

- 1.3. The corridor would enable not only east-west passage but it would open up circular routes for leisure, health and well-being activities.
- 1.4. There are further enhancements that Cambridgeshire County Council is seeking to the existing network as part of the scheme. These would link in with the proposed NMU corridor, creating important opportunities for neighbouring settlements – including major new development at Wintringham Park - along the way to access the corridor and vice versa on foot, cycle and horse. This would include upgrades from footpath to bridleway at the Wintringham Park development, Hen Brook 1/9 path, and FP1/16-1/17 overbridge upgrade.
- 1.5. This report considers options and constraints in providing the route between the points indicated with blue arrows on the above plan and identifies a preferred option to take forward for further consideration. A provision of 3m wide shared use path for walkers, cyclists and horses is considered to be the minimum acceptable in line with LTN1/20 Table 6/3 guidance¹. Where demand is likely to be higher, and physical constraints permit a wider path would be preferable.
- 1.6. On the following pages, the route will be examined section by section, using the A428 scheme general arrangement plans as maps to indicate relevant issues. Parts of the NMU route to be provided by the A428 scheme are identified as thick red lines on the plans; ‘missing’ sections by green arrows. Most of the proposed additions to the NMU provision are within the A428 scheme red line boundary. Gaps 1a and 10 are outside the red line, but within existing highway boundaries.

¹ [REDACTED]

2. Analysis of the route

2.1. Caxton Gibbet/A1198 Junction to Cambourne Junction

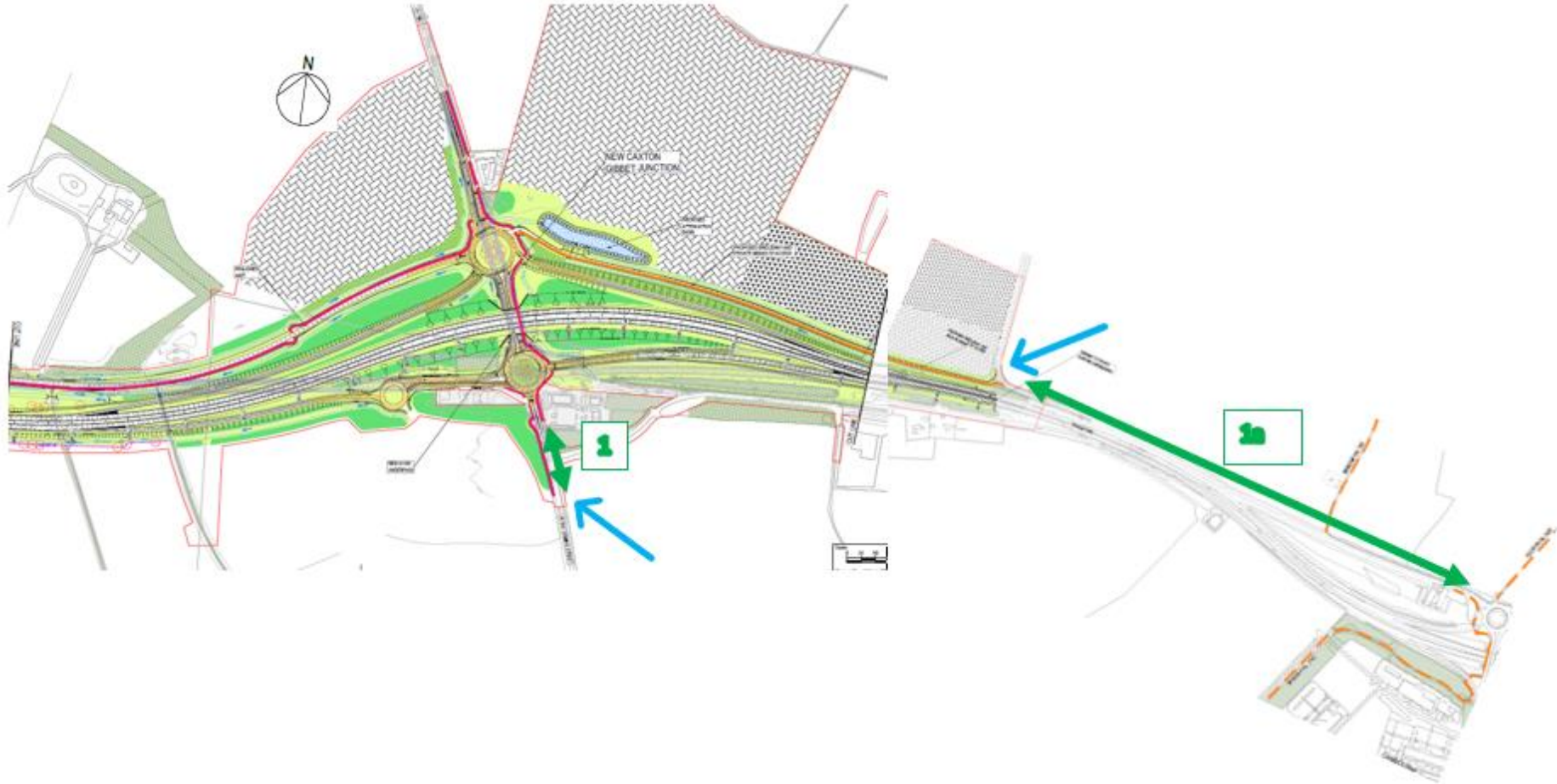


Figure 2: Caxton Gibbet/A1198 Junction to Cambourne Junction

- 2.1.1. At Caxton Gibbet Junction, at the eastern extent of the A428 Scheme, adjacent developers of West Cambourne are committed to providing an NMU route to the A1198 south of the new Caxton Gibbet junction. The provision with A428 Scheme should connect directly at a point to be agreed with CCC, and not leave a 60m gap in provision at the location identified '1' on Figure 2. This would be a short extension of the current proposal but the provision of an NMU in the eastern verge of the A1198 is essential to connect to Cambourne. It is not satisfactory to expect NMU users to cross the A1198 to the western verge, then recross a short distance further south to the eastern verge to get to Cambourne. This section of road is widened due to the central ghost island for turning vehicles and is therefore particularly unsuitable to locate a crossing. It is noted a 50mph speed limit applies on the A1998 at this location.
- 2.1.2. It is recognised that the eastern verge of the A1198 is constrained in this location with safety fence in front of a single lighting column and wooded area (see Figure 3, area circled in red), but by reconfiguring the available space, and reassessing the need for safety fence bearing in mind the speed limit, sufficient space should be available within the highway boundary to provide for a 3m NMU track in the east verge.



Figure 3: A1198 south of Caxton Gibbet junction with A428, looking north. Reference 1

2.1.3. The A428 Scheme's connection of the NMU network via a private means of access on the north and east of the junction to the old St Neots Road is to be welcomed as it provides valuable onward connections to bridleway 73/4 (north to Elsworth) and footpath 142/5 (to Knapwell). However, there is then a gap in NMU provision of 1.26km along the old St Neots Rd from the end of the access road to Cambourne (identified 1a above). An NMU route along this section would provide a valuable connection between Papworth, Eltisley and Cambourne particularly as it would be a highly desirable route from the villages to Cambourne Village College. The route could be provided along the south side of St Neots Road which may require removal of some vegetation (see Figure 4 below). The land is already CCC or NH land.



Figure 4: Old St Neots Road looking west

2.1.4. The A428 Scheme proposes NMU route northwards along the east verge of A1198. This provides linkage with an adjacent CCC scheme to Papworth.

2.1.5. The scheme also provides NMU route for some 900m, connecting to the former A428, west of Caxton Gibbet. However this route is not continuous and would abruptly terminate, as indicated in the next section.

2.2. Caxton Gibbet to Eltisley:

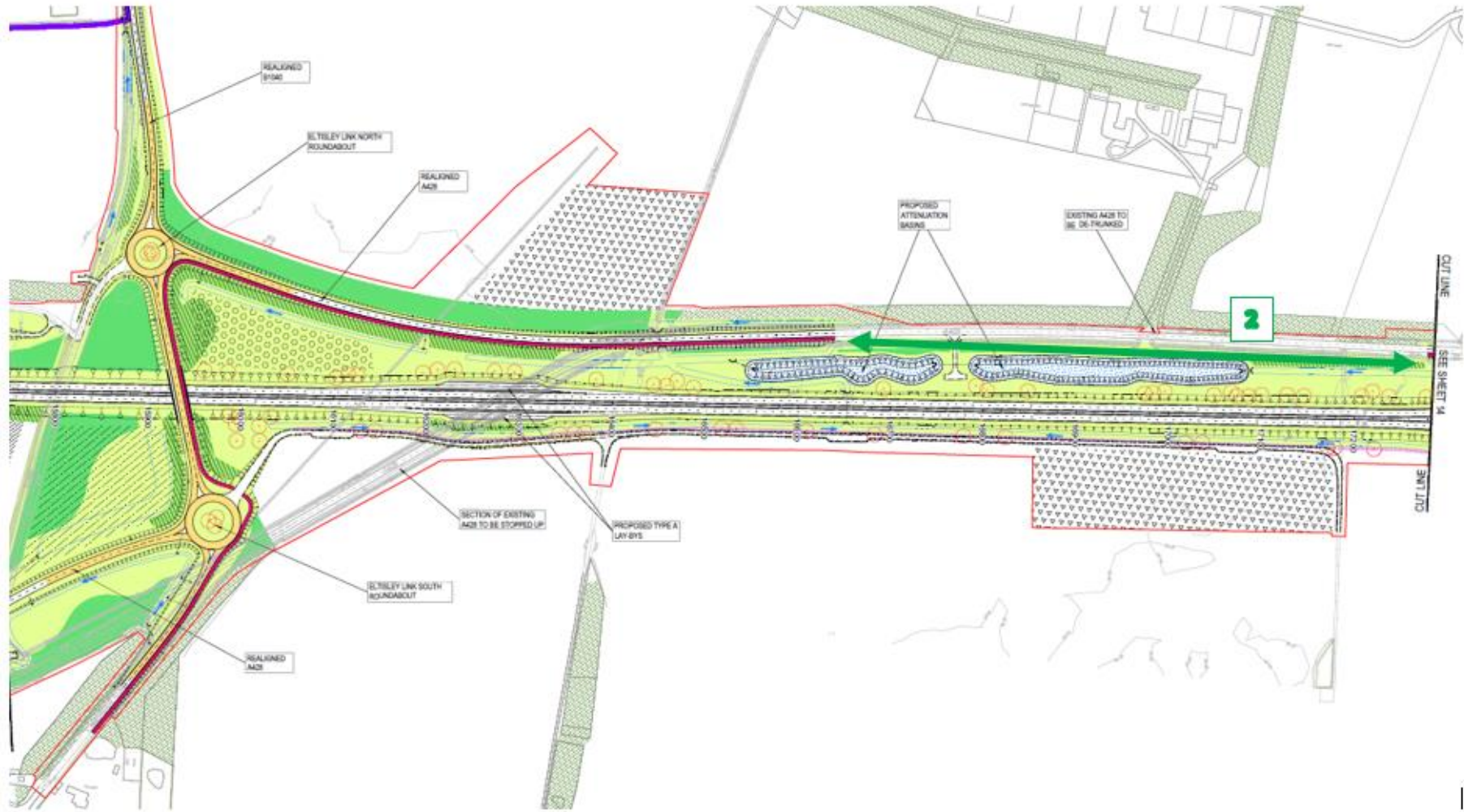


Figure 5: Caxton Gibbet to Eltisley

2.2.1. Along the former A428 from Caxton Gibbet the scheme proposes an NMU route in the southern verge, apart from a length of approximately 660m (identified as '2' on Figure 5 above). Clearly this gap in provision would leave NMUs with nowhere to go other than to re-join the carriageway. In the eastbound direction this would mean crossing the former A428 for 660m before crossing a second time to re-join the NMU route, only to have to cross the A428 a third time 500m further east. No formal crossing points are proposed to assist users re-joining the carriageway at the ends of the 600m gap. Clearly this makes little sense, is not safe and is unlikely to be used in that fashion. The 660m gap needs to be closed to provide continuous provision in the southern verge, and referring to the photograph below, there seems to be little constraining its provision, and no additional scheme land take required.



Figure 6: Existing A428 looking west, at location of 660m gap in NMU route. Verge to left of photo is largely clear of significant constraints

2.2.2. The connection of the proposed NMU into Eltisley village is welcomed, although it would appear to stop around 120m short of where the footpath in the village commences.

2.3. West of Eltisley:

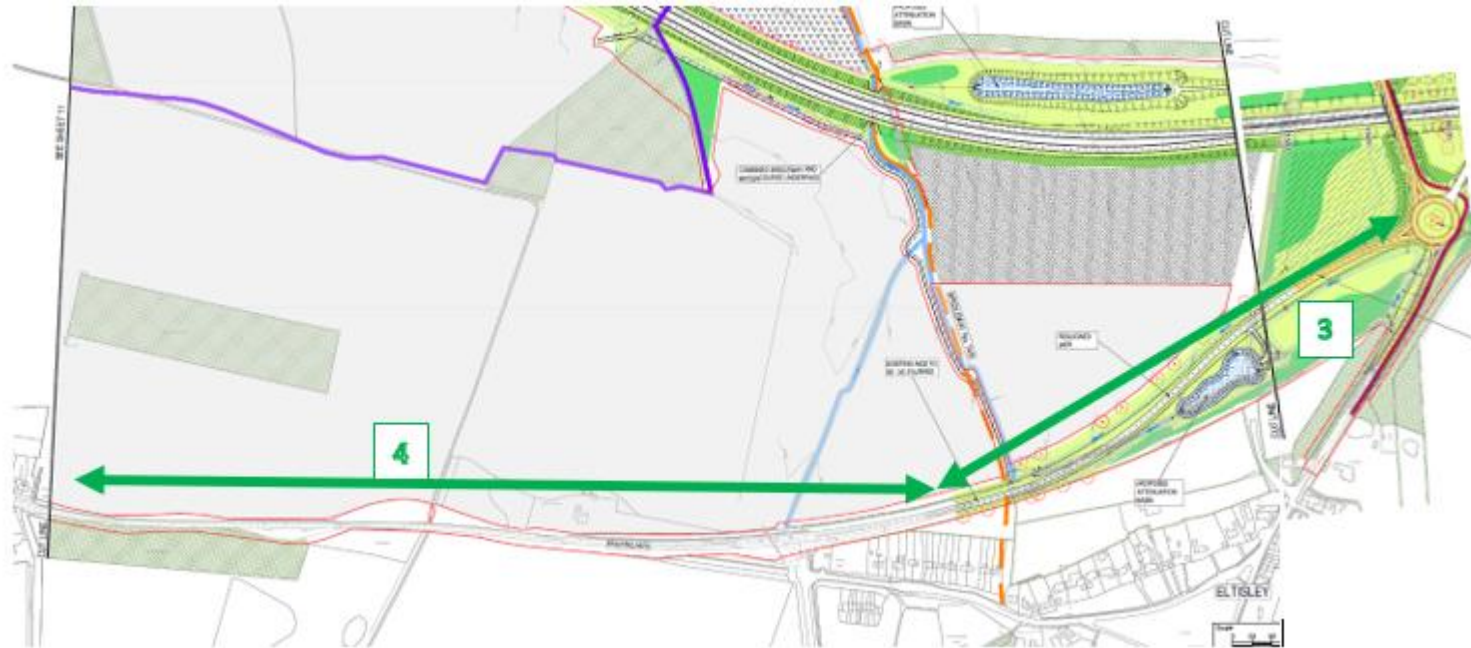


Figure 7: West of Eltisley

- 2.3.1. West of the Eltisley Link southern roundabout, the A428 scheme does not propose any NMU provision on the former A428 route. The first 650m of this route (identified as '3' on Figure 7 above) is new build road and as such there is no reason why a full NMU could not be provided, in either verge, with no additional scheme land take.
- 2.3.2. An NMU route along this section would provide a valuable linkage with existing bridleway 74/6 which crosses the A428 at this location and would provide onward linkage to Eltisley and Yelling.
- 2.3.3. Further west (on the section identified as '4' on Figure 7 above) NMU provision would need to be within the existing highway boundary. There is an existing 1m footway on the north side of the A428 along most of this section (see Figure 8 below), and although there may

need to be some local 'pinch points' where space is limited, generally there is space to widen the path to NMU route standards. Locally, lighting columns, road signs and the like would need to be repositioned to achieve this.

2.3.4. There are in places wide verges (old meanders in the road, now straightened) which may provide opportunity to route an NMU further away from the road.

2.3.5. At the west of this section the existing footpath switches from north side to south side. Due to constraints in the northern verge, any NMU may have to cross sides at this point too, but the feasibility of remaining in the northern verge albeit with local width restrictions should be considered to remove the need to cross.



2.7

Figure 8: A428, west of Eltisley junction, looking west. Existing path in north verge

2.4. Croxton:



Figure 9: Croxton

2.4.1. In the Croxton area, the A428 scheme does not propose any NMU provision on the former A428 route.

2.4.2. An NMU route along this section would provide a valuable linkage with existing footpath 59/1 which intersects the A428 at this location and also Toseland Road, Abbotsley Road and High Street Croxton

2.4.3. On the section identified as '5' on Figure 9 above, NMU provision would need to be within the existing highway boundary. There is an existing 1m footway on the south side of the A428 along most of this section (see Figure 10 below). The verges are not wide and some of the section is on low embankment meaning there would need to be earthworks to create a level platform for any NMU route, whether it is on the north or south sides. There may need to be some local 'pinch points' where space is limited. Some road signs and the like would need to be repositioned to achieve any provision.

2.4.4. There are at the east of this section wide verges (old meanders in the road, now straightened) which may provide opportunity to route an NMU further away from the road.



Figure 10: Croxton area, looking west– existing footpath in southern verge

2.5. Croxton to Eltisley Manor:

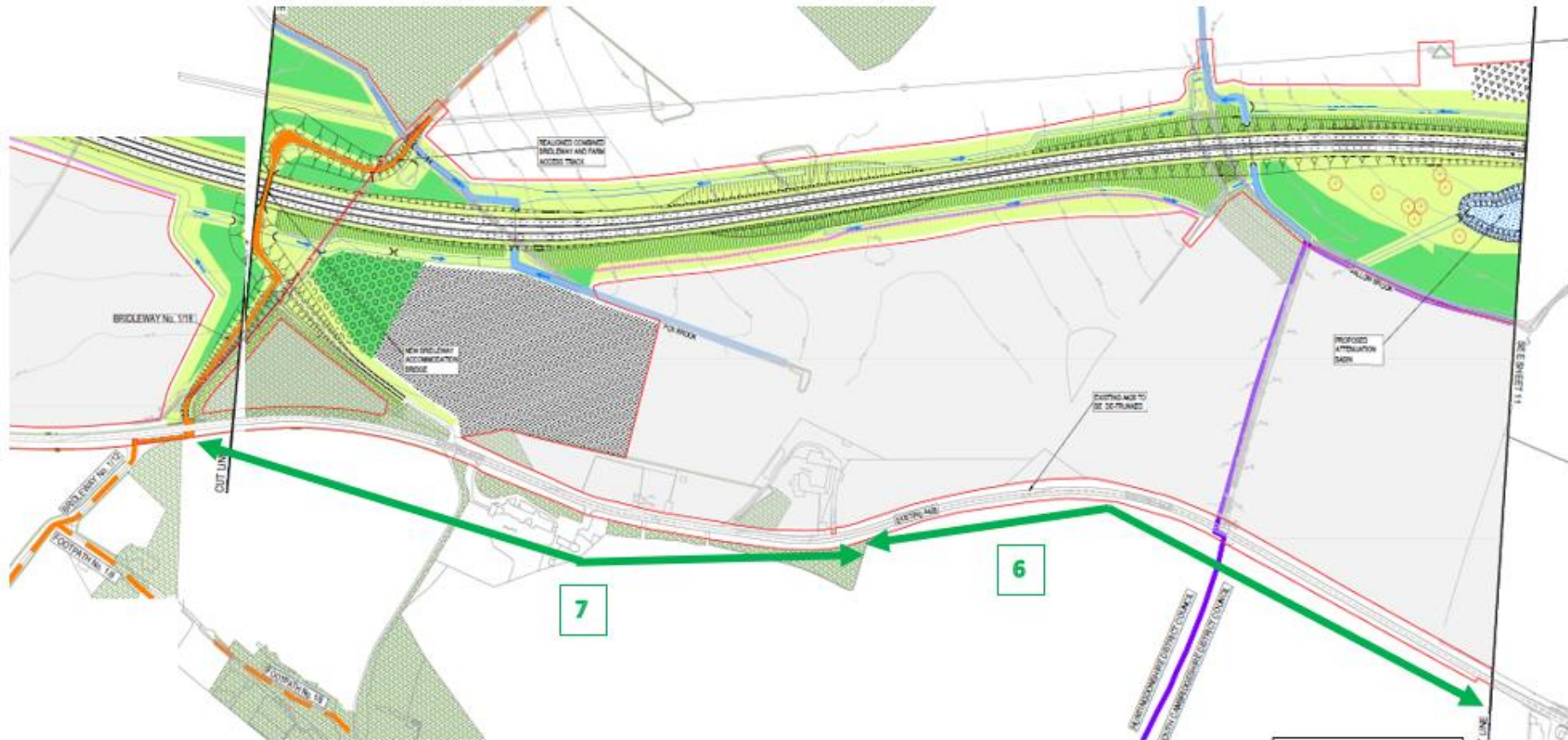


Figure 11: Croxton to Eltisley Manor

2.5.1. Over this section the existing A428 has no provisions in the verge, and the A428 scheme does not propose any new NMU provision on the former A428 route.

2.5.2. An NMU route would make a valuable network connection to bridleways 1/12 and 1/18, footpaths 1/2 and 1/8 and byway 1/7 leading to Toseland, Gravelly and Abbotsley for example.

2.5.3. In the eastern part of this section, there is little space within the existing highway boundaries see Figure 12 Figure 11 below, and provision of a NMU to an acceptable standard may not be possible. An 'offline' provision along the south side field edge (outside red line boundary) may be an option for the section marked as '6' on Figure 11 above. In the event that highway constraints render the provision of a NMU route within or adjacent to the existing highway boundary unfeasible, an alternative solution within the scheme redline boundary is proposed at paragraph 2.7.

2.5.4. Further west (Figure 13), the verges on the south side of the existing A328 are generally wider and provision could be made in the southern verge for an NMU route albeit with possible occasional pinch points at tight constraints.



Figure 12: Existing A428 looking west. Narrow verges



Figure 13: Existing A428 looking west. Wider verges

2.6. Wintringham and Cambridge road junction:



Figure 14: Wintringham and Cambridge road junction

2.6.1. Over the length identified as '8' on Figure 14 above, the back of the existing verges is quite overgrown but it is considered that a 3m NMU route could be achieved within the existing boundaries. An 'offline' provision along the north side field edge may be an alternative option for the section marked as '8' on Figure 14 above.



Figure 15: A428 looking west

2.6.2. A 1m wide footpath is in the north verge in the western section adjacent to Wintringham cottages, but this section (identified '9' on Figure 14 above) is heavily constrained by the boundary fence on the south side and by Toll Gate cottage on the north side. An alternative solution is proposed at paragraph 2.7.



Figure 16: A428 looking west

2.6.3. West of Wintringham Cottages the A428 scheme makes provision for the NMU route up to Cambridge Road roundabout.

2.7. Croxton to Cambridge Road junction: an Alternative Route Option:

2.7.1. Due to the constraints identified in sections '6' and '7' on Figure 11, and '8' and '9' on Figure 14 above, an alternative route close to the new A428 between Toseland Road and Cambridge Road would be a much easier and cheaper to construct, and possibly give a more pleasant journey away from traffic. A suggested line (about 3.3km) is shown in purple below. There would appear to be sufficient land within the current scheme land take for this proposal. Connections to the wider network can still be achieved, as indicated.



Figure 17: Croxton to Cambridge Road junction: an Alternative Route Option

2.8. Cambridge road roundabout:



Figure 18: Cambridge road roundabout



Figure 19: B1428

2.8.1. The A428 Scheme provision of NMU route up to the Cambridge Road roundabout would leave a gap of about 190m (identified as '10' on Figure 18 above). The route needs to connect to the existing footpath in the east verge of the B1428 and new NMU route to the west side in adjacent housing development, identified with a blue arrow above on Figure 19.

2.8.2. Onward westward extension of NMU route would be useful, and such provision may come partially from the adjacent housing development.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1.1. An east/west NMU link following the former A428 corridor would provide much needed additional connectivity to the Public Rights of Way network.
- 3.1.2. The corridor would enable not only east-west passage but it would open up circular routes for leisure, health and well-being activities.
- 3.1.3. Experience of other similar schemes would indicate it is likely to be well used and would release significant suppressed demand for both leisure and commuter activities.
- 3.1.4. Over most of the proposed total length of about 9km it could be accommodated within the existing A428 highway boundaries.
- 3.1.5. Approximately 1km appears on initial inspection to be too tightly constrained within the existing A428 boundary and provision would be better made either with the adjacent field edge, or alternatively a route which follows the southern boundary of the new A428 for about 3.3km is likely to be easier and cheaper to construct as well as being a more pleasant journey. This alternative route is within the order limits of the A428 scheme.
- 3.1.6. The following relatively small increases to the provision made within the A428 scheme at its tie-in points would greatly improve the connectivity benefits of an east/west NMU link:
- Gap1: 40m gap at Caxton Gibbet/A1198 east verge (Figure 3);
 - Gap 1a: 1260m along the old St Neots Rd from the end of the access road to Cambourne (Figure 4);
 - Gap 2: 660m gap between Eltisley and Caxton Gibbet (Figure 6); and
 - Gap 10: 190m gap at Cambridge road Roundabout (Figure 18).