

Do you feel that the *Connecting the country: Our long-term strategic plan* reflects your view of what the future of the Strategic Road Network should be?

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

Please could you tell us why you gave this rating?*

Please refer to the individual sections below where further comments are provided. It is difficult to completely agree with an approach as there are many ways this could have been undertaken, however, Wokingham Borough Council is broadly supportive of the approach taken.

Do you feel that national corridors, inter-regional routes and regional connections are the correct categories for the Strategic Road Network?

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

Do you have any further comments on how we have categorised our view of where we should focus the future of the Strategic Road Network?*

Although there is some logic to the categorisation, the roads network has already been categorised and the Strategic Road Network has been named as such due to its strategic nature. If a part of the SRN is a regional connection it perhaps suggests that it has less strategic importance than a national corridor and thus should be managed as a local route by a local authority who understands the movements in an area. This feels a little like watering down the importance of some strategic routes. Having said that, there is clearly a need to prioritise routes in some way as some will be more important than others, it is perhaps a case of looking at those with something like a Multi Criteria Assessment Tool to determine these rather than defining them with a less subjective and arbitrary method. It is not clear from the document but it is possible that these higher category of road could be subject to different rules around preventing local traffic using these routes, for instance, and this could significantly impact on the local networks around these roads; all of the SRN should therefore be treated in the same way.

Do the nine focus areas match your view of where we should focus the future of the Strategic Road Network?

Options: Yes, No, Undecided

Yes

Which focus area would you like to engage with?

You may select and provide feedback on more than one focus area.

All options selected except for Growth and Levelling up, Freight and Logistics and Decarbonisation. This is because for each of the questions in these focus areas we have selected “completely agree” and do not wish to make further comment. For those questions below where “completely agree” is selected the text box accompanying this is left blank.

Car Travel

Do you feel the trends outlined for 'Car travel' reflect your view of the future? (Pages 21-23)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Undecided

Why:

Whilst the uncertainty of any projections is acknowledged, it appears that the document is accepting that there will inevitably be an ongoing increase in private motor vehicles despite the efforts Government and Local Authorities are making to increase Active Travel, public transport use, shared mobility, etc. This also ignores the efforts of the LTP process becoming more aligned to Local Plan development to minimise additional trips and also trends experienced nationally of younger people being less likely to drive or own a private vehicle.

Do you feel the vision outlined for 'Car travel' reflects your view of the future? (Page 52)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

Why:

Supporting increased Active Travel as per P21 should be supported further and moving people away from car travel should be part of the vision; whilst car travel will remain an important mode for some journeys the vision is not explicit in making any attempt to reduce people's dependence on car travel.

Do you feel our delivery plan outlined for 'Car travel' reflects your view of the future? (Page 57)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

Why:

In terms of integration and Modal shift there is mention of public transport but this does not consider rail as an alternative to the SRN which it could be for many trips. The introduction of hubs is welcome but there is potentially a case for hubs (e.g. public transport hubs at rail Stations) that do not attract long distance car trips to/from them.

The actions by 2050 still assume a high level of use and congestion on the network which would suggest that the vision of decide and provide has not been fully implemented. If the

levers suggested are implemented to a high degree to restrict use of the SRN (e.g. a high cost of road user charging) it is essential that the impact of doing this on the surrounding local roads is carefully assessed and mitigations completed to assist with affected areas; we would ask that a high level of consultation and engagement with local councils and their residents is undertaken if such measures are studied further as there could be a significant impact on our residents.

Safety

Do you feel the trends outlined for 'Safety' reflect your view of the future? (Pages 29-31)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Completely

Do you feel the vision outlined for 'Safety' reflects your view of the future? (Page 53)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Completely

Do you feel our delivery plan outlined for 'Safety' reflects your view of the future? (Page 59)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

Why:

We agree that Safety should be the first imperative for the organisation. If this is the case, more could potentially be done in terms of enforcement and speed limit reduction; the plan suggests that “where there is an identified need” some of this will occur, however, it is not clear how this need is identified. Other violations such as poor lane discipline and driving too close to other vehicles should be recognised as safety problems and dealt with accordingly, modern technology should be utilised to identify poor and potentially dangerous driver behaviour.

Digital

Do you feel the trends outlined for 'Digital' reflect your view of the future? (Pages 32-35)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

Why:

The uncertainty in this section is rightly highlighted. This level of uncertainty makes it very difficult to plan for the longer term and so this should be closely monitored and the plan updated regularly (this should be completed for all sections but particularly in this area).

Do you feel the vision outlined for 'Digital' reflects your view of the future? (Page 53)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

Why:

The vision suggests “CAV-enabled by 2050”, our only comment would be that this may need to come sooner given the pace of change in the industry.

Do you feel our delivery plan outlined for 'Digital' reflects your view of the future? (Page 60)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

Why:

Again, as mentioned above, the level of uncertainty makes this plan difficult to clearly define beyond the next few years, however, at this time it does appear reasonable.

Decarbonisation

Do you feel the trends outlined for 'Decarbonisation' reflect your view of the future? (Pages 36-38)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Completely

Do you feel the vision outlined for 'Decarbonisation' reflects your view of the future? (Page 53)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

Why:

Whilst we agree with the vision to an extent, we believe everyone should be doing all they can to accelerate this as much as possible.

Do you feel our delivery plan outlined for 'Decarbonisation' reflects your view of the future? (Page 61)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

As above, we feel that greater focus should be on decarbonise to achieve net-zero as soon as possible.

Customer Experience

Do you feel the trends outlined for 'Customer Experience' reflect your view of the future? (Pages 40-42)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Completely

Do you feel the vision outlined for 'Customer Experience' reflects your view of the future? (Page 54)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Undecided

Why:

Whilst we support the focus on transition to EV and making information more widely available, the key causes of delay do not appear to be addressed in the vision, improving congestion, incidents, roadworks and road geometry should be a focus of this vision. This is potentially dealt with in some of the other areas of this plan but to omit it from this section seems to ignore the primary cause of concern for both freight and car users.

Do you feel our delivery plan outlined for 'Customer Experience' reflects your view of the future? (Page 62)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

Why:

As per the previous comment, congestion is a cause of nearly 50% of all delays but is not considered in this section, reference could be made to other sections to cover this, but it should not be omitted.

Sustainable network development

Do you feel the trends outlined for 'Sustainable network development' reflect your view of the future? (Pages 43-46)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Completely

Do you feel the vision outlined for 'Sustainable network development' reflects your view of the future? (Page 54)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Completely

Do you feel our delivery plan outlined for 'Sustainable network development' reflects your view of the future? (Page 63)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

Why:

Our residents are impacted by noise and air quality issues along the SRN. The “communities” section of the delivery plan is welcome, however, consideration should be given to how National Highways will support new development along its corridors in order to assist with sustainable development of the communities as well as focussing on development of the network itself.

Asset Resilience

Do you feel the trends outlined for 'Asset Resilience' reflect your view of the future? (Pages 47-50)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Completely

Do you feel the vision outlined for 'Asset Resilience' reflects your view of the future? (Page 54)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Completely

Do you feel our delivery plan outlined for 'Asset Resilience' reflects your view of the future? (Page 64)

Options: Not at all, Undecided, Somewhat, Completely

Somewhat

Why

Whilst the plan covers many of the key issues described in the future trends section, the vision states: “Where roadworks are required, new standards of planning and communication will help us put customers in control. This means customers will be able to make timely decisions about alternative routes, modes and departure times.” However, there is no evidence of this in the delivery plan. Advance notice and widely shared information regarding works and closures as well as more information for our residents regarding alternative modes or recommending not to travel at all is potentially a very useful tool for managing the network during works and should be explored further and included in the plan.

Our roads are consistently used as diversion routes both formally during works as well becoming alternatives during incidents and congestion on the SRN. This can lead to higher traffic volumes as well inappropriate (e.g. large/heavy freight) using the network leading to deterioration of our roads; it is suggested that these routes should be constructed to a higher standard with contribution from National Highways as well as an ongoing increase in maintenance allocation to assist those areas that experience these issues.

Thank you for providing us with your feedback on Connecting the country: Our long-term strategic plan. Please use this space for any general comments.

No Further comments.

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