

# Traffic Information Strategy

## Our approach

### Introduction

Highways England's role is to operate, maintain and modernise the strategic road network. Provision of traffic information plays an important part in enabling us to discharge these responsibilities.

This strategy sets out a clear framework, describing how:

- We will collect and use traffic data and information:
  - To plan long-term improvements and interventions
  - To react to and manage incidents on the network
  - To support real-time decision making, for example managing occupancy
- We will make traffic information available to customers:
  - To enable them to plan their journeys in advance
  - To provide increased opportunity for them to make adjustments to their journeys when incidents occur
  - To keep them informed of reasons behind disruptions
  - To allow customers to review their journey

- We will make traffic data and information available to third parties:
  - To enable these companies to develop products and services for customers

Our approach takes account of input from key business partners, stakeholder groups and our client, monitor and watchdog.

Our aspiration is for all our customers to have access to the quality door-to-door journey information they need to make the right travel choices.

To deliver this, our approach is to better understand what our customers need from traffic information and facilitate the provision of this, both through our own services and by providing reliable data to our traffic information partners.



## Context

Highways England operates and maintains a network comprising 4,300 miles of motorways and A-roads. While this figure equates to just 3% of all roads in England, the network carries 66% of freight

- There are 85 billion miles of journeys undertaken on Highways England’s roads each year
- 4 million customers use our network daily
- By 2040 it is predicted that traffic (in terms of total miles driven) will be between 27 and 57% higher than it was in 2013
- There were 437,000 network incidents handled in 2014.

## Understanding technology

The technology platforms through which traffic information is now available are changing at an incredible pace. Smartphones have become the hub of our daily lives and are now in the pockets of two thirds of UK adults, up from just 39% in 2012.

To understand the influence that our information is having we need to have the capability to **continually review and assess** how customers are both accessing and using information.

We will ensure that we stay up to date with available technologies, working with our key stakeholders and partners to ensure that customer needs remain met.

## Our existing services

Under our Licence, we have an obligation to:

- Proactively and reactively provide relevant, accurate and timely information about traffic and conditions on the network to road users, including when there is disruption.

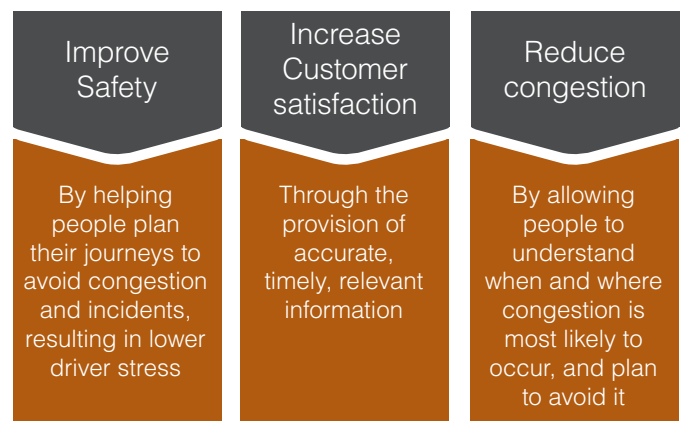
To meet this, we deliver a suite of information services, powered by a large number of roadside and other technology assets, designed to collect data.

This data is processed each day by our National Traffic Operations Centre, before being combined with real time event information obtained from operational colleagues based in our regional control centres. This holistic view of traffic conditions is made available to stakeholders, partners and directly to customers, through our suite of services.



## The value of traffic information

Quality information about predicted and planned traffic conditions enables customers to make informed choices, contributing directly to Highways England’s strategic objectives to:



These goals will only be achieved when the traffic information **influences** as well as **informs** users on our roads. Our focus is therefore to provide information and data which is useful and influences the choices customers make every day.

## Our approach to providing traffic information services

1. We will not seek to compete with the established market; instead we will develop services that complement those provided by the market. Where we can make a difference because we have a unique capability, or where our information can enhance safety on our network, we will seek to exploit our services.
2. We will look for opportunities to promote our services and journey planning to maximise their usefulness and benefits, aligned to our company's agreed communication style and approach.
3. We will work with others to increase the provision of personalised services. We care that traffic information reaches the maximum number of customers and will collaborate with other information providers to achieve this, working towards a solid reputation as a reliable data provider.
4. We will use customer insight to improve and develop ongoing provision of services. New services will only be delivered where there is a clear customer need, and we will seek to involve customers throughout the development cycle.
5. We will ensure that the data we collect is used when making investment decisions, understanding asset impacts and for long-term planning purposes.
6. We will continue to collect data for our operational needs, and to publish it under the Government's open data agenda. In doing so, we will be transparent about the quality of that data, so that our partners can use it confidently.
7. We will keep abreast of the changing technology landscape and will actively seek new opportunities to deliver information to our customers over new and emerging channels where it aligns with our wider approach.

## Understanding changing needs and landscape

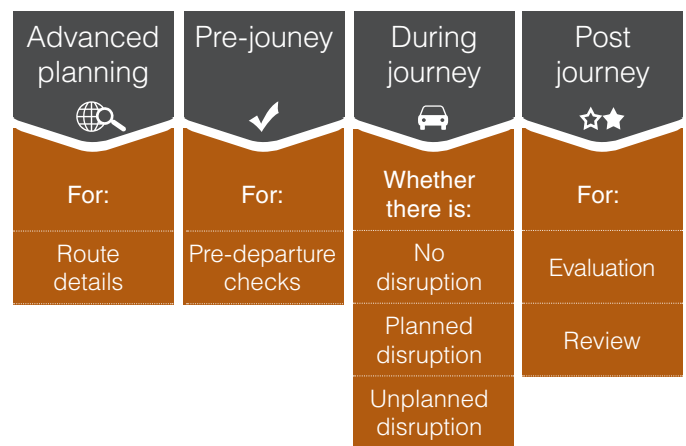
### Understanding our customers

This strategy is written from a customer's perspective and is fully aligned with our Customer Service Strategy. We have started a process of gaining deeper insight into our customers' needs for traffic information, so that we can continue to make the right decisions about our information.

Our research will improve our understanding of what information is important to our customers, at what points on their journey information matters and how they want the information provided.

Of particular interest will be an increased awareness of how customers react when they receive information, as this will enable us to develop better targeted information services.

We will be adopting an approach which deepens our understanding of traffic information needs across the four stages of a journey:



## Future focus of traffic information

Whilst we currently provide a wide range of services, we believe this is appropriate so customers have choice, and our strategy is to continue to support this range of services either through direct provision or supply of data to the market.

However, based on continuous customer insight work and understanding of the technology market, we will establish a new direction for the provision of traffic information, with an increased focus being paid to areas where existing feedback suggests current services are weak.

In the short term, we expect to focus on the areas of personalised services, end-to-end journey planning and journey time information. This will require ever increasing collaboration and information integration with traffic data providers (like local authorities) and information services. We will work with partner organisations to understand the benefits to be derived from data warehousing and the wider BIG data agenda, where multiple sources of data are brought together into one, as a way of delivering this increased integration.

We recognise that there is an active marketplace where the private sector has successfully developed and provides both free to use and chargeable services to customers.

In this context, our future approach strikes a balance between data collection, information provision and increased collaboration.

## What the strategy will deliver

Effective delivery of the approach outlined in this strategy will ensure that customers receive the quality of information they need to effectively plan their journey whilst also enabling Highways England to best meet the requirements of the Road Investment Strategy. It will enable us to deliver multiple benefits and will ensure we work closely and in the spirit of collaboration with the wider traffic information market.

We are being asked to invest significant resources in upgrading and maintaining our network. Through the effective use of data collected from the network, we will be able to inform long term planning, secure improvements in network performance and enable our customers to better plan their journeys.

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