

Appendix 2 Summary of Shaping the Future of England's Strategic Roads and the Strategic Road Network Initial Report

Shaping the Future of England's strategic Roads

The full report can be viewed at the link below; this document is generally high level with limited local detail. The one area which does focus in on local detail is the section on trunking and de-trunking.

[Shaping the future of England's strategic roads - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/shaping-the-future-of-england-s-strategic-roads-2019-2020.pdf)

This document summarises evidence and proposals provided to the Department for Transport (DfT) about the current performance of the SRN, future priorities for the next road period and beyond, as well as the analytical strategy they have adopted. It represents the final part of the research phase in developing RIS3, and seeks comments on:

- National Highways' proposals in its **Strategic Road Network Initial Report** (referred to here as the 'Initial Report')
- their analytical approach
- whether they have heard the full range of views that should be incorporated into the RIS3 programme

The principal focus of this document, however, is to consult on the set of proposals made in National Highways' Initial Report, which outlines:

- the company's view on the current state of the SRN
- its potential future needs
- their proposed priorities for the next Road Period (RP3), covering the financial years 2025-26 to 2029-30

The DfT previously provisionally identified six strategic objectives for Road Investment period 3 (RIS3) in their "Planning Ahead" document published in December 2021. These objectives will be reviewed and updated in the light of this public consultation.

The six strategic objectives are:-

1. Growing the economy
2. Improving safety for all
3. Network performance to meet customer needs
4. A technology-enabled network
5. Managing and planning the SRN for the future
6. Improved environmental outcomes

Detrunking & Trunking

The principal purpose of the SRN is to enable safe, reliable, predictable, rapid, and, often, long-distance journeys of both people (whether as drivers or passengers) and freight in England. It:

- links our main centres of population
- facilitates access to major ports, airports, and rail terminals

- enables access to geographically peripheral regions of England
- provides key cross-border routes to Scotland and Wales

As demand patterns change, it is important to be ready to amend the geographic extent of the SRN, so that roads best managed at a local level to meet a communities' needs are in the hands of local highway authorities. Similarly, where a road's strategic significance suggests it should be managed by National Highways, the department is willing to examine the case for adding it to the SRN with the support of the relevant local highway authority.

DfT state that they are currently in discussion with relevant local highway authorities and National Highways regarding the existing extent of the SRN and the scope for any changes during the current road period to 2025.

These include:

- 'trunking' - adding roads to the SRN that are currently locally managed
- 'de-trunking' - transferring parts of the SRN to the relevant local highway authority / authorities)

DfT is inviting suggestions about trunking and de-trunking as part of this consultation.

Proposed roads for trunking

Nineteen routes are proposed for trunking nationally. The two routes passing through Wokingham Borough are as follows.

Road	Region	Route
A329(M) + A322	South East	A329(M) + A329 + A322 – Reading to Guildford
A33+A339	South East	A33+A339 – Reading (M4 J11) to Basingstoke

Six routes are proposed for de-trunking but none of these are located within the south-east region.

The document states that “Any changes of ownership between National Highways and local highway authorities would be subject to discussion between the relevant parties before they are finalised.”

Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3)

Under this topic, it is stated that:-

The boundaries of the SRN should not be a barrier to action. It is possible that investment may involve spending money off the SRN. For example, investment in a neighbouring local road or an alternative mode of travel may help the SRN to perform better.

Focus Areas

The external focus areas that National Highways identify are principally:

- how much its customers will travel
- how its customers will experience travel
- how it will manage its network

Improving safety for all

Maintaining current safety performance will not be enough if the National Highways is to achieve its long-term goals, including the long-term commitment to zero fatal and serious injury accidents by 2040. Investing across every aspect of safety, from infrastructure measures to education campaigns for its staff, contractors, and customers, to improving the roads which present the highest safety risk is essential.

Taking a targeted approach to enhancing the network

Despite the progress already made in RIS1 and RIS2, road users continue to face delays and unreliability when using the strategic road network. In the current context of high-cost inflation and a considerable tail of committed RIS2 scheme spend, completing these projects is likely to be the priority for enhancement spend during the RIS3 period.

Where there is the opportunity for new enhancements, users of the SRN and other stakeholders have made the case for an increased priority on smaller, locally focused enhancement schemes in the third road period. These schemes would tackle known issues on the network and bring tangible local benefits helping to enable local and regional growth. These schemes can typically be delivered quickly and cost-effectively, with the benefits realised sooner. They also usually have lower environmental impacts than larger, more complex schemes.

National Highways' Performance

The Initial Report (summarised below) considers how National Highways delivers its vision, including: how it must change as an organisation; how it evolves the way it works with its supply chain; and the outcomes it intends to achieve in Road Period 3 and the shape and nature of the performance framework that will underpin these.

National Highways performance framework brings together the requirements that it is committed to delivering. This includes targeted key performance indicators (which together make up the suite of RIS performance metrics) and descriptive commitments. The Initial report summarises insights on the current RIS performance metrics, including improvements that could be made to the existing measures and gaps where new metrics and targets may be needed.

Analytical approach

The report states that the department's analysts are working closely with colleagues in National Highways to ensure there is a sound, well-understood evidence base available for both organisations to draw on through the decision-making process. Alongside this

consultation they have also published a strategic outline of the approach they are taking on analysis for RIS3.

The aim is for relevant, robust, and trusted analysis to support decision making in all key RIS3 areas. Analysis that provides sound information which can be relied upon when forming decisions, and that policymakers, analysts and key stakeholders have confidence in the methods used to produce its results.

The strategy describes the analytical platform in place to support the development of RIS3 and summarises the analytical approach for assessing different types of RIS3 investment working with National Highways, ORR, and Transport Focus. It also explains how investment appraisal takes account of the interests of users, as identified by Transport Focus.

In addition, it sets out how they are developing appraisal methods and models compared to RIS2.

SRN Initial Report

The full report can be found here:

[Strategic Road Network Initial Report - National Highways](#)

The Strategic Road Network (SRN) Initial Report summarises:

- National Highways' performance over the current road period to-date
- research into customer, community and stakeholder priorities as well as local, regional and national insights
- the condition of the network, along with corresponding challenges and opportunities
- proposals for targeting improvements across the SRN over the third road period (2025-2030)
- how National Highways will deliver these proposals and the outcomes that they could achieve

This report looks ahead to 2025-30, the third road period (RP3)

It has been guided by the twenty Route Strategy Initial Overview Reports, along with "Connecting the Country" (the long-term strategic plan), both of which are subject to a separate consultation.

The SRN initial report contains five targeted proposals for the third road period as below.

Our third road period proposals

Our proposals

We have developed five targeted proposals to help us deliver and balance the broad range of objectives specified by government, while also ensuring we make progress towards our long-term strategy. We also set out how we will evolve and change as an organisation to meet our changing demands and deliver our ambitions.

1. Improving safety for all

Reducing the risk on our 1-star and 2-star iRAP rated roads, lifting the rating to 3* or better where possible, and play a stronger role in influencing user behaviour and vehicle standards.

2. Making the most of our network

By operating increasingly connected roads, undertaking increasing proactive maintenance, making our technology more resilient and investing in vital renewals to deliver safer, more reliable journeys.

3. Evolve our customer and community services.

By improving the data and information we provide to our customers. Taking a broader approach to supporting end to end journeys, including improved facilities for freight and non-motorised users. Supporting growth and development alongside the SRN and addressing legacy impacts on our network, including air quality and noise.

4. Taking a targeted approach to enhancing our network

Continuing to invest in our network, following the fundamental principles of PAS 2080 and only building when the problem cannot be fixed by other approaches. Meeting network needs by completing schemes committed as part of the RIS process, investing in Lower Thames Crossing, and delivering more, smaller value, £2 million - £25 million schemes where funding allows.

5. Drive decarbonisation and environment sustainability

Achieve net zero corporate emissions, and reduce maintenance and construction emissions between 40 and 50%. Facilitate low-carbon travel and demonstrate wider environmental leadership, including around biodiversity and climate resilience. Invest in low carbon technology to drive a step change in manufacturing.

Contents of interest include the following information.

Given that the M4 through Wokingham is a Smart Motorway, the following text (on page 22) is of local interest.

“In its response to the Transport Select Committee’s report into smart motorways the Government committed £390m over the duration of the second Road Investment Strategy to roll out an emergency area retrofit programme. This would see over 150 additional emergency areas being added to ALRs (*All Lane Running motorways*) in operation and construction. We will continue working with DfT to consider the case for retrofitting to the remainder of all lane running smart motorways. This will be part of the development of RIS3, based on the evidence of safety benefits we are gathering and assessing.”

It is reported that the *“route strategies highlighted region-specific priorities These scheme-specific references will inform discussion with Government about the needs of the network, but should not be taken as funding or delivery commitments for roads investment periods. Key examples include”* (Page 39):

- Improved connectivity to the international gateways (including M25 Heathrow);
- Congestion, delay and journey unreliability issues on some A-roads and for east-west corridors in particular (including the M25 south-west quadrant);
- Improved journey time reliability particularly in peak times and during holiday season (including the junction of M4/M25 and the M3);
- Greater consideration of modal shift and integration with alternative modes of transport and connectivity (including M4 Reading);
- Improved north-south links between M4 (Midlands) and the south coast;
- Improved resilience of our network at key intersections (including M4/A34);
- Reduced impact of traffic on air quality, noise pollution and severance (including the A404 at High Wycombe).

As a highway authority, Wokingham BC will be affected by these aims (page 114 onward):-

Increasing proactive collaboration:-

- Building on our route strategies, we want to work more proactively with mayors, local authorities, STBs and other transport network providers to identify needs and support development objectives.
- We propose engaging earlier in the local and regional planning development process, helping shape high-level development plans that align with our route strategies and enable sustainable development.
- We want to continue supporting local development sites as a statutory planning consultee, aligning to government’s growth and environment objectives

Points for further consideration:-

- Partnering with local authorities more extensively to support local transport plans, to tackle specific congestion on our network

Increasing integration with local roads and other transport modes, providing more extensive support for local transport:-

- We could partner with local authorities more extensively to support local transport plans. This could mean working to deliver a programme to tackle specific congestion on our network, identified through our route strategies and scheme assessments.
- It could also include delivering or supporting further park and ride facilities, increasing access to public transport and promoting journey choice, or wider actions to support modal shift in towns and cities.
- We could also explore a programme to increase vehicle occupancy, working with local authorities, industry and local businesses to encourage measures inc lift sharing and bus and coach travel.

Evolving our customer and community services, Investing through designated funds:-

“We want to make our funds more accessible and simpler to apply for, reaching and appealing to a broader set of third-party organisations. With that in mind we are reviewing the processes and governance for our designated funds. Designated funds investment proposals will: -

- Demonstrate collaboration and strong support: Investment decisions will be informed by stakeholders and the Designated Funds Advisory Group to more fully understand how and where we should invest and maximise value. We will look for opportunities for partnership working and joint funding.”

One of the designated funds is the Environment and wellbeing fund. National Highways explain that “We will seek out areas in and around our network where we are not already doing work, and use this fund to help address historic network issues, improve the health and wellbeing of our neighbours and promote environmental sustainability. The types of activities would include:

- Addressing the severance of communities by our roads in the past or restoring urban centres that have been de-trunked.
- Reducing noise, improving air quality, improving our heritage assets and restoring a sense of pride in place back to areas on or close to our network.
- Taking opportunities to improve the natural environment on or near to our network through restoring the landscape and improving flood resilience, biodiversity, beyond statutory obligations, and landscape integration.

A second Designated Fund of interest is the Users and communities fund. National Highways explain that “We want to work more closely with local community groups and local planning authorities as well as other stakeholders. Such collaboration would help us identify where we can use this fund to promote and support active travel, small scale regeneration and improve services for more modal choice and better journeys. The types of activities would include:-

- Building facilities to enable active travel and supporting non-motorised transport on and around our roads, would help improve journeys as well as support people’s health and wellbeing.
- Supporting our communities through local initiatives such as small-scale regeneration schemes to restore social cohesion, by learning more about community priorities and building stronger relationships. This will be enabled through a grants administration service, making funding more easily accessible to a more diverse range of stakeholders.
- Improving services, including working with third parties. Improving infrastructure for coaches, buses and freight on and around our roads, providing high quality lorry

parking in the right places and driving improvements to roadside facilities. In addition our work continues in improving the quality and timeliness of information for road users and improving inter-modal operability.

- Our developing active travel strategy and plan, which will create a portfolio of work to target active travel, will be a vital input to the communities fund, alongside the developing integration investment plan. This will set out the activities we need to do around bus stops, park and ride facilities and public transport hubs. Both these plans will inform our Designated Funds programme.

Reducing Road User Emissions, continuing in the third road period. National Highways proposals include:-

- We want to implement our plan to improve public transport on the SRN, which we aim to publish in 2023.
- To encourage and enable electric vehicle travel on our network, we could go further to support electric vehicle charging facilities. This could mean going beyond our current role and providing the physical infrastructure for charging points that can then be used by our customers.

Wider environmental sustainability, Driving decarbonisation and environmental sustainability.

National Highways state that “The relationship between our network and the wider landscape is key to the health, wellbeing and overall quality of life of communities close to the network, and their sense of place. Our proposals for the third road period will support community wellbeing by tackling local environmental impacts and increasing climate resilience.

These include “Air quality: Trialling technologies and developing a programme of initiatives to improve NO₂, NH₃ and PM_{2.5} to support our work to bring all our network into compliance with government’s national air quality limits on NO₂ and improve the health and wellbeing of local communities.”

Smart Motorways- “We propose to continue working towards achieving the commitments set out in the Smart Motorway Safety: Evidence Stocktake and Action Plan and working to deliver the recommendations made in the Transport Select Committee’s report to further improve the safety of smart motorways. A decision on whether to retrofit emergency areas across the remainder of all lane running smart motorways will be considered as part of the development of RIS3, based on the evidence.”

Tackling pinchpoints and problem areas:-

- We propose, subject to funding, increased focus on into smaller £2-£25 million schemes.
- We want to focus, in particular, on the edges of our network, helping address the forecast congestion around them and with cities at the end of the second road period.
- This would help us improve how our roads connect with the wider road network, for example through better slip roads, as well as improve integration with other transport networks, for example through redesigned junctions. This would support local movement and local priorities, such as reducing traffic in city centres

Other specific items covered with the consultation questions are summarised within the **Initial Report** as below.

Improving safety for all

The SRN Initial Report includes the intention to improve road safety in Road Period 3 through a 'safe systems' approach, of which improvements to provide 'safe roads' is one element.

National Highways state that "Above all, our roads must be safe. This is a top priority for us, our customers and industry. By making our roads safer and more accessible, we will enable even more people to benefit from our SRN, connecting them to families, work, education and other opportunities. For RIS3, we want to focus on reducing the risk on our 1-star and 2-star roads, rated by the International road Assessment Programme (iRAP), lifting the rating to 3-star or better where possible. We will also continue our work to influence positive driver behaviour and vehicle standards through driver education programmes, reaching as many of our customers and communities as possible. We will increase professional driver training with operators with a focus on maintaining the roadworthiness of HGVs and vans. We are committed to improving our understanding of the experiences of disabled people who use our roads and how we can improve our infrastructure and services to meet their needs. By doing this, we will be able to offer a more inclusive, accessible experience to all of our road users. We will continue to invest in initiatives to protect our vulnerable users such as walkers, cyclists and horse riders. For example, by installing barriers to separate non-motorised users from our network, and providing signed and well-lit dedicated crossing points and lanes.

Making the most of Our network

The SRN Initial Report considers the role of National Highways' 24/7 operational services to improve incident response capability and the safety and reliability of everyday journeys for its customers. It examines the case for expanding its maintenance programme, including increasing proactive maintenance to reduce large repairs and avoid unnecessary restrictions and closures. It also highlights continued renewal activities needed to keep the SRN open, safe, and serviceable – in particular replacing worn out road surfaces, renewing aging structures and replacing operational technology that requires major work to improve reliability and security.

National Highways key proposals include:

- "Continuing to keep road users safe through active traffic and incident management, including using and improving the technology at our disposal to monitor our network and respond to issues as they occur.
- Expanding our maintenance programme to support the increasing number of assets under our direct operational responsibility as a result of DBFO contract take-back.
- We want to prioritise proactive maintenance, with the aim of reducing large repairs and disruption, better planning of our interventions to reduce delays and carbon-emitting congestion.
- Taking action to build climate resilience and prepare for the forecast impacts of climate change.
- Delivering increased targeted renewals. Our advice is that in responding to our ageing assets which are more complex to manage and in response to historically deferred works, we should: i) Increase the volume of renewals of our flexible asphalt

surface and continue the proposed increased investment in our concrete road replacement programme as set out in RIS2. ii) Ramp up our structures renewals programme targeting those that present the greatest potential for disruption to our network and movement of freight and people, and ensure the condition and stability of our asset stock remains.

- Tackling the backlog of technology assets which are at end-of-life, upgrading legacy or out-dated systems to current standards and increase consistency across our technology estate.”

‘Evolving our customer and community services’.

Highways England states that:-

“To realise our long-term vision we believe we will need to evolve our traditional remit as a highway operator. We see a need to increasingly work in partnership, whether with third party wayfinding providers and the automotive industry to support our closer digital relationship with customers, or with local and regional stakeholders to strengthen the SRN integration with public and active modes. We see a potentially greater ‘off-network’ role improving freight parking, refuelling and welfare facilities, as well as identifying gaps in existing provision. We want motorway service areas to become more enjoyable places, where customers can take time to relax amongst high-quality greenspace, retail, and charging infrastructure.”

Priorities for the third road period

“Across our activities we seek to reduce congestion and improve journey times, which is key to customer satisfaction. This is not the only a requirement of our customers. We want to grow our capabilities to understand and respond to the complex needs of our diverse customer base, and recognise and address the legacy impacts of the SRN.

Our key proposals include:

- Providing customers with more real-time information that they can personalise and tailored to their route requirements, before and during their journeys, and developing strong relationships with a range of third parties to encourage data sharing.
- Ensuring early adopters of connected and autonomous vehicles can take advantage of increasing connectivity, while also ensuring that our network continues to run effectively for all our customers, regardless of their vehicle capabilities.”
- Continuing to work proactively with mayors, local authorities, STBs and other transport network providers, in particular engaging earlier in the local and regional planning development process.
- Broadening our activities around improving customer travel choice and supporting better end-to-end journeys, including developing a third road period programme of improvement and enhancements schemes on our active travel infrastructure.
- Developing new freight corridor studies for priority areas, continuing to conduct joint strategic planning with Network Rail.
- Refocusing designated funds, investing across a more specific set of priorities aligned to our strategic objectives and to meet the needs of customers, communities and the wider environment.

Points for further consideration

- Partnering with local authorities more extensively to support local transport plans, to tackle specific congestion on our network.
- Look for more extensive opportunities to introduce segregated provision for non-motorised users along our network.
- Setting out an approach to improve the provision of freight facilities, supporting end-to-end journeys and driver welfare.

Driving decarbonisation and environmental sustainability’.

National Highways state the following priorities for the third road period:-

“Carbon: (Embedding and enabling low-carbon approaches across our organisation, network, supply chain and industry):-

- Achieving net zero corporate emissions by 2030, without purchased offsetting, including by decarbonising our own travel and transitioning our energy generation and usage.
- Reducing maintenance and construction emissions by between 40 and 50%, against a 2020 baseline, by minimising new construction, using Lean construction practices, circular economy principles and other carbon management approaches that minimise construction emissions.
- Enabling the transition to zero carbon motoring on our network, including by encouraging the use of alternate transport, such as active travel, and supporting the installation of approximately 2,500 high-powered, open access charge points across our network by 2030 through the government rapid charging fund.

Wider environment: (Demonstrating wider environmental leadership, working holistically to support social value, health and wellbeing, improving ecosystems and conserving natural resources.)

- Supporting community wellbeing by tackling local environmental impacts such as air, water and noise pollution and increasing climate resilience.
- Delivering activities that restore, enhance and manage a richer, resilient and more bio-diverse environment for current and future generations.

Points for further consideration:- to encourage and enable electric vehicle travel on our network, we could go further to support electric vehicle charging facilities. This could mean going beyond our current role and providing the physical infrastructure for charging points that can then be used by our customers.

“The most important performance outcomes to measure.”

National Highways report the following:-

“Reflecting the proposals set out in this report, it is important that our performance framework reflects the plans and proposed outcomes we have set out in this Initial Report. This means: -

- Developing a carbon metric to reflect our ambition to enable and embed low-carbon approaches, building on our existing KPI and helping us monitor progress against our net zero plan.
- Updating our biodiversity metric to reflect the latest legislation and achieve 10% biodiversity net gain from nationally-significant infrastructure projects.

- Exploring how we can effectively measure improvements in our operational technology as we work to increase the reliability and security of our roads.
- Reviewing how our renewals programme is monitored to reflect the greater focus on investment to provide a reliable, sustainable and safe road network.
- Reviewing our approach to monitoring designated funds, recognising its targeted approach to deliver social value and support Levelling Up.
- Exploring a performance indicator that supports active travel by understanding the views of our cyclists and walkers.

The approach to digital technology

National Highways report the following:-

“As the reliance on technology has rapidly become a core component in the way we operate our network and connect with our customers, we need to maximise the opportunities and benefits of our current technology and ensure that our systems are reliable, secure and resilient.”

- Our priority is to ensure that our existing technology functions effectively, which we propose to address through our renewals programme.
- We want to further improve our use of roadside and regional operations centre technology, such as stopped vehicle detection and sign settings. This will help us improve how we manage our network and make decisions, enabling us to respond quickly and appropriately to incidents.
- We also want to make better use of technology, such as flood sensors and embankment slip warnings, to increasingly provide us with real-time asset data. This would reduce the need for manual inspections of the different parts of our network.
- There is also the opportunity to significantly increase remote access to technical assets and fault resolution capabilities, reducing road worker exposure and equipment down-time.
- We want to improve the quality of our data, and how we use it, to help us manage risk more effectively and increase our resilience to events that could impact our network.

Our role could range from providing better real-time data on current and predicted travel conditions to vehicles and customers to implementing a full Intelligent Transport System which uses sensors, real-time data, traffic and control systems and data analytics to maximise network performance. Our operational role will depend on the type of road and customer needs, as well as wider policy and technology developments. In the third road period, we need to lay the foundations to prepare for greater levels of system operation. This will range from improving the data we collect and provide to customers to increasing the security and reliability of our technology.

Providing better real-time information:-

- We want to provide customers with more real-time information that they can personalise and tailored to their route requirements.
- This would include advanced information on planned roadworks, events affecting their journeys, current incidents, congestion and availability of electric vehicle charging points.
- This live, data would also give our customers greater travel choice, whether by presenting options for alternative routes or by giving details of available electric

vehicle chargers. Meeting changing customer expectations and connectivity through technology Evolving our customer and community services.

Sharing our data more widely:-

- We want to develop even closer relationships with a range of third parties, including transport authorities, transport operators and infrastructure owners. This would enable us to share data and support the delivery of a seamless and integrated end-to-end journey experience for our customers. This would include working with third party information providers, such as Waze.
- Data on customer journeys and needs could also support policymakers and investors with future decision making.
- This could, for example, include evidencing the need for increased investment in electric vehicle charge points based on the number electric vehicles travelling on our network and the journeys they are making.

Preparing our network for autonomous vehicles

- Transitioning to high levels of autonomous vehicles is likely to provide many exciting benefits and opportunities, both for our network and those who use it. This will be a gradual process and there is likely to be a mixed traffic environment for a significant period.
- In the third road period, we need to make crucial changes to our systems, data and technology to ensure early adopters can take advantage of increasing connectivity. We also need to ensure our network continues to run effectively for all our customers, regardless of their vehicle capabilities.
- We will work with manufacturers, technology bodies and regulatory and standards bodies to understand the requirements for full network connectivity. This will support preparation for the integration of connected and autonomous vehicles and widespread communication with in-vehicle systems, allowing for the future decommissioning of roadside operational technology.