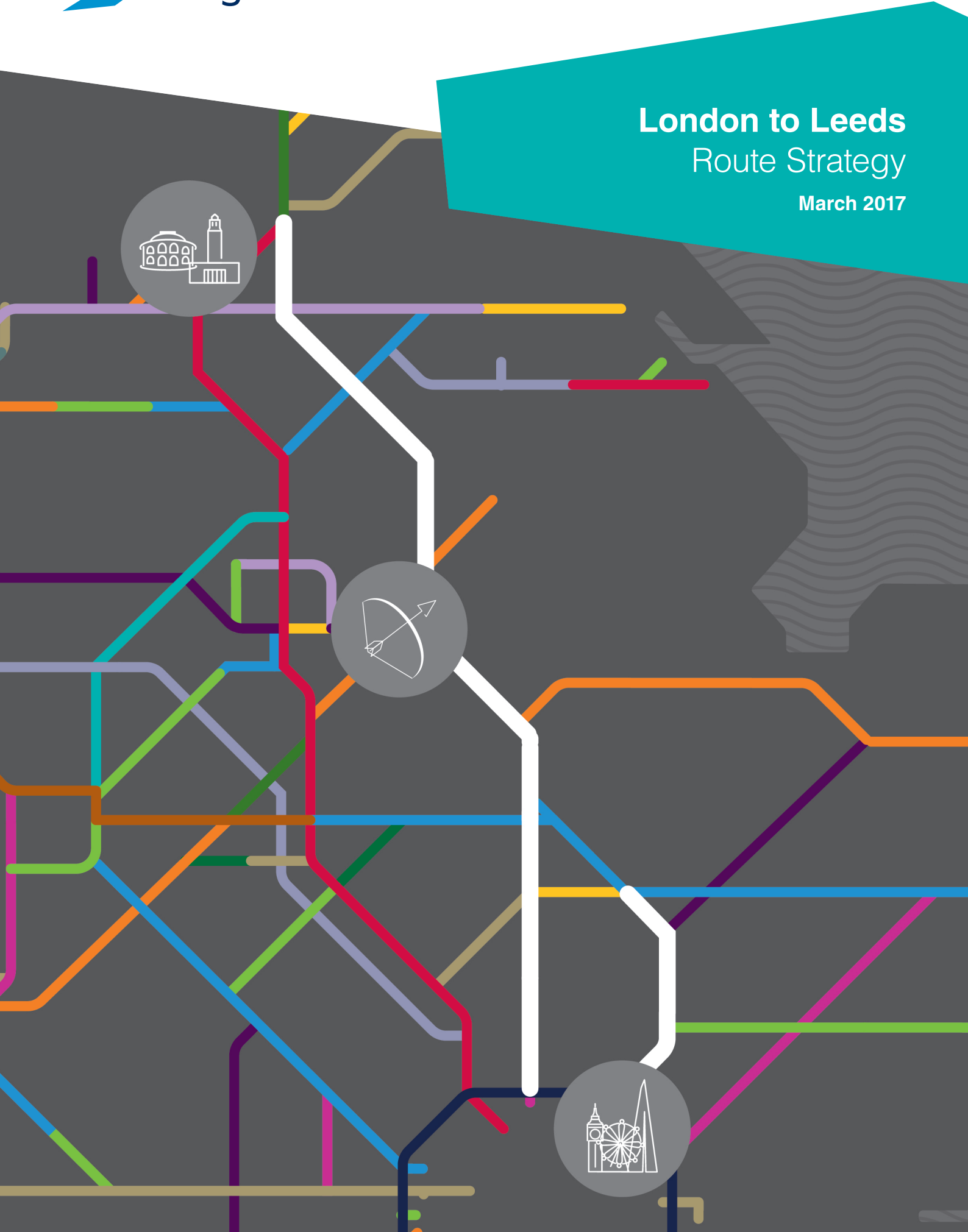


London to Leeds Route Strategy

March 2017



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Route strategies

The division of routes for the programme of route strategies on the Strategic Road Network

- London to Scotland East
- London Orbital and M23 to Gatwick
- London to Scotland West
- London to Wales
- Felixstowe to Midlands
- Solent to Midlands
- M25 to Solent (A3 and M3)
- Kent Corridor to M25 (M2 and M20)
- South Coast Central
- Birmingham to Exeter
- South West Peninsula
- London to Leeds (East)
- East of England
- South Pennines
- North Pennines
- Midlands to Wales and Gloucestershire
- North and East Midlands
- South Midlands



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1. Introduction

The modernisation of England's motorways and major A roads, also known as the strategic road network (SRN), is making a vital contribution to economic wellbeing and growth. This Route Strategy – one of 18 such reports – provides a statement on the current performance of, and perceived pressures on, the London to Leeds East route to inform the planning of future investment.

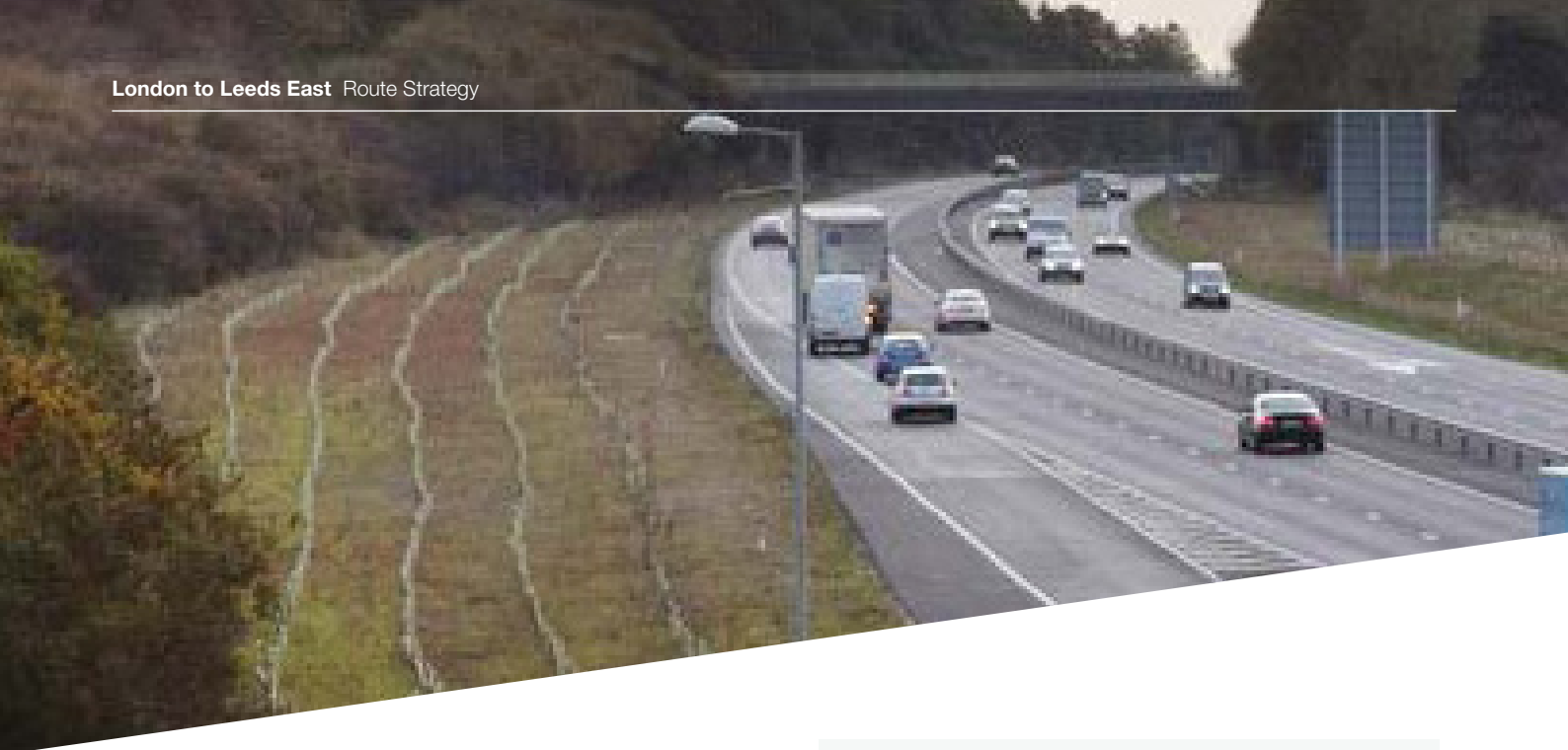
The SRN supports national and local economic prosperity by:

- linking together major cities
- connecting with extensive local road networks
- providing links to major ports, airports, and rail terminals
- enabling good access to regions and cross-border routes between the nations of the United Kingdom

The establishment of Highways England through the Infrastructure Act 2015 has changed fundamentally the way we plan investment in the network. Funding is now determined every 5 years, in the [Road Investment Strategy \(RIS\)](#), which is set by Government. We are currently delivering on the commitments that were set out in the first RIS covering 2015 to 2020, which are already making a difference for road users across the network.

At the same time, we are working closely with the other 3 bodies with statutory responsibility for the RIS – Department for Transport, Office of Rail and Road and Transport Focus – on preparing for the next RIS (RIS2) for the period after 2020.





Purpose of Route Strategies

Route Strategies provide a high level view of the current performance of the SRN as well as issues perceived by our stakeholders that affect the network. They are one of the key components of research required for developing the RIS. This suite of Route Strategies builds upon the analysis underpinning the first set of Route Strategies undertaken between 2013 to 2015, which together provided the first comprehensive assessment of the entire network. This time the Route Strategies aim to:

- bring together information from key partners, motorists, local communities, construction partners, environmental groups and across the business
- achieve a better understanding of the condition and performance of our roads, and local and regional aspirations
- shape our investment priorities to improve the service for road users and support a growing economy
- help inform the next RIS¹

Strategic themes

The Government’s vision for transforming the SRN is described in the [Road Investment Strategy post 2020: Planning Ahead](#) document available on www.gov.uk. This vision builds on the 5 broad aims published in the [Road Investment Strategy for 2015-2020](#): economy; network capability; integration; safety; and the environment. It also builds on Highways England’s 5 strategic outcomes (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2). Using the evidence from this and the other 17 Route Strategies, we will develop proposals that can help bring the Government’s vision for roads to life.

RIS1 Strategic Vision as reiterated in “RIS Post 2020: Planning ahead”



Figure 1.1 - RIS1 strategic vision

Highways England Strategic Business Plan’s key outcomes

- Supporting economic growth** through a modernised and reliable network that reduces delays, creates jobs and helps business compete and opens up new areas for development
- More free-flowing network** where routine delays are more infrequent, and where journeys are safer and more reliable
- Safe and serviceable network** where no one should be harmed when travelling or working on the network
- Improved environment** where the impact of our activities is further reduced, ensuring a long-term and sustainable benefit to the environment
- More accessible and integrated network** that gives people the freedom to choose their mode of transport and enable safe movement across and alongside the network

Figure 1.2 - Highways England strategic outcomes

¹See Chapter 6 for more information on the next RIS

Stakeholder engagement

Building on the engagement we started in the first round of Route Strategies, we have continued to work closely with a wide range of stakeholders to enhance our understanding of the strategic road network, and identify where users and other stakeholders feel investment is needed.

We used a number of methods to collate information. For example, we launched an online tool for customers and stakeholders over the summer of 2016 to inform us of the issues and challenges on our roads that affected them. As well as information collated from a range of people within Highways England, more than 300 different stakeholder organisations provided important feedback on the network during the evidence collection period. There were also more than 370 individual members of the public who contributed information. In total, around 2,700 individual points were raised by external stakeholders.

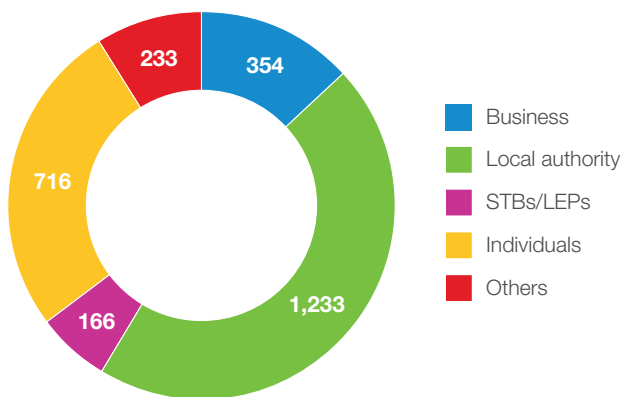


Figure 1.3 - External stakeholder responses

We are increasingly working with subnational transport bodies (STBs), including Midlands Connect, England’s Economic Heartland and Transport for the North, so we can ensure that their developing strategies and planning are integrated into our thinking (and vice versa).

Transport Focus

We commissioned Transport Focus, the road user watchdog, to undertake research on road user priorities. More than 4,400 interviews were undertaken with drivers across the SRN. Figure 1.4 below shows the breakdown by user type and purpose.

Completed interviews		
	3,487	79%
	322	7%
	407	9%
	206	5%
Commuting	501	11%
Business	1,367	31%
Leisure	2,457	56%






































Figure 1.4 - Driver sample breakdown

250 fleet managers from a mix of industries, size and regions

The research found that 60% of the users of the London to Leeds East route rated the motorway sections as either extremely good or fairly good and 59% of users rated the A road sections of the route the same. As Table 1.1 shows, although 28% of users still experienced problems using the route, with delays caused by road closures/accidents and congestion cited as the two main causes, this was low in comparison to all but two of the other routes.

The full report has been published on Transport Focus’s website www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/road-to-the-future.

We will continue to work closely with Transport Focus to understand customer priorities to ensure that the next RIS reflects their needs.

Experienced problems %	Route impacted	Largest problem	Second largest problem
61%	M25 to Solent		
58%	London Orbital and M23 to Gatwick		
50%	South Coast Central		
46%	Solent to Midlands		
44%	East of England		
43%	Birmingham to Exeter		
41%	South West Peninsula		
41%	North and East Midlands		
40%	London to Scotland East		
40%	South Pennines		
39%	Kent Corridor to M25		
37%	London to Scotland West		
32%	Midlands to Wales and Gloucestershire		 
30%	Felixstowe to Midlands		
30%	South Midlands		
28%	London to Leeds East		
27%	London to Wales		
17%	North Pennines		



Congestion/traffic queuing



Roadworks



Delays caused by accidents/roads closed



Roads busy/high volume of traffic

Table 1.1 - Transport Focus summary

2. The route

The London to Leeds East route is an important strategic link, acting as a spine between the north and the south on the eastern side of the country, while also connecting to the East Midlands.

It runs north–south linking the M25 to the north of London to the East Midlands, and the north of England at the M1 to the east of Leeds via the A1 and M11. The A1/A1(M) element of the route runs parallel, and functions as an alternative, to the M1 corridor. The M11 provides a link between the M25 and Cambridge, serving Stansted Airport.

The London to Leeds East route comprises the A1/A1(M) between M25 junction 23 in Hertfordshire, and the northern end of the M1 east of Leeds. The M11 links east London with the route starting at the M25 to the A14 in Cambridgeshire. Both the A1(M) and M11 at their southern ends act as radial routes for London access.

The major centres served by the A1 and A1(M) include London, Stevenage, Peterborough, Grantham, Newark-on-Trent and Doncaster. The M11 serves London, Harlow, Stansted Airport and Cambridge. Both the A1/A1(M) and M11 form part of the Trans-European Transport Network.

The A1/A1(M) infrastructure standard is a mix of motorway and all-purpose trunk road standards which are intermittent along the route. There is variation between high-standard, high-capacity 4-lane motorway, and older sections of the A1, which comprise 2 lanes with frontage access, at-grade junctions and bus stops. The rural nature of some of the surrounding area means slow-moving farm vehicles commonly use parts of the route.

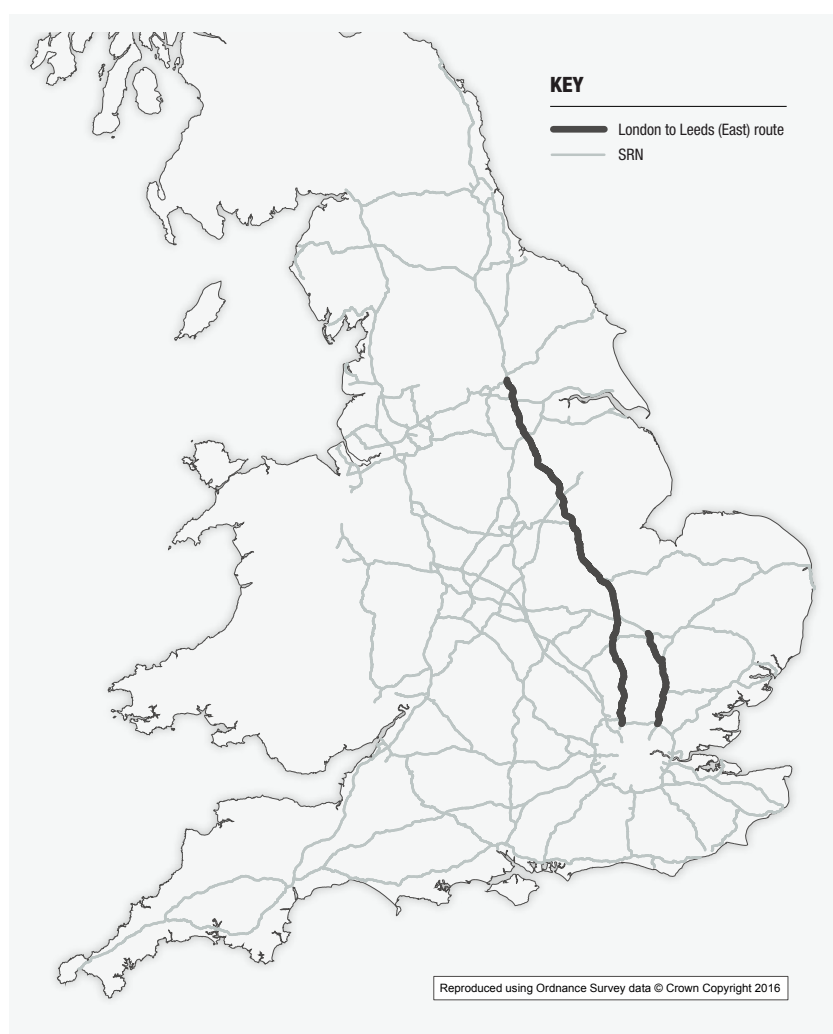


Figure 2.1 – Route overview map

Between junctions 41 and 43, this section effectively provides a motorway standard route between the M62 at Ferrybridge and the A1(M) north of Leeds. It was upgraded to motorway standard, and opened to traffic in 2006.

As a major north–south link, the route plays an important role in supporting the distribution of goods and strategic traffic from London and southern ports up through the Midlands to Yorkshire. The route is key to the economic prosperity of the east of England.

Aside from the major cities and towns served by the route, the surrounding land use is predominantly rural. There are a number of leisure attractions that are likely to experience weekend and seasonal peaks.

On average, 7.1 billion vehicle miles are travelled per year on the route. Journeys along the route include both long-distance commercial and leisure-related trips between the north and south of England. Due to the competing nature of routes, some users travelling the extent of the route are likely to make a choice between the A1 and the M1 dependent upon traffic conditions at the time of travel.

To the south of the route and close to London, there is a high volume of relatively short-distance trips given the expanse of the London commuter belt. The medium-sized urban centres of Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City, Stevenage, Hitchin, Harlow, and Bishop’s Stortford generate commuter traffic to the capital. Cambridge, Peterborough, Doncaster and Leeds are all sizeable settlements along the route that generate traffic. In addition, the M11 provides a high-speed and direct link between London, Cambridge and London Stansted Airport.



The route plays an important role in supporting the distribution of goods and strategic traffic from London and southern ports up through the Midlands to Yorkshire



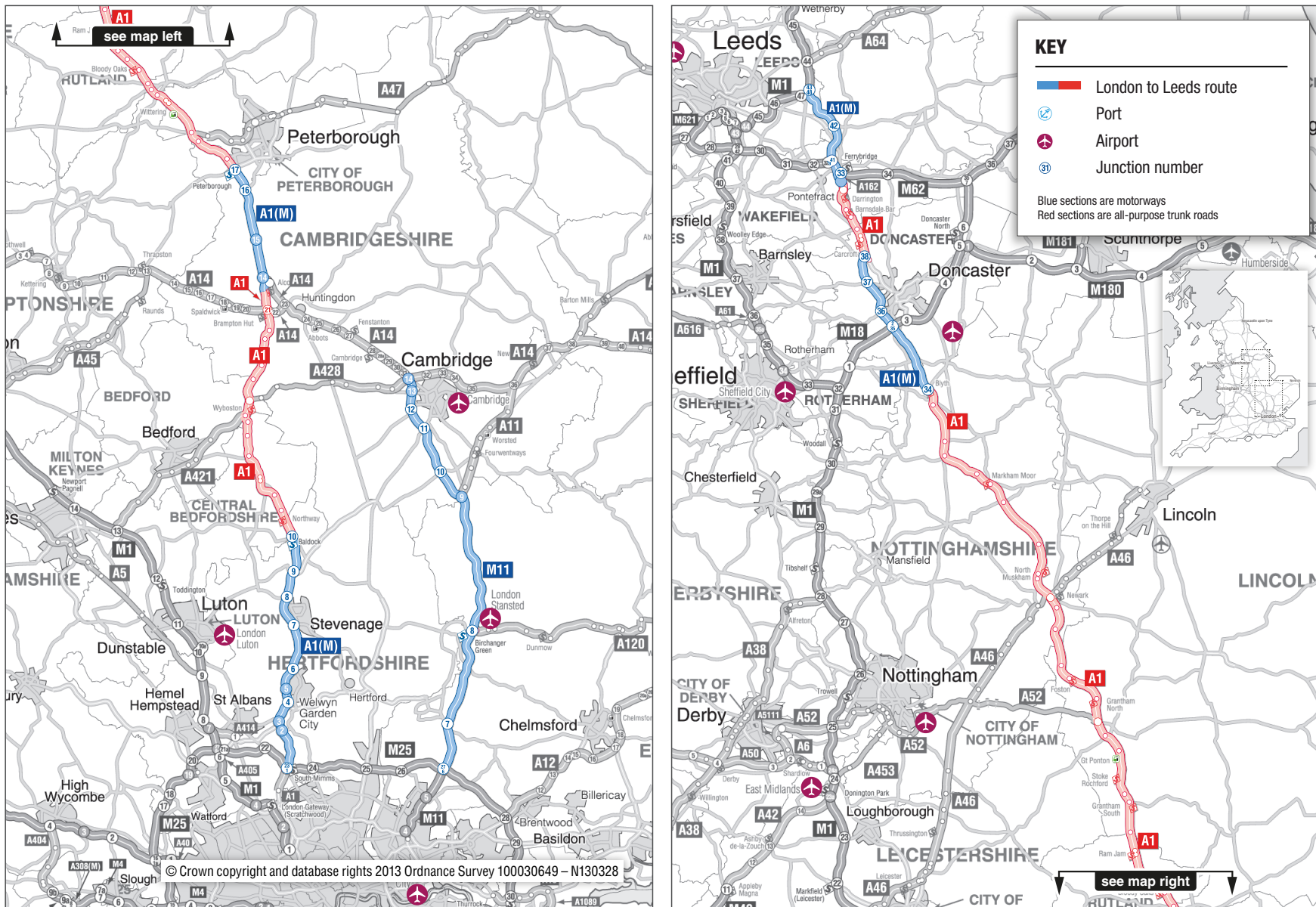


Figure 2.2 - Route Strategy overview map



3. Current constraints and challenges

This chapter outlines the emerging issues raised by stakeholders and is supplemented by Highways England information.

The following text and figures within this chapter provide a summary of the information collected and applied to our strategic themes.



A safe and serviceable network

There are concentrations of safety issues at various points on the route, particularly on the sections of the A1 that are not of motorway standard. These sections often have at-grade junctions and in some instances allow for right turns across the carriageway. Short slip roads are a characteristic of these parts of the network.

These features present a safety risk that manifest themselves in high accident rates, particularly on:

- the A1 between Water Newton and Wittering
- the A1 between Brampton and Biggleswade, with several major at-grade roundabouts and many local and property accesses
- the A1 between Redhouse and Darrington, with many local and property accesses, laybys and merge/diverge points

A general lack of technology on the A1/A1(M) results in a lack of information for drivers.

On the M11:

- junctions 5–7 have a high number of collisions and casualties
- junctions 10–13 serving Cambridge suffer congestion which threatens safety



More free-flowing network

Congestion is an issue at a number of locations along the route, particularly near large urban centres and commuter destinations in peak hours. The A1(M) and M11 provide direct access into the north of London and link to the M25 and, as such, have capacity issues at peak times.

On the sections of the A1 that are not of motorway standard between A1(M) junction 10 at Baldock and A1(M) junction 13 at Alconbury, congestion is an issue because of numerous at-grade junctions and access roads to properties. There are capacity issues between A1(M) junction 38 at Redhouse and the A1(M) at Darrington. In a southbound direction the change from 3-lane motorway standard to 2-lane trunk road at Darrington creates a bottleneck which can result in queueing back to the motorway section.

A number of junctions have insufficient capacity to accommodate demand. Although the exact cause of congestion varies at each location, they all serve large urban centres and have limited capacity at peak times to cope with high volumes.



Supporting economic growth

The route is an important strategic link, acting as a spine between the north and the south on the east side of the country, while also passing through the East Midlands. The A1 continues northwards beyond this route to ultimately provide a link to the east of Scotland. The route is therefore of significant importance to the pan-regional economy as well as providing access to large urban centres, commuter settlements and rural areas. In particular:

- the A1/A1(M) provides an alternative for freight and business travel to the M1 route which runs parallel and to the west, each route providing vital resilience for the other
- the M11 provides an important link between London and Cambridge, an area rich in high-tech business and the knowledge economy
- between London and Cambridge, the M11 also serves Stansted Airport, which is considered to be an important international hub for the southern region
- Doncaster Sheffield Airport is located near to the A1 route, providing international connectivity to the South Yorkshire region

Locations on the route that are already suffering from congestion are likely to see those problems exacerbated by the impact of new developments.



An improved environment

The route passes through a number of different areas with varying environmental challenges.

Flooding has been identified as an issue on the A1(M) between junction 6 at Welwyn and junction 7 at Stevenage and on the A1 between Redhouse and Darrington and also between Baldock and Wyboston. On the M11, junction 14 at Cambridge has also been subject to flooding.

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have been declared and are reflected in figures 3.1 to 3.3.

A number of Noise Important Areas have been identified on the A1(M) near to Darrington, Pontefract, Carcroft, Doncaster and Tickhill and also again between junctions 4 at Welwyn and 8 at Letchworth.



A more accessible and integrated network

There are locations on the route where existing infrastructure prohibits particular movements and thereby reduces the accessibility of an area. Improved integration with the local road network would therefore be beneficial.

On the M11, A1 and A1(M) the lack of technology means drivers do not have enough information to help them choose the right route if incidents occur.

London to Leeds East - Route Strategy: Map 1 of 3

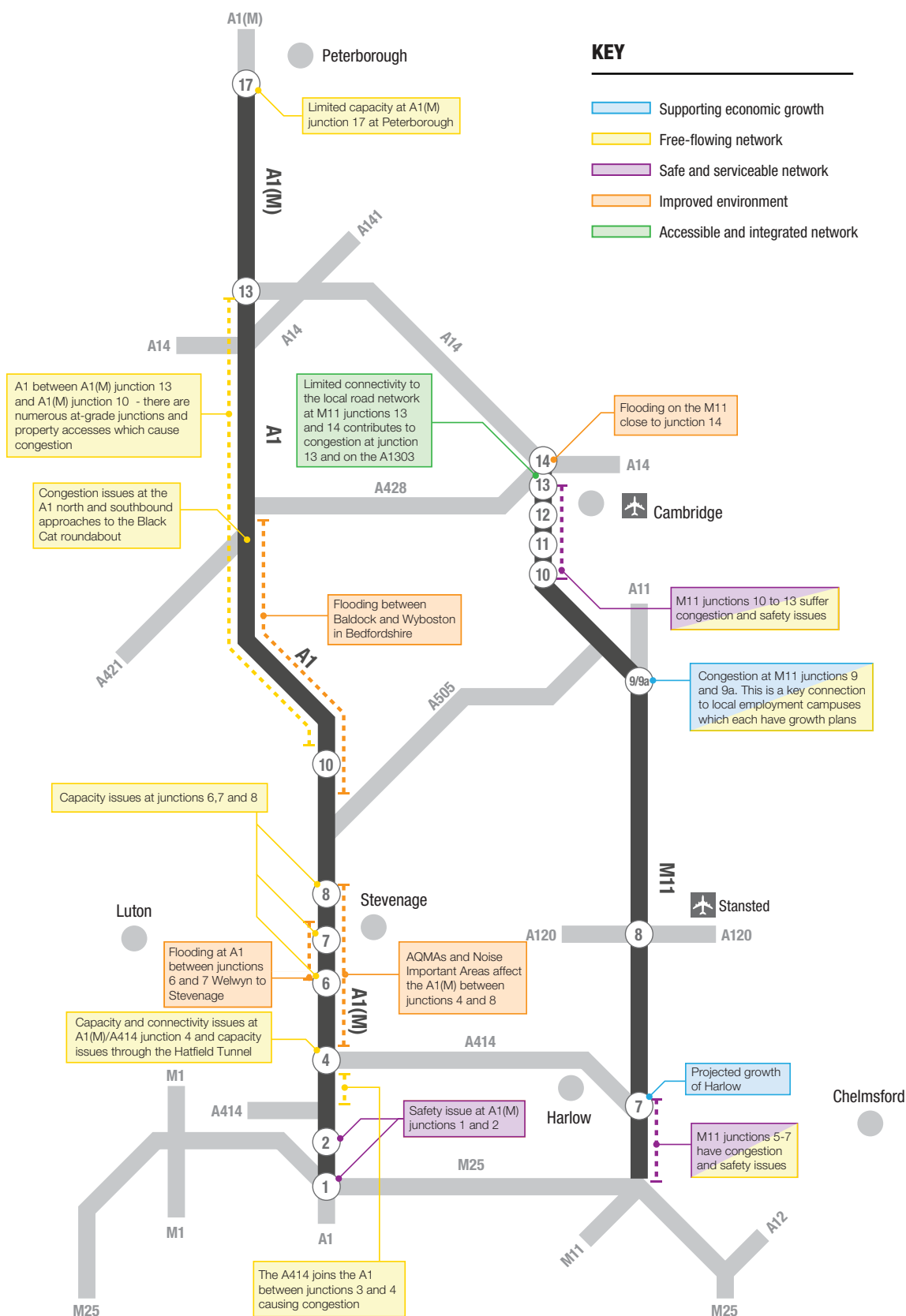


Figure 3.1 - Key challenges for the route

London to Leeds East - Route Strategy: Map 2 of 3

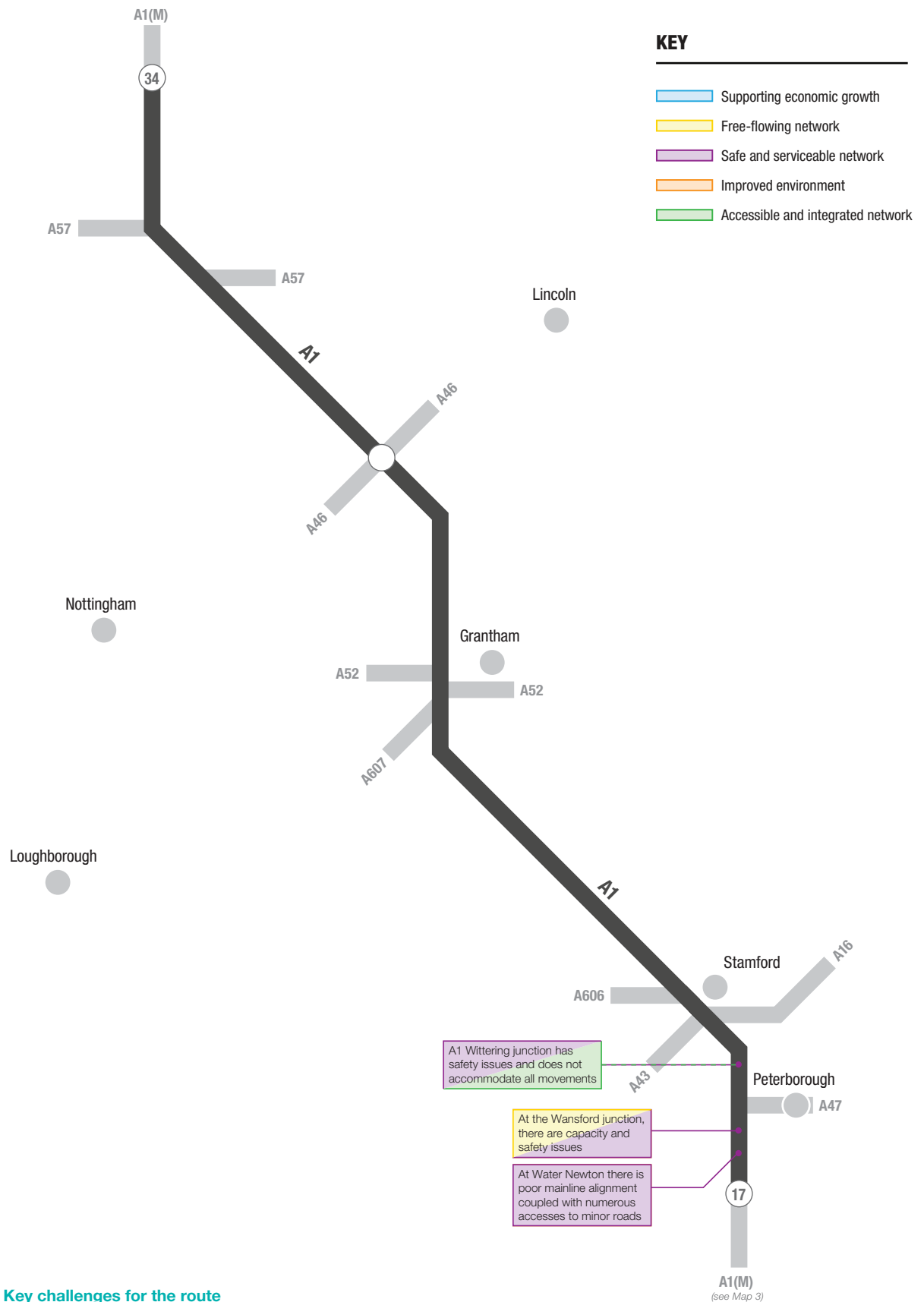


Figure 3.2 - Key challenges for the route

London to Leeds East - Route Strategy: Map 3 of 3

KEY

- Supporting economic growth
- Free-flowing network
- Safe and serviceable network
- Improved environment
- Accessible and integrated network

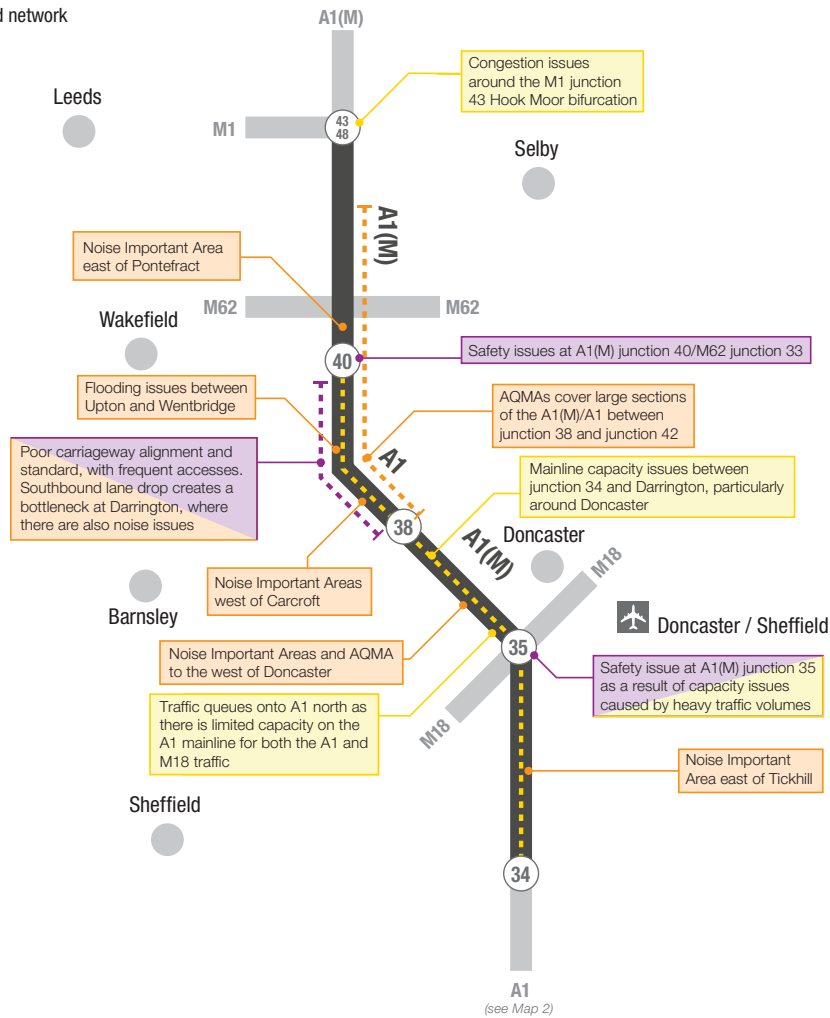


Figure 3.3 - Key challenges for the route

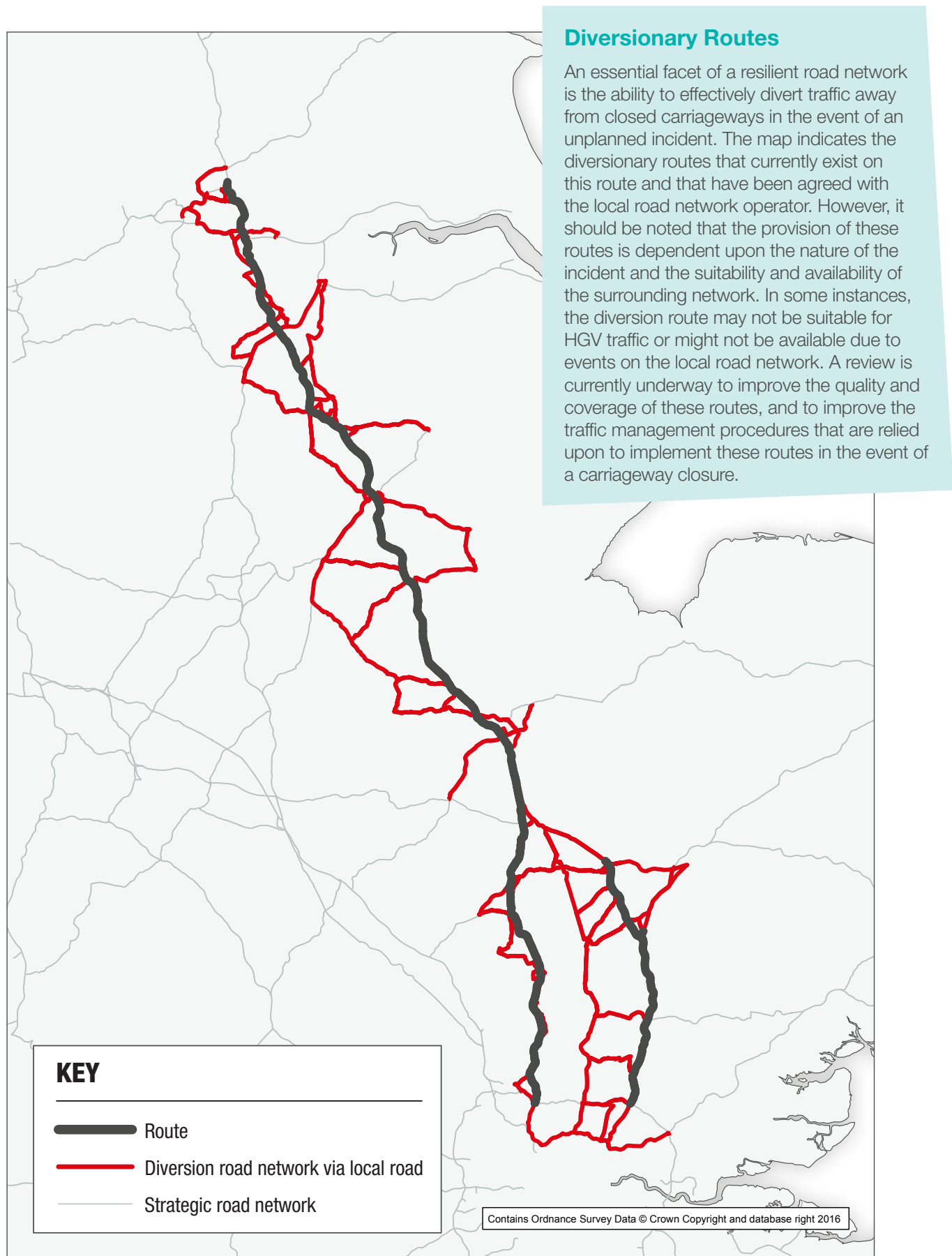


Figure 3.4 - London to Leeds East diversionary routes

Maintaining the strategic road network

We carry out routine maintenance and renewal of roads, structures and technology to keep the network safe, serviceable and reliable. We also ensure that our contractors deliver a high level of service on the SRN to support operational performance and the long-term integrity of the asset.

The heavy year-round use of all our routes means that they require regular maintenance and inspections for repairs to keep them fully operational, in order to support economic growth. Our maintenance regime focuses on 4 key aspects of the routes: road surfaces, bridges and structures, drainage and earthworks. The summary condition of each on this route is set out below:

Road surface

The surface condition across the route is considered to be sound or having some deterioration with less than 0.5% having severe deterioration that would require focused investigation.

Bridges and structures

The structures across the route are mostly in very good or good condition. According to an analysis of current data, fewer than 3% of our structures are in poor or very poor condition.

Drainage

Drainage assets are represented by both linear assets (for example pipes, channels, ditches, drains) and non-linear assets (for example gullies, chambers). Across route, drainage assets are considered to be in good condition for linear assets and fair condition for non-linear assets. Of those assets inspected, 70% of linear assets have been assessed as having no defects or only superficial defects. For non-linear assets, 75% have been assessed as having no defects or only superficial defects.

Earthworks

The geotechnical earthworks across the route are considered to be in poor condition, with the total length of earthworks that require further investigation amounting to less than 5%.

New assets have an operational 'life', during which, under normal conditions and maintenance, the risk of failure is expected to be low. Beyond this period, the risk of asset failure is expected to increase, although for many types of asset the risk of failure remains low and we do not routinely replace assets solely because they are older than their expected operational life. We use a combination of more regular maintenance and inspection, along with a risk-based approach to ensure that assets remain safe while achieving value for money from our maintenance and renewal activities.



Future developments

We have taken steps to transform our approach to maintenance by establishing an asset management programme that develops and implements the Asset Management Framework for Highways England.

The framework aligns strategic objectives with regional asset management plans and lifecycle asset management plans. It also includes the analysis required to plan the investment and expenditure on the strategic road network during the next road period, developing the business case options for capital renewals. It will provide a clear articulation of the total value that will be delivered by investment in RIS2, including the costs and benefits of delivering the capital renewals programme.

Operations

We are establishing a nationally consistent approach to the management of our operational capability through our Operational Excellence change programme. This will deepen our understanding of how our interventions impact on the performance of the network and on the journeys of our customers. We are using the latest analytical software to process traffic data and gain insight into:

- how our operational services can improve safety and provide security to road users
- how the attendance of a traffic officer has an impact on incident durations
- how information provided by Highways England can benefit road users who plan their journeys beforehand and then while on their journeys

By better understanding our current operational performance, we can create a baseline from which we can identify opportunities for improvement.



4. Current investment plans and growth potential

Investment in the strategic road network can make areas more attractive for inward investment, unlock new sites for employment and housing and facilitate regeneration.

From servicing the UK's logistics needs, linking our manufacturing heartlands and connecting to our international gateways, supporting services-driven activity in high-growth towns and cities, to meeting the needs of our visitor economy, the SRN is critically important to servicing the UK economy.

Economic context

Highways England has been working with a wide range of stakeholders to develop a strategic economic growth plan, which we are calling *The Road to Growth*. This plan explores the economic role of the strategic road network, and aims to explain how we will further increase our contribution to the UK economy. As part of the evidence base for *The Road to Growth*, over 400 economic hotspots – or economic opportunity areas (EOAs) – around the SRN have been identified in consultation with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The figures in this chapter highlight the EOAs which most closely align and are supported by the route.

To inform the development of *The Road to Growth* and assess the relationship between the SRN and economic growth, a suite of evidence reports were completed. These reports were published alongside The Road to Growth discussion paper and were subject to public consultation from November 2016 to January 2017. Alongside the engagement we have undertaken with all LEPs across England, the following evidence reports have ensured we have a more comprehensive economic evidence base and a better understanding of future challenges and opportunities:

- economic growth and the SRN – an evidence review of the relationship between transport investment and economic growth

- commercial development – an assessment of the relationship between the main property sectors and the SRN
- international gateways – a review of principal international gateways (ports and airports) and their contribution to the economy
- socio-economic analysis and future forecasts – mapping of socio-economic data (population, deprivation and employment) and sectoral forecasts up to 2030. This included identification of the likely growth forecasts for all sectors with a particular focus on those sectors heavily dependent on the SRN

The Road to Growth sets out our evidence findings to date and the steps we will take to enhance our enabling role in supporting economic growth.

Innovation

In April 2016, we published our Innovation, Technology and Research Strategy which set out how Highways England will use pioneering behaviours to help support our strategic objectives and create value for customers and stakeholders.

The £150 million Innovation Designated Fund was established to support innovative capital projects and to support developing the use of emerging technologies, new materials and ways of working.

Investment plans

The following figures show the location of Highways England major improvement projects which have previously been announced to help tackle some of the issues on the network. The Highways England website and delivery plan updates should be consulted for the latest information.

The figures also show strategic studies which have been progressed during RIS1, innovation projects and economic opportunity areas.

London to Leeds East - Route Strategy: Map 1 of 3

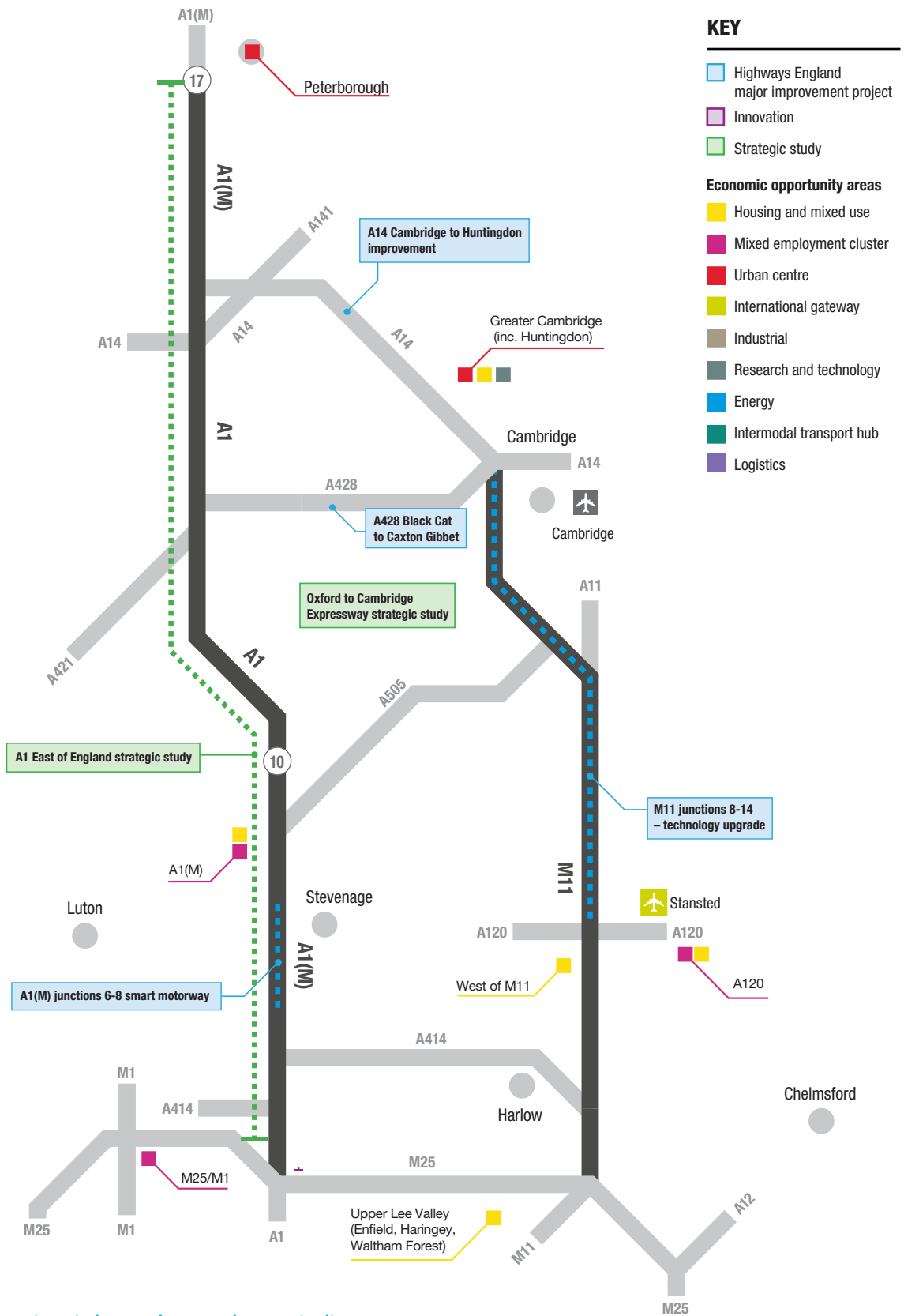


Figure 4.1 - Investment plans and economic opportunity areas

London to Leeds East - Route Strategy: Map 2 of 3

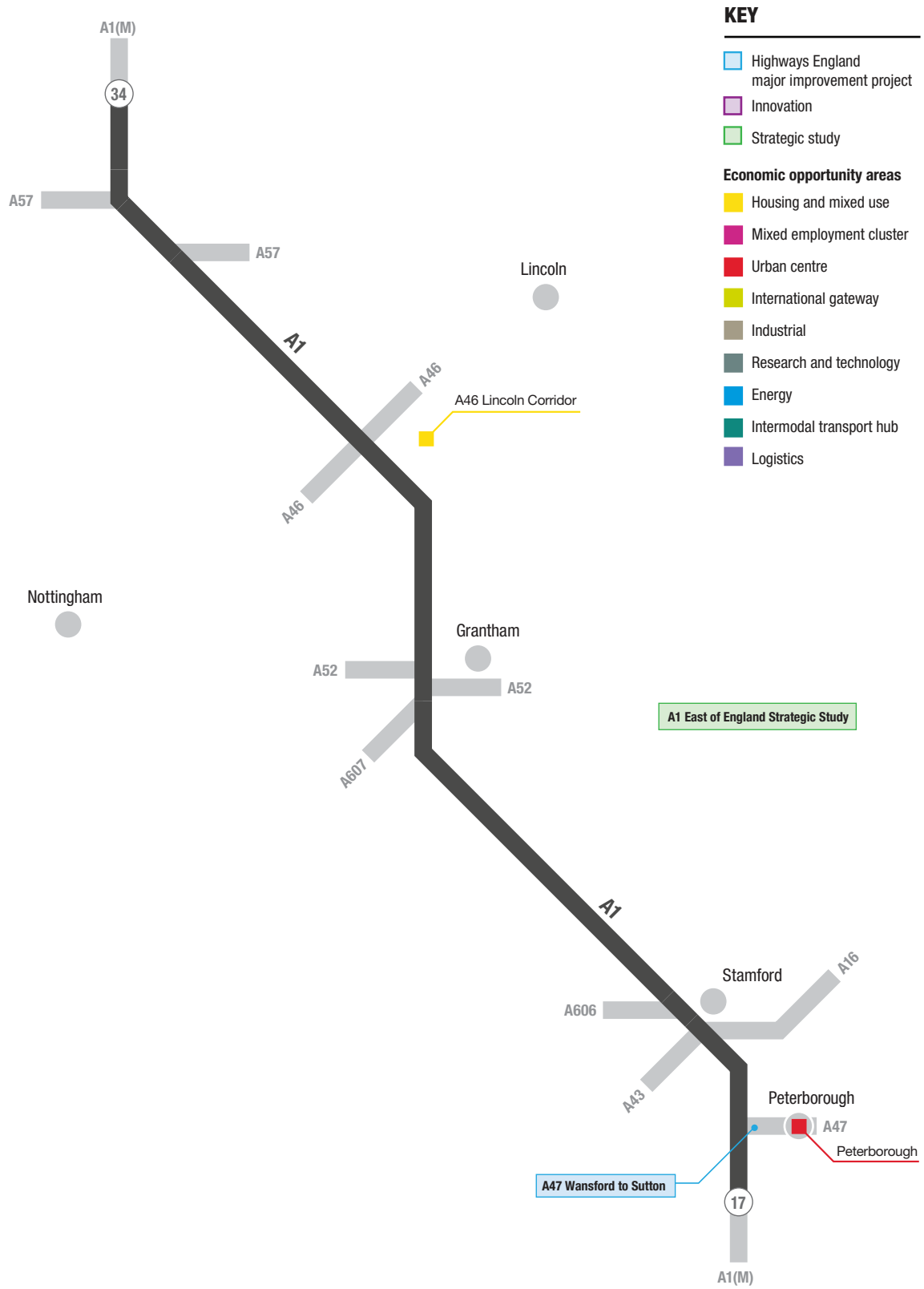


Figure 4.2 - Investment plans and economic opportunity areas

London to Leeds East - Route Strategy: Map 3 of 3

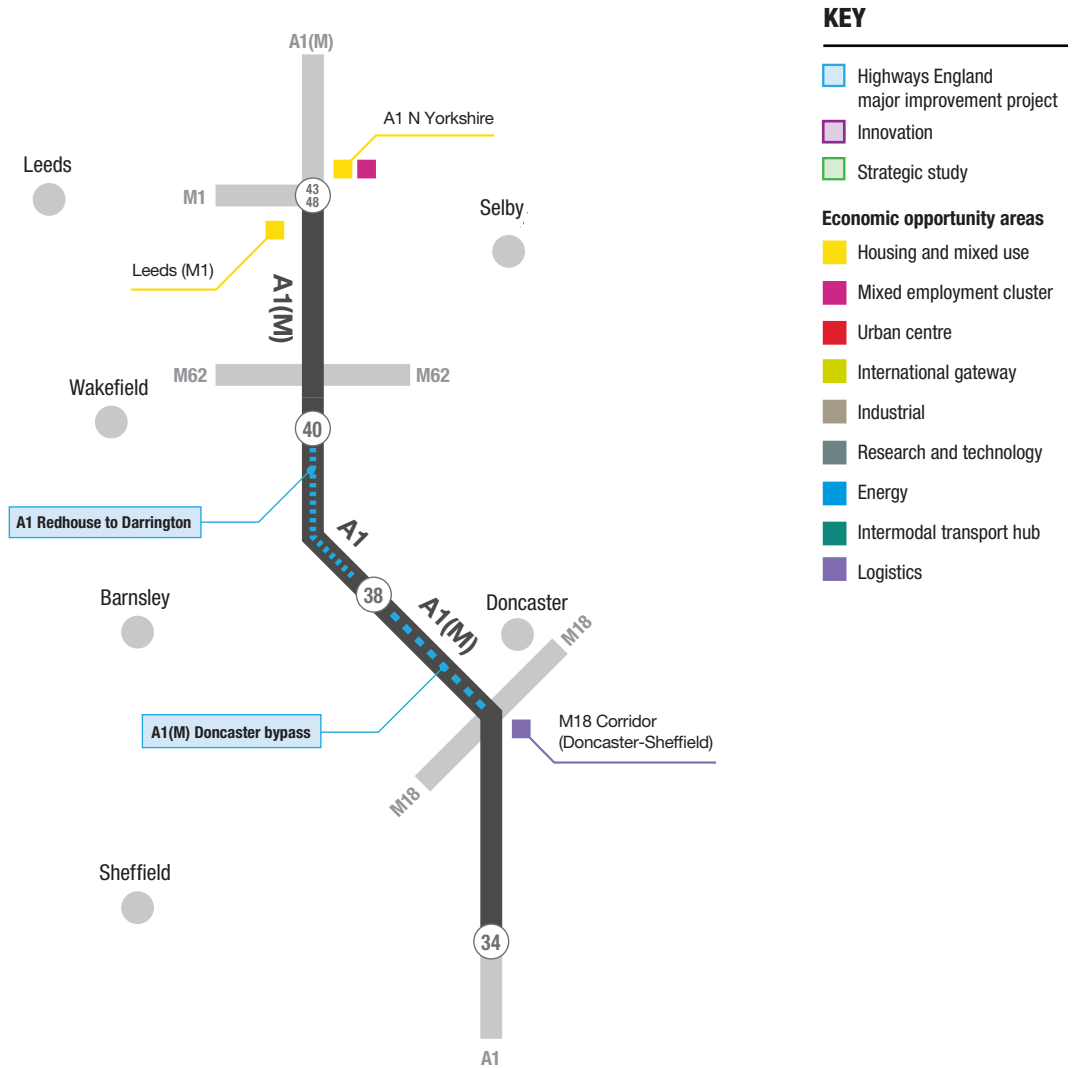


Figure 4.3 - Investment plans and economic opportunity areas

5. Future challenges and opportunities

Route Strategies have identified study areas on the strategic road network which require further investigation of the issues raised by stakeholders and identified through Highways England intelligence. These study areas will now be assessed further as part of our development for RIS2.

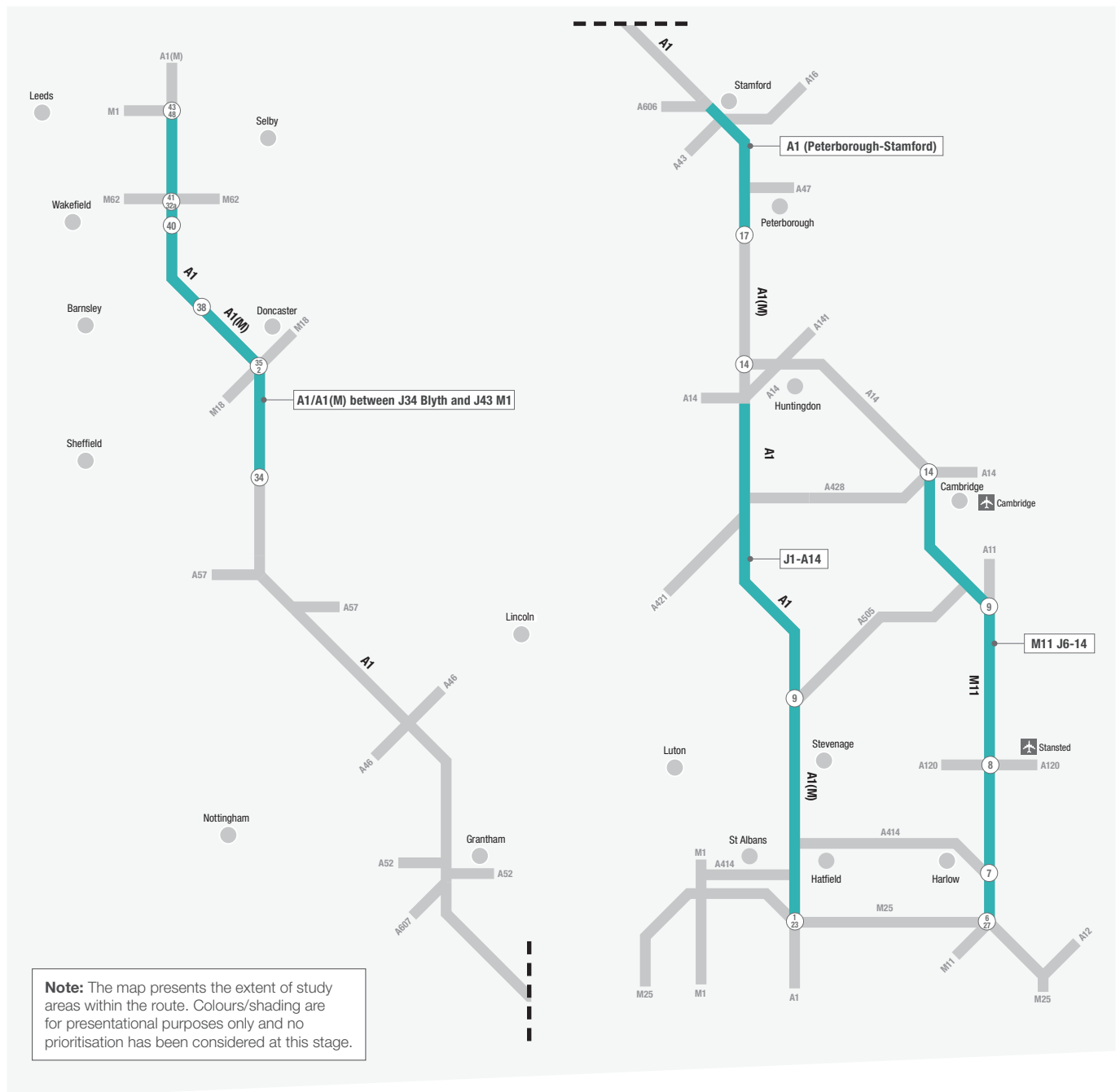
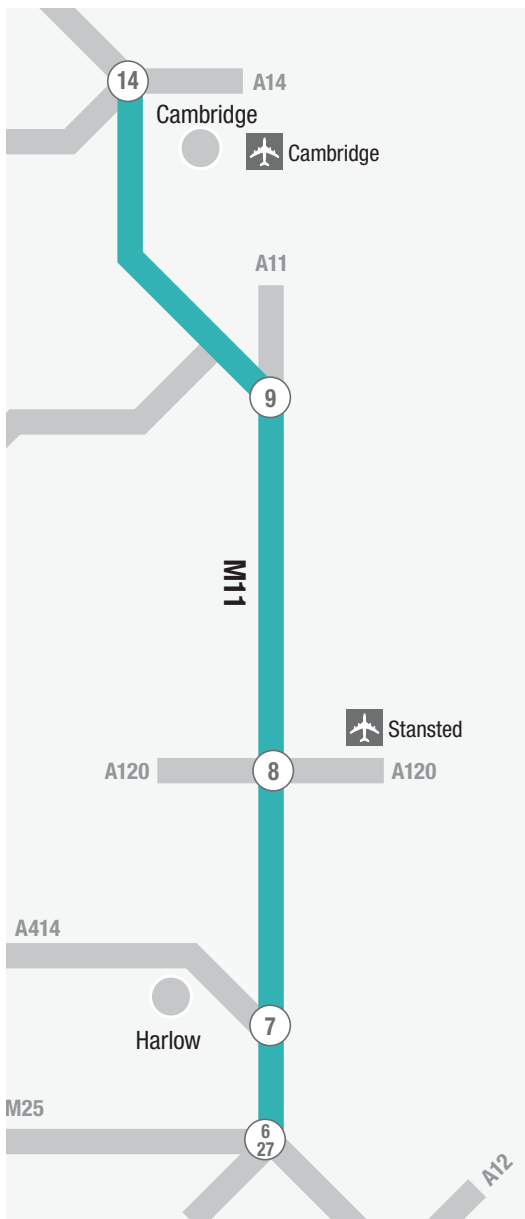


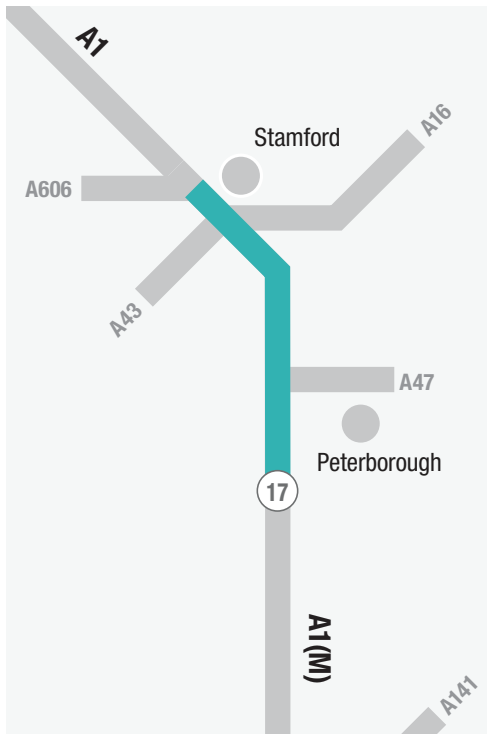
Figure 5.1 - Map of all study areas

M11 junctions 6-14



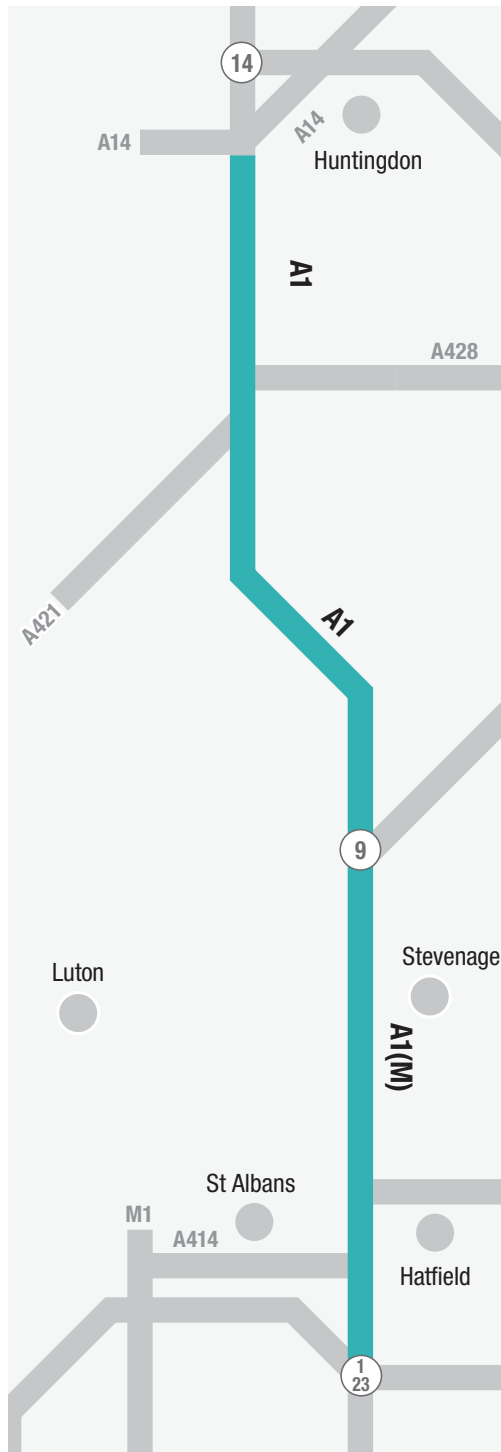
- There is a high number of safety incidents between junctions 5 and 7, with congestion also being an issue here.
- The growth of Harlow is constrained by the capacity of junction 7.
- There is a lack of resilience as a result of the SRN and local highway technology systems not being coordinated.
- There are congestion issues at junctions 9, 9a, 10, 11, 12 and 13.
- M11 close to junction 14 has flooding issues.

A1 (Peterborough-Stamford)



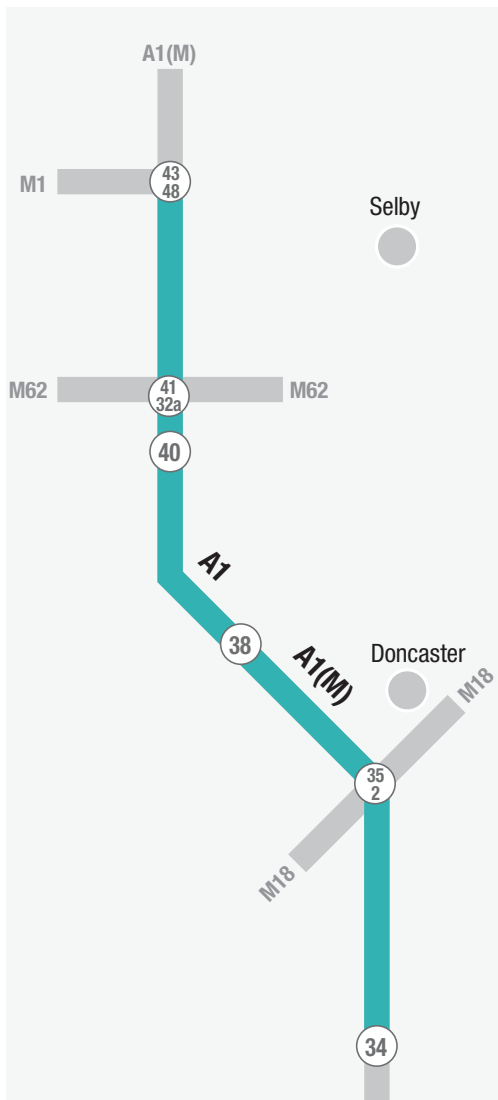
- There is limited capacity at A1(M) junction 17 at Peterborough.
- At Wansford junction, there are safety issues due to network capacity constraints.
- At Water Newton there is poor mainline alignment coupled with numerous accesses to minor roads.
- A1 Wittering junction has safety issues and does not accommodate all vehicle movements.
- The EOA at Peterborough is likely to generate additional traffic demand on the A1.

A1 junctions 1-A14



- There is a safety issue at A1(M) junctions 1 and 2.
- There is congestion where the A414 joins the A1(M) between junctions 3 and 4, and between Baldock and Wyboston.
- On the A1 between Brampton and Biggleswade much of the carriageway is of poor alignment and standard, with several major at-grade roundabouts and many local and property accesses, laybys and substandard merge/diverges.
- There are capacity issues at A1(M) junctions 6, 7 and 8.
- There are congestion issues at the A1 north and southbound approaches to the Black Cat roundabout.
- There are flooding incidents at A1 between junctions 6 and 7 Welwyn to Stevenage.
- There are AQMAs and Noise Important Areas on the A1(M) between junctions 4 and 8.

A1/A1(M) between J34 Blyth and J43 M1



- There is a lack of capacity to facilitate north-south movements which will worsen in the future.
- There is a safety issue at A1(M) junction 35 to Darrington as a result of capacity issues caused by heavy traffic volumes.
- Mainline capacity issues exist between junction 34 and Darrington, particularly around Doncaster. Traffic queues onto A1 north as there is limited capacity on A1 mainline for both the A1 and M18 traffic.
- There are Noise Important Areas at Darrington, Tickhill, Doncaster, west of Carcroft and east of Pontefract.
- There are AQMA and air-quality issues at junction 36, Darrington and Castleford.
- Between Redhouse and Darrington, the carriageway is of poor alignment and standard, with many local and property accesses. There are also congestion issues, and problems with flooding between Upton and Wentbridge.
- There is a safety issue at A1(M) junction 40/M62 junction 33.
- There are congestion issues around the M1 junction 43 Hook Moor bifurcation.
- There is an Economic Growth Opportunity Area in M62 corridor, particularly the junctions between the M62 and M1, which is likely to generate additional network demand.



6. Next steps

Our findings from this and other Route Strategies, as well as other research, will inform our first Strategic Road Network Initial Report which is to be published later this year. This will form the basis of a public consultation, which in turn will feed into decision-making on the next Road Investment Strategy (RIS2).

We are looking ahead to the next RIS and how we can support the Secretary of State in ensuring that value for money investments are made in the road network. The process for developing RIS2 is set out in our licence, and is in 3 phases: research, decision and mobilisation.

We are currently in the first phase – **research phase** – where we are gathering wide-ranging evidence on the state of the network and how we can ensure that improvements have maximum impact. The series of Route Strategies, of which this is one, is an important part of this phase alongside the outcomes of strategic studies which looked at particularly complicated problems on parts of the network and how to tackle them. Another key source of evidence is the Strategic Economic Growth Plan (*The Road to Growth*), which examines where and how the SRN can help support economic growth. This will emphasise that sectors dependent on the road network employ 7.4 million people, that we are already doing a great deal to support growth and that we want to do even more.

Now that this series of Route Strategies is published, we will continue our engagement with stakeholders, including other transport providers and authorities, on how best to address problems and maximise opportunities. For example, in working towards seamless end-to-end journeys for our customers, we will be focussing on how the strategic road network links with local roads and other modes of transport.

Findings from the research phase will feed into Highways England's Strategic Road Network Initial Report, expected to be published later this year, which will outline Highways England's ambitions for the network across 2020–2025 and beyond. The Initial Report will be the subject of public consultation.

In the **decision phase**, the consultation feedback will assist the Department for Transport in developing RIS2. In turn we will develop a Strategic Business Plan (SBP) setting out how we will deliver RIS2 as a business. Both the RIS and SBP will be reviewed by the regulator of roads, the Office of Rail and Road, to ensure that we have made the most efficient decisions. The final documents are to be published in 2019.



Figure 6.1 - RIS2 high-level process

In the final **mobilisation phase**, we will set out a Delivery Plan with a detailed programme of investment to be carried out in 2020 to 2025 on the basis of the commitments in RIS2.

Continued investment in modernisation, maintenance and operation will further improve the road network on top of the measures and schemes currently being undertaken, and will allow us to further support users of the strategic road network and the UK's economy. The rigorous process of developing RIS2 should ensure that the best use is made of taxpayers' money and that investments have the maximum impact.

The views and perspectives of different stakeholders, including motorists, are important to us. Stakeholders may also wish to contact one of the partner organisations. For example, stakeholders can keep up to date with Transport Focus' work, by signing up to their monthly electronic newsletter *Road User Voice*. Alternatively, stakeholders may prefer to make their views known through one of the many organisations involved in RIS2. They include the AA, RAC, RAC Foundation, Road Haulage Association, Freight Transport Association, Campaign for Better Transport, Confederation of British Industry and many others.

We will provide information about the process and emerging findings at events for representative organisations in spring 2017. At the same time, we are developing the dialogue with emerging STBs, local government, LEPs, business groups and environmental organisations. We want to align our analysis, and eventually our decision-making, with that of other organisations, so that we can maximise the benefit of investment, for example focusing on improving the interconnectivity between different modes and between the strategic and local road networks. This should lead to a richer discussion during public consultation on the Strategic Road Network Initial Report.





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