



A428

Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements

Project update: February 2020



We're bringing more young people into the planning process using Minecraft, the world's most popular video game. Here pupils from Castle Newnham school tell us what they think to our plans.



Welcome to our project update



During the summer of 2019 we carried out an extensive consultation including 17 events across the region. Over 2,500 people took the time to come and talk to us about our plans to improve journeys between Milton Keynes and Cambridge. Thank you to everyone who came to see us and got involved. The feedback shows

there is overwhelming support for both the proposals and our consultation process. This is something we are very proud of as we deliver a scheme that has the support of the local community and creates real benefits for the region.

Our consultation also looked at new ways to present our plans and engage people in our proposals. One of these was to use Minecraft, the world's biggest selling video game, to engage younger people. The scheme has been built in Minecraft, a virtual land where players create and build using 3D building blocks. The model – a first for a major UK road scheme and the biggest of its kind – lets young people freely explore the plans and share with their friends online.

We also ran our first workshop using Minecraft in a local Bedfordshire school. It was great to see so many young people take an interest in our proposals. Inspiring our next generation of engineers is something we take seriously and we intend to do more workshops with local schools in the year ahead.

Since the consultation, we have been reviewing your feedback which includes over 900 responses. We will consider each and every response as we develop our final proposals ahead of submitting the Development Consent Order application.

We remain committed to opening the new road in 2025/26. We will continue to share updates with local communities, customers and stakeholders as the project progresses.

To sign up for email updates on the project, visit our website: www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a428

Lee Galloway
Programme leader

Your feedback is valuable and helps the ongoing development of the scheme.

What have we been doing?

Since the consultation, we have been carrying out ground investigations and surveys along the proposed route. These are important and will give our team a clear picture of the type of soils, rock and groundwater to help us design structures and plan how we build them.

We are also starting archaeological trial trenching in the area. The investigations will help us understand the significance of the archaeological resource and inform how we can avoid or minimise harm through design and mitigation. The first phase will begin in early 2020 and will run until the end of summer.

At the same time, we have continued to engage with the local community and other interested parties. We hold regular Community Forums and Technical Working Groups. These are an important way to gain feedback from key stakeholders as we develop our proposals.



17
events



2,500+
attendees



27,000+
invitations

The consultation

An eight week consultation ran from Monday 3 June to Sunday 28 July 2019 providing the opportunity to have your say on our proposals for the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements scheme.

Working with stakeholders

Over recent months we have attended meetings with stakeholders across the region including local authorities, parish councils, landowners, statutory bodies, elected representatives including MPs and ward councillors.

Promoting the consultation

Consultations typically resonate with an older audience. Parents, workers and young people are often more difficult to reach.

To gain the views of all our customers, we did a number of things differently. We held Minecraft workshops at all consultation events to encourage families to attend and partnered with Mumsnet to promote them.

Pop up events at service stations and shopping centres as well as at community centres gave us the chance to talk and listen to the views of a broad mix of people.

We also promoted the consultation through news releases, social media, advertising, media interviews, a postcard sent to over 27,000 addresses and our dedicated project website.



24,500+
visitors to
the website



17,000+
views of flythrough
on You Tube



3.2m+
people reached
by media coverage



Your responses

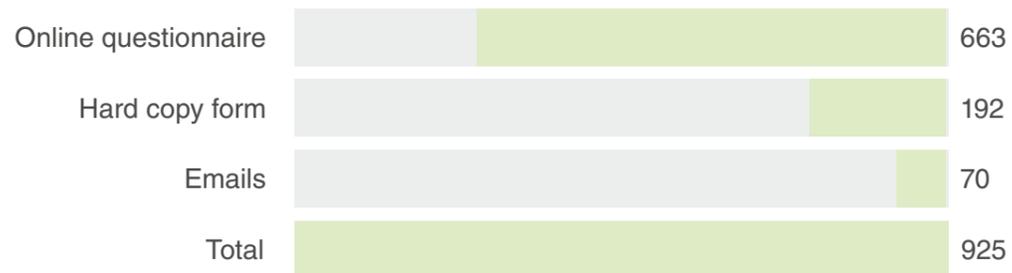
925
responses received

Please note:

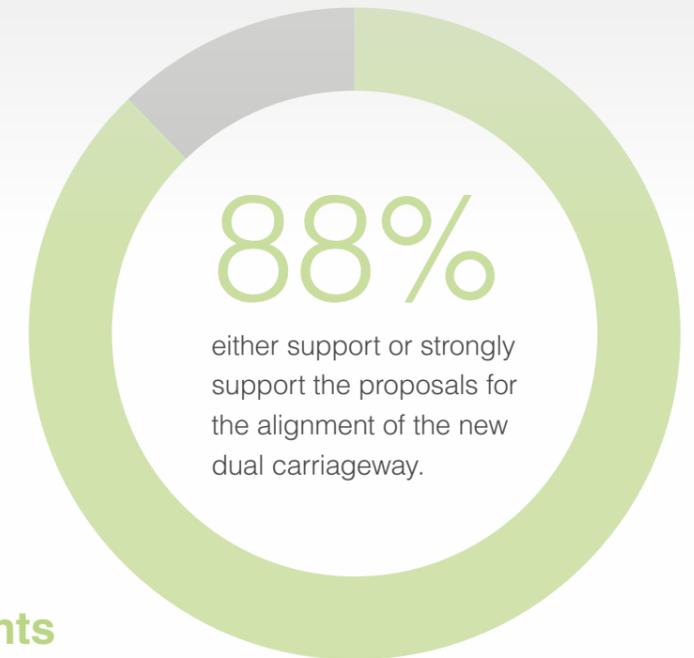
Percentages on the charts may not add up to 100%, as they are rounded to the nearest percent. Where a figure is less than 0.5% we have displayed that figure as <1% as this is preferable to 0%.

The consultation responses were received and analysed by Traverse, a specialist independent company. The full statutory Consultation Report providing detailed information about the consultation process, the issues raised and our responses to them will be published as part of our Development Consent Order application this summer. The following pages provide a summary of the responses from the consultation.

How people chose to respond



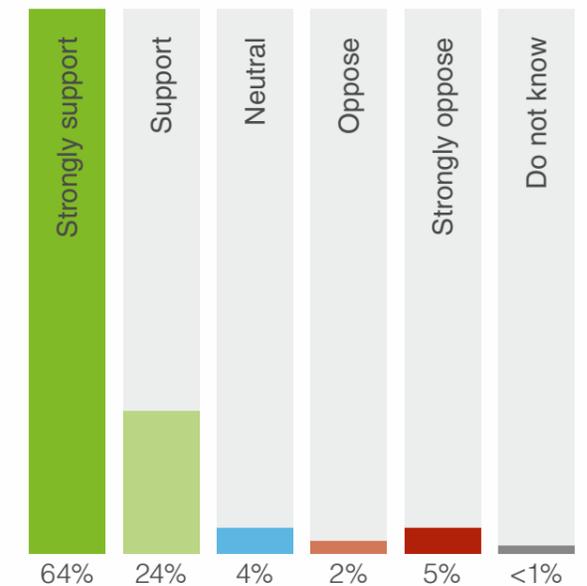
Do you support or oppose the detailed alignment of the new dual carriageway?



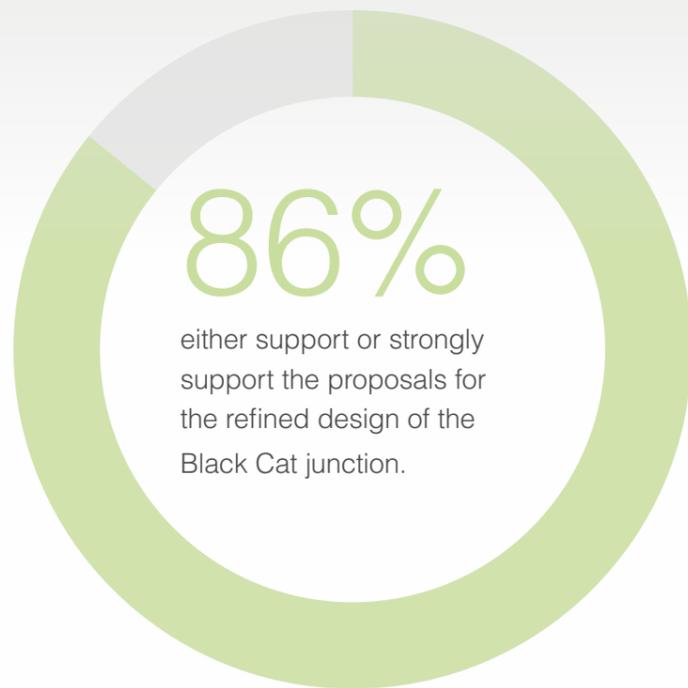
Highlighted comments

Your comments reflect high support for the scheme. A brief overview is below:

- ... The scheme will have a positive impact on traffic, safety and reduce the number of drivers using village roads as rat runs.
- ... People felt the roundabout will address the present situation in relation to congestion, safety, and connectivity between Bedford and Cambridge.
- ... A small number commented on the impact on local communities during construction. This included concerns over additional rat running and construction noise.



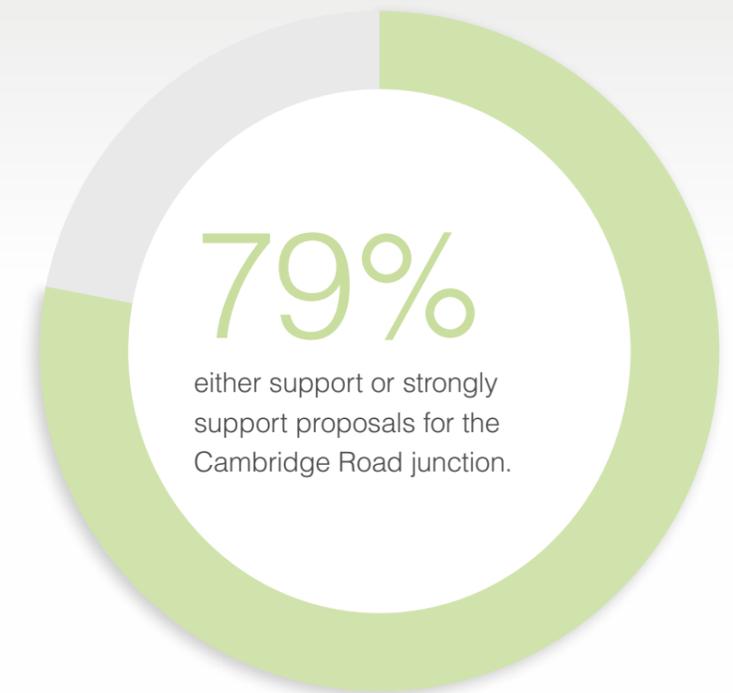
Do you support or oppose the refined design for Black Cat junction?



Highlighted comments

- People felt the new design of the Black Cat junction will reduce congestion at this critical point on the road network.
- The new design will reduce traffic congestion at the junction as well as alleviating rat running in surrounding villages while improving road safety.
- A small number of people felt the design will fail to address existing issues with the A1, such as the bottlenecks at Sandy and Buckden.

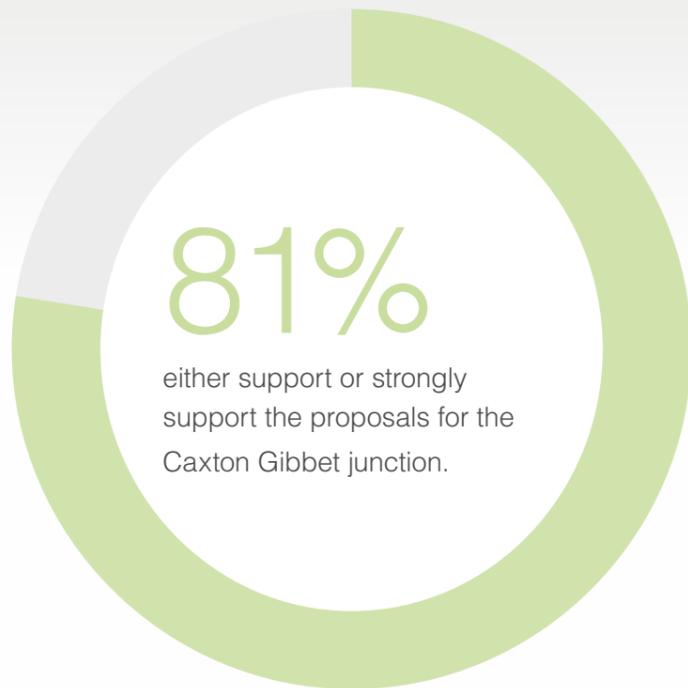
Do you support or oppose the design for Cambridge Road junction?



Highlighted comments

- The junction will meet the needs of the local area with enough capacity to deal with any increase in traffic that may arise as a result of the new housing developments.
- A small number of concerns were raised that the junction has not been designed with adequate capacity for the Loves Farm or Wintringham development.

Do you support or oppose the design for Caxton Gibbet junction?



Highlighted comments

Some people highlighted that the Caxton Gibbet junction will reduce congestion, journey times, traffic and the number of vehicles using unsuitable local roads, as well as increase safety.

A small number of people raised concerns that congestion levels at the new Caxton Gibbet junction will be worse than they are currently due to large volumes of traffic needing to navigate two roundabouts.

Do you support or oppose the changes to the existing A428 junction at Eltisley?

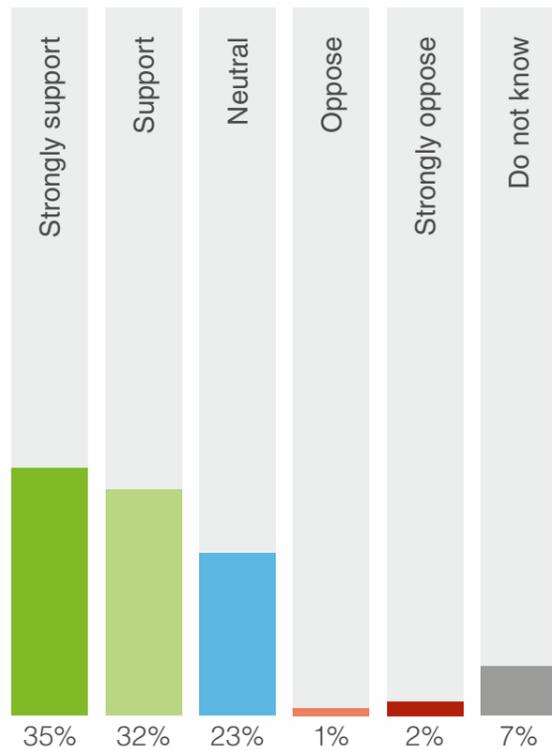


Highlighted comments

Respondents said there will be a positive impact on traffic in the area, particularly in terms of safety and congestion both at the new junction and on surrounding roads.

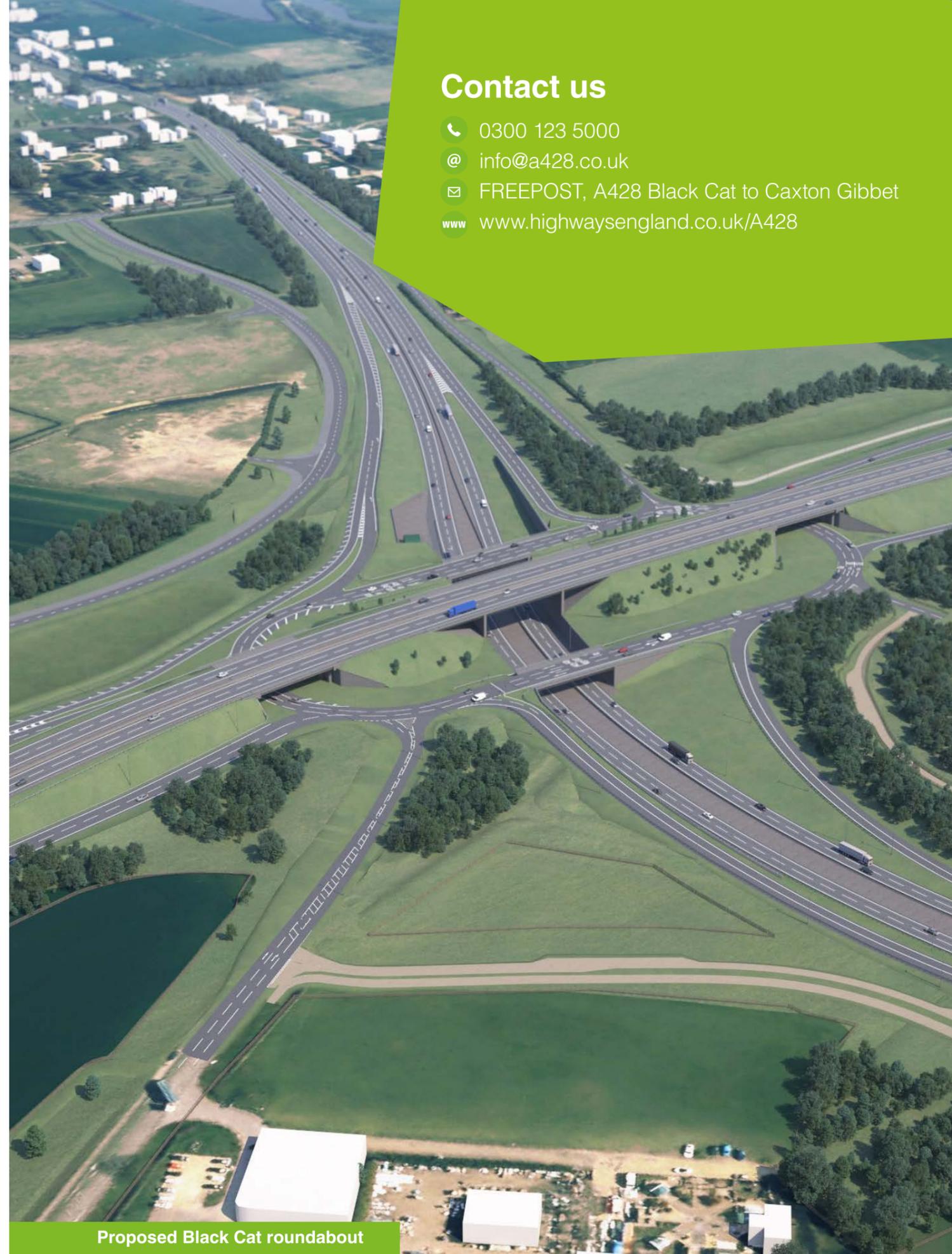
A small number of people felt the design of the junction was overly complex which could be difficult to navigate. Some also raised concerns about the potential for rat running through Eltisley during construction and once the new road is opened.

Do you support or oppose the proposed routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders?



Highlighted comments

- The scheme will improve the safety of cyclists, walkers and horse riders because of the segregation from motorised traffic.
- A small number of people felt that insufficient consideration has been given to cyclists including concerns about the crossing proposed at Caxton Gibbet.



Contact us

- 0300 123 5000
- info@a428.co.uk
- FREEPOST, A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet
- www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A428

Proposed Black Cat roundabout

Next steps

We're continuing to work through people's comments in detail and as we consider the responses, we may make changes to the scheme. If we make significant changes to the design, we may carry out further consultation on those changes. We will keep you informed if this happens.

It is vital we get all aspects of the design right to ensure we maximise the benefits of the scheme while also minimising any impacts on communities and the environment. We will continue to work closely with stakeholders to shape the design and understand the impact on local communities.

We remain committed to opening the new road in 2025/26.

We now expect to submit our Development Consent Order (DCO) application in Summer 2020. This will give us additional time to consider local concerns around the wider impacts of the scheme at key points on the road network.

It will also give us time to ensure our assessments around noise and air quality from the changes in traffic patterns are as detailed as possible.



Considering feedback from the consultation, developing the design and preparing our submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

We will make our submission to the Planning Inspectorate, which will include feedback from the consultation. This is called the DCO application.

The Planning Inspectorate has 28 days to decide if the application meets the required standards to proceed, including whether our consultation has been adequate.

You can register with the Planning Inspectorate as an interested party and make formal representations about the project. You will then be kept informed of progress and opportunities to be involved.

The Planning Inspectorate has six months to examine our application. This is called the DCO examination period. Registered parties can send written comments to the Planning Inspectorate and can ask to speak at a public hearing.

The Planning Inspectorate will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport within three months of the end of the examination period.

The Secretary of State then has three months to issue a decision. This will be followed by a public announcement. If approved, construction could begin soon after.

