

Highways England  
FREEPOST  
A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet

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July 26th 2019

Dear Sirs,

## ***A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Improvements Public consultation – June 2019***

I am writing to you on behalf of CTC Cambridge, a local group of Cycling UK. We strongly request that this scheme is revised to include more extensive improvements for people cycling and other non-motorised users (NMUs).

We welcome the limited plans for cycling and walking that are outlined in the consultation. In particular we welcome the new grade-separated crossings that are proposed for some of the public rights of way that cross the new road.

However it is clear to us that this scheme will have a strongly negative impact on people cycling in this area and therefore we think the scheme must include more high-quality measures to mitigate these negative impacts.

In our view the consultation plans to cater for non-motorised users are lacking ambition from a cycling perspective. Highways England could and should do much more to support cycling and walking journeys as part of this scheme.

Specifically, we think the scheme should include more new cycle paths in order to comply with the Department for Transport's own strategic guidelines. We also think the scheme must include several new elements on connecting roads to mitigate the effect of the large projected increase in traffic volumes on these roads.

We have identified a set of detailed proposals to show the set of improvements that we think are needed. These proposals (which we refer to as "CTC Cambridge Proposals") are described in detail below. Our proposals do not affect the new road itself: they are aimed at mitigating the impact of this scheme on cyclists and other non-motorised road users on the adjacent road network.

We would like to emphasise that this scheme will have a strongly negative impact on cycling unless the improvements suggested by us are added to the scheme. We think several existing cycle routes are likely to be badly affected by

increased traffic volumes on adjacent roads. Our proposals aim to address the most important of these negative impacts.

We also want to emphasise that we are simply asking Highways England to follow the Government's stated policy for the strategic road network, as described in the Department for Transport report "Action for Roads" sections 3.24-3.33 (2013), and Interim Advice Note IAN 195/16 (2016). We reproduce the relevant clause from IAN 195/16 below – with our added emphasis.

*Extract from IAN 195/16 (Oct 2016) – **with our added emphasis***

### **2.1.1. Designing networks for Cycle Traffic**

The development of cycle networks shall be in accordance with Highways England's Cycling Strategy. **Where Non-Motorised Users (NMU) are prohibited from the Strategic Road Network, out of corridor cycle routes may be created as part of the legal process of creation of new highway,** or through the adoption or conversion of rights of way, such as disused railway lines, with the potential to link to national cycle routes. **Highways England and designers shall plan to acquire land to create the space to accommodate cycle traffic as part of new scheme designs** (see Section 1.3) or when enhancing cycling provision for existing routes with NMU prohibitions.

Where all-purpose trunk roads are upgraded with new routes being provided, the original route corridor and adjoining local road network can provide a suitable opportunity for compensatory cycle route provision. In such instances, designers shall liaise with the appropriate local highway authority responsible for the original route once reclassified.

**Where alternative cycle routes away from the SRN cannot be provided, designers shall ensure that cycle networks allow for segregated cycle trips within the corridor of all-purpose trunk roads with speed limits of 40mph or greater.** Cycle networks shall also allow for trips crossing the SRN corridor. Cross-corridor schemes, such as those crossing motorways or where NMUs are prohibited, can reduce or eliminate severance which may have otherwise suppressed demand for cycle traffic.

In our opinion, the cycling elements in the consultation document fail to meet these sensible government policy objectives. Our proposals are designed to provide the missing elements and propose a design that better addresses the needs of people cycling and other non-motorised road users.

It is disappointing to see Highways England once again proposing a new road scheme that fails to cater adequately for cycling and walking journeys. We need to change the way that transport in the UK is planned if we are to meet our legal commitment to reducing carbon emissions. The cost of including our modest proposals as part of this scheme will be only a few percent of the approximately £1bn budget. It will be a disgrace if the scheme goes ahead without these changes.

Yours faithfully

Rupert Goodings  
Cycle Campaigning Officer  
CTC Cambridge

# **CTC Cambridge proposals to improve the scheme for people cycling and other non-motorised road users**

## ***Summary***

In the remainder of this document we make a number of proposals to improve this scheme for people cycling and other non-motorised users.

We have grouped our proposals into five groups as follows:

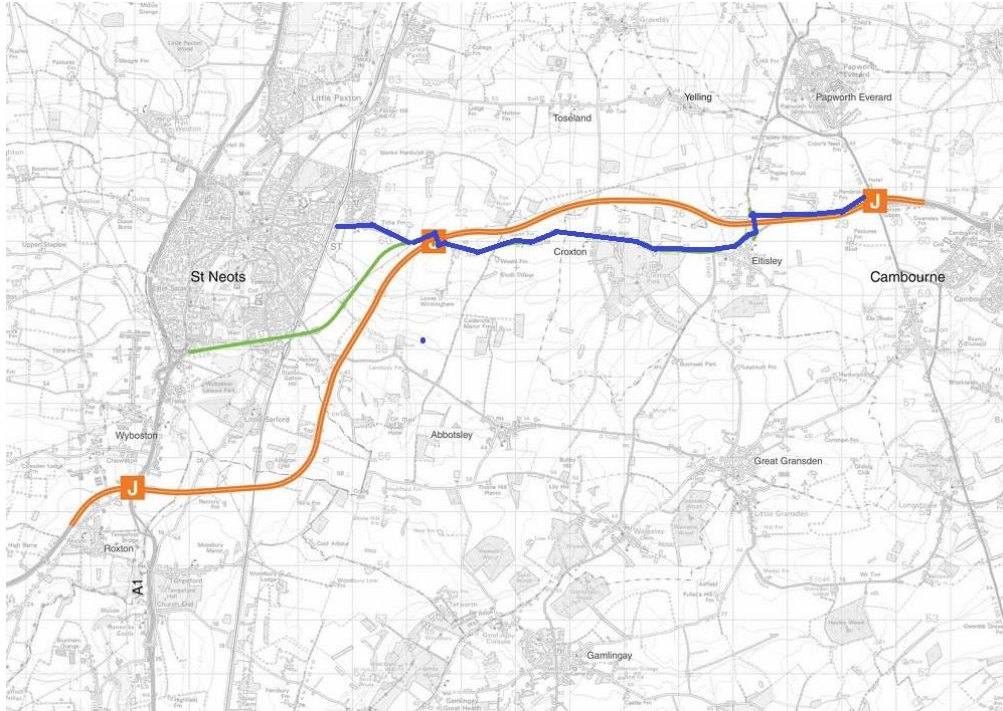
1. CTC Cambridge Proposal 1: A new segregated cycle path alongside the old A428 from St Neots to Caxton Gibbet. This would connect to a new cycle path from Cambourne to Cambridge that is already planned by the Greater Cambridge Partnership and other local authorities.
2. CTC Cambridge Proposal 2: Create safer junctions and crossing places along the A1198. These are needed to because the Highways England scheme will lead to a much higher volume of traffic on the A1198 (both north and south of the new A428) making it difficult and unsafe for cyclists to cross.
3. CTC Cambridge Proposal 3: Create new cycle paths to avoid the need to cycle on the A1198 where there is no alternative cycle route. These are needed to because the Highways England scheme will lead to a higher volume of traffic on the A1198, making it unsuitable and unsafe for people cycling.
4. CTC Cambridge Proposal 4: Create additional cycle paths along the B1040 to provide two missing links. Again this will mitigate the effect of the extra traffic generated by the Highways England scheme.
5. CTC Cambridge Proposal 5: Improvements to existing junctions and crossings of the old A428 to address the historic severance of the old road.

These proposals are explained in more detail in the sections below.

## **CTC Cambridge Proposal 1**

### **A new segregated cycle path alongside the old A428**

We are disappointed that the Highways England plans do not include a new cycle path connection between St Neots and Cambourne (and hence to Cambridge) despite this being a major discussion item during the early consultation meeting in November 2016 between Highways England and various representatives of cycling, walking and horse-riding organisations.



We think the plans should include the creation of a new segregated cycle path between St Neots and Caxton Gibbet using the route shown in blue on the map above. At Caxton Gibbet the path should be able to connect to a new segregated cycle path between Papworth and Cambourne which we understand is already planned by Cambridge County Council (this new cycle path is also described in CTC Cambridge Proposal 3).

Whilst Cambourne will be a major start point and destination for local cyclists in itself, this would also allow cyclists from St Neots and villages along the route to continue in the direction of Cambridge using a new cycle path that will be delivered as part of the Greater Cambridge Partnership's "City Deal".

We are aware that cyclists will be banned from using the new A428. We do not object to this, but this prohibition should trigger a requirement for Highways England to provide an alternative route. The old A428 is not an acceptable alternative route for cyclists. Although the old road will carry less motor traffic it will still be too dangerous due to the relatively narrow carriageway and the 60 mph speed limit.

This proposal is based on Highways England's own recent guidelines detailed in Interim Advice Note 195/16 (2016) section 2.1.1.

The new cycle path must provide a safe way to cross the A1198 at Caxton Gibbet to complete the connection to Cambourne. This should be a grade-separated crossing (an underpass) which can be included as part of the new

roundabout and junction design. This element is restated below in CTC Cambridge Proposal 2.

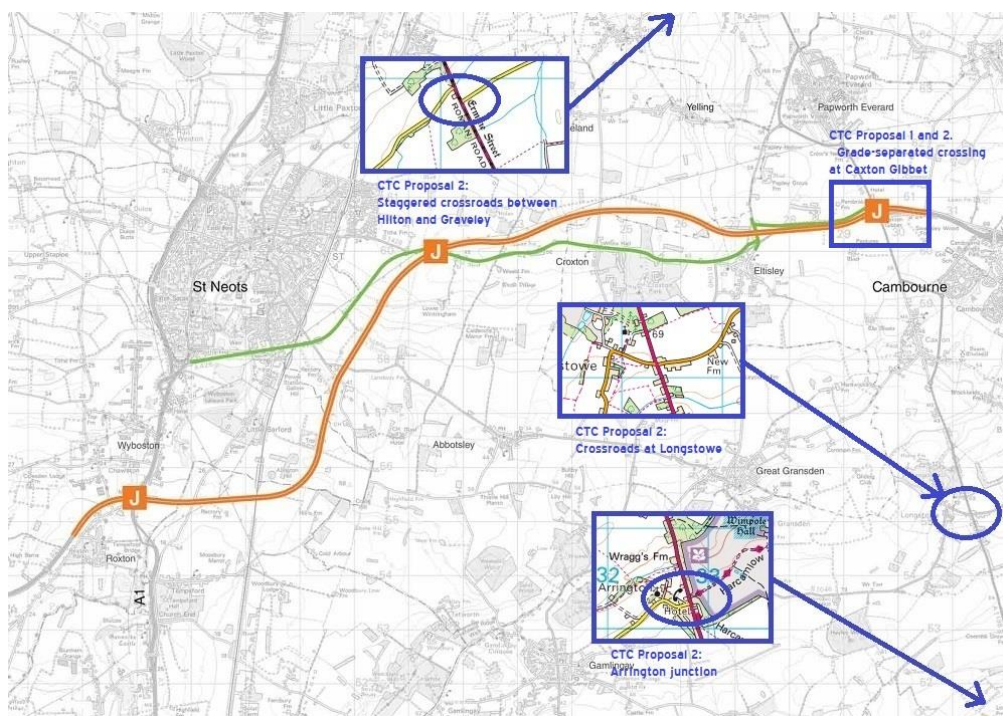
Although we're asking for a continuous cycle route all the way between St Neots and Cambourne (and from there to Cambridge) we're not suggesting that many people will want to ride the entire route. Instead we're asking for a route that will cater for shorter local journeys, especially those between the villages along the route and the shops, schools and employment opportunities in St Neots and Cambourne.

## **CTC Cambridge Proposal 2 Junction improvements to mitigate increased traffic volume on the A1198.**

The consultation documents from Highways England concede that the new A428 will cause increased traffic volumes on connecting roads. The worst-affected road will be the A1198, which is projected to see a significant increase in traffic volumes. We therefore think that extensive mitigation is needed to deal with the impact of this increased motor traffic on people cycling.

This means that the A1198 will be unusable as a cycle route, even for short sections, and existing crossings of the A1198 (such as at Longstowe) will become more dangerous and difficult.

We therefore think Highways England should amend their plans to include measures to mitigate the effect of this increased motor traffic on people cycling, walking and on horseback. In particular, there is a need for protected crossings where local roads cross the A1198, and new cycle paths alongside the A1198 in those places where the A1198 is the only route available. We are proposing detailed improvements to deal with both of these issues.



We have identified four main junctions that need mitigation:

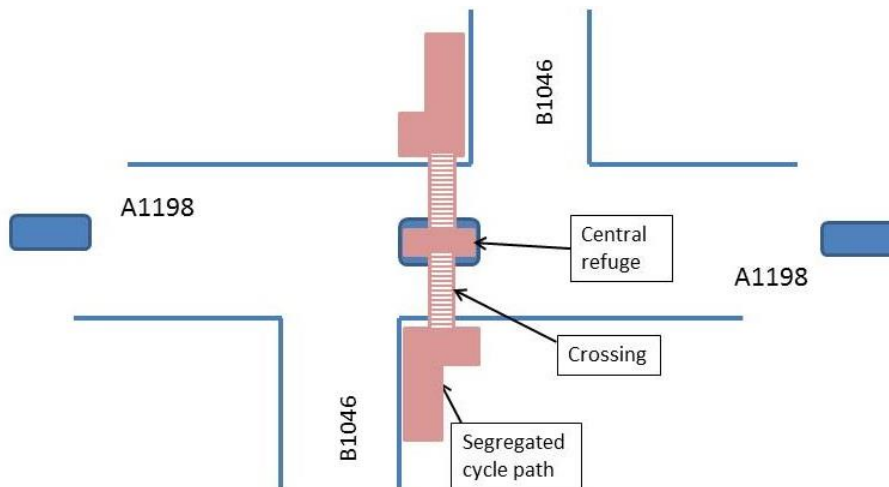
1. The crossing of the A1198 at Caxton Gibbet (as identified in CTC Cambridge Proposal 1)
2. The staggered crossroads between Hilton and Graveley
3. The B1046 crossroads at Longstowe.
4. The junction at Arrington (between Croydon/Arrington and the Wimpole Estate)

In all these cases these junctions need to be modified to provide a safer crossing for cyclists to mitigate the effects of the expected high traffic volumes. For the

crossing at Caxton Gibbet we recommend a grade-separated crossing (an underpass) which can be constructed as part of the new roundabout and junction. For the other junctions, which require improvements to the existing junctions, we recommend a combination of three elements:

- a two stage crossing of the main road with a central refuge (large enough for all types of cycle)
- a segregated cycle path alongside the A1198 for the staggered junctions
- and a lower speed limit on the A1198 for the section around each junction.

A typical arrangement - based on the B1046 junction at Longstowe - is illustrated below.



It is essential that the segregated cycle paths and the central refuge provide enough space so that large cycles (e.g. Bakfiets-type bikes) can manoeuvre easily and are fully protected as they wait for a gap in the traffic. The segregated cycle paths should also extend down the side roads so that cyclists can cross the minor road well away from the junction.

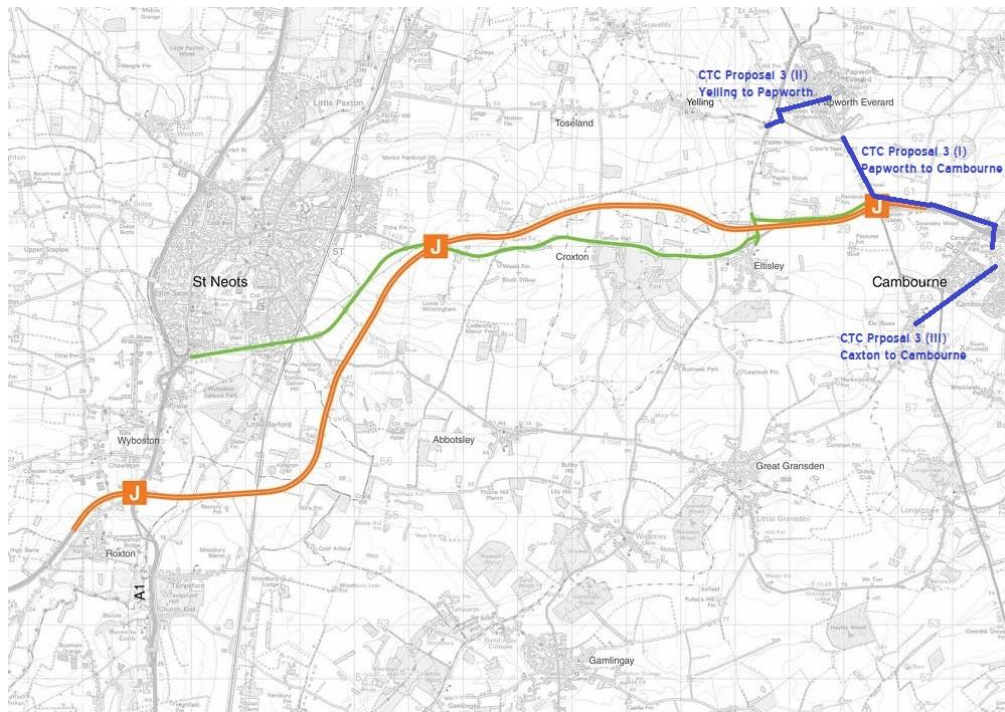
The combination of all three elements is needed to provide a safe crossing for non-motorised road users given the increased traffic volumes. These changes will also create a safer junction for motor vehicles that are joining or leaving the A1198 at these same junctions.

## **CTC Cambridge Proposal 3**

### **Create new cycle paths to avoid the need to cycle on the A1198 where there is no alternative cycle route.**

As noted above, the A1198 is predicted to see a significant increase in traffic volume. The largest increase in volume will be north of Caxton Gibbet where the volume of motor traffic is predicted to double from 14,000 vehicles/day to 27,000. This large increase will be caused by the combined effect of a new junction with the A14 at its northern end and the improved junction with the A428 proposed for Caxton Gibbet. This section is likely to carry even higher volumes whenever there is a blockage on the A14 or A428 and motor traffic is diverted onto the other route.

This means that the A1198 will not be usable by cyclists, even for short sections. New cycle paths are therefore needed along some key sections of the A1198 to maintain existing cycle connections between nearby communities.



We have identified three main areas where a new cycle paths are needed to maintain connections between settlements:

1. Connecting Papworth Everard and Cambourne: A new cycleway along the A1198 between Caxton Gibbet and Papworth Everard.
2. Connecting Yelling and Papworth Everard: A connection from the Yelling Road into Papworth Everard, ideally including a new off-road path to achieve a more direction connection.
3. Connecting Caxton village and Cambourne: Resurfacing the existing off-road connection between Caxton village and Cambourne.

### **Connecting Papworth Everard and Cambourne**

Our first proposal is a restatement of the need for a new cycle route that has already been proposed by Cambridge County Council between Cambourne and Papworth. Part of this connection overlaps with the eastern section of CTC



Cambridge Proposal 1 (the A428 cycle path) and they can share this same route between Caxton Gibbet and Cambourne.

### **Connecting Yelling and Papworth Everard**

Our second proposal creates a cycle connection to the Yelling road that avoids the need to cycle on the A1198. Our preferred route follows the direct desire line as follows:

- A short section of new cycle path alongside the B1040, between its junction with the Yelling road and the roundabout where it meets the A1198; together with
- A new off-road link from the B1040/A1198 roundabout directly into the centre of Papworth village. As an example, this could follow the line of an existing footpath which would need to be reclassified, widened and resurfaced with an all-weather surface to be suitable for cycling, but other off-road routes may be more suitable. This connection may also require a short section of segregated cycle path alongside the A1198.

### **Connecting Caxton village and Cambourne**

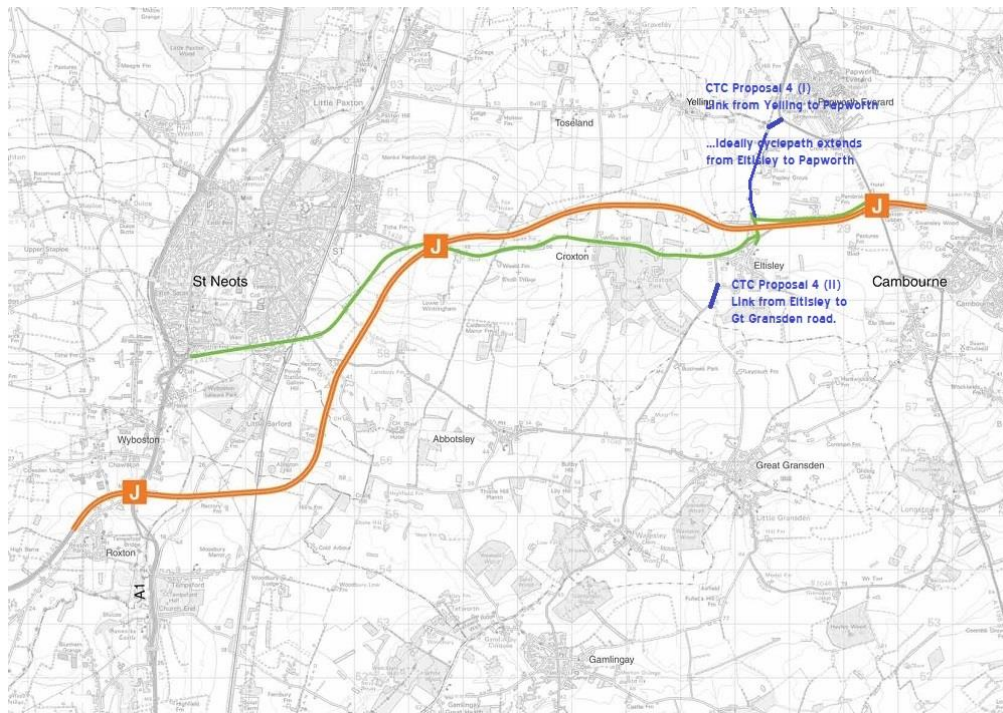
Our third proposal is to surface the existing bridleway between Caxton village and Cambourne with an all-weather surface to provide a good quality direct cycle route between the two villages. The existing bridleway is rough and muddy in places and the only alternative route involves cycling along a section of the A1198.

If the bridleway cannot be improved, a less-preferred alternative is to make it possible to ride between these two villages using existing roads. This would require a segregated cycle path alongside the section of A1198 between the roundabout north of Caxton village and the roundabout west of Cambourne.

## **CTC Cambridge Proposal 4 Segregated cycle paths along the B1040**

The consultation document from Highways England does not include any prediction of the traffic volumes that are expected along the B1040. We think that this road is also likely to see increased motor traffic because of the proposed scheme and some mitigation is therefore needed to deal with the impact of this increased motor traffic.

We consider that these are a lower priority than the A1198 cycle paths suggested in CTC Cambridge Proposal 3 above, and have therefore identified two short sections as the most important missing links.



We think segregated cycle paths are needed on two sections of the B1040:

1. the 300m section of B1040 from the turn for Yelling to the roundabout where it meets the A1198. We mentioned this above.
2. the 300m section of B1040 from the turn for Eltisley village as far as the turn Great Gransden. This provides a link between Great Gransden and Eltisley and on to the A428 cycle path proposed in CTC Cambridge Proposal 1

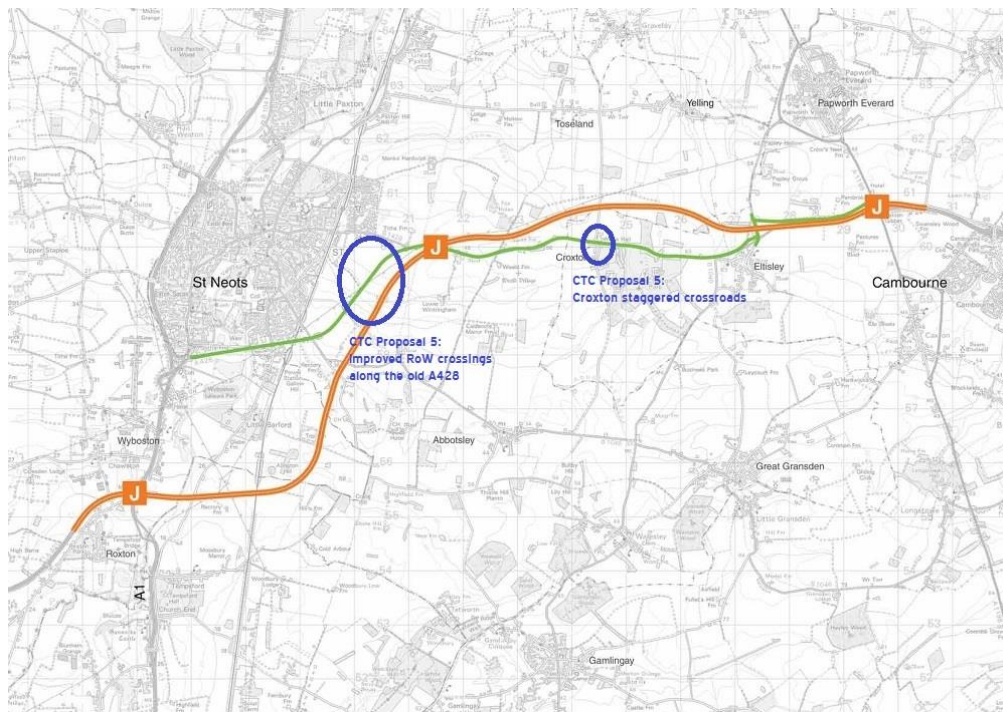
Ideally we would like to see a cycle path alongside the B1040 all the way from Papworth Everard to Eltisley. This would complement our earlier proposals by providing a complete connection between Eltisley and Papworth. We think a segregated cycle path is needed for the whole of this section because this section of the B1040 will likely see the largest increase in traffic volume.

## **CTC Cambridge Proposal 5 Mitigation measures for the old A428**

The new A428 will have grade-separated crossings (overpasses or underpasses) wherever a local road needs to cross it. Similarly, it will have grade-separated crossings (including some new footbridges and underpasses) wherever most existing rights of way cross the new road, though some rights of way will be diverted to the nearest road crossing or extinguished completely.

However the consultation does not appear to include any plans for improvements where the same rights of way cross the old A428. This means that the de-facto severance of existing rights of way by the old A428 will persist, especially on the western section where traffic volumes will remain high.

We think the Highways England plans should include improved rights of way crossings of the old A428, especially on the western section.



We have identified two main areas where measures are needed to help people cycling and walking to cross the old A428:

1. the staggered crossroads at Croxton. This junction should be improved to create a safer crossing for cyclists using the design elements defined in our CTC Cambridge Proposal 2 above.
2. the section east of St Neots where several rights of way cross the old road, in particular the multiple footpath crossings of the current A428 between GR199588 and GR204595. These rights of way will have grade-separated crossings of the new road but unless the plans include safer crossings of the old road these rights of way will still experience de-facto severance by the old road.