

# Cornwall's major road upgrade aims to be otter-ly wildlife friendly

Highways England's upgrade of the A30 in Cornwall is not just about improving safety, journey reliability and connectivity for local communities – it also goes for otters and other wildlife too.

The A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross improvement scheme will unlock one of the last major bottlenecks in the county by creating an 8.7-mile section of dual carriageway to help promote economic growth, improve journey times and increase safety.

The new route has also been designed to protect the environment and as part of that work, a total of 33 multi-species crossing points are being constructed to assist the habitats and journeys of animals such as otters, badgers, bats and reptiles.

Extensive ecological surveys identified otter, badger and bat habitats to the north and south of the new route and, as well as the construction of a 'green' bridge at Marazanvose, the crossing points include 11 underbridges, two overbridges, five drainage culverts and two dry tunnels – all allowing for the safe passage of animals.

An artist's impression of one of the 33 multi-species animal crossings to be constructed under the A30

There will be nine crossing tunnels specifically for otters, and a new and specially designed sett for badgers. Otter ledges are being created in two of the culverts, 21 of the crossings are designed to protect connectivity for bats, while 12 miles of wildlife-proof fencing is being constructed to guide animals toward these crossing points.

Josh Hodder, Highways England Senior Project Manager, said:

We're really proud of the work we are undertaking to protect and enhance the ecology and environment in the area, and we're currently forecasting a net gain of over 10% in biodiversity as part of the work we're doing on the scheme.

We've worked with and listened to local communities throughout the consultation and planning process, and informed by a wealth of feedback, the design of the road has been carried out in the most sympathetic way for both local people, the travelling public, wildlife and the environment.

Highways England has also funded a number of environmental projects around the location of the scheme and this is something we're also

proud to be involved with and which will have long-lasting benefits for Cornwall.

With construction scaling up this year, work will start this summer to build the animal crossing points and existing environments are being sensitively replaced to limit the impact on any wildlife.

In terms of environmental mitigation, the scheme will also see:

- over 28 miles of new drainage constructed to protect the local area and water courses
- ponds constructed to store and control the flow of surface water and address pollutants from the road
- the construction of eight miles of Cornish hedge, representing a net gain of nearly seven miles of Cornish hedges
- the planting of species rich grassland and trees native to Cornwall, blending the new with the old
- no artificial lighting on the main route or at junctions, removing any light pollution from the new road
- the construction of earth barriers and sound-absorbing fencing at key locations to reduce noise impact of the new road

As part of Designated Funded environmental projects in the first roads investment period, Highways England has also worked closely with Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Cornwall Council and The Environment Agency to create 'green ribs' in the central Cornwall area, which extend out from the A30 to connect core habitat areas and achieve continuous landscape corridors.

The Highways England-funded work has been undertaken close to the route of the new scheme to create three green ribs between Ladock and Gwills, Benny Mill to Boswiddle and Benhaven to Lambourne Mill.

The environmental enhancements have included:

- tree works (woodland creation and management, wet woodland management, feature tree introduction, orchard creation and restoration, and veteran tree management)
- planting of species rich grassland and wet meadow
- pond and wet habitat restoration
- boundary works (creation and restoration of Cornish hedge, stock-proof fencing and stock-proof thorny hedge planting, and hedgerow enhancement)

Cherilyn Mackrory, MP for Truro and Falmouth, said:

It is great to see the work continue on this important piece of transport infrastructure for Cornwall and I am looking forward to visiting again soon to see the progress for myself, much of it carried out by local contractors.

I am particularly looking forward to seeing the work being carried out to preserve and enhance the local environment, as well as the

animal crossings. While there will be some short-term disruption to the local environment while the construction is under way, I know that the overall net gain will be a positive one, both environmentally and ecologically, for Cornwall.

The construction methods of contractors Costain will also protect the environment as a cut-and-fill earthworks method is being employed to improve sustainability and reduce the amount of import and export of earth and other material and in terms of its carbon footprint, low-temperature asphalt is being sourced locally.

Highways England and contractors Costain have been engaging with Cornwall Council and the Cornwall Wildlife Trust. Costain Environmental Lead Ali Thomas said:

Protection of the local environment is imperative. We're working to ensure that the local wildlife and their terrestrial and aquatic habitats are protected and we're working with local stakeholders to minimise the project's environmental impact and to realise opportunities for environmental improvement and enhancement.

We are also working with our supply chain to promote low carbon and innovative solutions for implementation to reduce the carbon footprint of our operations, reduce material consumption and improve air quality.

The £330 million upgrade is scheduled to be open to traffic in 2023. Further information on environmental mitigation and other details are available on our [A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross web page](#).

The cost of developing the scheme is being partly funded by an £8 million contribution from the European Regional Development Fund, with an additional £12 million for the construction phase. The remainder of the cost of developing and delivering the scheme is being funded by central Government.

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.