

Delivering a world class strategic road network through information

The Highways Agency Information Strategy



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Foreword

In 2006, we published our first Information Strategy. Since then we have made enormous strides in putting that strategy into action.

Our customers now have available the TRUE information we promised. Our information can be trusted; it can be relied upon to be accurate; and it is increasingly useful information that helps our customers make effective decisions.

We have also radically improved the way we plan and execute our investments in information to support our business and customer objectives. This means we are investing wisely making sure that the money we spend will give us all the best return possible.

We have delivered major new traffic information services, including Traffic Radio, travel times on VMS and significant upgrades to our Traffic England website. Our National Traffic Control Centre (NTCC) has been extremely successful, and our preparations for the next generation

National Traffic Information Service – to replace the PFI-provided NTCC in 2011 – are well on track. This will be a world class traffic information service to support our vision of becoming the World's leading road operator.

Internally, the modernisation of our office support systems has set new standards in the industry and won national recognition. We now have systems that are well supported, increasingly customer-focussed and resilient to meet the needs of the 24/7/365 business we are.

In all this, we have built the right links between our business objectives and the way we employ information and information technology to support those objectives. As our Chief Information Officer and Director of Information, I have successfully moved the focus of that role away from technology alone towards a focus on increasing the quality of our services to customers, to directly supporting our business aims and objectives, to driving through real savings whilst ensuring services

improve. I have also ensured that the Agency has the right information policies and practices in place, as our customers expect, so that we meet all the data handling and legal requirements placed on us.

We have reviewed and updated the Information Strategy to define our way forward for the next five years. As such, the Strategy fully aligns with and supports our Strategic Plan.

Our Information Vision continues to consist of three strands: to provide Trusted Reliable Useful Effective (TRUE) information; to make best use of our information asset to improve performance; and to deliver robust, efficient, effective and reliable information systems and services. Our work continues to have eight guiding principles, as set out in the body of this Strategy. These principles have been very effective since 2006 in guiding our decision making, and they shall continue to do so.

So this Strategy provides a framework for delivering our Information Vision: to provide accurate and timely information more efficiently and effectively, to more people, enabling us to be the world's leading road operator.

The Smarter Government White Paper sets out the Government's intention to make public information available free of charge. This is what we have been doing for some time with our traffic information. We recognise that much value can be added by others in supplying services to their customers, who are also our customers. We will continue to enable a level playing field for the traffic information industry in the use of our information.

Information is critical and underpins everything we do to manage traffic, manage and improve our network, improve safety on it and protect the environment around it. Good information also underpins the innovation we need to ensure we continue to be progressive. Good information practices are a fundamental component of the Lean approach being adopted in our organisation. By enhancing our intelligence – provided by high quality information and information systems – we can gain efficiencies in all our processes –

which means that projects are delivered more quickly, incidents are responded to earlier, and safety improvements are more effective, saving lives by reducing the number of serious accidents on our network.

By adopting a holistic approach and information architecture we can ensure we develop as a single entity, ensuring we reap the maximum benefits across the organisation from our investment in systems. That means making sure that new systems can meet the relevant business requirements from the whole organisation, and that those services increasingly become common or shared services used and re-used rather than reinvented.

To deliver our vision of being the world's leading road operator, our Strategic Plan sets out five goals to measure our progress:

- We provide a service that our customers can trust
- We set the standard for delivery
- We deliver sustainable solutions
- Our roads are the safest in the world
- Our network is a dynamic and resilient asset

Good, well-designed and effectively delivered information and information services are essential, indispensable enablers to the achievement of all these goals. This Information Strategy explains what we are going to do to ensure we deliver what our business and our customers need.



Denise Plumpton
Director of Information and
Chief Information Officer

Introduction

The Highways Agency is responsible for the operation and management of the strategic road network in England on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport.

Our core functions are:

- To manage traffic
- To tackle congestion
- To provide information to road users
- To improve safety and journey time reliability
- To respect and minimise our impact on the environment

The Strategic Road Network (SRN) is a defined network of England's motorways and all-purpose trunk roads (the major A roads). The network is valued at over £87 billion. It carries a third of all road traffic in England and two thirds of heavy freight traffic.

The SRN is the direct responsibility of the Department for Transport, designed, built, maintained and operated by the Highways Agency.

The Highways Agency's Strategic Plan (2010-15) 'The World's Leading Road Operator', sets out the strategic plan for the Highways Agency for the next five years, and establishes our vision to be: **'The world's leading road operator'**.

To deliver that vision, the Strategic Plan identifies five new goals which will indicate the progress of the Highways Agency towards achieving this vision.

1. We provide a service that our customers can trust
2. We set the standard for delivery
3. We deliver sustainable solutions
4. Our roads are the safest in the world
5. Our network is a dynamic and resilient asset

Our Information Vision supports the delivery of the Strategic Plan in terms of our information asset.

Our Information Vision has three key strands:

- To inform customers through the provision of TRUE information
- To make the best use of our information asset to improve our performance and that of our partners
- To deliver robust, efficient, effective and reliable information systems and services to our customers, staff and stakeholders

Our Information Strategy

The first Highways Agency Information Strategy was published in 2006. This document refreshes our previous Information Strategy ready for the next five years up to 2015.

The Strategy endorses and reaffirms the key messages from 2006. It also reflects our growing maturity and understanding of the issues. The Information Strategy will underline the importance of good governance in achieving efficient and effective solutions to the challenges that face us over the next five years.

In pursuing our information vision we recognise the importance of developing smarter information systems, smarter ways of communicating our information and the necessity of working with a wide range of providers to meet the expanding needs and expectations of our customers for personalised information.

This Information Strategy:

- Provides a framework for our information vision: **to provide accurate and timely information more efficiently and effectively, to more people, supporting the Highways Agency as the world's leading road operator.**
- Sets out the principles followed to pursue this vision
- Recognises the importance of defining and developing a capabilities framework for our organisation
- Supports strong and coordinated governance through planning and decision making to achieve our key strategic objectives
- Is outcome focussed
- Explains the strategic priorities of the Highways Agency in terms of our information asset for the next five years

Our Information Strategy is divided into four parts. Each part shares the same vision but is designed to reflect the specific needs and expectations of our customers; our stakeholders & partners and our people.

1. Overarching Strategy

Enabling the delivery of a world class Agency to deliver a world class Strategic Road Network through Information

2. Our Customers

Enabling Smart Journeys by delivering Smarter Information

3. Our People

Changing our operational capability through better information and information processes

4. Our Stakeholders and Partners

Smart Delivery through Smart and informed Partnerships

Recognising the role of information in operating the strategic road network

Smarter government means giving people the tools they need to help shape meaningful and effective services, and to hold government to account. Through the efficient delivery of the right information, at the right time, we will be able to empower our customers.

Our customers will be able to make informed choices about their travel. We will support economic growth by squeezing our strategic network capacity to it's fullest and maintain our commitment to minimising our environmental impacts.



'Our strategy for the strategic road network, is based on investing in the physical capacity of the strategic network and innovation in the way that capacity is delivered and managed. There are real gains to be made from better management of traffic flow, better management of road works, better strategies for managing incidents, and providing better information to help journey choices and getting around the country.' Roads – Delivering Choice and Reliability (DfT 2007/08)

Better information is a key part of the development of a more effective strategy for operating the network.



Where we are now

Our traffic information already underpins:

- Live travel information on the Traffic England website (www.trafficengland.com/TCC)
- Information on traffic delays and incidents through the Transport Direct website (www.transportdirect.info)
- A digital radio station providing live traffic information to supplement our HA Information Line
- Traffic warnings and current travel times on roadside variable message signs
- The Traffic Officer Service, along with National and Regional Control Centres

We provide high quality information to media and commercial service providers. We also collate information from our service providers to ensure the most current traffic information is available to those travelling on our network.

Along with providing information to those using our network, we collate a significant amount of performance data on the state of the network both in terms of journey time reliability, network performance and condition. This information provides us with an understanding of how the network is performing, where the pinch-points are, and how planned or unplanned incidents will impact.



Our challenge

We continue to face significant economic, social and environmental challenges and recognise the need to increase operational efficiency and reduce costs.

As we focus upon making the best use of our network through our Managed Motorways programme and seek to influence driver behaviour through demand management initiatives, increasing pressure and expectation is placed upon our information asset.

By increasing the efficiency of our information asset we can continue to improve our performance and the performance of our partners. Our people and delivery chain are key in ensuring we continue to improve the delivery of efficient, effective, reliable and robust information systems and services to support our customers, staff and stakeholders.

Our information asset

Information is a critical and common asset which supports the achievement of the organisation's prime and enabling objectives. We have a clear vision about information and its supporting technology, about how we can transform the way our business is operated and developed to the benefit of our customers, staff and stakeholders across the industry.

We will ensure:

- We have 21st Century technology supporting our people, in our offices
- Information informs our decision making, supporting our vision of becoming the worlds leading road operator
- Smart information, information systems and their supporting technology are key enablers in meeting key business pressures in the years to come

Our guiding principles

In 2006 we established eight guiding principles that provide a strategic framework for managing and developing our information asset. Those principles continue to run through our strategic thinking today and will provide a common thread into the future.

1. Understand what you need

- We will make sure we understand how our information is most useful to our customers and our partners now, and how we can improve it in the future. We will ask our customers and partners for regular feedback and include them in the development of new areas of work, so we can build our service around your needs.
- We will make sure we understand the diversity of all those that use our strategic road network and work to ensure our services are accessible and appropriate for all.

- We will support the development of a coordinated Knowledge Programme within the organisation to provide evidence based research to help inform our decision making.



2. Provide high quality information

- Our information will be customer friendly and will be easily accessible.
- Our information will be relevant and up-to-date.
- Our information quality will gain the confidence and trust of our customers and partners.

3. Build an efficient delivery chain

- By working with our suppliers we will ensure an information delivery chain that meets the needs of our customers, our people and our partners.
- It will be resilient, reliable and flexible, and able to respond to changes.

4. Communicate effectively

- We will make sure that we communicate our messages clearly and concisely; promoting all the places where our information can be obtained.
- We will do the same with our internal information systems so our staff know what information is available to help them put customers and partners first and develop a more connected work ethos.

5. Future-proof our systems

- Our information systems will respond to developments in government policy and legislation.
- We will look to the future and ensure our systems are designed and developed so that they can deliver the information required efficiently and effectively and meet changing needs.

6. Collaboration

- We will improve the way that we work with partners in other areas to develop our information systems and supporting technology.

7. Governance

- We will make sure we improve the way we provide information, information systems and business services by working within a clear framework based on proven management principles.
- We will be open to scrutiny, transparent, and will encourage you, our stakeholders and staff to tell us where we could improve.
- We will recognise success.
- We will evaluate the full costs and benefits of everything we do.
- Our decision making will be based on defining and developing our business capabilities.

8. Support technological developments

- We will understand the preferences of our customers for the technologies they use, and influence positively the development of that technology.
- In particular, we will support the development of in-vehicle systems to deliver information safely.



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