

# A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvements

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9.57 Updated Background Biodiversity Information 2021 Technical  
Note

Planning Act 2008

Rule 8(1)(k)

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Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure)  
Rules 2010**

**A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet  
improvements  
Development Consent Order 202[ ]**

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**9.57 Updated Background Biodiversity Information 2021  
Technical Note**

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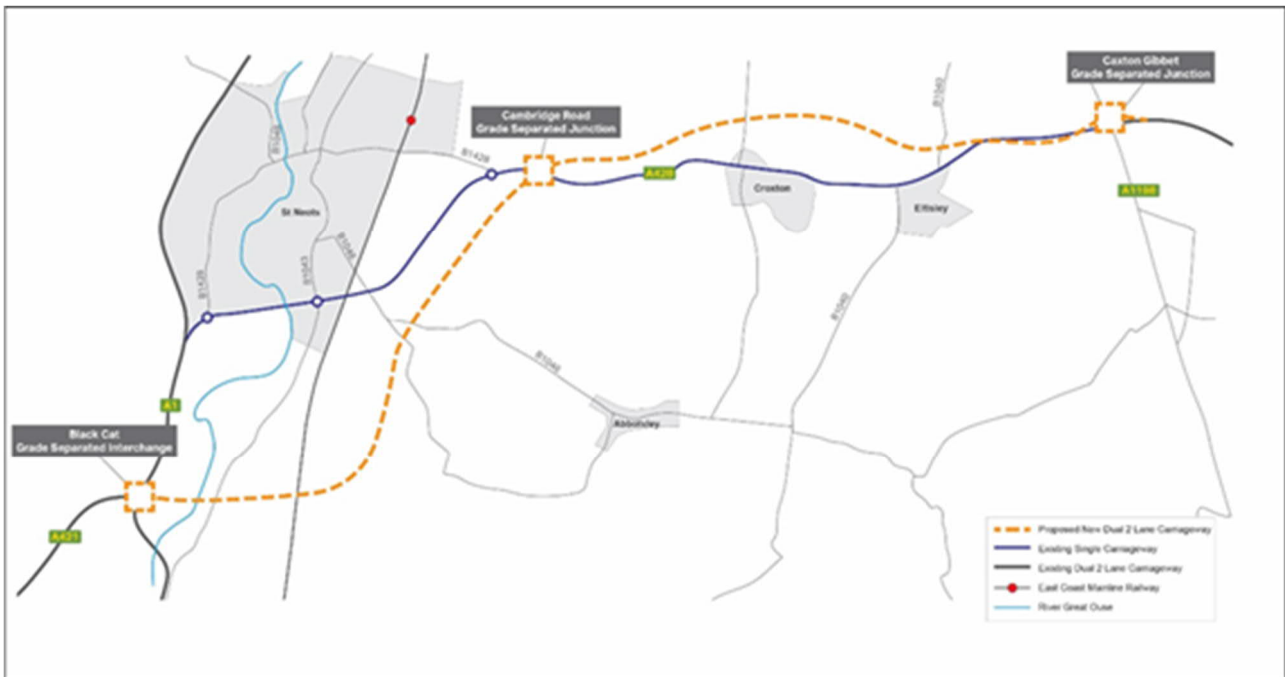
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# 1 Summary

- 1.1.1 A review of background information on the biodiversity of the Scheme and its surrounding landscape has been undertaken to update that provided in Appendix 8.1 Background information [APP-188] of Chapter 8, Biodiversity [APP-077] of the Environmental Statement.
- 1.1.2 The review involved:
- a. Requesting any new biodiversity data since 2018 from the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre (BRMC) and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC).
  - b. Reviewing information obtained from recently published mapping and recent aerial photography.
  - c. Searching for any recently published information on the biodiversity of the area since 2018 when the last published information data search was undertaken (refer to Appendix 8.1, Background Information [APP-188] of the Environmental Statement) and due in part to lead in times in publishing accounts for a given year in some periodicals.
- 1.1.3 In summary, no significant records of protected species have been found during the update data search of the flora and fauna within the Study Area (described in Appendix 8.1, Background Information [APP-188] of the Environmental Statement as the area within the Order Limits and extended to consider the wider counties and districts of Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire through which the Scheme would pass).
- 1.1.4 Of all the records found since 2018 only two records of European Otter (*Lutra lutra*) and two records of Eurasian Badger (*Meles meles*) have been found adjacent to the Order Limits (defined as the maximum area of land required temporarily and permanently to construct, operate and maintain the Scheme) in locations from which these species had already been noted. Furthermore, no records have been found within the Order Limits of the Scheme. This is in part as a result of the dominance of arable agriculture habitat within the Scheme and wider landscape.

## 2 Introduction

2.1.1 The purpose of the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Improvements (the Scheme) is to address the problems of congestion, poor journey time reliability and poor resilience against incidents between the Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet roundabouts. The Scheme seeks to address these problems through construction of a new 10 mile (16 kilometre) dual 2-lane carriageway from the Black Cat roundabout to Caxton Gibbet roundabout, to be known as the A421, and in addition approximately 1.8 miles (3 kilometre) of tie-in works shown in schematic form in **Figure 2-1**.



**Figure 2-1: The Scheme**

2.1.2 This technical note should be read in conjunction with the document Appendix 8-1 Background Information of the Environmental Statement [APP-188].

### 3 Review of background biodiversity information

- 3.1.1 A thorough biodiversity search was undertaken in October 2021 for existing information on the habitats and species within the Study Area (described in Appendix 8.1, Background Information **[APP-188]** of the Environmental Statement as the area within the Order Limits and extended to consider the wider counties and districts of Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire through which the Scheme would pass). This review was undertaken to inform the Biodiversity assessment reported in Chapter 8, Biodiversity **[APP-077]** of the Environmental Statement **[APP-077]**. As more than two years have occurred from the previous data search, a review was undertaken of background information on the biodiversity of the Scheme and its surrounding landscape up to 2 kilometres (1.2 miles) of the Order Limits (Study Area), to update that provided in Appendix 8-1 Background Information of the Environmental Statement **[APP-188]**.
- 3.1.2 The review was undertaken using the same approach as in Appendix 8.1, Background Information **[APP-188]** of the Environmental Statement which included:
- a. Requesting any new biodiversity data since 2018 from the BRMC and the CPERC covering all UK protected species records found within the Study Area.
  - b. Reviewing information obtained from recently published maps and recent aerial photography.
  - c. Information derived from searching for any recently published information on the biodiversity of the area including those editions of the Bedfordshire Naturalist, Bedfordshire Bird Report, Nature in Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire Bird Report published post completion of Appendix 8.1, Background Information **[APP-188]** of the Environmental Statement.

## 4 Data searches from BRMC and CPERC

4.1.1 In October 2021, an updated desk study was requested from the BRMC and the CPERC for records made post 2018.

4.1.2 Of these records, none are located within the Order Limits of the Scheme. The Order Limits define the maximum area of land required temporarily and permanently to construct, operate and maintain the Scheme. The extents of the Order Limits are illustrated on **Figure 2.1** of the Environmental Statement [**APP-088**].

4.1.3 Those records that were within the Study Area and new to the baseline were identified as follows:

### **Bats**

4.1.4 Of the records for bats, four recent records of Barbastelle, a rarer species was reported. Two were from Gallow Brook north of Croxton Park (175m from the Order Limits) and another 100m from the Order Limits in between Fox Brook and Wintringham Brook. A brown long-eared roost was reported from Croxton Park. There were also new records of Common Pipistrelle, Daubenton's Bat, Natterer's Bat, Noctule Bat, Serotine and Soprano Pipistrelle. Some of the new records for bats were from surveys undertaken for the Scheme and issued as part of licence returns (Appendix 8.5, Bats [**APP-192**] of the Environmental Statement)

### **Badger**

4.1.5 Of the 17 new records for Badger, 16 were road casualties of which ten had been reported from roads leading to the Black Cat roundabout (north, south and west). There was one record of a Badger sett towards Wyboston which is located such that there will be no impact from the Scheme.

### **Riparian mammals**

4.1.6 Although none of the records included in the data is within 1 kilometre (0.6 miles) of the Order Limits of the Scheme, it is worth noting that the pattern of distribution for Water Vole is broadly the same as described in Appendix 8.1, Background Information [**APP-188**] of the Environmental Statement. There were eight Water Vole records, all very close together, near Cambourne from the Bourne Brook catchment beyond the Study Area, a record from the River Ivel at Blunham and one from the River Great Ouse downstream of Great Barford. New locations were the Colmworth Brook to the west of the A1 (one record) and two records from St Neots by Hen Brook just below the confluence with Fox Brook. There were four records of Otter within the Study Area, the locations of three of which were already known from the surveys undertaken of riparian mammals in 2018 (Appendix 8.7, Riparian Mammals [**APP-194**] of the Environmental Statement). The fourth record was from South Brook, Chawston, 200m to the west of the A1 and the Order Limits, an area known to have Otter activity from the surveys undertaken of riparian mammals in 2018.

## Barn Owl and Red Kite

- 4.1.7 As records for Barn Owl (15 records from the BRMC) and Red Kite (one record) did not specify nesting, these are taken as records of the presence of the species. Apart from one Barn Owl record from just to the east of Sir John's Wood, all the Barn Owl records were to the west of the A1 corridor. Red Kite was recorded from near Papley Grove Farm, south of Papworth.

## Great Crested Newt (GCN)

- 4.1.8 The CPERC provided six recent records for GCN within 500m of the Order Limits (refer to **Table 4-1**). Two of these (Records GCN1 and GCN4 (refer to **Table 4-1**)) were for ponds which are already known to support GCN, i.e. Ponds 80 and 81. Records GCN2 and GCN3 (refer to **Table 4-1**) are for ponds in Croxton Park, both in excess of 500m from the Order Limits. The existing A428 is also in between these ponds and the Order Limits therefore creating a significant barrier to dispersal. Records GCN5 and GCN6 are both within the village of Eltisley. Record GCN5 is close to other ponds in the village (and may be coincident with one of these, already known to support GCN from surveys undertaken in 2018 and 2019 (Appendix 8.14, Great Crested Newt [**APP-201**] of the Environmental Statement). Record GCN6 is a little further to the south, 547m from the Order Limits. The existing A428 and St Neots Road which runs through the village lie between these records and the Order Limits therefore creating a significant barrier to dispersal.

**Table 4-1 Records of GCN within 500m of the Order Limits**

Record	Grid reference	Distance from Order Limits (m)	New record?	Comments
GCN1	TL29055996	317	Pond 80	
GCN2	TL25535925	599	Yes	Record is in Croxton Park
GCN3	TL25645931	518	Yes	Record is in Croxton Park
GCN4	TL30226099	14	Pond 81	
GCN5	TL268596	185	Possible (very close to Ponds 62, 63 and 64)	Record is in Eltisley village
GCN6	TL273593	547	Yes	Record is in Eltisley village



## 5 Review of information obtained from mapping and aerial photography

- 5.1.1 No recent mapping (since 2018) of the Study Area was identified.
- 5.1.2 Recent aerial photography from publicly available sources such as Google Earth was compared with the aerial photography as examined in 2017 and 2018. There was no significant change in the habitats and land use within the Study Area apart from:
- a. The Wintringham residential development to the east of St Neots which had progressed significantly since 2018. These changes are buffered from the Scheme due to the existing A428 and a 300m wide strip of arable fields.
  - b. Works within the Breedon quarry site by the Black Cat roundabout immediately to the east of the A1. These changes will be superseded by the restoration plan for the quarry site linked to the planning permission for the quarrying, the latter being regarded as the baseline against which the biodiversity changes have been assessed.
  - c. Archaeological trial trench excavations undertaken by the Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) (commissioned by Skanska on behalf of National Highways) during 2020 and 2021, in areas expected to be used in relation to the Scheme for reasons such as floodplain compensation areas, soil storage areas, borrow pits, compound sites and construction areas.
  - d. As reported in the Case for the Scheme **[APP-240]**, planning permission 17/03001/MAF was granted to Gleneden Plant Sales Ltd by Bedfordshire Borough Council on 29 June 2018. This covered the change of use to construction plant storage and sales yard, erection of workshop, office, sales reception and staff amenity facilities building, and associated parking, hardstanding, landscaping and infrastructure. This resulted in redevelopment of approximately 3.3 ha (8.15 acres) of the north of the former brownfield site (RE1(E)).
  - e. As also reported in the Case for the Scheme **[APP-240]** planning permission confirms planning permission 19/00841/FUL was granted on 5 February 2021 to Gleneden Plant Sales Ltd by Bedfordshire Borough Council for the erection of a new maintenance workshop with associated parking.
  - f. Trees had been harvested from a small area (less than 300 m<sup>2</sup>) of woodland near Weald Farm, to the south of the existing A428 at national grid reference TL 228 596.

## 6 Data searches of recently published information on the biodiversity of the Study Area

- 6.1.1 The Study Area for this data search included parts of Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and what was the county of Huntingdonshire (now Huntingdonshire District Council within Cambridgeshire).

### Flora

#### *Cambridgeshire*

- 6.1.2 The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the Cambridgeshire (v.c.29) Rare Plant Register (Shanklin, 2019) [REF 1-7] was used to check both the recently published Flora of Cambridgeshire (Leslie, 2019) [REF 1-4] and Nature in Cambridgeshire [REF 1-3] (and Bedfordshire Naturalist) for any records of these plant species for the Study Area and for any of these species in those data collected from surveys as reported in Appendix 8-3 Terrestrial Habitats of the Environmental Statement [APP-190] and the Updated Terrestrial Habitat Surveys 2021 Technical Note [TR010044/EXAM/9.63] submitted at Deadline 5 of the Examination.
- 6.1.3 No records were found of any of these plants within the Survey Area.
- 6.1.4 A search was made for any records from Leslie (2019, 2020, 2021) [REF 1-4, REF 1-5, REF 1-6], of plants of any significance, e.g. rare species and invasive non-native species recorded in the Study Area. None were found.
- 6.1.5 Shanklin (2021) [REF 1-7] provides a useful review of Cambridgeshire's Protected Road Verges (PRV). Although Elsworth PRV S8, part of which is within the eastern end of the Order Limits, was surveyed (for results of the survey refer to the Updated Terrestrial Habitat Surveys 2021 Technical Note [TR010044/EXAM/9.63] submitted at Deadline 5 of the Examination), no specific reference is made to PRV S8 within the Shanklin (2021) [REF 1-7].

#### *Bedfordshire*

- 6.1.6 A search was made for any records from Wakely (2020, 2021) [REF 1-8, REF 1-9, REF 1-10] of plants of any significance, e.g. rare species and invasive non-native species recorded in the Study Area. None were found.

### Fauna

#### *Cambridgeshire*

- 6.1.7 A search was made for any records of the fauna of the Study Area of any significance, e.g. rare species and invasive non-native species as recorded in Nature in Cambridgeshire (2019, 2020 and 2021) [REF 1-3, REF 1-5, REF 1-6] and the Cambridgeshire Bird Reports (2019 and 2020) [REF 1-14, REF 1-15]. None were found.

### *Bedfordshire*

- 6.1.8 A search was made for any records of the fauna of the Study Area of any significance, e.g. rare species and invasive non-native species as recorded in Bedfordshire Naturalist (2020 and 2021) [REF 1-8, REF 1-9, REF 1-10] and the Bedfordshire Bird Reports (2019, 2020 and 2021) [REF 1-11, REF 1-12, REF 1-13].
- 6.1.9 Anderson (2021) [REF 1-16] reports the presence of Water Vole from the River Ivel and the River Great Ouse, both significantly upstream of the stretch of the River Great Ouse crossed by the Scheme.
- 6.1.10 As described in Appendix 8.1, Background Information [APP-188] of the Environmental Statement, there are continuing signs that Otter is returning to rivers and streams in Bedfordshire including the River Ivel and the River Great Ouse, although the activity on the latter was upstream of the Scheme with no new records for Otter in the Roxton to Wyboston section (Anderson, 2020) [REF 1-16].
- 6.1.11 Barbastelle was found in two hibernation sites, with a maximum of two bats per site in January 2018 (Dines, 2020) [REF 1-1]. Dines caught barbastelle bats during surveys in Streatly and Sundon and recorded on bat detectors in Aspley Guise, Colmworth, Dean, Felmersham, Haynes, Husborne Crawley, Milton Bryan, Potton, Souldrop, Southill, Stockgrove, Studham, Sutton, Swineshead, The Lodge (RSPB Sandy), Wilden and Woburn. The captured bats are located in the south-west of the county >30km from the Scheme and the closest detector records were approximately 5 kilometres (3.1 miles) of the Scheme at Wilden and the Lodge (RSPB Sandy). They indicate the continuing expansion of Barbastelle in Bedfordshire.

## 7 Discussion and Conclusions

- 7.1.1 New records from within the Study Area of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians made since 2018 have been provided by the local environmental records centres and found in recent publications.
- 7.1.2 Of the records, there were two records of Otter and two records of Badger found adjacent to the Scheme. Furthermore, no new records of these species have been found within the Order Limits of the Scheme. This is in part as a result of the dominance of arable agriculture habitat within the Scheme.
- 7.1.3 The records for Barbastelle for Bedfordshire were at least 5 kilometres (3.1 miles) from the Order Limits. These records indicate that this species is widespread across the county and becoming more widely recorded and potentially increasing their range. A similar trend has been described for Cambridgeshire with over 100 locations recorded for this bat (Hows *et al.*, 2016) [REF 1-2]. Barbastelle is known to occur within and close to the Order Limits in both Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire based on data from surveys undertaken for the Scheme (Appendix 8.5, Bats [APP-192] of the Environmental Statement).
- 7.1.4 The conclusion from this review of recent records, aerial photography and publications is that the Study Area has remained as described in the baseline of the Chapter 8, Biodiversity [APP-077] of the Environmental Statement and associated appendices. Notable changes in land use were noted with respect to the Wintringham development and Breedon Quarry but these do not alter the baseline.
- 7.1.5 The review has not altered the understanding of the biodiversity of the Study Area, nor does it alter the assessment conclusions and associated mitigation.

## 8 References

- REF 1-1 Dines, B. 2020. Bats 2018. Bedfordshire Naturalist 2018, 73, (1), 20-26.
- REF 1-2 Hows , M., Pilbeam, P., Conlan, H. and Featherstone, R. (2016) Cambridgeshire Mammal Atlas. Cambridgeshire Mammal Group.
- REF 1-3 Leslie, A.C. 2019. Vascular plant records 2018. Nature in Cambridgeshire, (61), 78-88.
- REF 1-4 Leslie, A.C. 2019. Flora of Cambridgeshire. Royal Horticultural Society, London.
- REF 1-5 Leslie, A.C. 2020. Vascular plant records 2019. Nature in Cambridgeshire, (62), 80-87.
- REF 1-6 Leslie, A.C. 2021. Vascular plant records 2020. Nature in Cambridgeshire, (61), 65-75.
- REF 1-7 Shanklin, J. 2019. Cambridgeshire (v.c.29) Rare Plant Register. 6th edition. BSBI March 2019.
- REF 1-8 Wakely, J. 2021. Flowering plants, ferns and fern allies, 2018. Bedfordshire Naturalist 2018, 74, (1), 143-154.
- REF 1-9 Wakely, J. 2021. Flowering plants, ferns and fern allies, 2019. Bedfordshire Naturalist 2019, 74, (1), 138-139.
- REF 1-10 Wakely, J. 2021. Rare plants in Bedfordshire. Bedfordshire Naturalist 2019, 74, (1), 143-154.
- REF 1-11 Bedfordshire Bird Club (2019). Bedford Bird Report 2019. Bedfordshire Natural History Society.
- REF 1-12 Bedfordshire Bird Club (2020). Bedford Bird Report 2019. Bedfordshire Natural History Society.
- REF 1-13 Bedfordshire Bird Club (2021). Bedford Bird Report 2019. Bedfordshire Natural History Society.
- REF 1-14 Cambridgeshire Bird Club (2019). Cambridgeshire Bird Report 2019.
- REF 1-15 Cambridgeshire Bird Club (2020). Cambridgeshire Bird Report 2020.
- REF 1-16 Anderson, D. 2021. Mammals 2019. Bedfordshire Naturalist, 74, (1), 14-22.