

Date: 24 June 2022  
Our ref: 397760  
Your ref: TR010044



Fergus O'Dowd  
Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London, SW1P 4DR

Customer Services  
Hornbeam House  
Crewe Business Park  
Electra Way  
Crewe  
Cheshire  
CW1 6GJ

**BY EMAIL ONLY**

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Mr O'Dowd

**TR010044 A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Road Improvement scheme – Request for comments from Interested Parties on the Applicant's response to the Secretary of State.**

Thank you for your letter, dated 22 June 2022, inviting Interested Parties to provide any comments on questions 4 and 7 of the Applicant's response of 14 June 2022 to the Secretary of State's consultation letter of 31 May 2022.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

**Question 4: Request for comments from the Applicant on the implications of changes to the construction programme.**

This question is focused around whether changes to the construction start date would affect the construction programme and traffic modelling which underpins the Environmental Statement (ES). Whilst this is unlikely to have implications for natural environment matters we welcome that the Applicant's response confirms that the current anticipated construction start date does not affect the conclusions of the ES and that the traffic modelling as reported in the Transport Assessment (APP-241) can still be relied upon, notwithstanding an anticipated construction start date of March 2022. The Applicant indicates that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken assuming that the Scheme's main construction works would commence in March 2023, subject to the DCO being made in August 2022, and that the conclusions of the ES are accurate and can be relied upon for the main construction programme start date of March 2023. Natural England is satisfied with this and has no further comment to make.

Question 7 does not affect matters within Natural England's remit hence we offer no comment.

I hope our comments are helpful.

Natural England  
24 June 2022

For further information please contact:  
Janet Nuttall  
Sustainable Development Adviser

