

Highways England to launch further A428 consultation as plans are refined

The further consultation into the multi-million-pound A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvement scheme, which could save commuters up to an hour and a half on their journeys every week, will outline the design refinements that include changes to the constructions methods and environmental impacts of the project.

The changes have been made following a combination of feedback received from 925 responses during the last consultation held in summer 2019, as well as new technical information and engagement with the local community and organisations.

The proposed A428 improvement scheme will see a new 10-mile dual carriageway built linking the Black Cat roundabout in Bedfordshire to the Caxton Gibbet junction in Cambridgeshire. Both roundabouts would also be upgraded into modern, free-flowing junctions and a new junction would be added at Cambridge Road near St Neots.

How the Black Cat junction would look once the project is complete

The project would replace the only remaining section of single carriageway between Milton Keynes and Cambridge and tackle one of the region's most notorious congestion hotspots.

Lee Galloway, Highways England A428 programme lead, said:

We have been really encouraged by people's feedback on the project so far, and this latest round of consultation reflects feedback from our consultation in 2019 and the ongoing engagement with the local community, organisations and road users.

This project will help to transform one of the East of England's busiest sections of road, playing a vital role in creating quicker, safer and more reliable journeys which will bring communities together, create new job opportunities and support long term sustainable growth.

This consultation will be a chance for people who live, work and travel in and around Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire to have their say on the latest design.

Roads Minister Baroness Vere said:

Our roads play a critical role in keeping Britain moving and this project will help to change people's everyday journeys across the East of England, improving vital links and helping to reduce congestion.

We encourage everyone to have their say during this consultation, and be part of the change as we continue to invest and level up across the country.

The five-week consultation will run from Wednesday 24 June 2020 to Tuesday 28 July 2020.

Highways England will be taking a whole new approach to the consultation, designed to let people find out about the plans and put their questions to the project team, while respecting the current COVID-19 guidelines. These will include:

- a virtual consultation room where people can log on from home via laptop or mobile device to hear about the changes from Highways England's technical team, and explore maps and more details about the proposals.
- live webchats with the Highways England technical team who can answer any questions that people have about the scheme.
- telephone information events where people can dial in to hear more details about the consultation.

Anyone who would prefer printed copies of the consultation booklet can pre-register their interest now. Email info@a428.co.uk or call 0300 123 5000.

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.

[Leader of the House of Commons speech: 8 June 2020](#)

I listened with great interest to the Rt Hon Member for Orkney and Shetland, who is a distinguished Member of this House and former holder of office in the coalition Government.

It is, of course, clear there are still some concerns about the return to physical proceedings and I am sympathetic to them: we are all trying our best to do right by our constituents at this difficult time.

I pay tribute to the work of all those across the House who have persevered despite the limitations of lockdown to help individuals and businesses in their constituencies. The Rt Hon Gentleman rightly said that Members of Parliament have been exceptionally busy in their constituencies, with a workload that for many has been higher than they have been expecting in ordinary time, but this is not an ordinary time.

We have to get the balance right between what can be done by shielding MPs and what allows Parliament to carry on doing its job. I fear that that is the key point, and I hope Members will understand that although their contributions have reflected their experiences and those of their party, it is our responsibility to consider Parliament's work as a whole—not just the duties of individual MPs, but the duties of our Parliament to the British people.

Even the Rt Hon Member for Orkney and Shetland, who applied for and received this debate, has said that it was a sub-optimal system, and that has been the view of the Procedure Committee and it has been mentioned widely in debates. The legislative programme was running at a snail's pace comparatively. We were not delivering on our promises to British voters, and that is the point: the most important way in which Parliament makes a real difference to the lives of our constituents is through legislation. Our democracy could not function without this essential work. It is how we translate the results of general elections into tangible change.

Legislation is how we translate the results of a general election into tangible change. In the Queen's Speech, the Government unveiled 36 Bills—an ambitious agenda that aims to help the whole country level up. People across the United Kingdom will be affected by the laws we pass, so this House must play its part in working to ensure that these Bills are the best they can possibly be.

The Zoom Parliament allowed some scrutiny to take place, and I was an enthusiastic advocate of having it. On 21 April, the choice was a Zoom Parliament, or no Parliament. Not only did we see Ministers coming to the Despatch Box, but we were able to examine people's homes and their bookcases. However, we also recognised its inadequacy. Hybridity was not sufficient.

Indeed, the Rt Hon Member for Orkney and Shetland accepted that there are real difficulties with the hybrid process and the stilted nature of the debate that we had in the virtual Parliament. He said that himself, so it is not as if I am the only one who thinks it did not work.

Meaningful engagement is what ministers want and it is what ministers need. Look at what has been happening in this debate. Questions are coming in at all angles, testing the Government's view. Why? Because we are here physically. I am not closed minded as Leader of the House. If it could work, with people who are shielded and cannot be here zooming in and making

interventions, I would not seek to stop that out of stubbornness, but I do not yet see how it is possible to make a debate like this, with a vibrant exchange of views. I have not counted how many interventions I have taken, but how would this debate have flowed? How could we have got the exchange of opinion with people randomly popping up? How would they have come in? Would there have been a tower of Babel as they shouted over each other? Would they have to be on mute or off mute, and how would we know when they came on? Would a list have to be prepared in advance? Would someone have to apply to Mr Speaker in advance to get on the list to intervene on what I was going to say before they knew what I was going to say? It is really difficult to make a debate work with virtual interventions.

A true Parliament of the people, in which our elected representatives come together to discuss fully and debate the Government's agenda and their response to the events of the day, is what we need.

That covers what we are doing to fulfil the promises that we made at the general election and on which we were elected. I now turn to the question of how we conduct our proceedings in ways that lead by example.

Members of Parliament are no different from others who are unable to perform their jobs fully from home and are now returning to their workplaces. I understand that many Members will feel concerned about their particular circumstances, but they can be reassured by the significant changes made to make the parliamentary estate covid-19-secure. It is clear to anyone in Westminster that, while we have emerged from the initial stage of lockdown, we are by no means back to normal. That is why I made it clear before the Whitsun recess that I would work with the House authorities to explore ways in which those unable to come here can continue to contribute.

I have every sympathy with Members who feel that the constraints of the pandemic prevent them from being able to attend in Westminster. The work of scrutiny is so important that it is right that we have brought forward a motion to allow those affected to have their say during scrutiny proceedings, but I remain conscious of how important it is that Members who participate in the decision-making process of the House ought and need to do so in person. As we saw last week, the decision on whether to vote Aye or No is a public one, for which individual Members can often find themselves held to account. It is a decision that should only ever be taken after the kind of serious consideration and engagement which is only possible when all those concerned are in Westminster. By the time Members are asked to vote, Ministers want to have had the chance to talk through fully any specific concerns of individuals or groups. That remains my strong view.

I am grateful to the Procedure Committee for its willingness to support the Government's desire to extend proxy voting. Last week, the House unanimously agreed to make this available to Members who are unable to attend at Westminster because they are at high risk from coronavirus because they are either clinically extremely vulnerable or clinically vulnerable. In making judgments of this kind, I have sought to balance the competing priorities of this place in a way that looks at Parliament as a whole. As I have maintained throughout, the Government are listening to Members across the House. I am—I

hope this will please the Hon Member for Rhondda and the Rt Hon Member for Orkney and Shetland—giving thought to bringing forward a motion that extends proxy voting beyond what has already been agreed by the House, to include Members who are more widely affected by the pandemic.

Parliament must send a clear message to the country: we are getting on with our work as best we can during a period of great challenge, just like everyone else. That is the spirit in which I encourage all Members to view our proceedings during the pandemic. We recognise that there are difficulties, but we are showing leadership to the nation in persisting in our purpose. We are doing our duty in leading the way. Our constituents will not entertain the notion that we should ask parents to send their children back to school while we choose to remain at home.

Fortunately, that is not our approach. Rather than suffering the depredations of the muted hybrid Parliament, we are once again talking to each other in ways that were impossible when we were scattered to the four winds. Rather than wading through the treacle of the hybrid proceedings, which even the Rt Hon Member for Orkney and Shetland said were far from perfect, we are once again fleet of foot and dancing a legislative quickstep.

I have enjoyed the formalised interventions in this speech just as much as I enjoy the informal interventions of Members putting their socially distanced heads around my door. Rather like the school swot secretly delighted by extra homework, I must confess that my appetite for the opportunity of today's debate is very great, even though some may think—and some of my hon. Friends have indicated that they do think—that talking about ourselves under the current circumstances is a little self-indulgent. For there is more to our democracy than general elections. Between polling days, it is in Parliament where the interplay between Ministers and MPs comes alive. I am delighted that that interplay, as we see today, is being restored, allowing our Parliament to scrutinise legislation properly and to get on with its core business of delivering for the British people.

Please note that interventions have been removed from this version. For a full transcript please visit [Hansard](#), the official report of all parliamentary debates.

[Parole Board launches member recruitment campaign](#)

News story

The Board is seeking psychologist, psychiatrist and retired judicial members

to contribute to its vital work



We are pleased to announce that the Parole Board is now recruiting new members. In this campaign, the Parole Board is specifically looking to attract Psychologist, Psychiatrist and Retired Judicial Members to join the more than 250 members currently contributing to the important work of parole reviews.

This is a varied and important role in protecting the public, while ensuring fairness for all involved. The Parole Board works to protect the public by risk assessing prisoners to decide whether they can safely be released into the community. It works as a court and makes risk assessments which are rigorous, fair and timely, based on information supplied by expert witnesses. The roles are public appointments.

This exciting opportunity is open to those who live in all regions of England and Wales. The role is home based, including with some hearings undertaken remotely by telephone and video. Travel will also be required to attend oral hearings during the working day in HMP establishments across England & Wales.

We are looking for people with a genuine interest in the work we do and who possess the behaviours, skills and judgement to make an effective and critical contribution to the Board's work. Parole Board decisions are of critical importance to public confidence in the criminal justice system.

At this time, we are only recruiting three specialist member roles:

If you think this might be you, please have a look at the further information on each of the roles [here](#).

The Parole Board also has Independent members who bring a breadth of skills and experience. We are not presently recruiting this type of member but you can [register your interest here](#) if you would like to be notified when our next campaign opens.

For further information on the work of a Parole Board member, please see [this write up in the Sunday Times](#).

Published 10 June 2020

[Extension to clinical excellence awards due to expire in April 2021](#)

News story

Award holders can apply for a one-year extension to national Clinical Excellence Awards due to expire on 1 April 2021.



Following [suspension of the 2020 national Clinical Excellence Awards competition](#), ministers have agreed to extend those awards that were due to be renewed in 2020 by one year

Extended awards will be due for renewal in the 2021 competition and renewable for 4 years.

National Clinical Excellence Award holders who were due to submit a renewal application in 2020, and whose award is due to expire on 1 April 2021, should complete the [online form](#). The form should take less than 5 minutes to complete.

Check your award's renewal year by [logging into your account](#) and clicking the 'My Award' tab.

Contact accea@dhsc.gov.uk if you need further help or advice.

You must complete the [online form](#) if your award is due to expire on 1 April 2021 and you want to extend your award.

Applications for award extension close on 31 July 2020.

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One of the million

News story

Today, the campaign group Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) is celebrating the fact that for the first time ever there are more than 1 million women working in science and engineering roles in the UK.



#1ofthemillion

Sellafield Ltd recently joined the organisation and are supporting the campaign. To do so, we are promoting some of the fantastic work of our scientists and engineers.

The picture accompanying this story shows some of our employees who make up part of the one million, and we also have blogs from some of our employees to highlight their work and how they came to work in their particular fields.

[Penny Rathbone](#) is our polymers expert. She has been working with the Cumbria Resilience Forum, where her knowledge of all things plastic, rubber and seal related has helped ensure that our key workers have continued to have supplies of safe personal protective equipment.

[Rebecca Weston](#), our Chief Operating Officer has blogged about the importance of the day, and how she is keen for more people to know about the opportunities available to them.

She also outlines how she got into a career in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), through a route which included teaching English in Eastern Europe.

Katherine Eilbeck led our work to join WISE. She said:

WISE is a fantastic organisation with an important and laudable aim, to encourage more women into the field. I'm delighted that

Sellafield Ltd has joined the campaign and hope that as many of our employees as possible support 'one of the million'.

People can also share their photos with WISE. They can be added to the WISE campaign pages at www.wisecampaign.org.uk.

Please feel free to share the day on your own social media channels and networks.

Promoting gender equality is an important part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mission to ensure that everyone is respected, included and able to perform at our best.

We are also responsible for helping the government achieve gender equality in the nuclear sector as part of the Nuclear Sector Deal.

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