



Road Investment Strategy post 2020: planning ahead

Informing individuals and organisations interested in the future of England's Strategic Road Network

Government launched the first ever Road Investment Strategy (RIS)¹ in 2015. For the first time, we have a stable, long-term plan for making England's motorways and major trunk roads world-class by investing over £15 billion between 2015 and 2020. One year in, significant progress has already been made on major new road schemes to improve journeys across England while continuing to ensure that traffic on the network flows smoothly day to day.

While Highways England delivers on the commitments set out in the first RIS (RIS1), we need to look ahead to future Road Investment Strategies. This next period of major road investment will continue the transformation of the strategic road network whilst also addressing strategic imperatives of economic growth and improved productivity to the benefit of the whole of England. It will provide safe and reliable motoring, more sustainable roads, and make use of emerging technologies to improve network capability and reliability. Taken together this offers a transformation in our infrastructure and performance of the network and the quality of journeys for road users.

By starting work on this now, we can build a strong evidence base for future investment decisions, find the best possible designs for new projects, and secure maximum value for taxpayers.

This note outlines Government's aims and process for preparing future RIS for all interested parties so that they can play their part.

¹ The RIS is a statutory requirement under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015. It sets Government's requirements of Highways England. March 2016

Delivering RIS1

The Government's highest priority for strategic roads is delivering RIS1. Since April 2015, Highways England has been moving forward work on 127 identified schemes, as well as responding to unplanned emergencies such as the disruption of cross-Channel traffic over the summer. After one year, over 20 major projects are on track to deliver or already completed.

Delivering to time and cost:

- Four schemes have already officially opened, including the widening of the A14 around Kettering and enhancements to the A453 between Nottingham and the M1;
- Since April 2015 construction has started on a number of major schemes including improvements to the A160 and A180 on Humberside and the A21 in Kent;
- 16 further major projects are under construction across the country;
- Major contracts have been awarded on further construction projects including the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon scheme and a further ten smart motorway schemes;
- Additionally Highways England have stepped in to deliver repairs to the A591 in Cumbria and to develop a long term solution to Operation Stack in Kent.

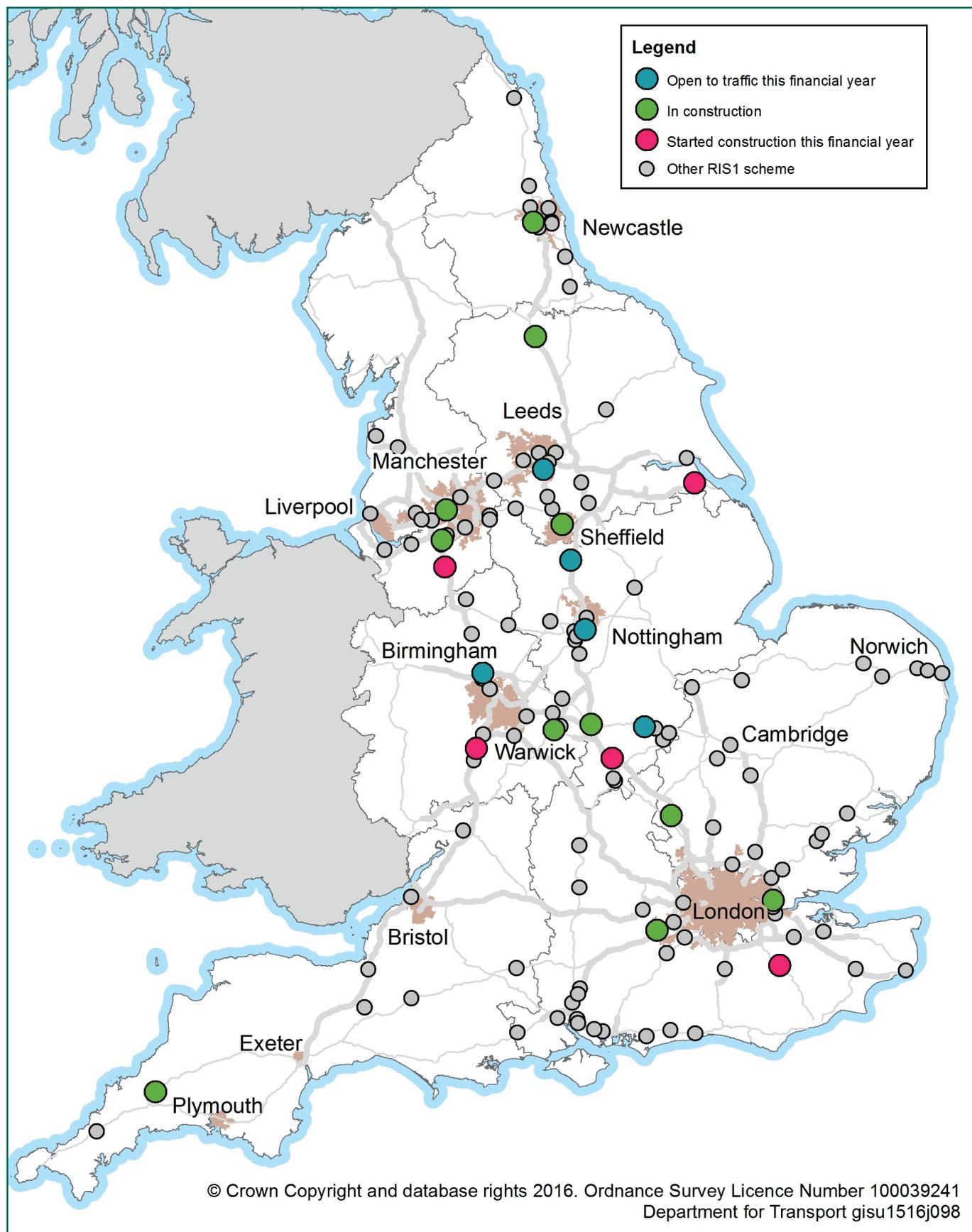
Improving practice and engaging with stakeholders

- As a result of close working with suppliers, future smart motorway schemes will involve shorter stretches of roadworks and completed within less time and at reduced cost;
- Highways England are also exploring faster speed limits through road works;
- There is better engagement with statutory consultees, local communities and other interested parties in the development of schemes;
- A wide range of interested parties have been getting involved in work on six strategic studies examining the potential for major upgrades to drive the creation of a Northern Powerhouse and change the economic geography of England; and
- Highways England is working with Natural England to develop green transport corridors.

Highways England performance since April 2015

- The Office of Rail and Road undertook its first review of Highways England's performance and reported in December 2015, concluding that during the initial six months of operation Highways England has made a good start;
- Highways England is exceeding its targets on keeping lanes open and clearing up incidents quickly, supporting the smooth flow of traffic. The road surface on motorways and main A roads is also being maintained above the targeted level;
- Highways England needs to push ahead with plans to improve safety performance on the strategic road network, tackling the engineering challenges as well as influencing driver behaviour, and provide a clearer picture of how they will deliver planned improvements to motorways and A roads.

Progress on RIS1 schemes



Developments

Although we are just coming to the end of the first year of delivering RIS1, it is time to start laying the groundwork for RIS2 so we can be sure to make the right decisions. In developing a robust investment strategy for the period 2020–25, we will need to take account of changes to the transport and infrastructure landscape, as well as the long-term trends that will shape our transport future.

Sub-National Transport Bodies

Across the UK we need to enable cities and regions to unlock growth. Local people know what works for their region so the Government will give cities a greater say in determining transport priorities and investment, through devolution deals and the development of Transport for the North and other sub-national transport bodies such as Midlands Connect. The

Government will work with such bodies to develop a long-term vision for transport in their area and we will use their skills and expertise to inform decisions on the RIS.

Likewise, the emergence of combined authorities and their key route networks also marks an important shift that will help shape future RIS.

National Infrastructure Commission

The Government has established the independent National Infrastructure Commission, to assess and identify the UK's long-term infrastructure needs. The Commission will look at long-term strategic infrastructure needs, and the RIS will

examine how to turn this into a programme of investment. Weaving these processes together, so the Commission's advice is at the heart of policy, and so the RIS remains stable and certain for those who are delivering it, will be an important part of making the new model a success.

National Roads Fund

From 2020/21 the Government guarantees that all revenue raised from Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) in England will be allocated to a new National Roads Fund and invested directly back into the strategic road network.

This will be underpinned by legislation, demonstrating the Government's

commitment to provide long term funding certainty for strategic roads. In turn this will boost confidence in the supply chain to prepare to deliver the pipeline of roads projects.

This funding could also support projects on local road networks close to the strategic road network, where it can be clearly demonstrated that this would help the strategic road network.

Future Influences on the Strategic Road Network

Population growth and changing expectations

The population in England is projected to continue to increase. This is likely to mean more drivers on the roads which we expect to result in more traffic. The structure of the population and changing expectations will also shape demands on the network. Road users will continue to expect well-maintained roads and reliable journeys.

New technologies will also shape expectations, for example, on the prevalence of charging points or the provision of real-time information. The RIS will evolve to meet road users expectations.

Technology

New technologies offer scope to improve outcomes on the road network. Some technologies are already tested and are important in managing parts of our network today, for example, Smart Motorways. These can be extended to make their benefits more widely felt.

Some technologies are still emerging, such as Ultra-Low-Emission Vehicles that will help achieve emissions targets and Connected and Autonomous Vehicles which could make driving easier, safer and more efficient and improve mobility. RIS2 will take advantage of the latest technology, and retain the flexibility to adapt to major new developments.

Growth and Productivity

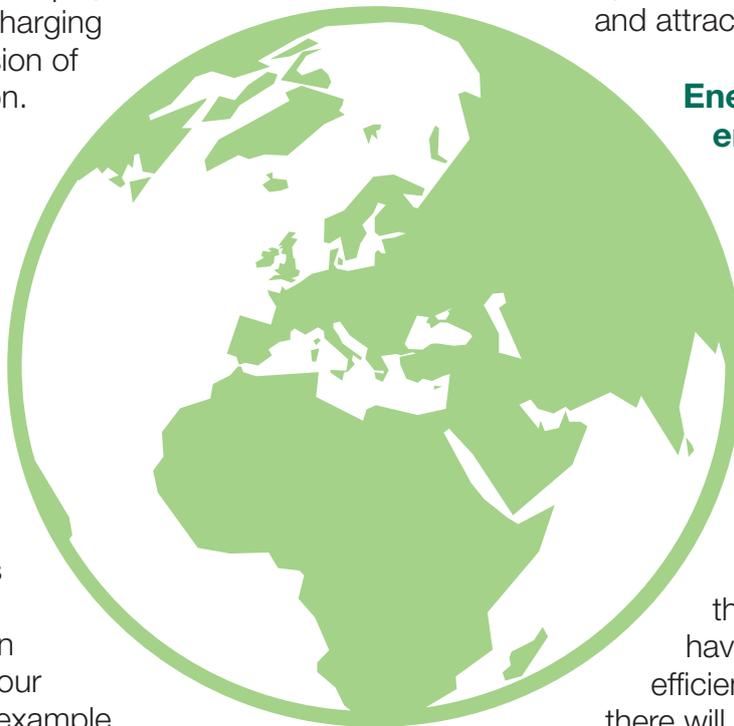
The Government is strongly committed to improving the productivity of our economy. Transport is widely recognised as a key driver of productivity, by connecting people to jobs and businesses to markets. It also has an important role in supporting all our communities who depend on effective transport infrastructure in order to thrive and grow. The strategic road network drives local economic activity, supporting new housing and business developments, encouraging trade and attractive investment.

Energy and environmental shifts

There will be increasing pressure on traditional energy sources but fuel costs are not expected to rise significantly.

It is projected that vehicles will have increasingly efficient engines and there will be a greater

take up of Ultra-Low-Emission Vehicles. The imperative to reduce carbon dioxide, mono-nitrogen oxides and other greenhouse gases in response to climate change, will drive this trend. There are potentially other wide-ranging implications of environmental change. In addition, increasing instances of extreme weather will test the network's resilience. As cost of driving and the environmental impact of vehicles reduces, traffic levels are projected to increase.



Building upon our Vision

Our vision in RIS 2015–20 for a transformed strategic road network in RIS1 continues to provide a sound foundation as we look towards 2040. In preparing RIS2, we want to build on our existing five broad aims:

Aim 1: Economy

The road network needs to support key goals of improving productivity and building a stronger economy. We will be particularly alert to opportunities for:

- **Helping business to get goods to market:** Provide good connections within the UK, as well as to overseas markets via ports and airports.
- **Building the Northern Powerhouse:** our strategic studies are looking at how to transform connections across the Pennines and other parts of the network.
- **Creating new opportunities for housing and development:** Provide the transport capacity to allow towns and cities to grow.
- **Enhancing connectivity to support urban and rural economies:** Meet the needs of city deals, devolution deals and other local plans.
- **Improving access to jobs:** Provide better connections that let people find work in more places, and help wider agglomerations to form.

Aim 2: Network Capability

We need a network that can meet future needs and support growth for the long term. Important objectives are likely to include:

- **Keeping the main arteries flowing:** With tight margins operated by the freight and logistics sector, a traffic jam on the M1 near Rugby could mean empty shelves in a supermarket in Norfolk or a factory sitting idle in Leeds. We will work to keep journeys reliable on the most essential routes;
- **Linking the country together:** Roads must be managed and improved to ensure that no part of the country is left isolated;
- **Tackling pinch points:** Addressing bottlenecks which reduce the value of the transport networks around them will be a priority for ongoing investment, to tackle congestion black spots.

Aim 3: Safety

England has some of the safest roads in the world and the strategic road network is the safest part of all, per mile driven. However this is no cause for complacency and we remain committed to reducing deaths and injuries on our nation's roads:

- **Investing in the design of the network:** Outdated or poorly designed junctions need to be tackled as do carriageway crossings. Single carriageway roads with poor safety records will be considered for extra protection measures especially where the road is to be dualled.
- **Putting safety at the heart of the day-to-day operation of the network:** The traffic officer service needs to continue supporting safety on motorways and some A roads. Good maintenance standards will continue to play their role in keeping the roads as safe as possible as will the use of technology and information management in handling incidents on the network.
- **Encouraging safe behaviour:** Promoting appropriate driver behaviour and helping to prevent driver error, for example, working with the police on driver awareness and compliance with mandatory signs for safe and efficient operation of Smart Motorways.

Aim 4: Integration

Almost all journeys start or end on a road. We will therefore seek new opportunities for:

- **Linking the strategic road network with ports, airports and rail:** Intermodal connections need to be made easy and we will use the opportunity of long-term planning to see where improvements to one mode can support other forms of transport;
- **Integrating the strategic road network with local road networks:** Road users want a smooth and reliable journey regardless of which stretch of the network they are driving on. We will continue to work with local highways authorities to ensure that the different parts of the network work as an integrated whole;
- **Supporting bus and coach services, cyclists and other vulnerable users:** Measures on the strategic road network for scheduled bus or coach services will be considered and we will continue to support measures to enable cyclists, horse riders and walkers to travel safely and comfortably.
- **The next RIS will continue and extend RIS1's practice of investing off of the strategic road network, where this helps the SRN to function better.** The boundaries of the network should not be a barrier to action, and we will ask local partners to bring forward suggestions as part of the route strategy process.

Aim 5: Environment

It is vital that we continue to drive the transition to a decarbonised network that is environmentally and locally sensitive. We will continue to tackle the immediate and long-term environmental impacts of the road network. Key aspects include:

- **Tackling air quality:** Air quality problems should be substantially reduced by the end of the first road period and we need to ensure that this trend continues;
- **Tackling noise:** Construction of further noise barriers coupled with an extensive resurfacing programme will continue.
- **Tackling water quality and flooding:** We will continue to tackle run off from the highways that adversely affect the quality of ground and surface water and issues that can arise where a road crosses rivers or flood plains. We will also take account of climate change in flood risk planning for roads.
- **Protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment:** Older roads need to be retrofitted to meet or exceed current design standards and the broader Highways England estate needs to be managed to play an important positive role in England's natural environment.
- **Accelerating the decarbonisation of the vehicle fleet:** Low-emission vehicles are the most promising way to tackle the effects of road transport on climate change. Practical issues, like recharging points and alternative fuelling methods, must not slow the uptake of new technologies.

Setting the next RIS

The Road Investment Strategy process means that there is a long-term timetable for developing the next programme of investment. With the start of RIS2 delivery more than four years away, there is time to develop and mobilise the next programme: gathering the best evidence possible, probing value for money and getting projects ready to start construction early in the next roads period.

As for RIS1, we expect RIS2 to comprise four parts:

Strategic Vision – a 25 year vision for the strategic road network outlining what Government wants to achieve with the network;

Investment Plan – a multi-year investment plan identifying where improvements will be made to the network;

Performance Specification – high-level objectives and performance standards required of Highways England across the network; and

Statement of Funds Available – a statement of public funds available to fund activities and improvements.

The process laid out here allows for the formal processes required by the Infrastructure Act 2015, and also provides the supply chain with sufficient time to prepare the next Roads Period. It includes a significant period for investigation, consultation and debate.

The future of the strategic road network is a matter which affects everyone. Development of the next RIS will be an open and transparent process which encourages organisations and communities to influence the shape of the future network.

There are four organisations with statutory roles in setting RIS2:



Department for Transport – the Government department responsible for strategic roads



Office of Rail and Road – responsible for monitoring how Highways England exercises its functions and for promoting its efficiency and performance



Highways England – the Government company responsible for enhancing, maintaining and operating the network



Transport Focus – the road user watchdog representing road users' interests.

In addition to this, a large number of other bodies will be represented in the process. Sub-national transport bodies, such as Transport for the North and Midlands Connect, may also make formal contributions to the process, depending on their local circumstances.

Research

- Strategic Studies
- Route Strategies
- Highways England publishes **Strategic Road Network Initial Report** on the state of the network and suggested priorities

Evidence used in drafting RIS2

Decision

- Department for Transport produces **Road Investment Strategy**
- Highways England produces **Strategic Business Plan**
- Office of Rail and Road advises Government on efficiency of both

RIS2 finalised and published

Mobilisation

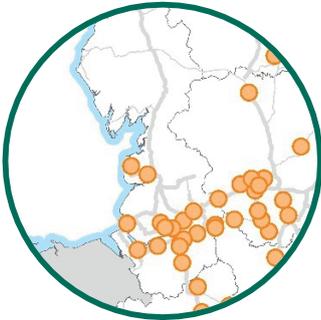
- Scheme development
- Highways England publishes **Delivery Plan**

1 April 2020 – Road Period 2 begins

Delivery

Developing the Next Programme

Highways England draw upon four principal sources to provide advice to Government on which proposals to take forward in RIS2. We will draw on this advice to arrive at a final prioritised set of proposals for RIS2 that is affordable within the available funding.



RIS 1 Schemes

Government's aim is to ensure that all 112 projects identified to start in the first Road Period begin by 1st April 2020. Work on many projects will continue after 2020, and the vast majority of projects should be open to the public by the middle of the next Roads Period.

RIS2 will repeat the commitments set out in RIS1 to get all schemes into construction and open to traffic, and if appropriate, RIS2 may update RIS1 to make clear what the public can expect.

RIS 2 Schemes in preparation

RIS1 identified 15 projects that would be developed for RIS2. While these projects need to prove they are suitable for investment before they can be committed, should they meet the necessary standard, they will be first in line for investment once the RIS1 schemes are under construction.



Strategic Studies



The strategic studies are intended to address complex problems about the future of the road network. Larger than single projects, they assess how to address major gaps in the network, or complex pinch-points that require multi-part solutions. The six studies are:

- Northern Trans-Pennine Route
- Manchester NW Quadrant
- Trans-Pennine Tunnel
- A1 East of England
- Oxford to Cambridge Expressway
- M25 SW Quadrant

The outcomes are expected to include proposals for detailed development and to start construction before 2025.

Route Strategies

For most of the network, the most important source of new investments and priorities will be Highways England's refreshed programme of route strategies. These will update the existing evidence base on issues such as congestion, safety, reliability and environmental performance, and combine them with the views of local users. The end results will be used to create a prioritised list of projects for the whole network.



The Performance Specification

The RIS is designed to cover the full range of activities required to manage the strategic road network and includes a performance specification. This acts like a contract between Highways England and the Secretary of State for Transport, saying how the network is expected to perform.

The performance specification for RIS1 set out eight key outcome areas. We expect the performance specification for RIS2 to build upon this, to challenge Highways England to strive for ever-better performance, and make sure that the strategic road network as a whole continues to work well.

In continuing this development, we expect to draw extensively on the work of the Office of Rail and Road and Transport Focus. The Office of Rail and Road is responsible for assessing the performance of Highways England, and we will take their advice to make sure that the performance specification is both challenging and deliverable. Transport Focus, representing the interests of road users, will help make sure that the performance specification covers what is most important to the people who use the strategic road network. We also want to draw on the experience of interested groups to help keep the performance specification focused on the best deliverable outcomes.

Safety

Our focus is always on providing a safer network for all road users and reducing the number of casualties



SAFETY SAFETY

40%

Reduction in the number of people **killed or seriously injured** on the network during the first Road Period



SAFETY SAFETY

User satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a measure of overall performance across a number of areas, assessed through the **National Road Users' Satisfaction Survey**

Overall satisfaction of at least 90%



Traffic flow

Free-flowing traffic is essential and during the first Road Period we have two KPIs to enable the evaluation of the Company's impact:

97% **Network availability** at a minimum, to keep traffic flowing and reduce the impact of roadworks



85% **Motorway incidents** cleared within the hour





Economic growth

The SRN will support economic growth. For the first Road Period we have focused on **average delay**, monitoring time lost per vehicle per mile to illustrate the cost of delay

Extract from The Road Investment Strategy 2015

Defining the Network

RIS2 will also take decisions about the extent of the strategic road network, adding or removing roads where appropriate. While we do not expect major changes, the route strategies will record any proposals, and they will be considered on a case by case basis.

How to contact us

During the research phase of RIS2 the Department for Transport will work with Highways England, Office for Rail and Road and Transport Focus, to engage with a wide range of organisations and individuals. This includes MPs, strategic transport bodies, local government, local enterprise partnerships, business groups and environmental organisations.

There are several ways in which stakeholders can input



If you want to identify issues on a specific part of the road network, suggest improvements that need to be made on or around a piece of the road network, or want to suggest that roads be added or removed from the trunk road network, you can get involved in Highways England's route strategies process. Highways England will make information about their approach to route strategies available on their webpages at Gov.uk. For further information contact routestrategies@highwaysengland.co.uk



Transport Focus will be carrying out research designed to put road users' interests at the heart of RIS2. If you would like to keep up to date with Transport Focus's work, sign up to their monthly electronic newsletter Road User Voice using the following link:
<http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/news/sign-up>



The AA, RAC, RAC Foundation, Road Haulage Association, Freight Transport Association, Campaign for Better Transport, Confederation of British Industry and many others are involved in developing RIS2, representing the views of their members. You may prefer to make your views known through one of these or other organisations.

While this is just the start of the RIS2 process and not a formal consultation, we welcome views and suggestions on points raised in this document and should you have any questions about the development of RIS2, please contact the Department for Transport at:
RIS2Team@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Further information about RIS2 will be published at
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-investment-strategy-post-2020>
as RIS2 develops.