

Communications Strategy

Our approach

Introduction

The strategic road network is a valuable and vital national asset, connecting communities, and unlocking local economic growth. Highways England is a new company responsible for operating, maintaining and modernising the strategic road network, to meet the needs of its customers.

As part of this challenge, we're delivering an ambitious £11 billion investment programme to support the Government's Road Investment Strategy.

Highways England has an important role in keeping the nation moving and we need to keep everyone informed about what we do and how we do it. To achieve this we will communicate and engage with all our customers, stakeholders, communities and suppliers.

Challenges

The driving environment is evolving rapidly; roads are busier and more complex, with new road models such as smart motorways and, in the not too distant future, expressways employed. Increased investment in the strategic road network will deliver significant benefits for our customers, but it will also require roadworks to enable these improvements to be provided.

Our performance is monitored by the Office of Rail and Road and our success in providing customer

satisfaction is measured by our watchdog, Transport Focus. To ensure that our customers and stakeholders are kept informed of our work, plans and the status of the strategic road network, we will communicate with them directly and also through our supply chain.

Communication responsibilities

To meet the needs of our customers, we will:

- help customers and stakeholders understand the priorities for the strategic road network, such as investment, modernisation, smart motorways and expressways
- encourage safer driving and safer working on our network
- provide relevant, accurate and timely information about network traffic and conditions to road users, including disruptions and changing road situations
- develop strong, trusted relationships with our stakeholders and keep them informed and engaged
- inform and engage existing, new and future employees, and position Highways England as an employer of choice
- inform people about legal and statutory requirements of the strategic road network and future developments.

Approach

We will be clear and open with customers and stakeholders when we explain our decisions. We will proactively communicate our delivery plans, explaining the rationale, scale and benefits of investment. This will ensure our stakeholders and customers are aware of and properly consulted on the running and development of the strategic road network.

No-one should be harmed when travelling or working on our network, so we will improve safety awareness by engaging customers and workers in adopting safer behaviours.

We will provide clear and concise information, tailored to the needs and preferences of targeted audiences to secure the best outcomes. We will deliver information consistently and interactively via a broad range of communication channels to suit the preferences of our customers and stakeholders.

Activities

As we carry out our responsibilities for operating, maintaining and modernising the strategic road network, we will provide customers and stakeholders with:

- better real-time information for journey planning, enabling safe and reliable journeys on the strategic road network
- clear, reliable and accurate information at all times on roadworks, schemes and developments that are starting, underway and completing
- an opportunity to voice their opinion on our work and plans – for drivers, neighbours, communities, stakeholders etc
- information to improve the driving experience of all road users including:
 - safety
 - driver behaviour
 - new road models such as smart motorways and expressways
 - seasonal information.

Communication themes

We will engage customers, stakeholders, suppliers and staff through a number of communication themes:

Safety

Providing a safe and serviceable network
Encouraging safer driving and safer working on our network

Delivery

Providing a constant flow of delivery-focused information, both regionally and nationally

Supporting economic growth

Showing how highways modernisation and investment is delivering economic and social benefits

Customer service

Customers at the heart of what we do and how we do it

Sustainability

Working to build a more sustainable and responsible organisation delivering best value for money

Audiences

We will communicate across a very wide, complex and interconnected range of customers, stakeholders, suppliers, special interest groups and employees – from the road users and people who live near our roads right through to the most senior levels of government.

Communication delivery

We will listen to our stakeholders and customers ensuring that we understand and engage effectively with our audiences nationally, regionally and locally.

We will collaborate with trusted partners who bring established reputation, brand values and customer relationships to help us deliver greater impact, positive communication outcomes and value for money.

In addition to national communications and engagement, we have dedicated teams in each of our regions who focus on providing communications and engagement activity at a more local level. Regional communication plans will provide a balance between implementing the national communications strategy at a regional level and providing engagement and communications activity for individual projects and programmes.

Our suppliers are vital to the successful implementation of our delivery plan. They support us with effective programme and project communications when our work takes place within communities. They are key to delivering complex infrastructure programme consultations.

A key engagement channel for Highways England is through public and stakeholder consultations, both statutory and non-statutory. In our first road investment period we have three major infrastructure projects that will require extensive customer and stakeholder consultations: Lower Thames Crossing, the A14 and A303 Stonehenge.

Internal communications

We communicate and engage with our employees throughout the company, enabling our people to identify with and understand the organisation, our aims, vision and values. We also ensure they are appropriately briefed on our strategy and plans.

Research, measurement and evaluation

Customers' needs are at the forefront of our communications planning and delivery. To ensure the effectiveness and understanding of our messages and communications, we will regularly measure and evaluate all of our communication activities. We will also undertake appropriate research with relevant groups to test road users' awareness of our messages and potential changes to road operations.



Communication channels

We have a range of communications channels to provide information to our customers and stakeholders, as well as communicating through our suppliers and partners. Our key communication channels are:

Digital and social media

Highways England website:

www.gov.uk/highways

Email:

info@highwaysengland.co.uk

YouTube:

Search for Highways England on YouTube

Highways England Twitter accounts Corporate Twitter account:

@HighwaysEngland

Regional Twitter accounts which include current traffic and travel information:

@HighwaysSEAST

@HighwaysSWEST

@HighwaysEAST

@HighwaysEMIDS

@HighwaysWMIDS

@HighwaysNWEST

@HighwaysNEAST

@HighwaysYORKS

Flickr:

www.flickr.com/photos/highwaysengland

LinkedIn:

Search for Highways England on LinkedIn

Email alerts:

service.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKHIGHWAY/subscriber/new

Mobile services (apps):

Free live traffic info app for Apple and Android – Live Traffic Info

Traffic England:

Live traffic information service from Highways England

www.trafficengland.com

Facebook:

Search for Highways England on Facebook

Supply chain portal:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/procurement#supply-chain-portal

How to contact us

For enquiries please call us on 0300 123 5000.

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