus which uses that route would have improved travel times

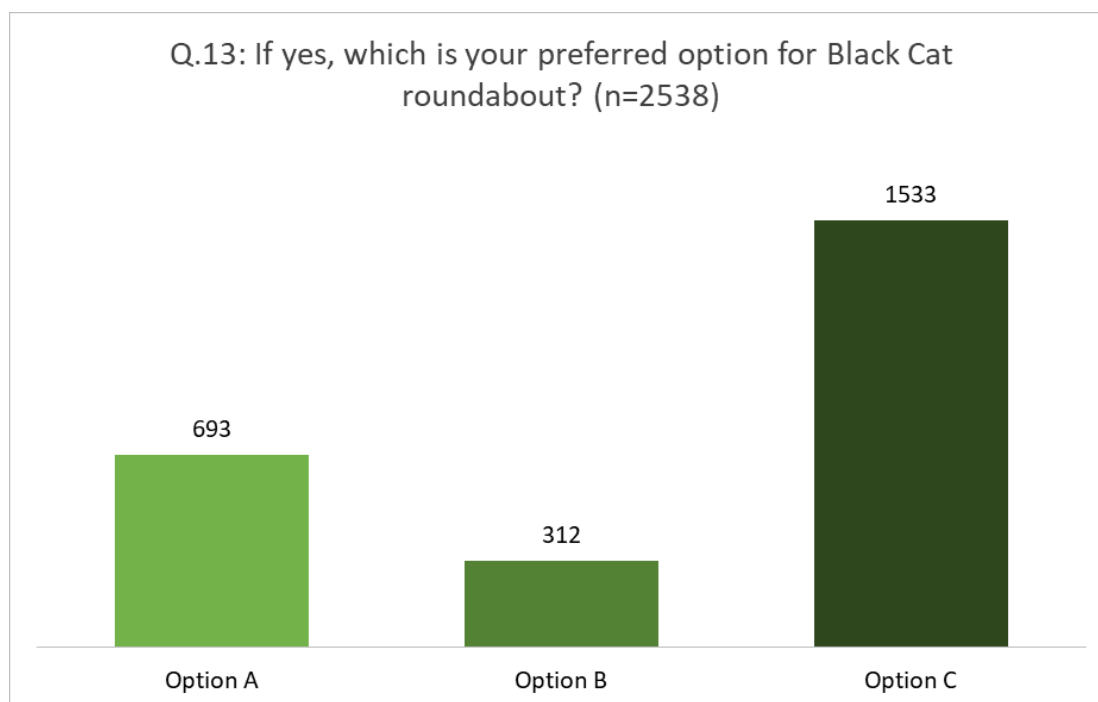
7.5.2 Concerns

Respondents expressed concerns about the additional land take required for this option and the impact on the surrounding countryside. Those who have concerns about Pink route option also mention, amongst others, a number of concerns:

- It would disturb local countryside and villages nearby
- It would cause noise, light and air pollution
- It would impact upon designated areas, woodland and wildlife habitats
- It would not sufficiently alleviate congestion on the existing A428 especially given planned/future housing developments

7.6 Black Cat options:

Of the 4189 responses that were received, 3718 responded to having a preference to the Black Cat roundabout options. 2538 respondents expressed a preference for 1 of the 3 Black Cat options. Consultation Option C received the most support from respondents with 1533 of the 2538 (60%) expressing it as their preferred route option. The second most popular was consultation Option A with 693 of the 2538 (27%) expressing it as their preferred route option.



7.7 Consultation Option A

Option A – removal of the current roundabout and constructing two roundabouts to the west; creating a new free-flow link from the A421 eastbound towards the A1 northbound, and slip roads to and from the A421, the A1 and the A428.

Option A is the second most popular consultation option amongst those that expressed a preference, with 693 of 2538 (27%) expressing it as their preferred route option.

7.7.1 Comments in support

Respondents who indicate support for this option do so primarily because of its simplicity and ‘straightforward’ nature and because they feel it will alleviate the traffic problems. Those who support Option A also mention, amongst others, a number of reasons for their support:

- It would cause least disruption during construction prevent the loss of direct private access onto the A428
- It would create free-flowing access across the black cat junction

- It would create the most futureproof development

7.7.2 Concerns

Respondents expressed concerns about the complexity of the junction to be able to function as a junction. Those who have concerns about Option A also mention, amongst others, a number of concerns:

- It would be complex which would cause more traffic and accidents
- It would have a visual impact being a three-tiered structure
- It would not have enough direct routes for traffic approaching the junction
- It would involve a lot of land take due to its complexity
- It would have the least impact environmentally

7.8 Consultation Option B

Option B – retaining the existing Black Cat Roundabout; creating a new free-flow link from the A421 eastbound towards the A1 northbound, and slip roads to and from the A421; addition of slip roads to provide a free flow link bypassing the roundabout traffic moving southbound onto the A421.

Option B is the least popular consultation option amongst those that expressed a preference, with 312 of 2538 (12%) expressing it as their preferred route option.

7.8.1 Comments in support

Respondents who indicate support for this option do so primarily because it's the most logical progression of the infrastructure already in place at the Black Cat. Those who support Option B also mention, amongst others, a number of reasons for their support:

- It would intrude least on the surrounding landscapes
- It would cause the least impact and disruption while the development is ongoing
- It would be constructed with the lowest cost to the tax-payer
- It would be a more cost-efficient solution to the problem

7.8.2 Concerns

Respondents expressed concerns about the lesser impact to the problems than the three-tiered options would solve. Those who have concerns about Option B also mention, amongst others, a number of concerns:

- It would not provide a free-flowing solution and would therefore not help to ease traffic and congestion at the junction It would not provide a long-terms solution
- It would have a detrimental impact on the local economy

- It would not allow sufficient access to the surrounding villages

7.9 Consultation Option C

Option C – Enlarging the existing Black Cat roundabout; creating a new free-flow link from the A421 eastbound towards the A1 northbound, and slip roads to and from the A421, and slip roads to and from the A421, the A1 and the A428.

Option C is the most popular consultation option amongst those that expressed a preference, with 1533 of 2538 (60%) expressing it as their preferred route option.

7.9.1 Comments in support

Of those who support this option, they believe that this option would create free-flowing traffic at the Black Cat, alleviating traffic and congestion problems at the junction. Those who support Option C also mention, amongst others, a number of reasons for their support:

- It would provide the necessary capacity and flexibility to cope with any future increases in traffic or road use Least impact on residents
- It would be the most cost-effective option as it would not need further modification
- It would have the least impact on the local environment and the surrounding area
- It would be a simple solution that is less confusing

7.9.2 Concerns

Respondents expressed concerns that the construction of Option C does not permit free-flowing traffic from the northern stretch of the A1 towards Bedford. Those who have concerns about Option C also mention, amongst others, a number of concerns:

- Would increase congestion around the roundabout
- Would be an imposing three-tiered roundabout that would have a visual impact
- Would involve the removal of a grade 2 listed building: Brook Cottages

8. Alternative options received as part of the feedback

As part of the 2017 consultation we presented the 3 route options and 3 Black Cat options. While most respondents commented on just the options presented, a number of respondents provided alternative options. This section outlines the main alternatives and our response to them.

8.1 Suggestions for additional measures

Measure	Suggestion	Location
Road improvements	Electronic diversionary signage to pass traffic onto the new road and prevent rat-running in case of road closures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 • A14
	Slip road improvement to prevent rat-running through St Neots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 at Little Paxton • A1 / B645 junction
	Junction improvements to maximise traffic flow benefits from project and prevent 'bottle necks' forming as a result of improved flow on new A428 road and Black Cat roundabout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girton interchange • Madingley junction • Cambourne junction • Buckden roundabout • Baldock roundabout • Sandy roundabout • Biggleswade roundabout
	Removal of roundabouts to improve traffic flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1
	Removal of bridges to improve traffic flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 (crossing the Cam)
	Other A1 road improvements (including upgrade to motorway status)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alconbury to Baldock • Brampton to Baldock
	Rerouting of the A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of Biggleswade, Sandy, St Neots and Buckden
NMU improvements	Bridleway improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gravely airfield (the Sandy-Huntingdon bridleway)
	Cycle route improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1198 Papworth Everard bypass to Caxton Gibbet

8.2 Caxton Gibbet alternative suggestions

- A 'spectacles' junction similar to one at Cambourne;
- An underpass for A428 traffic;
- A flyover for A428 traffic;

-
- Filter lane from A1198 to A428 eastbound;
 - Filter lane from A428 to A1198 southbound;
 - Bypassing the roundabout with a connection nearer Cambourne; and
 - Improving access for traffic leaving Papworth Everard.

8.3 Route alternative suggestions

- The new road should incorporate or simply upgrade the existing A428
- The new route should closely follow the existing road corridor.

8.4 Orange Route alternative suggestions

- Traffic flow modelling on roads approaching the proposed junction;
- The creation of multiple points of entry to St Neots from new road;
- Using only east-facing slip roads on the proposed junction to prevent local traffic using the new road to bypass St Neots; and
- Including additional signage in plans for the proposed junction to discourage traffic from using the B1428.
- Another exit for Eynesbury/St Neots;
- A greater number of St Neots access points;
- Moving the route further east to avoid impacting a family farm at Eynesbury;
- Moving the route closer to the railway line to avoid creating an “island of land”;
- Moving the route further south to minimise impact on Love’s Farm and Wintringham developments;
- A larger gap between the new road and the existing road to create farming land of an “economic scale” between roads;
- Crossing the railway line further to the north in order to straighten the route;
- A straighter and shorter Orange route with the Caxton Gibbet shifted junction slightly north;
- A flyover or underpass for the B1046;
- Deep cutting to mitigate the potential damaging effects of the new road;
- A wide central reservation leaving space for future expansion of the road;
- Maintenance of access to Toseland via the Toseland Road; and
- Reduced speed limits on the ‘old’ A428.
- The route should follow the line of the pylons which pass to the north of the existing route, providing maintenance access on top of the benefits given above; and

- Moving the route north would enable the creation of a 'green corridor' along the line of the existing A428.

8.5 Pink Route alternative suggestions

- More than three lanes in each direction to 'future proof' the Pink route;
- More connections to the Pink route; and
- Provision for horse riders suggests that 'land bridges' should be constructed to ensure that horses are not spooked by the expressway

In the public consultation documentation, suggestions for alternative designs have been made and noted within the Dialogue by Design report. We have extracted the information and reviewed the design ideas and if you would like any further information regarding this please contact: A428BlackCattoCaxtonGibbet@highwaysengland.co.uk

9. General issues raised

In addition to comments on the proposals and questions posed in this consultation, there were also a number of general issues raised. This section will provide a response to those issues:

9.1 Compensation and blight

We recognise that when an infrastructure project is proposed it can cause concerns for those whose property is potentially directly affected. As such, at the public consultation events we ensured that property specialists were on hand to speak to any concerned residents, landowners or business owners. We will make these specialists available at our statutory consultation.

With the project at an early stage of design and with different route options being considered, there is a resulting level of uncertainty. However, as the scheme develops there will be a lot more clarity on what land is required for the scheme. Once this is clear, direct engagement will take place with those landowners and property owners directly affected.

More information can be found <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-property-and-blight>

For those whose property or land is not required for the scheme, it may be that they are entitled to make a Part 1 compensation claim. Part 1 compensation comes into effect one year after the scheme becomes operational: More information can be found <https://www.gov.uk/compensation-road-property-value/overview>)

9.2 Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

We are working closely with the Oxford to Cambridge expressway team as they develop their proposals and build the cases for its inclusion in the Road Investment Strategy 2. A joint board has been set up with senior members to ensure that the schemes are fully considered in conjunction with each other and by each team. We will continue to work closely to ensure the best outcome for the projects.

9.3 Mitigation measures

Due to the early stage of the project we have not identified mitigation measures. Now that the preferred route has been announced we can begin to develop mitigation further including detailed landscape, archaeological and ecology surveys. We will produce a 'Scoping Report' which will outline in detail the expected significant environmental effects of the preferred route and start to outline specific mitigation measures that could reduce those effects. Mitigation measures could include, for example, landscaping and noise fencing.

10. Conclusion

The 2017 public consultation received a large amount of responses and we are grateful to all those who took time to come to our information events and respond to the consultation.

In total 2028 visitors attended the public information events and 4189 completed a questionnaire or provided a response via letter or email. This rate of response demonstrates the high level of local interest in the scheme.

From the results obtained, 94% of those who supported a consultation option expressed a preference for Orange, Pink or Purple route option, with only 6% expressing no preference. Of those who expressed a preference for a consultation option, the Orange route option received the most support with 3019 of the 3616 (83%) expressing it as their preferred route option. The second most popular option was Pink route option with 376 of the 3616 (10%) expressing it as their preferred route option. Purple route option was supported by 221 of the 3616 (6%).

Support for the Orange route option was provided for a number of reasons. The key themes for support from the consultation included its route alignment being close to the current road, improvements to traffic and congestion and will have the least impact to the environment. There were a number of concerns about the Orange route option which included the creation of rat-runs and detrimentally affected journey times.

The balance of responses shows that improvements are felt to be needed across the route and at both Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet. Improvement to the A428 was supported by 2982 out of 3819 (78%). Improvement to the Black Cat roundabout was supported by 3213 out of 3824 (84%).

A number of alternatives were provided. While some of these alternatives have already been considered and ruled out, the comments we received in relation to route alignment are being considered in detail with an open mind and will help us to inform our consultation strategy.

89% of those who attended our consultation events rated them positively via our 'smiley face' terminal. We received constructive criticism from a few respondents who have suggested how communications and the consultation could have been better. We always strive to improve so we will consider how we can incorporate those suggestions into our engagement going forward.

11. Appendix

Appendix A

Dialogue By Design Report on Public Consultation: A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Improvements

This report is available on request, please contact:
A428BlackCattoCaxtonGibbet@highwaysengland.co.uk

Appendix B

Consultation Brochure – is available on the website at:
www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a428

Appendix C

Consultation Panels

Copies of the panels are available on request, please contact:
A428BlackCattoCaxtonGibbet@highwaysengland.co.uk

If you need help accessing this or any other Highways England information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.

