Department for Transport

Road Investment Strategy 3 2026–2031

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Ministerial Foreword

The strategic road network (SRN) is a vital piece of Britain's infrastructure. It is made up of England's motorways and major A roads, the key economic arteries which keep people and goods moving throughout the country.

Of course, the road network extends well beyond the SRN. But these 4,500 miles of strategic roads, managed by National Highways, play a central role in connecting the country – connecting people, communities, businesses and industries, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

In this Road Investment Strategy, we set out how this Government will provide over **£27 billion** of investment to deliver the objectives set out in RIS3 and make sure the SRN serves everyone. This includes **£24.99 billion** to operate, maintain, renew and enhance the network. We have committed **£402 million** of funding for two nationally important Inward Investment Projects, aimed at attracting new industries and foreign direct investment. We have also provided a further **£1.65 billion** to deliver the publicly-funded works on the Lower Thames Crossing, which will provide a significant boost to the UK economy, strengthening connectivity across the UK and to major ports.

By investing in the SRN, we will reduce regional inequalities, ensuring that all parts of the UK benefit from free running, safer and more reliable road travel.

Our investment will also enable the network to play its full part in supporting the Government's ambitions to kickstart economic growth – increasing the UK's trade capability, supporting housing, jobs and opportunities, and helping boost essential sectors like manufacturing, construction and retail.

We know the SRN best supports these objectives when it runs safely, reliably and smoothly. It is therefore essential that we invest proactively in its upkeep – in particular, as we respond to the challenge of ageing assets and the risks posed by, and the impacts of, climate change.

This Strategy therefore includes an unprecedented investment of **£8.4 billion** into renewals, targeting major structures and replacement of road surfaces. Alongside this, continued investment in operational and traffic management services will mean the network can continue to be relied upon by road users across the country.

Our investment of **£3.8 billion** into key enhancement schemes will increase crucial capacity where it is most needed, tackling known bottlenecks and driving economic growth for the country. This includes improving the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine route by providing funding for a scheme which will create a continuous dual carriageway between the M6 at Penrith and A1(M) at Scotch Corner – an enhancement which promises to transform connectivity and network resilience.

We must ensure that all of this is done in a way which aligns with our wider environmental objectives, including the Government's Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery and Environmental Improvement Plans, as well as National Highways' own Net Zero Plan. Our investment in RIS3 will support practical steps to make progress and will ensure we continue looking after neighbouring communities, habitats and landscapes.

Earlier this year, we published the Road Safety Strategy demonstrating our commitment to improving safety on all roads. We are reinforcing that commitment by setting National Highways a target to achieve a **7.5%** reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on the SRN by the end of 2031, based on the 2022-24 baseline. Our investment will help drivers not just to be safe, but to feel safe and confident when driving.

In July 2024, when this Government came to office, we said that we would deliver the biggest overhaul to transport in a generation. RIS3 ensures that this vital part of our transport infrastructure will be maintained, managed and improved in a way that works for the people who need it, for the industries that rely on it and for Britain as a whole.

The Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport

Introduction

The strategic road network (SRN) comprises England's 4,500 miles of nationally significant motorways and major A-roads which:

- **Link our main places of population.**
- **Facilitate access to major ports and airports.**
- **Enable access to all regions across the country; and**
- **Provide key cross-border routes to Scotland and Wales.**

What is a Road Investment Strategy?

In 2015, the Infrastructure Act 2015 (Infrastructure Act) established a new arm's length body, National Highways (then Highways England), to manage the SRN and a statutory process for setting and funding a Road Investment Strategy (RIS).

The RIS is Government's multi-year investment plan for operating, maintaining, renewing and enhancing the SRN. To date, there have been two previous road investment strategies:

- RIS1 – covering 2015-2020, known as the first road period; and
- RIS2 – covering 2020-2025, known as the second road period.

These five-year funding settlements have provided stability to both National Highways and its supply chain, allowing a renewed and long-term focus on customer outcomes and efficient delivery.

The Infrastructure Act also provides the basis for the issuing of statutory directions and guidance to National Highways. Statutory directions and guidance have been issued to National Highways in the form of a "Licence", which sets out Government's expectations of National Highways.

Under the Infrastructure Act, National Highways must comply with the RIS.

The Infrastructure Act also provides specific roles for:

- Office of Rail and Road (ORR) – as independent highways monitor, with regulatory powers; and
- Transport Focus – as independent watchdog.

The Interim Period: 2025-26

Following the end of the second road period on 31 March 2025, the period of April 2025 to March 2026 was covered by a one-year Interim Settlement[1]. The legal basis for the Interim Settlement was a set of statutory directions and guidance, as provided for under Section 6 of the Infrastructure Act 2015.

The Interim Settlement provided investment of £4.842 billion for the operation, maintenance and enhancement of the SRN, ensuring short-term continuity of delivery and performance. This enabled the third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) to be aligned with the outcomes of the Government's Spending Review 2025, announced in June 2025.

Developing RIS3

The process for setting RIS3 has included:

- **Initial Report**: In May 2023, National Highways published their SRN Initial Report, underpinned by the work undertaken on route strategies. This summarised customer, community and stakeholder priorities, the condition of the network, proposals for targeting improvements over the third road period and how these could be delivered.
- **Public consultation:** The Department for Transport (DfT) subsequently consulted on this Initial Report between May and July 2023. The Government's response to the public consultation ('Shaping the Future of England's Strategic Roads') was published alongside the Draft RIS3 in August 2025.
- **Draft RIS3:** In August 2025, the Government published the Draft RIS3, setting out the high-level expectations of National Highways, the funding envelope for RIS3 and Transport Focus's recommendations on road user priorities.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** In Autumn 2025, the DfT undertook further consultation with stakeholders to understand whether their views had changed since the public consultation in 2023.
- **Draft Strategic Business Plan (dSBP):** National Highways responded to the Draft RIS3 with its dSBP for Government, which set out how it would meet the Government's objectives in September 2025.

1 Interim Settlement: Investment and management of the strategic road network from April 2025 to March 2026

- **Efficiency Review:** The dSBP was assessed by ORR in its Efficiency Review, which considered the extent to which the plan was challenging and deliverable, including the level of efficiency that National Highways proposed to achieve.

RIS3 runs from April 2026 to March 2031 and is the culmination of all the above work. Part 1 sets out our vision for the SRN in the short-term as well as the long-term. The Performance Specification outcomes set out in Part 2, and the Investment Plan outputs set out in Part 3, complement each other. Together with the descriptive commitments contained in RIS3, these form the Performance Framework.

Overall, RIS3 sets out Government's forward-looking, growth-focused strategy to meet the challenges and opportunities facing the network. The significant investment, of over £27 billion, will ensure that the SRN will be maintained and enhanced for current and future generations.

Next steps

Over the months ahead, we expect National Highways to finalise its **Strategic Business Plan** and **Delivery Plan for 2026-31**, outlining its response to RIS3, how it will deliver the RIS3 and its final route strategy reports.

ORR will also publish the outcomes of its **Efficiency Review**.

Part 1 – Vision

Vision

The Government's ambition is grounded in the needs of the network, shaped by expertise gained and lessons learned, and informed by the perspectives of the people who use the SRN as well as the communities alongside or affected by it.

Investment in RIS3 will mean that resilience is increased, long-standing congestion pinch points are addressed and that we start to fix the parts of the network that are reaching end of life. For users, it means that the roads we all rely on to get to work, see families and travel across the country will serve us now and well into the future, including as we transition to zero-emission vehicles.

The importance of the SRN

- The SRN is the second largest infrastructure asset by value that the UK Government owns. It is at the core of our national transport system, linking all of England's major towns and cities, connecting people to families, communities, leisure activities, work, education and other services.
- A well-functioning SRN is vital for economic productivity and prosperity. The SRN carries over one third of motor vehicle miles and over two-thirds of lorry miles in England, despite making up only 2.4% of the road network by length[2].
- The SRN is vital to the performance of business sectors such as freight and logistics, manufacturing, retail and construction. Together, these industries generate over £409 billion in gross value added (GVA), a figure projected to grow by 41% by 2050[3].
- The SRN also provides access to international gateways like ports, rail freight terminals, airports and borders – enabling opportunities for global trade for UK businesses as well as inward investment.
- At the same time, investment in the SRN supports local connectivity and cycling, walking and wheeling routes.

Wider Government ambitions and national priorities

Investment through RIS3 reflects wider Government ambitions and national priorities. Continued investment in the SRN drives economic growth in every region, supports innovation and helps minimise delays. For projects such as A66 Northern Trans-Pennine dualling and Lower Thames Crossing, the schemes will transform those corridors. The five-year investment provides more certainty to the supply chain, enabling them to reduce risk, increase innovation and further encourage investment.

The SRN needs to work for the whole country – tackling regional inequality, increasing the UK's trade capability, enabling housing growth and providing safe and reliable journeys that link communities and people.

2 National Highways - Initial Report
3 National Highways - Economic Role of National Highways

Continued investment in the network will also support wider government missions, from creating jobs and training opportunities across the UK, to building a joined-up active travel network that helps people live healthier lives, while also helping to protect the environment.

To realise its full value for the country, investment in the SRN also supports and complements government strategies that aim to create a safe, reliable and sustainable transport system across the country – as set out later in this document.

Part of an integrated transport system

The SRN is an essential part of the UK's transport system. It plays a vital role in inter-regional travel, serving all English regions, with connections to Scotland and Wales, and provides the basis for onward connections to Northern Ireland.

The transport context has changed in recent years because of greater devolution to local government. Close working with Local Authorities, Mayoral Strategic Authorities and other local partners supports delivery of the Government's aims for the network. National Highways can provide a leadership role in bringing these partners together to achieve better outcomes for the travelling public and businesses.

The SRN needs to be planned and operated as part of an integrated transport system, supporting multi-modal integration, improving access to economic hubs and supporting the Government's integrated transport strategy.

This collaboration recognises that journeys rarely start or end on the SRN. Continued coordination with Network Rail, Active Travel England and local transport authorities is required to ensure that SRN junctions, corridors and growth locations complement rail, mass transit, local active travel and bus networks, including good access to stations and strategic interchanges.

In the third road period, this will be supported by the Growth and Housing Accelerator Fund, which will offer a scalable and targeted mechanism to accelerate delivery of housing and industrial developments and unlock long-term value.

Supporting nationally significant growth corridors

RIS3 supports the cross-Government commitment to unlocking growth in nationally significant corridors. This includes the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor and key Northern growth corridors, and prospective New Towns, which are central to the UK's long-term economic, housing and innovation ambitions.

These corridors are recognised by Government as priority locations for productivity-led growth, with coordinated action across transport, housing, planning and skills policy to support delivery. Within these corridors, major rail programmes such as **East West Rail in the Oxford-Cambridge corridor** and **Northern Powerhouse Rail across the North** are being taken forward alongside investment in the SRN. The SRN plays a critical enabling role, providing the connectivity, resilience and reliability required to support businesses, labour markets and freight movement across and between regions as part of a multi-modal, place-based approach to transport connectivity.

Through RIS3, the Government is investing in the performance of the SRN in ways that directly support corridor growth. This includes major enhancement schemes that strengthen strategic east-west and north-south connectivity, such as the **A66 Northern Trans-Pennine route**, alongside targeted interventions to address congestion, safety and resilience at known pinch points. RIS3 also introduces a new **Growth and Housing Accelerator Fund** to support transport infrastructure that unlocks housing and employment sites, aligned with plan-led development and wider place-making objectives.

Alongside enhancements, Government's strong focus in RIS3 on **renewals, maintenance and operational performance** will help ensure that existing strategic corridors continue to function effectively as demand grows.

Together, these investments position the SRN as part of an integrated, multi-modal transport system, supporting corridor-led growth while safeguarding safety, environmental outcomes and long-term network performance.

Challenges and opportunities – in the third road period and beyond

RIS3 has been developed against a backdrop of immediate and longer-term challenges, including:

Challenges

Demand	• **Road vehicle mileage** is forecast to rise by approximately 10% by 2035 across all roads, and 12% on the SRN[4]. • The potential increased congestion could reduce journey reliability, increase delays and undermine productivity and growth. • As more drivers switch to electric vehicles (EVs), the number of chargers, including for HGVs, will need to continue to grow.
Ageing assets	• The **SRN is ageing**. Many of the existing assets on the network are operating beyond their original design life, while also being subject to increased traffic demand and the impacts of climate change. • Approximately two thirds of structures on the network are now over 45 years old[5] and historic construction techniques add complexity to keeping these assets safe and serviceable.
Climate change	• The network must adapt to **projected climate changes** and **weather extremes**, such as higher temperatures and increased precipitation. These events affect maintenance and renewal activities, can compromise renewal quality and reduce asset life. • Climate-related impacts therefore have implications for safety and performance in the short-term and for network resilience and lifecycle costs in the longer-term.
Ambition for environmental outcomes expected from the SRN	• The **Environment Act (2021**) marked a significant step forward in the legal protections offered to our natural environment, for example, Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects will be required to deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

As we move into the third road period, there will also be opportunities that we can harness to make things better for all those who use the SRN, as well as for the country, including:

4 National road traffic projections - 2022 - GOV.UK
5 National Highways = Initial Report

Opportunities

Technological innovation	• We know that **advances in technology** will open new frontiers in how we travel. They also offer ways to unlock solutions for the network today – such as supporting safety improvements, communicating with those using and relying on the roads, and leveraging efficiencies in operating and maintaining the network.
Business innovation	• Businesses thrive and invest in people, equipment and new ideas when they have a stable market in which to plan. This will drive **innovation and skills** – delivering maximum value to our economy.
Growth across regions	• Investment targeted at maintaining and improving roads is critical to **connectivity across regions** and will drive growth. • Investment in network improvements will **support jobs, housing and growth**, key to making all parts of the country better off.
Partnership working and collaboration	• By building on existing partnerships, and forging new ones, National Highways can **leverage its position of leadership** in the sector to **work in collaboration** to make things better for all those who use the SRN.
	• This will range from sharing data and delivering a consistent standard of road design to taking a one-network view of road journeys, improving multi-modal journeys and driving improvements in the industry.
	• For example, as part of water system planning reforms, National Highways will work closely with stakeholders across the water system to identify priorities for joined up local and regional action and investment, including interventions to mitigate water pollution.
Supporting connected places and housing growth	• The SRN can help **unlock new housing** and provide ever greater opportunities for **accessing jobs and leisure activities**. To do so successfully, local trips must be supported by high-quality active travel, public transport and other sustainable alternatives, rather than adding demand to strategic routes.
	• This requires close **collaboration across the transport system**, with National Highways working with local transport authorities, local planning authorities, Active Travel England and public transport operators.
	• To ensure better alignment between planning decisions and the operation of the SRN, the Government intends to update both planning practice guidance on transport and “Circular: 01/2022 strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development” after the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework.
Harnessing the environment to make a difference	• Long-term environmental goals for government and business, supported by legislation, drive sector-wide change.
	• Contributing to **improved environmental outcomes and wider net zero carbon goals** can be delivered through innovation and trialling of new techniques, focusing investment on improvements to the SRN that can make the greatest difference, sharing best practices and expecting more from National Highways’ supply chain.

Listening and responding to all those who use the SRN

The SRN serves a range of different user groups, each with different needs. Alongside this, consideration must be given to those who live and work alongside the network and the environments that the SRN runs through.

Understanding and responding to the needs of road users and local communities is, therefore, at the heart of RIS3. RIS3 has been developed from the outset in an open and collaborative way, and builds on feedback from the public consultation and subsequent engagement with key stakeholder groups.

DfT ran a formal consultation from 18 May to 13 July 2023. Those responding to the consultation included individuals, organisations, Sub-National Transport Bodies, combined authorities and Transport for London.

The themes that emerged most strongly included the need to improve road safety and deliver better environmental outcomes. Many participants supported a greater focus on maintaining and renewing the existing network rather than making large-scale enhancements. There was also a strong emphasis on the need to reduce carbon emissions from both road users and construction activity, and to integrate future development of the SRN with local transport plans.

A further series of stakeholder consultation workshops took place in September 2025. Overall, these showed strong support for **prioritising maintenance, renewals and resilience of existing assets** over new roadbuilding. There was also an overall expectation of stronger collaboration with devolved authorities and local government, and a balanced approach delivering measurable environmental, safety and long-term network performance outcomes.

Other themes included:

- Strong calls for greater transparency on scheme costs and realistic delivery timescales.
- Emphasis on outcome-based KPIs.
- The need to embed legally-binding net zero goals across investment and delivery decisions.
- Support for accelerating electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and enabling modal shift, particularly freight to rail.
- Concerns about the impacts of traffic on communities, particularly noise and air pollution – and the need to reduce these impacts to improve amenity, liveability and sense of place.
- Multi-modal planning demand management approaches.
- Calls for improved climate resilience of the network.
- Need for better heavy good vehicle (HGV) parking and driver welfare facilities.
- Growing interest in technology-enabled solutions to improve reliability and performance.
- Regional bodies stressed corridor-specific priorities and economic growth outcomes.
- The importance of a 'least-regrets multi-modal' approach as compared to 'predict and provide'.
- The importance of reliability and reducing delays.

Understanding insights from Transport Focus

As the independent watchdog, Transport Focus has provided insights and recommendations throughout the development of RIS3. Informed by expert evidence, research and responses to the Strategic Roads User Survey, Transport Focus has ensured that the views and priorities of road users across the country were understood as Government shaped the strategy.

We know through Transport Focus's research that road surface quality is users' top priority for improvement to SRN journeys. Users also want to see better management of roadworks, better management of unplanned delays, such as collisions and breakdowns, and better information about disruptions.

RIS3 strategic objectives

As set out in the Draft RIS3, published in August 2025, DfT has set six strategic objectives for RIS3 to shape the Government's overall ambition for the network, building on the foundations laid in RIS1 and RIS2. Taken together, these objectives will ensure the SRN is a well maintained and well-managed network, which drives economic growth and works for the diverse range of people who rely on it.

Objective 1: Grow the economy

Objective 2: Improve safety for all

Objective 3: A level of network performance that meets customers' needs

Objective 4: A technology-enabled and enabling network

Objective 5: A resilient network that is planned and managed for the long-term

Objective 6: Deliver improved environmental outcomes

Objective 1: Grow the economy

Context

Boosting economic growth, spreading opportunity equally and promoting wealth creation for all is vital to ensuring we raise living standards across the UK. That is why kickstarting the economy is the Government's **number one mission** to rebuild Britain.

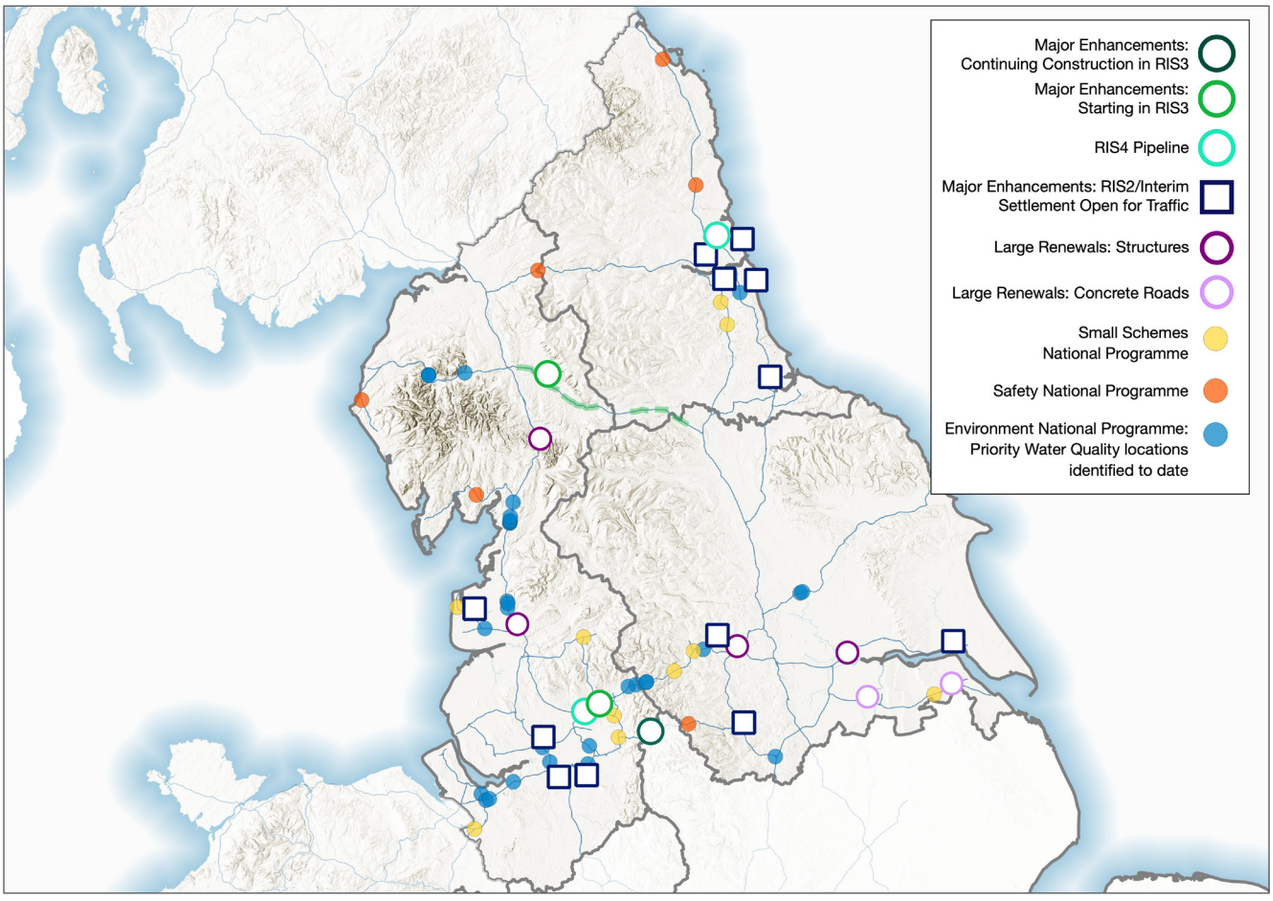
In support of this, the SRN will play a vital role in improving connectivity and providing reliable, sustainable and resilient transport corridors. This also aligns with the goals of the **Industrial Strategy** and the **10 Year Infrastructure Strategy**.

To ensure the SRN can continue to play this role, investment through RIS3 is focused on keeping the network moving: tackling the ageing asset base; managing increased demand; and responding to the risks of climate change. Network enhancements will continue to be required, addressing congestion, improving safety and offering substantive investment into the construction industry, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

New road capacity, junctions and access routes will also support the viability and effective delivery of housing developments. In this way, investment through RIS3 will provide transport infrastructure to support the Government's ambition to build 1.5 million new homes in this Parliament.

RIS3 underpins the Government's **Northern Growth Strategy**. It includes sustained, targeted investment across the north of England, including in major enhancement and renewal schemes in key economic corridors across the North, as well as smaller schemes to tackle local pinch points. This will complement investment in other modes such as Northern Powerhouse Rail to transform infrastructure in the north of England. Overall, during the third road period over £4.4 billion will be spent on three major enhancement schemes and renewals across Motorways and trunk 'A' roads in the north of England.

RIS3 Investment in the North



RIS3 also supports national planning policy and guidance, ensuring that decisions on the SRN are aligned with plan-led growth, sustainable locations for development and well-designed places including prospective New Towns. This is supported by DfT's **Connectivity Tool**, enabling enhanced decision making around how we plan for new developments and the transport infrastructure needed for greater connectivity and access to opportunity.

Investment in the SRN will furthermore strengthen Britain's industry today, and secure sustainable opportunities for future generations. Investment through RIS3 is expected to support around 50,000 jobs.

Growing the Economy: Focus in RIS3

Major renewals and preventative maintenance, reflecting the challenges of ageing assets, together with a targeted enhancements portfolio.

- RIS3 marks a deliberate transition from an emphasis on large-scale enhancement projects to an increased focus on major renewals and maintenance, keeping the network safe, reliable and open. A well maintained network is a key priority, with both National Highways and Transport Focus research placing road surface condition among the top priorities for users and communities.
- This will mean a stronger focus on **planned and preventative maintenance**, like resurfacing worn-out sections of road before they deteriorate. This helps avoid further deterioration and reduce the need for more resource-intensive repairs in the future, as well as reducing delays and disruption from unplanned works.
- Investment will also focus on **large renewal schemes** to address critical structures and the reconstruction of concrete road surfaces. For example, the Lune Gorge project on the M6 in Cumbria will deliver major renewals on seven bridges which are now approaching end of life. New designs will enhance long-term safety and reduce the need for significant maintenance in the future, strengthening connectivity along this vital stretch of the SRN.
- **Routine renewals** will continue to be used to extend asset life, improve resilience and avoid costly emergency repairs or disruptive closures.
- A number of existing **enhancement schemes** will continue in the third road period, targeted at known pinch points to increase safety, reduce congestion and improve journey time reliability. These major projects form part of a balanced portfolio which will strengthen the SRN's capacity and resilience, helping connect communities and unlock economic potential.
- The A66, for example, is one of the largest and **most important road investments in the North of England**. The route plays an essential role in connecting people and places across the north of England, and for journeys between Scotland and the eastern side of England; it is critical for freight and links to international ports. Investment in dualling the remaining single carriageway sections between the M6 and A1(M) will significantly improve journey times and safety, as well as providing additional resilience to trans-Pennine journeys which currently rely on the M62 corridor.
- Investment in Lower Thames Crossing will ease congestion at the Dartford Crossing, enabling more reliable routes and supporting **access to key ports**, which in turn enable trade with Europe.
- Funding through Inward Investment Projects will provide the underpinning infrastructure on the SRN for the UK to respond to **opportunities for regional growth**, boosting local economies and supporting job opportunities.
- A **Small Schemes National Programme** will offer focused safety and congestion improvements, tackling pinch points and barriers to connectivity. These schemes offer strong value for money, lower delivery risk and can be delivered quickly without major delivery consents. For example, two proposed schemes include M62 congestion relief schemes which can improve the economic spine linking Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds.

- A new **Growth and Housing Accelerator Fund** within National Programmes will ensure transport infrastructure enables housing across the country. By aligning with national priorities for housing, economic growth and industrial development, the fund offers a scalable and targeted mechanism to accelerate delivery and unlock long-term value.
- National Highways will also use **procurement strategies** that prioritise British supply chains and support UK-based businesses – so that every pound spent delivers maximum value to the economy. By procuring through frameworks devised with social value in mind, National Highways can make the most of opportunities to work with SMEs, stimulating regional growth and fostering innovation within the UK.

Objective 2: Improve safety for all

Context

Even one fatality on our roads is one too many. So, while Great Britain's road network is amongst the safest internationally in terms of road fatalities per million population[6], continuing to improve road safety is a top priority for the Government.

The Government's new **Road Safety Strategy**, published in January 2026, aims to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on roads across Great Britain. On all roads, there was an average of 4 lives lost daily in 2024, and the Road Safety Strategy sets targets to cut KSIs by 65% by 2035, compared to a 2022-24 baseline.

In alignment with the Road Safety Strategy, National Highways is focused on further increasing the safety of everyone who uses or works on the SRN. The company has a long-term 'zero harm' ambition to eliminate KSIs on the SRN, underpinned by its **Road to Zero Harm** initiative.

In the third road period, National Highways must demonstrate it has done all it reasonably can to achieve a 7.5% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the SRN by the end of 2031, based on the 2022-24 baseline.

The health, safety and wellbeing of those who work on the SRN is also of fundamental importance. The RIS3 Performance Specification includes the introduction of the 'Lost Time Indicator' performance indicators to measure the safety of National Highways' workforce and that of its supply chain. This new measure aligns with industry standards and provides more detailed reporting.

In previous road periods, smart motorways were developed to provide additional capacity without road widening. In response to public concerns, £900 million has been invested over the past six years to add further features to smart motorways to improve their safety. The Government will not build any new smart motorways and expects National Highways to continue to increase public confidence on existing smart motorways.

6 Reported road casualties Great Britain, annual report: 2024 - GOV.UK

Improve safety for all: Focus for RIS3

Improving safety on the SRN, focussing on sections of the network with the highest safety needs

- In the third road period, National Highways will reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the SRN, maintaining its ambition to prevent incidents arising in the first place and to reduce the severity when they do occur.
- The **Safe System approach** will be used to address not only the infrastructure elements directly within National Highways' control, but also to deliver improvements through greater collaboration with the police and other stakeholders.
- A new **Safety National Programme** will cover all regions in England, responding to the safety needs of high-risk major A-roads in a prioritised way. It will target improvements at specific higher risk stretches of the SRN based on the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) star rating.

Safe System approach

- Investment through the **Safety Designated Fund** will target small-scale safety interventions, supporting regional initiatives and addressing local safety issues on the SRN. For example, responding to issues identified through the post-collision investigation process.
- This will all be underpinned by a robust **operations, maintenance and renewals** programme that works in a cross-cutting manner to prioritise and maintain safety on the network (including in extreme weather). This includes the operational technology used in control rooms to monitor traffic, setting and managing variable speed limits during extreme weather conditions, and notifying operatives of potential incidents and traffic officers, who work to manage and clear incidents.
- To drive improvements in the safety of those working on the network, National Highways will continue to embed its **Home Safe and Well** approach as the overarching framework for approaching health, safety and wellbeing. Partnership working will also continue, rooted in the **'Be the Change' behavioural safety programme** to increase safety for those working in the supply chain.

- Over the third road period, we expect National Highways to continue to invest in the technology needed to help increase public confidence when driving on **smart motorways**, like upgrading CCTV cameras to detect incidents that could have an impact on the safety of users or their journey times.
- The Government also expects National Highways to continue to prioritise traffic officers to attend any incidents that do occur on smart motorways, so that they can provide support to those drivers who most need it. The Government will expect National Highways to continue to monitor the latest safety data and evaluate the effectiveness of measures taken to date to reduce the risks associated with live lane breakdowns.

Objective 3: A level of network performance that meets customers' needs

Context

The SRN supports long-distance journeys, taking strategic traffic out of towns and villages. To do this, the SRN needs to provide reliable movement of people and freight. The network must also operate alongside the local road network, providing suitable access and egress points, and enabling local traffic to mix safely. Supporting long-distance journeys also means ensuring there are sufficient opportunities for charging electric vehicles along the SRN.

We know from Transport Focus's research that those who use the network want to see better management of roadworks, better management of unplanned delays, such as collisions and breakdowns, and better information about any disruption. This is especially important for freight operators. Good road surfaces, safe and well maintained roads and more reliable journeys with fewer delays are also priorities for many.

RIS3 has been developed alongside the government's strategy for integrated transport, ensuring we continue to develop connectivity between different places and different transport modes to support mobility for all. Investment in the SRN will enable the principles and priorities to be realised, supporting safe, dependable journeys and helping to align transport and development.

Investment in the SRN supports active travel and the **Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS)**, which aims to deliver safer crossings, routes and integrated paths alongside the SRN for cycling, walking and wheeling. This has been informed by insight from Transport Focus on the experience of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. National Highways will also continue to collaborate with Active Travel England through the principles set out in its Memorandum of Understanding between organisations. This will seek to ensure joined up active travel at regional and national level and ensure maximum value from investment. These improvements not only reduce carbon emissions by encouraging sustainable travel but also promote healthier lifestyles by enabling more people to walk, wheel and cycle.

A level of network performance that meets customers' needs: Focus for RIS3

Prioritising actions which meet customer requirements of the network.

- **Operations, maintenance and renewals** activities have a significant positive impact on user experience. The work of **operations** will help keep the SRN moving 24/7 to ensure users have the best possible experience when travelling on the network. Effective and proactive incident management is undertaken by National Highways' customer contact centre, regional control centres and on-road traffic officers to resolve incidents and reduce their duration and impacts.
- Planned **maintenance and renewals** will minimise emergency repairs and unplanned closures, taking all reasonable steps to ensure the continued availability and resilience of the network as a strategic artery for national traffic.
- Scheduling and coordination of works through the **Asset Delivery model** (National Highways' approach to maintaining network assets and standardising asset management processes) will continue to reduce disruption for users and freight operators, supported by accurate advance notifications of closures.
- Forecasting tools and **data-driven approaches** will work to anticipate congestion, while renewed traffic management **technology**, such as CCTV and electronic signage, will provide real-time updates about incidents or delay for users.
- Actions taken through the **Customer and Communities Designated Fund** will provide benefits for people who use the network and local communities. The fund will focus on delivery of activities across access and inclusion, freight and roadside facilities, community investment, active travel and integration. Works could, for example, include creation of crossings, providing traffic-free routes for local communities near the SRN or improving the experience of electric vehicle drivers using the network.
- **Litter** will continue to be removed through operational activities to clear carriageways and roads. In partnership with local authorities and Keep Britain Tidy, National Highways will work to drive behaviour change with signage at litter hotspots and through media campaigns. The Government is exploring options to give National Highways new powers as a litter enforcement authority when Parliamentary time permits. Trials are also ongoing to test the capability of cameras to catch litterers.
- National Highways will also support industry to accelerate the roll-out of **electric vehicle charging**, including for HGVs, across the network.

Objective 4: A technology-enabled and enabling network

Context

RIS3 prepares the ground for technology change, building in flexibility to respond to different dynamics as they emerge and harness the rapidly developing possibilities of new technology. We know that, as technology evolves, users of the SRN are likely to expect seamless connectivity throughout their journey.

While the role of technology is rapidly evolving, it remains central to the management and daily operation of the SRN. Technology assets enable National Highways to monitor conditions and inform and direct road users. They support safe and reliable journeys – from the CCTV and stopped vehicle detection that identifies hazards, to traffic monitoring and variable signs for reliable journeys and telephones for emergency use.

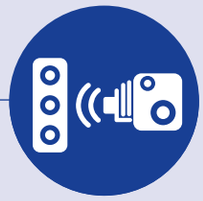
Technology will be an enabler for enhancing network performance in key areas such as safety, reliability and resilience. It has the potential to transform road users' experience, help reduce carbon emissions and drive efficiency across road use, maintenance and construction.

Technology will also enable more reliable road travel across all regions, supporting real-time information and making best use of integrated systems and data across the SRN.

During the third road period, National Highways will continue to look to the future for opportunities to harness data, technology (including artificial intelligence) and connectivity. This will improve the way the SRN is designed, built, operated and used.

The future of road transport will be inevitably shaped by developments in autonomous vehicles, and the infrastructure required in the future will look different to how it does today. Opportunities in this space must be considered as we look to ensure the network is fit for purpose for the future.

A technology-enabled and enabling network: Focus for RIS3



Making the most of technology to improve performance for the road users and leveraging efficiencies for National Highways.

- In the third road period, the focus will be on **maintaining and renewing existing technology**, ensuring it contributes to the smooth operation of the network and allowing a return to steady state investment for future road periods.
- **Technological assets** keep the network moving and allow National Highways to detect and respond to incidents on the network. We know that users value reliable and up-to-date information, increased safety and reliable journeys. National Highways will harness and continue to use technology to improve these areas. National Highways will also maintain and work to standardise the **technological systems** underpinning physical assets.
- Technology will enable National Highways to leverage **efficiencies**. This could, for example, range from using data to analyse traffic patterns and reduce congestion, to using digital asset management to monitor asset condition, plan maintenance in the most efficient way and deliver benefits for road users through fewer unplanned closures and more reliable journey times.
- The third road period will also see National Highways focus on building technological platforms that offer open access and can **adapt to a range of emergent technologies**.
- National Highways should continue to use its position of leadership and influence to innovate and work with the wider supply chain, as well as other partners including Local Authorities, other transport modes and the devolved governments. This will help **support and improve digital skills** across the entire supply chain to fully leverage technological advancements.

Objective 5: A resilient network that is planned and managed for the long-term

Context

It is crucial that we invest in the SRN's existing assets to ensure the network can continue to support the needs of people and the economy, both now and in the future, including as we transition to zero-emission vehicles. RIS3 builds on the progress made in improving understanding of the condition of all parts of the SRN. This requires investment focused on managing risk associated with the asset, such as structures and road carriageways and minimising disruption to road users.

We also need to address the risks posed by, and the impacts of, climate change, in alignment with the **Climate Adaptation Strategy for Transport** and the **Third National Adaptation Programme**.

A resilient network must also cater for wider long-term societal trends. RIS3 is underpinned by **Common Analytical Scenarios** to cover economic, geographic, behavioural and technological uncertainties. These represent a wide range of scenarios, resulting in different traffic demand growth projections. While all scenarios project traffic to grow above recent levels by 2060, the 'low economy' scenario projects limited traffic growth, with the distance driven reducing beyond 2045.

A resilient network that is planned and managed for the long-term: Focus for RIS3

Intelligence-based, proactive maintenance and renewals to protect network assets, as well as actions to build resilience to climate change.

- As mentioned under Objective 1, an integrated approach to **operations, maintenance and renewals** will be taken, based on asset condition and risk. This will help the network remain safe, reliable and resilient for road users, reducing unplanned disruption.
- To tackle urgent challenges such as ageing infrastructure, the growing renewals need and future climate change, there will be increased levels of maintenance and renewals funding. This will enable stronger focus on **planned and preventative maintenance**, and on **large renewal schemes** to address critical structures and the reconstruction of concrete road surfaces. **Routine renewals** will continue to be used to extend asset life, improve resilience and avoid costly emergency repairs or closures.
- Operational activities, including winter fleet, will continue to enable safe journeys for customers when adverse weather does occur.
- The transition to a full **Asset Delivery** model has given National Highways the tools to actively manage the network – using better data to plan, coordinate, and deliver the required maintenance and renewals. This approach will help keep assets in good condition for the long-term, helping the network remain safe and reliable.
- To build resilience to climate change and better protect the network from extreme weather, there will be a focus on **maintenance inspections** of drainage and road surface conditions, as well as **renewal interventions** targeting flooding hotspots. National Highways will continue to collaborate with partners such as local authorities and the Environment Agency to address flood risks, e.g. through natural flood management schemes.
- National Highways will continue to develop, update and publish its report detailing **Climate Adaptation** strategies as part of the Adaptation Reporting Power, while also assessing its Design Manual for Roads and Bridges standards against the National Infrastructure Commission's recommendation for resilience. DfT will collaborate on the development and publication of any new resilience standards developed as committed within UK infrastructure: a 10 year strategy.
- The third road period will also see the **'soft estate'** (the land under National Highways' control that runs alongside the SRN) being managed as an asset class in its own right, enabling focus on reducing the risks of ash dieback and overgrown vegetation.

Objective 6: Deliver improved environmental outcomes

Context

RIS3 recognises the critical importance of balancing economic growth with environmental commitments and the commitment to reach net zero by 2050. In this way, RIS3 has been shaped by the Government's **Carbon Budget and Growth Delivery Plan, Air Quality Strategy**, and the **Environmental Improvement Plan**.

RIS3 has also been shaped by National Highways' **Environmental Sustainability Strategy** (2023) and its **Net Zero Plan** (2021), which set out how it will support the Government's commitment to achieve net zero by 2050 through achieving: net zero for its own operations by 2030; net zero for maintenance and construction by 2040; and net zero carbon travel on the SRN by 2050.

We know that users and community groups care about the impact that the network has on their health and the environment. In RIS3, these plans translate into practical actions that contribute to long-term health benefits, including addressing local air quality issues, reducing pressure on the NHS and improving quality of life for communities.

While National Highways has already made considerable progress in ensuring environmental considerations are embedded in its everyday business activities, in the third road period the Government will continue to require National Highways to deliver against environmental legislative commitments alongside its own commitments on the environment and net zero.

Deliver improved environmental outcomes: Focus for RIS3

Meeting legislative commitments and focusing effort on those aspects of the network where the greatest improvements can be made.

- The new **Environment National Programme** will be the primary vehicle for meeting legislative commitments, enhanced through the Environment Act (2021), as well as other statutory requirements. These include protecting cultural heritage features on, and close to, the network, as well as improving the condition of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within National Highways' ownership.
- Interventions will focus on delivering long-term benefits for communities and users, such as through **air, noise and water pollution mitigation** measures.
- A key area identified as requiring action is the pollution risk of high-risk outfalls and soakaways that discharge highways runoff into surrounding environments.
- National Highways will feed into reformed regional water planning to identify priorities for investment and action to tackle pollution from outfalls and soakaways beyond RIS3 and opportunities for joined up action.
- The **Environment Designated Fund** will continue to support measures to improve air quality, supporting the government to meet its objectives and obligations.
- More broadly, National Highways will continue the roll out of **LED lighting** and key carbon reduction initiatives such as transitioning their own fleet to electric vehicles and continuing **zero-carbon HGV trials**. National Highways will also continue to support industry to accelerate the roll-out of **electric vehicle charging**, including for HGVs, across the network.
- National Highways will support the Government's tree planting targets, contributing to the net-zero ambition and improved health and wellbeing outcomes.
- National Highways will cut **carbon emissions throughout the lifetime of their assets**. This includes investing in materials that accelerate the construction industry towards decarbonisation and driving change to ensure materials can be reused or recycled at the end of their life.
- Through an emphasis on good road and environmental design, RIS3 works to create a network that is visually appealing, climate-resilient and fosters a sense of place.

Part 2 – Performance Specification

Performance Specification

Purpose of the performance framework

The performance framework for RIS3 sets out what the Government expects National Highways to deliver with the funding it has made available. Performance expectations are set by Government, taking into account the levers available to National Highways.

The performance framework:

Performance framework

The performance specification, with performance metrics (set out on page 35) used to monitor outcomes and standards on the SRN through which National Highways' performance is assessed

A capital investment specification that is part of National Highways' delivery plan, setting investment outputs

A set of descriptive commitments
covering performance and investment, outlining where National Highways is expected to embed improvements or undertake further activities

ORR holds National Highways to account for compliance with the RIS as set out in the Infrastructure Act.

Performance specification: components

- The performance specification for RIS3 builds on the performance measures used in RIS1 and RIS2. This provides National Highways with continuity and a stable reporting framework, enabling performance to be considered over multiple road periods, while sitting alongside the wider elements of the performance framework covering capital investment delivery and progress against improvement commitments.
- The performance specification is structured around three components:

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – where clear, measurable outcomes are expected and targeted.

Performance Indicators (PIs) – to support transparency, provide additional context to targeted KPIs and drive continuous improvement.

Descriptive Commitments – relating to performance, these cover other priorities that are not suited to metrics. For example, commitments to develop new metrics for future road periods, annual published reporting on specific aspects of performance, or putting in place the building blocks for improved performance and reporting transparency for the future. For new metrics in development, National Highways will need to investigate and assess feasibility before any development work is undertaken.

Performance outcome areas

- The performance metrics and descriptive commitments are spread across six performance outcome areas which we set out in the Draft RIS3, and upon which we require National Highways to focus:

- Targeted KPIs are set out across the performance outcome areas and focused on those aspects of performance which are most aligned to road user priorities or Government objectives. They are kept to a manageable number to enable National Highways to maintain focus as a business on the key areas, and to ensure that the company is not tied up in overly bureaucratic reporting.
- The performance metrics are underpinned by a continuous metric refinement and improvement process by National Highways. This ensures that the metrics make full use of the data available, support National Highways management processes and are relevant for users.
- Metric definitions and scope are described in National Highways' Operational Metrics Manual and confirmed in its Delivery Plan.

Performance specification: principles

- We have applied seven principles for developing the performance specification, based on our experience from RIS2. Some metrics do not meet all these principles completely, but attempt to strike a balance between them, for example metrics where National Highways has a lesser degree of control but are of high importance to road users.
- These metric principles are not to be considered in a pass or fail context. Instead, they represent a spectrum on which each metric should be considered for inclusion in the performance specification.

RIS3 target and metric-setting principle	Definition
Realistic, yet challenging	Targets are challenging but achievable.
Appropriate	Targets are based on evidence and have a strong rationale. They will be derived from the latest available benchmarked data. Targets will ideally be based on a minimum of three years' worth of baseline data. Relevant forecast models will be used to make informed estimates of future performance to ensure targets are appropriate throughout the third road period.
Robust	A design which is transparent, verifiable and from high-quality data that is reliable, sound and has been analytically assured.
Aligned	Evidence that we are focusing on the priorities of National Highways' key stakeholders and SRN users. Each metric should be directly allied to an outcome area(s) to measure performance.
Actionable	National Highways can influence outcomes and associated measures. Its leadership role can support ambition. Whilst National Highways is unlikely to have complete influence over all outcomes and measures, this should not preclude their inclusion in the performance specification. Measures incentivise the right behaviours from the company.
Future-proof	They speak to forward-looking priorities, not just historic priorities. Metrics should be reviewed as part of the RIS setting process and only by exception within RIS delivery.
Representative	The metric provides a representative view of performance across the SRN through complete data coverage or an appropriate sample. Where possible, metrics can be reported at different levels (e.g. national, regional, route, road, link) to assist in driving performance improvements.
Understandable	It is understood by stakeholders or can be made accessible through a clear communications plan.
Cost effective	Metric cost (in both cost of data and cost of processing/person time/ level of effort) is proportionate to its value.

- The level of ambition for performance targets has been considered in the context of the challenges and opportunities considered in the Vision. The expectation in the Draft RIS3 was for National Highways to maintain levels of performance broadly at those achieved at the end of the second road period. This level of expectation follows through into the final performance targets. For outcomes such as delay and safety, this is a challenging goal. Demand on the SRN is forecast to increase and National Highways plan to increase renewals activities, which will directly affect the capacity and performance of the existing network.

Alignment with Government's RIS3 objectives

- The performance specification supports delivery of the six strategic objectives of RIS3, with one performance outcome often supporting multiple objectives.

Performance specification outcome	RIS3 strategic objective
 **1. Improve safety for all**	• Improve safety for all
 **2. Providing fast and reliable journeys**	• Grow the economy • Have a level of network performance that meets customers' needs
 **3. A well maintained and resilient network**	• A resilient network that is planned and managed for the long-term • A technology-enabled and enabling network
 **4. Being environmentally responsible**	• Improved environmental outcomes
 **5. Meeting the needs of all road users**	• Have a level of network performance that meets customers' needs • A resilient network that is planned and managed for the long-term
 **6. Achieving efficient delivery**	• A technology-enabled and enabling network

Action plans

- Operating an open network means that there are factors outside of National Highways' control that can, and do, affect performance. In areas where outcomes are influenced significantly by factors beyond National Highways' direct control, Action Plans were introduced in the Interim Settlement (covering April 2025 to March 2026) and have been retained in RIS3.
- Action Plans complement KPIs by providing clarity on the actions the company will take to support delivery of targets, enabling a clearer link between National Highways' activities and expected outcomes. They also set out a clear link between funding and deliverables. They include:
  - Defined interventions and programmes
  - Proposed reporting data to support performance monitoring
  - Collaboration with partners where required
- Action Plans will be produced and included in the Delivery Plan for:
  - Safety, recognising the shared responsibility for reducing harm across the network
  - Customer and delay, where journey times can be affected by weather, incidents, or third-party activity, or general congestion due to traffic levels or roadworks
- Plans must contain SMART objectives, ensuring that targets are matched by transparency, planning and appropriate accountability.

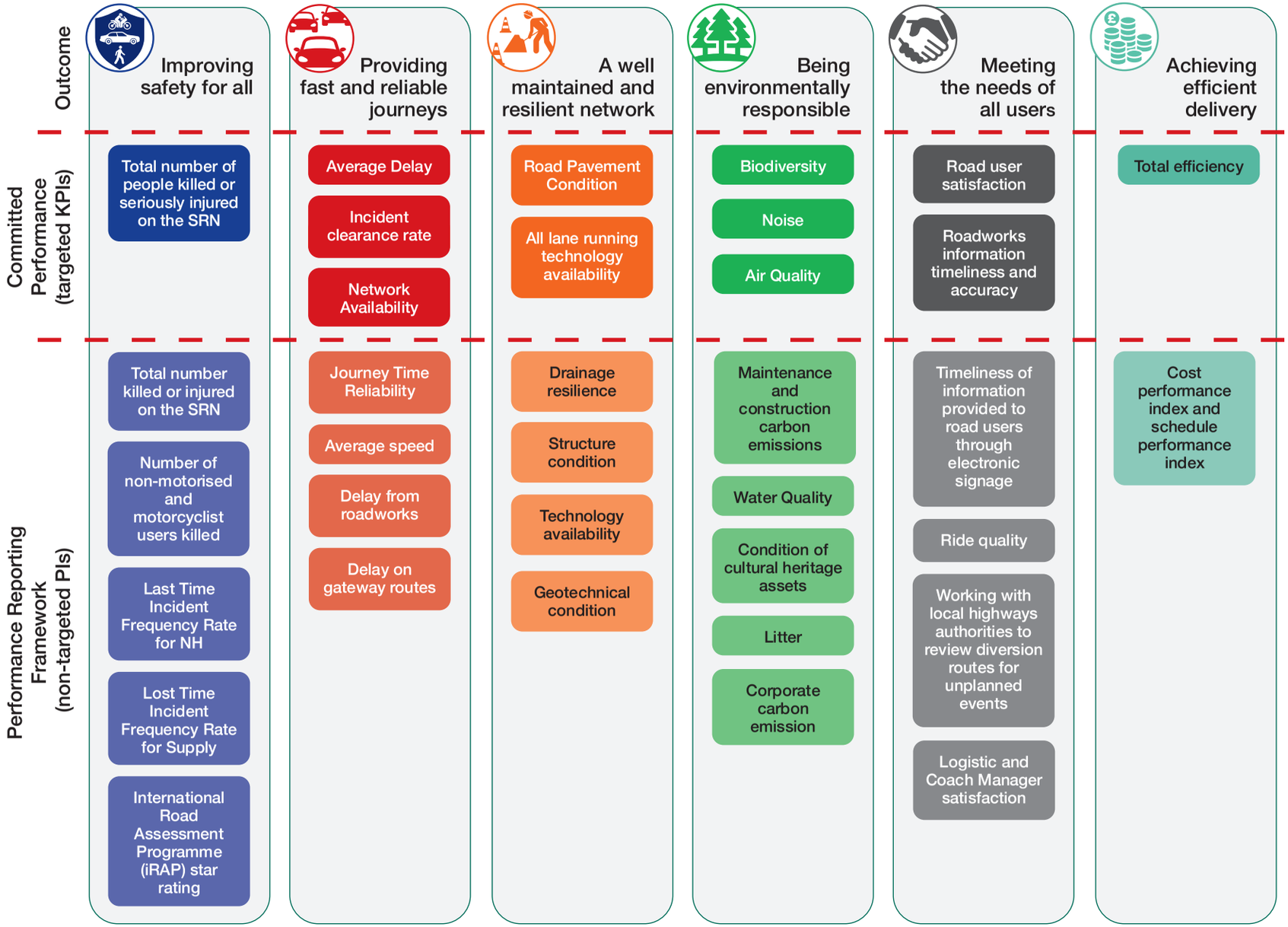
Active travel performance

- National Highways shall continue to report bi-annually detailing its performance and initiatives to serve riders, walkers and cyclists using the approach developed in the second road period.
- The report shall cover, but not be limited to, operations, maintenance, renewals, initiatives and enhancements. National Highways shall evolve and improve its content during the third road period, working collaboratively with DfT, ORR and Transport Focus.

Future metric development: RIS4 performance framework

- National Highways will develop the performance metrics for RIS4. National Highways must publish a Performance Framework Improvement Plan, approved by DfT, alongside the National Highways Delivery Plan for 2026-31 and deliver the actions and milestones within it. National Highways must provide six-monthly progress updates to DfT and ORR, and an annual update to the plan.

RIS3 Performance Metrics



Part 2 – Performance Specification

Improving safety for all

Metric	Metric / target	Expectation
Killed or seriously injured (KSI)	**KPI Target** An objective of RIS3 is to improve safety on the SRN. National Highways must demonstrate it has done all it reasonably can to achieve a **7.5% reduction** in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the SRN by the end of 2031, based on the 2022-24 baseline. To support progress, National Highways must also publish and deliver its approved Safety Action Plan and subsequent annual updates to the plan, including 18 route safety improvements, which is expected to deliver a 4% reduction in KSIs towards the target. National Highways must also show that it is working in partnership with others to identify solutions in areas where it has less direct influence on safety outcomes.	**Basis of metric:** Total number of road user fatalities or serious injuries on the SRN.
Total number killed or injured on the SRN	PI	**Basis of metric:** Total number of road user fatalities and all-severity injuries on the SRN.
Number of non-motorised and motorcyclist users killed or injured on the SRN	PI	**Basis of metric:** The total number of pedestrian, pedal cyclist, motorcyclist and equestrian casualties on the SRN.
Lost time incident frequency rate for National Highways staff	PI	**Basis of metric:** Internally reported lost-time incidents for National Highways staff.

Metric	Metric / target	Expectation
Lost time incident frequency rate for supply chain staff	PI	**Basis of metric:** Internally reported lost-time incidents for National Highways' contractors and sub-contractors, including DBFO staff.
International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP star rating)	PI	**Basis of metric:** Percentage travel on SRN roads rated 3 star or greater and average-flow weighted decimal star ratings.

Supporting growth and productivity through providing fast and reliable journeys

Metric	Metric / target	Expectation
Average delay	**KPI Target** An objective of RIS3 is to reduce delays and grow the economy. National Highways must demonstrate it has done all it reasonably can to reduce delays on the SRN so that average delay performance is no worse at the end of the third road period than it was at the end of the second road period. To support progress, National Highways must also publish its approved Customer and Delay Action Plan and deliver the actions set out in it and in subsequent annual updates to this plan.	**Basis of metric:** Difference between observed average travel time and the speed limit travel time.
Network availability	**KPI Target** Achieve at least 97.5% lane availability. The target will be reviewed once National Highways performance data is sufficiently robust. This target will be confirmed in National Highways Delivery Plan Update.	**Basis of metric:** Percentage of the network free from traffic restrictions owing to roadworks.
Incident clearance rate	**KPI Target** Achieve at least 88% of motorway incidents to be cleared within one hour, based on 24-hour coverage, for each year of the third road period.	**Basis of metric:** Percentage of incidents cleared within one hour, based on 24-hour coverage.
Journey time reliability	PI	**Basis of metric:** Percentage of reliable journeys (where reliable journey would be defined as typical journey time + 20%).
Delay from roadworks	PI	**Basis of metric:** Overall delay experienced by users that is caused by roadworks.

Metric	Metric / target	Expectation
Delay on gateway routes	PI	**Basis of metric:** Average delay (seconds per vehicle mile) observed on SRN routes connecting all ports and airports and those where HGV movements are a high proportion of all traffic.
Average speed	PI	**Basis of metric:** The average mph whilst travelling on the SRN.

A well maintained and resilient network

Metric	Metric / target	Expectation
Pavement condition	**KPI Target** Percentage of the network in good condition to be maintained at 96.2%* or above. * a -0.1% variance is permitted in years 1 – 4.	**Basis of metric:** Percentage of the road pavement that is in good condition (and does not require any further consideration for maintenance). Sections managed by Design Build Finance Operate (DBFO) and brought back into National Highways control in the third road period are excluded and will be reported separately.
All Lane Running (ALR) technology availability	**KPI Target** Achieve 95%-97% roadside assets available and functioning. Consideration will be given to replacing this metric with an SRN-wide technology availability KPI once National Highways performance data is sufficiently robust.	**Basis of metric:** Percentage of time that All Lane Running (ALR) smart motorway roadside technology services are available and functioning and not experiencing a service-affecting fault.
Technology availability	PI	**Basis of metric:** Percentage of time that roadside technology services are available and functioning on all trunk roads and motorways forming the SRN, including DBFO-managed roads. Tunnels are excluded from the metric.
Drainage resilience	PI	**Basis of metric:** Percentage of carriageway that does not have an observed significant susceptibility to flooding.
Structures condition	PI	**Basis of metric:** Average structural condition; critical element condition; and structural condition Index.
Geotechnical condition	PI	**Basis of metric:** Percentage length of asset in good condition.

Being environmentally responsible

Metric	Metric / target	Expectation
Biodiversity	**KPI Target** At least 2,000 biodiversity units must be delivered, in addition to 10% biodiversity net gain on all major enhancements starting construction in the third road period.	**Basis of metric:** Biodiversity units for habitats and hedgerows delivered in compliance with the Defra statutory biodiversity metric.
Air quality	**KPI Target** Bring links agreed with the department (based on Defra's compliance modelling) into compliance with legal NO_2 limits in the shortest timescales possible. National Highways to report activities that directly or indirectly address NO_2 and PM2.5 emissions in its annual reporting.	**Basis of metric:** The number of links on the network in exceedance of NO_2 limits.
Noise	**KPI Target** At least 5,000 households benefitting from noise exposure reduction by 2030-31.	**Basis of metric:** Households within Noise Important Areas mitigated. National Highways plans to be based on achieving maximum effectiveness based on updated Defra Noise Important Areas mapping.
Corporate carbon emissions	PI	**Basis of metric:** Carbon dioxide emission associated with National Highways' activities as it operates and manages the estate and network. Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) to be used as the standard for measuring emissions. **Metric coverage:** Metric covers Scopes 1, 2, and 3 emissions under Greenhouse Gas protocol. National Highways to report separately its corporate carbon emissions as part of its Greening Government Commitment (GGC).

Metric	Metric / target	Expectation
Construction and maintenance carbon emission	PI	**Basis of metric:** Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions associated with National Highways' supply chain construction and maintenance activities, normalised by spend.
Condition of cultural assets	PI	**Basis of metric:** The overall condition of the culturally significant assets owned by National Highways, measured by an aggregate 'quality score'. **Metric coverage:** All heritage assets owned by National Highways on the SRN. Historical Railways Estate asset condition to be reported separately.
Water quality	PI	**Basis of metric:** Number of outfalls and soakaways identified on the SRN, analysed and confirmed using National Highways' standards, and assigned a risk category of A (Very high risk), B (High) or C (Moderate), which are mitigated. National Highways to 'shadow report' length of watercourse enhanced.
Litter	PI	**Basis of metric:** Percentage of the SRN where litter is graded at B or above, under Defra Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. **Metric coverage:** All sections of the SRN, excluding DBFO roads. Includes roads under local authority litter clearing responsibilities.

Meeting the needs of all road users and integrated transport

Metric	Metric / target	Expectation
Road user satisfaction	**KPI Target** An objective of the RIS is a level of network performance that meets customer needs. As part of that, National Highways must demonstrate it has done all it reasonably can to improve road user satisfaction year-on-year, including achieving higher satisfaction in 2030-31 than in 2025-26, as measured through the Strategic Roads User Survey. To support progress, National Highways must publish its approved Customer and Delay Action Plan and deliver the actions set out in it and in subsequent annual updates to this plan.	**Basis of metric:** The percentage of drivers who are satisfied with their journey on the SRN as measured by the Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS), conducted by Transport Focus.
Roadworks information timeliness and accuracy	**KPI Target** Achieve at least 80% accuracy of planned roadworks seven days in advance of works by the end of the third road period.	**Basis of metric:** The percentage of overnight road closures that are accurately notified by National Highways seven days in advance.
Timeliness of information provided to road users through electronic signage	PI	**Basis of metric:** Average median time to manually set signs and signals on all motorways after National Highways has received notification of a carriageway compromise incident. **Metric coverage:** All motorways where electronic signs and signals are in operation.
Ride quality	PI	**Basis of metric:** Measures the smoothness of the road aligned to the customer experience.

Metric	Metric / target	Expectation
Working with local highway authorities to review diversion routes for unplanned events	PI	**Basis of metric:** The percentage of local highway authorities which National Highways engaged with to review diversion routes for unplanned events.
Logistics and coach manager satisfaction	PI	**Basis of metric:** Percentage of respondents to Transport Focus's Logistics and Coach Survey who were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with how the motorways and major 'A' roads met their needs as a business.

Achieving efficient delivery

Metric	Metric / target	Expectation
Total efficiency	**KPI Target** To demonstrate and evidence total efficiency of £1.4 billion capital and operational expenditure by the end of the third road period.	**Basis of metric:** Efficiency that National Highways delivers during the road period. **Metric coverage:** All capital and resource expenditure, excluding protocols.
Cost performance index and schedule performance index	PI	**Basis of metric:** Cost and schedule across those enhancement schemes under construction from the Project Control Framework.

Part 3 – Investment Plan

Investment Plan

An online interactive map detailing previous and planned investment on the strategic road network is available via this QR code.

This investment plan sets out the funding available, Government's expenditure priorities and the details of what that programme is expected to deliver in terms of outputs. Specific outputs required from capital expenditure are detailed in the Capital Commitments table towards the end of the section. There is a level of overprogramming built into National Highways' plans; this is suitable to the scale of the investment and what is considered manageable and prudent for infrastructure portfolios of this size.

An online interactive map detailing previous and planned investment on the strategic road network is available here: https://maps.dft.gov.uk/road-schemes-spring-2026/index.html.

RIS3 Statement of Funds Available

Funding is outlined for the third road period, 2026-2031. This covers the totality of funding that the Government expects to give National Highways to deliver the objectives of RIS3.

Item	2026-27 (£m)	2027-28 (£m)	2028-29 (£m)	2029-30 (£m)	2030-31 (£m)	RP3 total (£m)
Renewals	1,466	1,775	1,752	1,707	1,741	8,441
Enhancements	1,126	769	533	526	892	3,846
Other Capital	817	930	1,128	1,272	1,037	5,184
Capital spending total	**3,409**	**3,474**	**3,413**	**3,505**	**3,670**	**17,471**
Resource spending total	**1,478**	**1,464**	**1,495**	**1,524**	**1,554**	**7,515**
Total spending	**4,887**	**4,938**	**4,908**	**5,029**	**5,224**	**24,986**

In addition to the funding noted in the above table, £402 million of ringfenced funding, up to 2029-30, will also be made available to support delivery of Inward Investment Projects. This funding is part of the overall Statement of Funds Available. Any future funding beyond 2029-30 is to be agreed as part of the next Spending Review.

The Department may also wish to provide additional funding to National Highways over the third Road Period for data services such as the provision of road safety data to local and combined authorities.

£1,655 million is being made available to complete the publicly-funded works for the Lower Thames Crossing. This funding is part of the overall Statement of Funds Available, but this will also be ringfenced from other funding within RIS3. These figures take into account the intention for the private sector to reimburse the taxpayer for some of the costs incurred ahead of the transaction.

Under the proposed Regulated Asset Base (RAB) model, which is currently the Government's preferred financing option for the project, the private sector is expected to take forward the construction and long-term operation of the Lower Thames Crossing part-way through the five-year road period.

The total amount to be spent by the Government on the Lower Thames Crossing depends on the precise timing and terms of the transaction related to the transfer to the private sector. This is still in development, but the expectation is that the project will transfer in 2028.

Operations, maintenance and renewals

Context

Keeping the network safe means making sure that there is a properly funded and well-planned programme for the third road period, consisting of a mix of operations, maintenance and renewals (OMR) activities.

These activities are interrelated and support a number of performance outcomes. For example, investing in better drainage, including sustainable drainage systems, and vegetation management can reduce the risk of flooding, which not only improves safety and resilience but reduces incidents on the SRN. It also protects nearby habitats and can result in lower carbon emissions, compared to other solutions. The plans for each OMR workstream have therefore been developed in coordination, with interdependencies considered.

Planning and delivery of these activities is strengthened by National Highways' Asset Delivery model, which is now rolled out to the whole country. This standardises asset management processes and supports high-quality, consistent decision making across the country. Planning and proactively coordinating activities can reduce disruption, supporting better long-term outcomes for users and economic growth.

Continued innovation also supports improvements in how OMR is delivered. Advancing capability, across National Highways and the supply chain, whilst standardising processes, supported by enhanced use of technology and data, will enable smarter approaches to risk, efficient delivery and maintaining customer focus. This can improve safety, efficiency and sustainability across the network.

Well considered and proactive OMR is also crucial to reduce the carbon footprint of the SRN; maximising the life of existing road assets is far less carbon intensive than alternatives.

Overall, RIS3 focuses on an OMR programme which protects the ageing asset base and helps ensure the network is safe and serviceable. It responds to known challenges rather than storing up problems for the future, while maintaining performance levels.

Operations

What do we mean by Operations?

- Operational activities keep the SRN moving and help ensure road users get the best possible service when using the network.
- Activities include: traffic monitoring and setting signs and signals, managing user enquiries; monitoring, responding to and resolving incidents across the SRN; and driving efficiencies and improvements across systems and roads.
- This is undertaken 24/7, 365 days a year. These span National Highways' customer contact centre, regional operations centres, on-road traffic officers and the National Traffic Information Service.
- Further activities include: commissioning vehicle recovery services; managing the winter fleet to grit and plough the network; operating a network of weather stations; and managing and setting up diversion routes for unplanned events.

RIS2 set the foundations for National Highways as a service operator, with an emphasis on live management of the network and meeting user needs. In the third road period, **safety-focused operations**, through traffic officers and regional operations centres, will continue to be a core part of how National Highways manages the network.

These operations reduce incidents, respond quickly to users in need when incidents occur and maintain road conditions to reduce risks, while keeping the network moving and avoiding costly delays.

National Highways will need to take a proactive approach to respond to more users as traffic increases and manage users' increasing expectations around information to support their journeys.

This can be achieved by **better use of data** to forecast traffic flows, identify pressure points and improve how traffic is monitored and maintained. The Government expects National Highways to anticipate demand and respond quickly, helping users make informed travel choices and experience safer, more reliable journeys.

The Government also expects National Highways to continue to improve how it uses **digital communications** to relay quality information to road users via various communication systems.

National Highways will continue to strengthen how they communicate with customers, including through social media and their website, and engage with local communities affected by the SRN. National Highways will also continue to improve journey information available to road users, including by working with Wayfinder and other digital service providers to improve data sharing and enhancing use of roadside electronic signs.

Maintenance

What do we mean by Maintenance?

- Maintenance spans a wide range of activities across all the SRN's assets, ranging from making sure carriageways are clear and barriers are in a good state of repair, to ensuring verges and grassland are cut regularly.
- Maintenance activities include: safety and condition inspections; planned, cyclical maintenance; and reactive repairs, such as repairing potholes or fixing a technical fault.

Maintaining the network is essential to keeping the SRN running safely and smoothly, upholding environmental commitments and ensuring the SRN remains serviceable. It is also a key component of meeting user and stakeholder expectations, particularly around performance.

A regular, systematic maintenance approach does more than mitigate premature asset deterioration; it supports early intervention which in turn reduces long-term costs, expensive and avoidable roadworks and disruption to users. Preventative treatments ensure that asset life is extended, which can safely push back the point at which costly renewals are required.

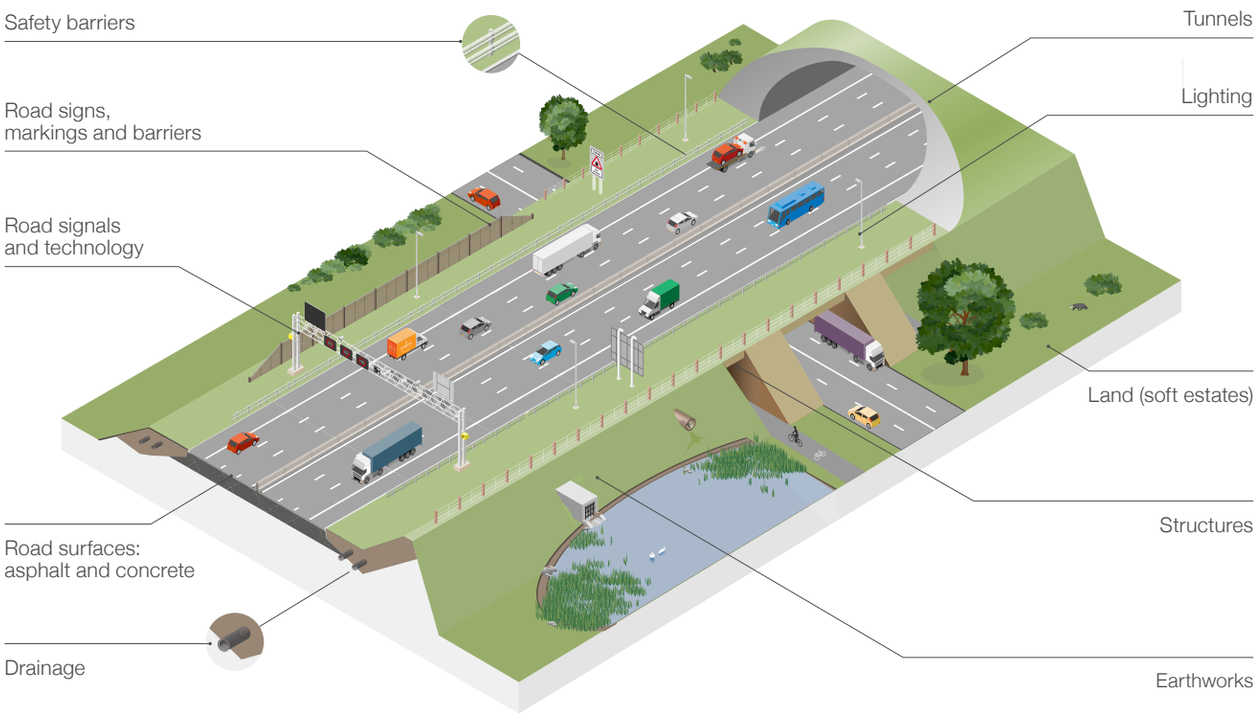
Funding through RIS3 will enable **increased proactive maintenance** in the third road period. Acting before major deterioration occurs is more cost-effective and less disruptive than reactively treating them after problems have arisen.

Renewals

What do we mean by Renewals?

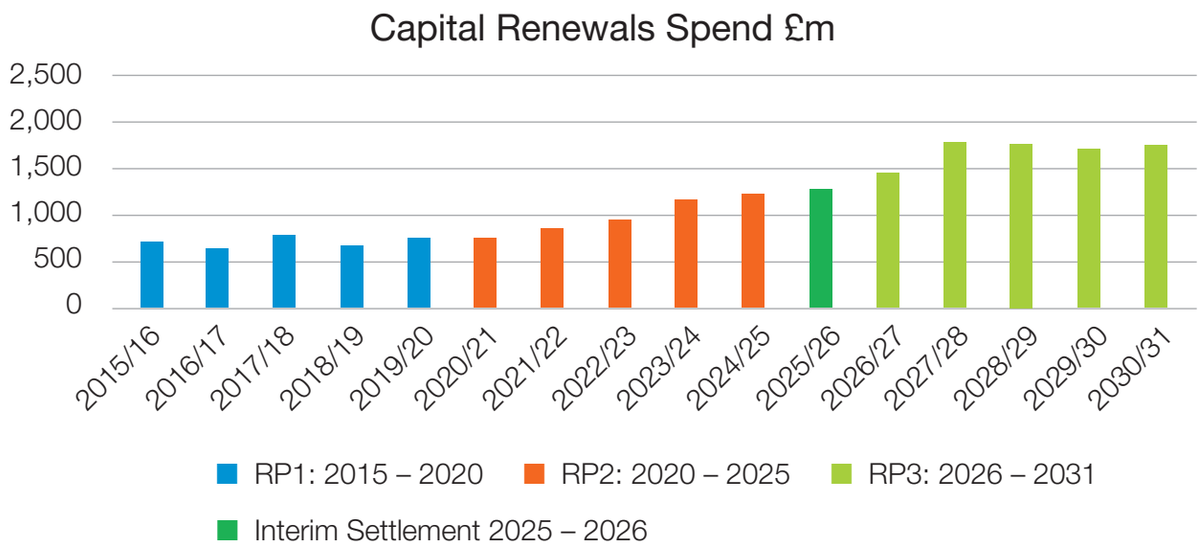
- Renewals are undertaken when assets are approaching or reach, end of design life so the assets can continue to provide their intended functions.
- These works involve a combination of replacement, refurbishment, life extension and holding works, underpinned by continually improved modelling.

Different parts of the network



Source: National Highways

RIS3 contains **unprecedented funding of £8.4 billion** for renewals. This investment will address the current condition and age of the SRN, as well as some of the issues associated with historic deferrals of works. The need for **large renewals** has become clear, with analysis highlighting, in particular, the deteriorating condition of structures and road surfaces.



Spend from 2025/26 onwards is indicative based on projections, figures provided are in nominal terms.

Like operations and maintenance programmes, the renewals programme has been developed based on **asset knowledge**, including the outputs of inspections and predictive modelling. While RIS3 sets overall renewal priorities for National Highways, the scope of individual programmes is expected to evolve during the road period, to respond to the needs of users and the SRN asset.

Some of the major structures and concrete road surface reconstruction schemes are of a significant size and scale. In the third road period, **15 renewal schemes valued over £50 million** have been defined as large renewals and will be progressed to delivery.

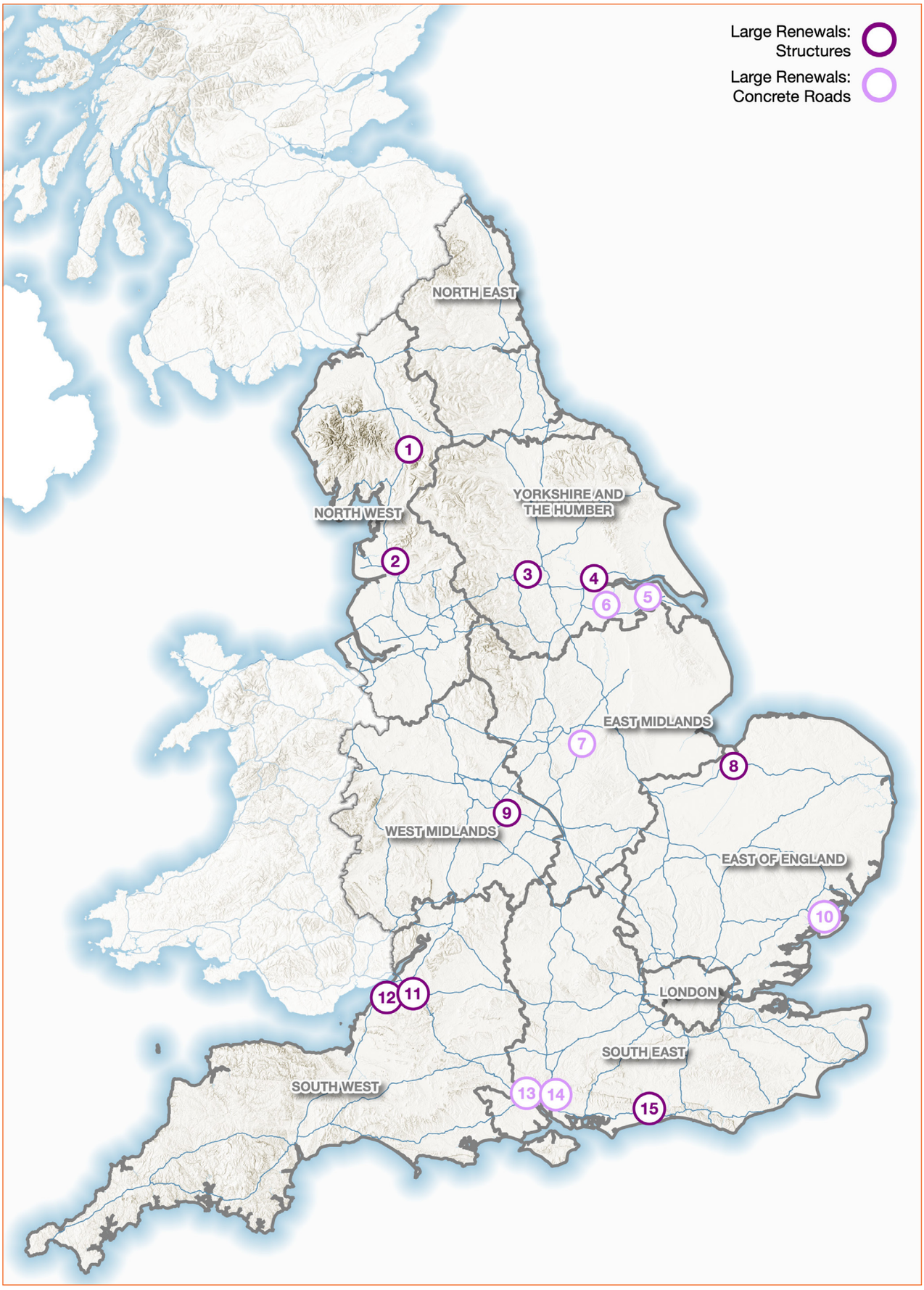
We know through Transport Focus's Strategic Road User Survey that the extent and management of roadworks is regularly highlighted by motorists as a key determinant of overall satisfaction with journeys made on the SRN. By doing the work in a planned and structured way, more disruptive emergency closures will be kept to a minimum. Ultimately, the works will ensure safer, smoother and more reliable journeys for road users across the network.

Three asset classes make up the majority of the proposed investment in renewals: **structures; road surfaces; roadside technology**.

SRN Asset Categories

Structures	• The major **structures** on the SRN include bridges, culverts, retaining walls and gantries. These are diverse in complexity, size and construction needs. If problems occur, fixing them can be disruptive. Tunnels are considered as an asset in their own right. • The scale of the renewals works requires long-term planning, delivery flexibility, rigorous governance and programme-level coordination to support timely delivery and cost control. • RIS3 supports work on significant structures, including bridges and viaducts.
Road Surfaces	• **Road surfaces** (also known as 'pavement') refers to the surface that users drive on. The condition and makeup of road surfaces affect ride quality, which has a strong link to user satisfaction. They tend to be either rigid (concrete) or flexible (asphalt). • Concrete road surfaces make up around 4% of the network. They produce more noise when driving, and failures are often sudden and more impactful. Renewing concrete pavements requires continued investment in the third road period. • It is expected that around **152 lane kilometres of rigid road surface** (excluding DBFO), will be reconstructed, alongside replacing sections of asphalt pavement.
Roadside Technology	• There is a pressing need to focus on renewing **roadside technology**. As technology assets have a relatively short lifespan (of around 12 years on average, and even shorter for assets like CCTV), they need more frequent replacement than most other assets on the SRN. • Delaying upgrades can lead to poor reliability, loss of service and cyber security issues. The systems operate as an interconnected network; if one component fails, it can affect the entire system. Therefore, timely renewals are important for both safety and performance. • Upgrading technology assets also ensures that the network keeps pace with rapid developments and meets rising customer expectations for secure, responsive and well-informed journeys for users.
Other Asset Classes	• Other notable assets include **road restraints** and **drainage (including sustainable drainage systems)** that aim to improve safety and environmental outcomes. • Road restraint assets are the barriers that reduce the impact of accidents. We need to invest in renewing this asset because of the important safety role it provides. • Flooding on the network can cause delays, risks safety and can damage road surfaces and other assets. Updates to drainage standards and increased rainfall mean these assets now need renewing. To stabilise the frequency of flooding on the SRN, we expect a range of flooding sub catchments to be mitigated.

Major Structures and Concrete pavement renewals



Map Key on Page 74

Improving asset understanding

Across the third road period, National Highways will continue to improve the data, information and cost estimations that underpin decision-making around renewals.

Renewals reporting and forecasting improvement: National Highways must produce robust, asset level renewals reporting to strengthen RIS3 monitoring and RIS4 investment decisions by continuing to improve renewals data and setting clear and ambitious milestones for these improvements in its annual delivery plan. As agreed during the Interim Settlement, from the start of the third road period National Highways must report actual spend by the six main asset classes and enhance the existing assurance reporting on other assets, including cost information. The organisation will continue to refine the attribution of non-asset-specific costs and continue to produce an annual report on the schedule and cost of large renewals.

Asset management (Asset Data Improvement Plan): National Highways will continue improving asset data to understand asset risks and strengthen investment decisions for RIS4. National Highways must publish their Asset Data Improvement Plan, agreed by DfT, alongside the National Highways Delivery Plan for 2026-31 and deliver the actions and milestones within it, with quarterly progress updates to DfT and ORR, and any changes agreed through the annual Delivery Plan Update.

Asset Health Indicator development: National Highways must continue to develop and test Asset Health Indicator measures in line with milestones already agreed with ORR, with details included in its annual Delivery Plan Update. From the start of the third road period, National Highways must report data from a range of prototype measures developed during the Interim Period, alongside further data collection and validation. The Asset Health Indicators will also inform investment decisions for RIS4.

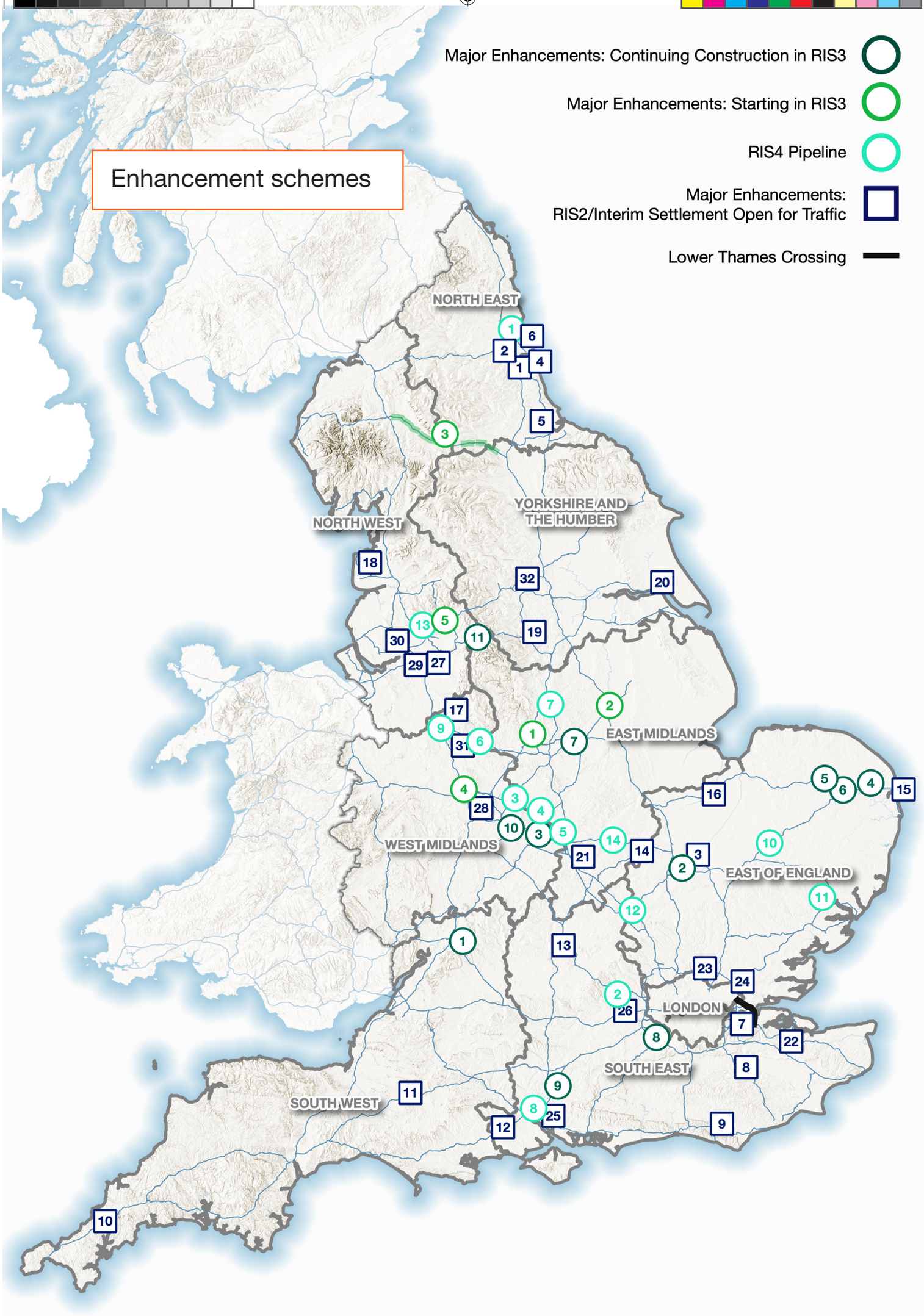
Cost estimation: National Highways must improve their cost estimation, which will lead to more robust RIS4 investment plans. National Highways must publish a Cost Estimation Improvement Plan, agreed by DfT, alongside the National Highways Delivery Plan for 2026-31 and deliver the actions and milestones within it, with quarterly progress updates to DfT and ORR, and any changes agreed through the annual Delivery Plan Update.

Enhancement schemes

Enhancement schemes will continue to play an important role, complementing the asset renewals of the network. These major projects are subject to continued governance and assurance approvals and are delivered through the £3.8 billion of enhancements funding to provide a route to updating the network to tackle historic problems and meet changing demands.

Map Key on Page 73

Enhancement schemes



Opening to traffic

RIS3 will see **12** enhancement schemes open to traffic in the third road period. This includes 10 enhancements already in construction, bringing benefits from additional capacity on key A-roads across the North, Midlands, East and South West and motorways in the South East.

Some of the schemes expected to be completed in the third road period include improvements on the A57 in Greater Manchester, A52 Nottingham Junctions, A417 Missing Link, A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet and three schemes on the A47 in Norfolk. These will bring significant benefits to people and business, as well as driving economic growth.

Improvements on the A47

The improvements along the A47 corridor in Norfolk will upgrade the remaining single carriage sections to dual carriageway between Norwich, Dereham and Great Yarmouth, as well as delivering junction upgrades.

Once complete, the A47 will better serve local communities and regional transport needs, enabling more resilient journeys across Norfolk. People, businesses and freight will benefit from increased capacity, enhanced safety and improved journey-time reliability.

The improvements will also support the Greater Norwich City Deal and the creation of new homes and jobs in the area. Connectivity along the corridor to key services and destinations, such as the Norwich University Hospital, will be strengthened."

As part of the improvements, National Highways will also deliver better access for local communities, enabling choice through improved routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

Start of works

In the third road period, work will start on a further **five** enhancements schemes across the North and Midlands.

- This includes work beginning early in the road period on the **A66 Northern Trans-Pennine scheme**, which will provide a continuous dual carriageway on the A66 between the M6 at Penrith and A1(M) at Scotch Corner. When complete, the scheme will reduce over-reliance on the M62 for trans-Pennine connectivity, strengthen road safety along the route and cut journey times across the Pennines.
- The **M54 to M6 Link Road in Staffordshire and M60 Simister Island in Greater Manchester** will both start work in the period, as well as open to traffic before the end of the third road period. Both schemes are crucial in supporting economic growth across these areas for people and business.
  - The M54 to M6 Link Road, which lies in a high growth area in the Midlands, will improve access to markets and support employment growth for the region.
  - The M60 Simister Island will support employment and housing aspirations in the wider 'Atom Valley' development zone.

A66 Trans-Pennine scheme

The A66 is a key local, regional and national route for east/west journeys in the north of England providing connections for freight, tourism and businesses. The A66 carries high levels of freight, with 25% of traffic being heavy goods vehicles. It offers the most direct route between ports/distribution hubs in Scotland and South East England. It also plays an important role in the life of nearby communities, connecting people to jobs, education, health and other essential services. The investment in the A66 will significantly improve journeys, safety and connectivity across the North.

- Work will also begin in the Midlands on both the A38 Derby Junctions and A46 Newark Bypass, which will be completed in the next road period.
  - The A38 is the strategic route from Birmingham through Derby to the M1 at Junction 28. It carries significant volumes of north-south long-distance traffic. Where it passes Derby, long-distance traffic interacts with a large volume of vehicles, making local journeys congested. By separating local traffic from strategic traffic, the scheme will reduce congestion and improve safety.
  - The investment to upgrade the A46 at Newark will support sectors which are dominant in the local economy and reliant on roads for growth, including manufacturing and logistics. Improved access to Humber ports will support exports and their Freeport status.

Later this year, National Highways will provide more detail on the opening to traffic dates and start of works dates in its Delivery Plan.

Enhancements pipeline

As well as specifying major enhancements that are planned to commence and complete construction during the third road period, RIS3 also highlights the schemes which National Highways will develop during the third road period.

These will be ready for delivery early in the fourth road period, subject to business cases demonstrating they are consistent with National Highways' and wider government objectives. This includes exploring place-based opportunities for enhancement to the SRN that deliver growth, using private sector partnerships and contributions.

The pipeline of schemes in RIS3 is smaller than in RIS2. RIS2 identified a list of 32 potential major projects to be developed for possible future delivery, which increased during the period as priorities changed. As indicated in RIS2, the Pipeline was an overly ambitious list, and was ultimately unaffordable, and the number of potential schemes has been reduced to a more manageable number.

RIS4 pipeline development schemes

The following **nine** schemes will be developed during the third road period to start construction early in the fourth road period, subject to the business cases demonstrating they are consistent with National Highways' and wider government objectives and are value for money, affordable and deliverable.

M1 Junction 28 Junction improvements to support growth by reducing congestion on key transport corridor of the M1 and A38.	**A404 Corridor Improvements** Improvement two junctions to support significant growth in and around Thames Valley.	**M27 Junction 3** Improves access to the Port of Southampton, the main port for UK manufactured goods exported outside the EU.	**A5 / M42 Junction 10** Unlocking economic and housing growth by easing congestion on the A5 where it meets Junction 10 of the M42.
A5 Dodwells to Longshoot Improves performance and capacity of the A5 to support commercial and housing growth.	**A50 Corridor** Improving four junctions along the A50 corridor and improving links to the M1 and M6.	**M6 Junction 15** Reducing congestion and increasing capacity at this key junction, supporting wider growth of the A50 corridor.	**A5 Gibbet Hill** Supporting significant planned commercial and housing growth in the region.
A19 Moor Farm Junction: Delivering junction improvements to support significant planned housing and commercial growth in the North East.			

The A14 Junction 10a scheme entered the pipeline during the second road period and will move into delivery during the third road period, subject to third party funding contribution and obtaining the necessary planning approvals.

Potential further schemes for development

The following **four** schemes form part of the pipeline of potential schemes for RIS4. They will progress through the options stage to assess their viability for possible inclusion in RIS4. However, they remain uncommitted at this stage.

National Highways may also consider additional schemes, if opportunities emerge during the third road period and subject to long-term affordability, as part of its work on the pipeline.

M62 / A57 Link Addressing a major pinch point at Junction 11-12 of the M60 and significant delay on the corridor, while also supporting growth and developments within the new mayoral development zone at Western Gateway.	**M1 Junction 13** Delivering improvements to the junction connecting the A421 and the M1, in response to significant regional growth.	**A12 / A14 Copdock Interchange** Delivering improvements to increase capacity and improve the performance of a key junction serving freight traffic bound to and from the Port of Felixstowe.	**A11 Fiveways Junction** Improving a key junction to support regional growth.

During the third road period, National Highways will also begin to identify and progress early scoping work for future major enhancements, to be considered for detailed design and development during the fourth road period and possible construction in the fifth road period and beyond. This will draw on the findings of route strategies, the outcome of strategic studies and wider government priorities.

Inward Investment Projects

The Department continues to work with other government departments on inward investment projects, aimed at attracting new industries, foreign direct investment, fostering innovation and creating high-quality jobs.

Several cross-government initiatives, which also involve National Highways, are underway to enable major development projects. The Government has committed £402 million for the Spending Review period 2026-27 to 2029-2030 to deliver associated works on the SRN.

These projects are expected to bring significant economic benefits, including job creation, boosting local economies and advancing key sectors such as clean energy, advanced manufacturing, tourism and leisure. These initiatives support the Government's broader goals of economic growth, innovation and sustainability, while positioning the UK as a global leader in key emerging industries.

Lower Thames Crossing

The Government is committed to delivering the Lower Thames Crossing, linking Tilbury in Essex to Gravesend in Kent beneath the River Thames. This is the most significant road-building scheme in a generation. It will provide a significant boost to the UK economy, easing congestion at the Dartford Crossing, strengthening connectivity across the UK and to major ports and improving resilience and reliability for both car and freight users. The crossing will allow vital goods to reach every corner of the country more smoothly and quickly, creating a new strategic trade route between the ports of the South East, and the Midlands and the North.

At Autumn Budget 2025, the Government committed a further £891 million to complete the publicly-funded works for the Lower Thames Crossing, the final tranche of government support to enable the private sector to take forward construction and long-term operation. This brings the total expected public investment for the scheme during the five-year road period to £1,655 million. This funding is ringfenced. These figures take into account the intention for the private sector to reimburse the taxpayer for some of the costs incurred ahead of the transaction.

The public funding will deliver essential enabling works, including habitat creation, vegetation clearance, ground investigations, access and haul road construction, compound establishment and significant utilities activity starting in 2026. It will deliver the creation of North Portal Access for the Tunnel Boring Machine. These works are critical to reducing delivery and transaction risk, strengthening investor confidence and helping to lower potential financing costs.

Until the point at which the private sector takes over responsibility for construction and operation, the Lower Thames Crossing project is governed by the Government and key decisions will be taken by Ministers, while delivery remains the responsibility of National Highways.

The Regulated Asset Base (RAB) model is the Government's preferred financing option at this stage, which allows for a regulated private entity to finance, build, operate and maintain Lower Thames Crossing under long-term oversight by an independent regulator. Formal market engagement will launch in 2026, marking an exciting next step for the scheme. This funding approach accelerates progress by unlocking private investment, therefore reducing the financial burden on taxpayers and boosting economic growth.

Under the Government's preferred RAB financing option, once the scheme has transitioned to a new private entity for delivery and operation, it will no longer form part of the RIS as it will not be delivered by National Highways. The RAB model will allow for a regulated private entity to finance, build, operate and maintain LTC. This entity will be overseen by a regulator, whose role includes supervising the performance of the private entity and protecting the interests of users.

Strategic studies

In RIS1 and RIS2, the DfT commissioned National Highways to undertake a series of strategic studies to address some of the most complex challenges on the SRN.

These studies were designed to examine issues that were considered too large to be resolved through single, stand-alone enhancements or that required strategic thinking beyond a traditional highway's intervention and more ambitious solutions. They typically spanned multiple road periods and provided recommendations intended to inform long-term planning and investment decisions.

Over the second road period, the approach to strategic studies evolved from focusing primarily on major transformational solutions to taking a more holistic view, identifying both priority locations and smaller, discrete interventions that could collectively deliver meaningful improvement to a region or route.

This work has been developed in partnership with Sub-National Transport Bodies and other regional partners. Most studies have now concluded, and their recommendations have helped shape decision making for RIS3 and beyond, although some may need to be revisited during the road period to ensure their evidence remains current.

The strategic studies concluded since 2020, included:

Trans Pennine Tunnel	• Concluded in 2021 due to cost and environmental constraints. • The work was subsequently rescoped as the Trans Pennine Connectivity, Safety and Resilience Study, which has directly informed RIS3 investment decisions.
Manchester North West Quadrant	• Rescoped in 2022 to identify lower cost, smaller scale interventions. • This work has improved National Highways' understanding of the performance and associated impacts on one of the busiest sections of the SRN and informed future enhancement pipeline considerations.
Oxford–Cambridge Expressway	• Cancelled in 2021, with further targeted investigation carried out as part of the Oxford–Cambridge Arc Connectivity – Roads Study. • The work identified several priority locations requiring further examination and development. This work will be refreshed during the third road period to ensure it reflects the latest plans emerging from the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor.
Central Pennines	• Completed with recommendations provided to local authorities and partners for incorporation into longer-term investment planning.
M4 Dorset Coast	• Concluded in 2025, setting out a package of possible interventions to improve connectivity and resilience between the M4 and Dorset Coast. • The study also recommended changes to the SRN between the M4 to Warminster, with associated detrunking of the A36 and trunking of the A350. Work is underway to develop and assess options for implementing these recommendations to inform future investment plans.
Urban SRN	• Concluded in 2023. • The findings of this study have supported better understanding of the role of the urban strategic network and helped strengthen engagement with local transport authorities and evolving regional priorities.
M25 South West Quadrant	• Concluded in 2021, with most substantive recommendations centred on smart motorway interventions which were not progressed. • Wider recommendations have informed future enhancement pipeline considerations on the parallel A404 corridor.

DfT will consider commissioning new strategic studies where emerging evidence indicates complex or evolving challenges on the SRN.

In parallel, DfT recognises that some prospective new town and growth locations have particularly complex interfaces with the SRN, including areas such as Brabazon and the Western Innovation Arc and parts of the Oxford-Cambridge corridor. In these locations, the SRN plays a critical role in enabling growth, but also presents constraints that require careful, strategic consideration. One example is National Highways exploring a more proportionate and targeted plan of any potential small-scale interventions for the A12 corridor in Essex. Any potential small-scale interventions would be subject to demonstrating that they would achieve wider government objectives for possible delivery in future road periods.

While RIS3 does not pre-empt decisions on the selection or delivery of new town sites, the Government expects continued collaborative working between National Highways, local leaders

and delivery partners to develop a shared understanding of network challenges and potential long-term approaches to managing growth in SRN-constrained areas.

Building on work undertaken in previous road periods, including the strategic study completed for the Oxford-Cambridge corridor during the second road period, RIS3 provides the framework for further evidence-led consideration of strategic network issues where this would add value.

Any future strategic studies or refreshes will be considered in the context of wider government priorities, affordability and deliverability, and will inform longer-term planning rather than constitute a commitment to specific interventions or investment within the third road period.

Geographical scope of the SRN

The pressures on local and strategic roads change over time. The SRN may need to evolve to continue to meet the needs of the people and businesses who rely on it.

Changes to the size and scale of the SRN (including the trunking and detrunking of particular stretches of road) are complex and have implications for funding, both for local highway authorities and National Highways. Any change involves evidence gathering and analysis to provide clarity on operational, managerial, commercial, contractual, financial, legal and other implications, as well as close engagement and collaboration with relevant local highway authorities.

In the short-term, there are no plans for any significant changes to the extent of the SRN. Possible changes will continue to be reviewed in the third road period, and any agreed changes will be taken forward in the following road period.

National Programmes

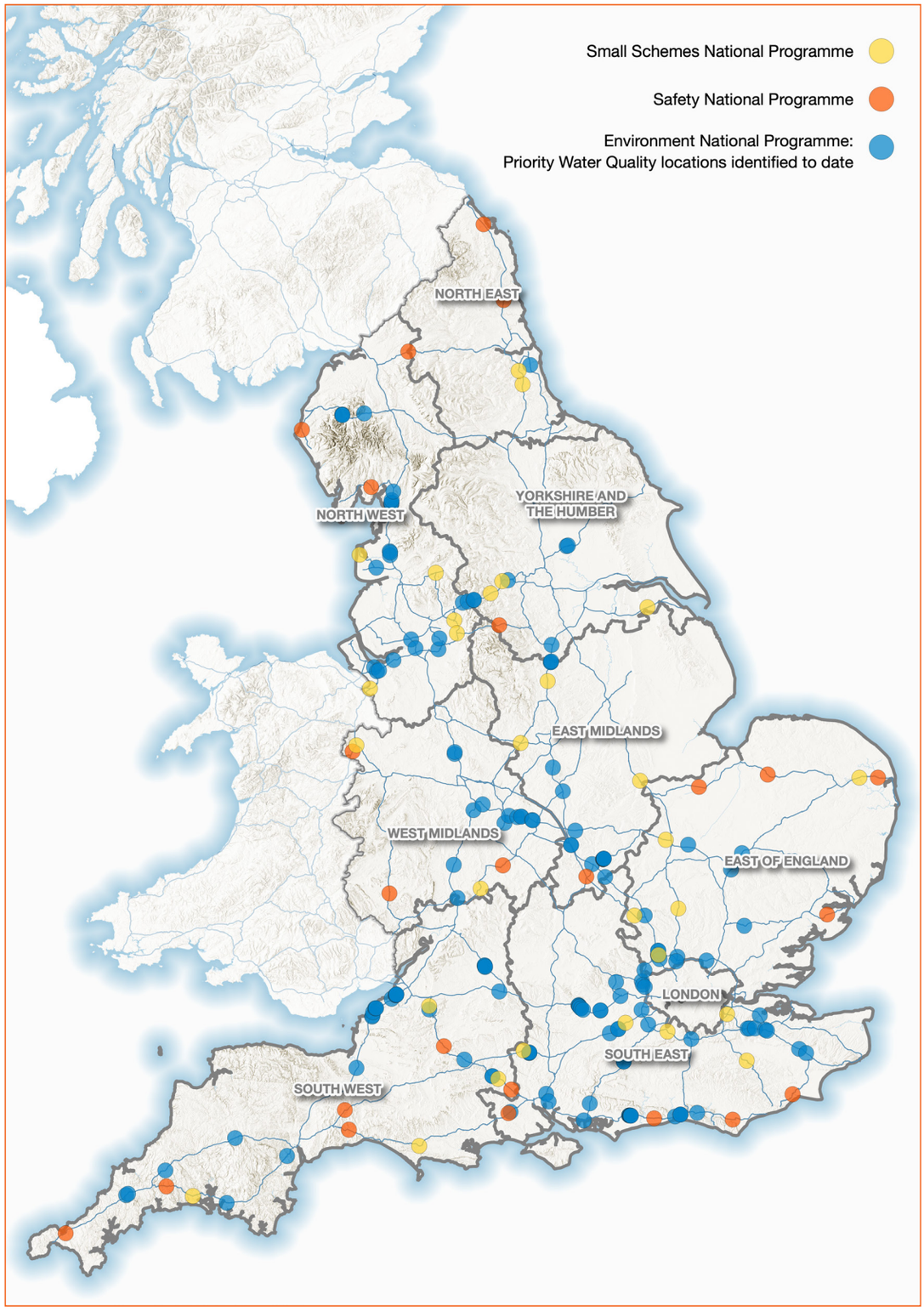
RIS3 includes, for the first time, a set of four National Programmes, which are a new way of delivering defined outputs that support RIS3 objectives in various ways, where these are not funded within other programmes.

They offer a real opportunity to make improvements to the environment, safety and experience of users of the network and neighbouring communities. The details of what each will deliver are set out below.

Environment National Programme	This National Programme will focus on: ● Addressing high-risk water outfalls and soakaways across the network to mitigate potential water pollution from road runoffs. ● Improving SSSIs within National Highways' ownership by applying positive conservation management actions to support bringing sites into favourable condition. ● Interventions to preserve 'fragile' cultural heritage assets across the SRN estate. ● Mitigating noise exposure for households in 'Noise Important Areas', in line with Defra's Noise Action Plans, with work to reduce noise exposure for at least 5,000 households, as set out in the performance specification, supporting delivery of the Noise KPI. ● Enabling delivery of the Biodiversity KPI and strategic nature enhancement interventions that support government's Nature Recovery Strategy and the delivery of relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS).
Safety National Programme	● This National Programme will enable focus on the SRN's A-roads with poor safety performance and low iRAP star ratings, with some targeting rural locations where there are few viable alternatives. ● Using intelligence based on the iRAP system, the internationally recognised safety measure for road infrastructure, 24 routes have been identified for development in the third road period, with the completion of improvements on 18 routes by the end of the road period. ● Mitigations could include crash barriers or vehicle restraint systems, improvements to signs, road markings, junction improvements and pedestrian and cycle crossings. ● Users and stakeholders recognise the importance of, and welcome, these kinds of interventions, but there will also be linked benefits including potentially reduced congestion, improved crossings for walkers, wheelers and cyclists and reduced severance for communities.

Small Schemes National Programme	• This National Programme is focused on a programme of smaller schemes across the country, primarily aimed at reducing localised congestion for users to unlock economic growth and opportunities for people and business. • Schemes could include: lane widening; improved road markings; small scale junction improvements; and crossing, pedestrian and cycle upgrades. • For users, this would mean reduced congestion, improved safety and more reliable journeys. Given the size and scale, these smaller schemes are expected to be more flexible, with a focus on value and timely delivery within the road period to meet local needs.
Growth and Housing Accelerator Fund	• This National Programme is a fund designed to unlock and enable new housing and employment sites on or near the SRN. It serves as a flexible gap-funding mechanism, specifically aimed at locations where development is hindered by viability challenges and where alternative funding sources are not available. • Examples of interventions could include: – Supporting mature schemes with defined funding shortfalls, ensuring schemes can progress to completion and support the new homes target. – Funding critical infrastructure such as new junctions, bypasses and active travel links, ensuring that transport infrastructure meets the needs of new sites and does not hinder development. – Prioritising multi-modal and low-carbon transport interventions, ensuring choice and flexibility for users and supporting our environmental ambitions. – Providing critical support in areas without devolved funding settlements, where access to capital is more constrained, enabling growth and access to required infrastructure across all our regions.

National Programmes: Proposed Scheme Locations



The locations displayed as part of the Safety National Programme include a long list of 24 higher-risk routes identified for development within RIS3, with improvements on 18 of these corridors planned by the end of the road period. Schemes remain subject to feasibility studies. On Small Scheme locations, a further assessment of the schemes will be undertaken and a prioritised programmes for schemes to be developed and delivered in the roads period will be published at end of 2027/28. Water quality sites are based on the confirmed high priority locations published by National Highways in October 2025 and may be substituted or added to as the programme develops to ensure investment delivers the greatest environmental benefit.

Designated Funds

Since RIS1, funding has been provided by the Government to support wider activities which aim to improve the performance of the SRN, reduce its impact on communities and the environment and go beyond the requirements of National Highways as a network operator.

Stakeholders welcome the positive contributions that these funds have made to date. We recognise the significant impact that these relatively small-scale interventions can have for users, communities and the environment.

RIS3 will continue to provide funding for four Designated Funds: **Safety; Customer and Communities; Innovation and Research; and Environment**. These four funds have been refined from RIS2 to reflect the priorities of RIS3 and its increased focus on safety and environmental objectives.

Each Designated Fund is operated directly by National Highways. National Highways will report to Government about where the money has been spent, and how it has delivered value for money, but the operational decisions about how to invest these funds is delegated to National Highways.

The use of Designated Funds is expected to maintain the strong focus on working with partners and delivering through joint funding to ensure we deliver the most benefits for road users, communities around the SRN and better facilities for freight. This could include actions to help us support ambitions to improve roadside facilities and welfare for HGV drivers, including consideration of how such facilities can support the transition to a zero-emission HGV fleet.

While other funding packages have a relatively fixed set of outcomes, Designated Funds will continue to have the flexibility to respond to new and emerging needs as they arise, allowing the specifics of the programme to be developed throughout the road period.

Designated Funds - A30 Saints Trails (Cornwall)

The Saints Trails initiative represents one of the largest cycling infrastructure investments in the South West. With £11.9 million from Designated Funds, alongside £2 million funding from Cornwall Council, this investment created 9.12km of cycling routes and 11 crossings. All those who walk, wheel or cycle are now enjoying the benefits of safer travel across Cornwall, which includes the former Perranporth to Chacewater railway line. Benefits include:

- Improved community safety, with the provision of a traffic-free route instead of sharing road space with motorised traffic.
- Access to more sustainable travel choices for the local communities in Cornwall, including improved cycling facilities, reducing the impact of the A30 as a barrier and addressing severance.

RIS3 Designated Funds

Safety

Improving safety for users and workers on the SRN is a key RIS3 priority. This fund supports targeted, small-scale safety interventions, aligned with wider activities supported by other investment and the Safe System approach. The fund will deliver network interventions to improve safety on high-risk roads, including post collision response and suicide prevention.

Innovation and Research

RIS3 comes at a time when the requirements of our roads and the users of the roads are evolving at pace, with increasing opportunities for technology, innovation and environmental advances across all National Highways' activities. This fund will deliver a range of activities, through investment in innovation and research to support long-term strategic commitments, such as decarbonisation and better customer experience.

Customer and Communities

While a vital piece of Britain's infrastructure, the SRN can impact the communities and environments it runs alongside. There are also users of the network who have particular needs, where investment could enhance their experience of the network. The Customer and Communities Fund will focus on interventions to benefit people and communities. This includes focusing on active travel, accessibility of the network and services, improving the experience of freight operators and drivers when using the SRN, including freight roadside facilities, and leaving a positive legacy for communities.

Environment

Several activities which were previously funded through the Environment Designated Fund are now integrated into the requirements of scheme development or undertaken through operations, maintenance and renewals. In the third road period, interventions through this fund will focus on delivering a range of environmental activities, working in partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders. These could include responding to air quality obligations, supporting carbon reduction, including of road users, habitat improvement and natural flood management.

Capital Commitments specified in RIS3

Government has specified clear commitments for delivery during the third road period as part of its capital investment. For all asset types, this excludes renewals on roads being handed back by DBFO arrangements.

National Highways will identify the detailed scope of works and reporting required within their Delivery Plan for 2026-31. The ORR also monitors National Highways' delivery of these capital commitments.

Renewals	
Pavement - flexible	• Replace 9,024 lane-kilometres of asphalt road surface (+/- 5%).
Pavement – rigid	• Deliver 152 lane-kilometres of concrete road reconstruction (+/-20 l/km).
Structures	• Progress work on 111 significant structure schemes, of which 76 schemes will be constructed during the third road period (+/- 10 schemes).
Drainage	• Deliver 190 flooding sub catchments mitigations (+/- 30 no.).
Roadside technology	• Renewal of 12,650 roadside technology assets (+/- 5%).
Road restraints	• Deliver 1,191 km of assets renewed (+/- 5%), excluding damage to network property assets renewed.
Large renewals	• Work on 15 large renewals schemes, of which 5-9 schemes will reach the end of construction by end of 2030-31.
Enhancements	
Existing enhancements	• Achieve open for traffic on 12 schemes. • Achieve start of works milestones on 5 schemes.
Pipeline	• Develop 10 schemes for consideration, which can be progressed to start of work in the fourth road period.
National Programmes	
Environment (water quality)	• Mitigate a total of 190 – 250 high risk water outfalls / soakaways, reviewing a deliverability plan by the end of 2027/28. • This range includes those outfalls and soakaways mitigated during Road Period 2 and 2025/26.
Safety	• Develop 24 safety route corridors and complete 18 safety route corridor improvements projects.
Small Schemes	• Develop and publish a prioritised programme of small schemes by the end of 2027/28. • Complete the detailed design and delivery of the small schemes programme by the end of 2030/31.
Growth & Housing Accelerator Fund	• Delivery of a Growth and Housing Accelerator Fund programme to facilitate delivery of new homes and jobs creation. • Publish a continuous rolling programme of delivery from the end of 2026/27.

Corporate services

As a government-owned company managing a key national asset, National Highways must remain a modern, resilient organisation capable of delivering the Government's ambitions for the SRN.

The corporate services funding in RIS3 covers National Highways' core corporate functions and digital services.

Core corporate functions	• National Highways' **core corporate functions** ensure that the organisation has the right people and skills to manage the complex and evolving network.
Digital services	• National Highways' **digital services** cover the corporate systems, data services and digital systems that support roadside technology, which is now central to how the network is managed and how information is shared with customers. • RIS3 investment will enable a focus on maximising the opportunities and benefits of current technology, ensuring the systems are reliable, secure and resilient. • The data, technology and digital infrastructure is relied upon by both users and National Highways to ensure safe, efficient and reliable journeys on the network. As reliance on technology increases, the risks around cyber security also increase and it is essential that National Highways works to protect the organisation's digital assets. The Government expects National Highways to invest in protecting its critical services to create resilience in the system. • Road users value reliable and up-to-date information, better safety and more reliable journeys. Digital services allow National Highways to detect queues and congestion on the network, automatically setting signs and signals to warn drivers and reduce speed limits. They also enable traffic officers and control room staff to communicate and manage incidents, and ensure monitoring services work to enable action to be taken to maintain performance.

Protocols

Protocols are a way of managing additional functions and activities which are not core to National Highways' role as a strategic highways company, but requests from the Secretary of State. National Highways' roles and responsibilities are set out in a separate framework. National Highways is therefore instructed to undertake the following protocols, summarised below.

Abnormal loads	• Authorise the movement of abnormal loads within Great Britain, carried out by delegation under section 44 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and for planning the movement of the largest and heaviest abnormal loads within England and Wales. • The abnormal loads protocol is a strategic priority of the Government, and supporting their movements remains a key strategic function of National Highways.

National salt reserve	• Hold and maintain emergency salt reserves for English Local Highways Authorities, used as a 'last resort' during shortages. • National Highways handles the storage, maintenance and distribution of the salt stock.
M6 Toll	• Discharge the Secretary of State's responsibilities as set out in the concession agreement between the Secretary of State and the M6 Toll concessionaire, ensuring compliance with the agreement and making sure the route is operated effectively and efficiently.
Technical regulations	• Maintain and develop standards, guidance and specifications for the SRN, including updates to the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).
Dartford free-flow charging	• To discharge certain charging authority functions and obligations on behalf of the Secretary of State in respect of the Dartford-Thurrock Crossing charging scheme. • To performance manage and administer the collection of the charge and enforcement management services, using agreements between the Secretary of State and appointed contractors and service providers.
Dartford and Local Authority pensions scheme	• To be responsible for discharging the liabilities arising from the Secretary of State's commitment to fund any future deficits in the Dartford Pension Scheme, the Severn River Crossing Pension Scheme and the Local Authority Pension Schemes (arising from historic Road Construction Units) and administer the contributions for these funds.
Severn River Crossings	• To ensure the Department has the required information regarding the operational performance of the Crossings. • To provide input into the strategic study on the future of the Crossings and to work with the Department in implementing the outcome of the strategic study. • To ensure the liability for the cables on the M48 Bridge is managed on a whole-life cost basis.
Historic Railways Estate	• National Highways will manage the Historic Railways Estate on behalf of the Secretary of State. • National Highways will inspect and safely maintain the former railways structures, manage parcels of former railway land and property, manage the letting of properties and seek transfer of assets to local authorities or other appropriate organisations. • National Highways will also promote its value for local communities, seeking opportunities to safely re-purpose or re-use the estate through effective partnership working.
Operation Brock	• Deploy and manage the HGV contraflow systems on the coast-bound M20 during cross-channel disruption to keep passenger traffic moving safely and efficiently.

Investment by Region

Scheme Maps Key:

	Major Enhancements: RIS2/Interim Settlement Open for Traffic		
1	A1 Birtley to Coal House	17	A500 Etruria
2	A31 Scotswood to North Brunton	18	A585 Windy Harbour to Skippool
3	A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon	19	A61 Westwood Roundabout
4	A19 Down Hill Lane	20	A63 Castle Street
5	A19 Norton to Wynyard	21	M1 Junctions 13-19
6	A19 Testos	22	M2 Junction 5
7	A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet	23	M25 Junction 25
8	A21 Safety Package	24	M25 Junction 28
9	A27 East of Lewes Package	25	M27 Junctions 4-11
10	A30 Chiverton to Carland Cross	26	M4 Junctions 3-12
11	A303 Sparkford to Ilchester	27	M56 Junctions 6-8
12	A31 Ringwood	28	M6 Junction 10
13	A34 Newbury to Oxford Enhancements	29	M6 Junction 19
14	A45/A6 Chowns Mill Junction	30	M6 Junctions 21a-26
15	A47 Great Yarmouth Harfreys Junction	31	M6 Junctions 13-15
16	A47 Guyhirn Junction	32	M621 Junctions 1-7

	Major Enhancements: Continuing Construction in RIS3		
1	A417 Missing Link	7	A52 Nottingham Junctions
2	A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet	8	M25 Junction 10
3	A46 Coventry Junctions	9	M3 Junction 9
4	A47 Blofield to North Burlingham	10	M42 Junction 6
5	A47 North Tuddenham to Easton	11	Mottram Moor Link Road and A57 Link Road
6	A47 Thickthorn Junction		

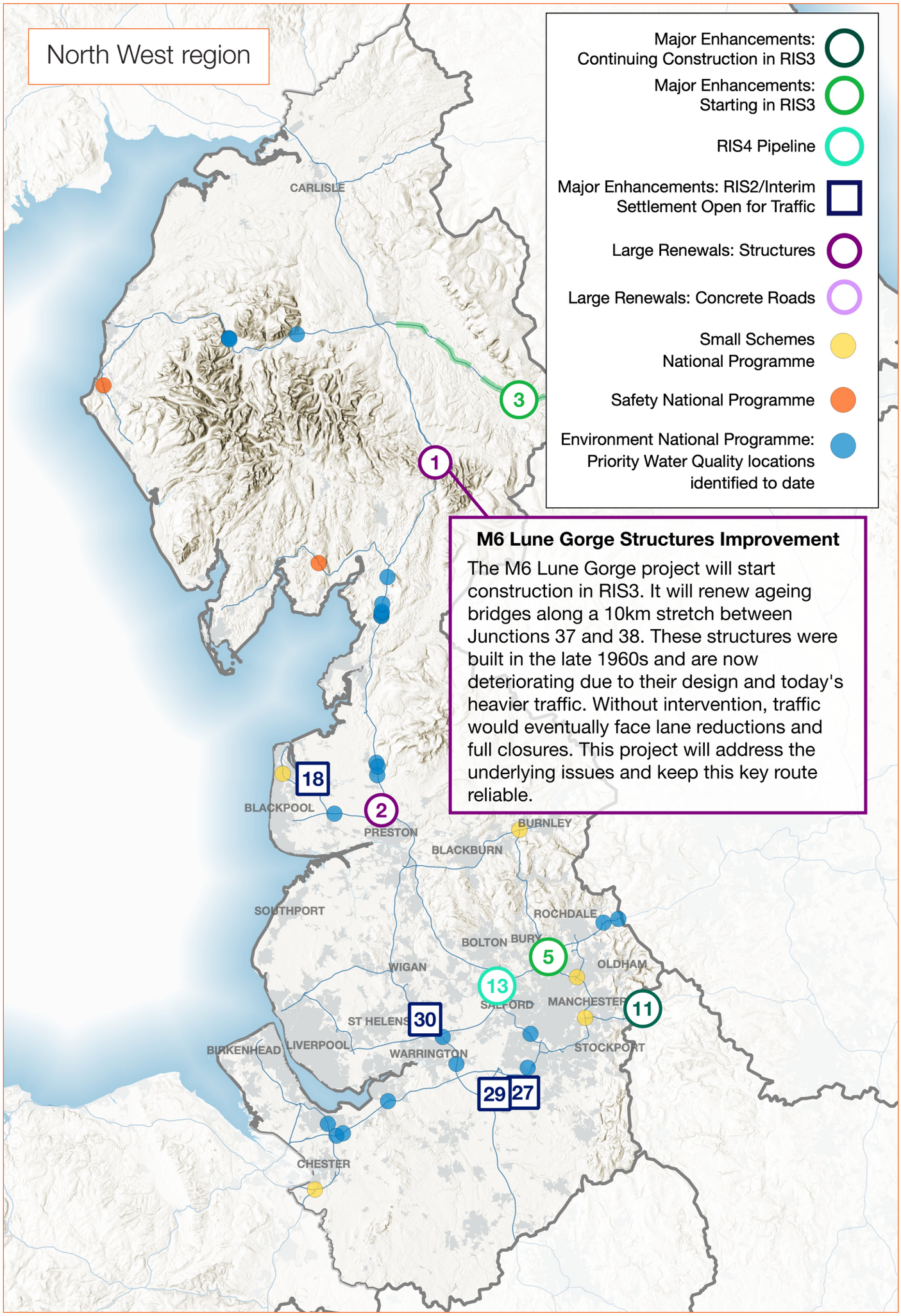
	Major Enhancements: Starting in RIS3		
1	A38 Derby Junctions	4	M54 to M6 Link Road
2	A46 Newark Bypass	5	M60/M62/M66 Simister Island Interchange
3	A66 Northern Trans-Pennine		

	RIS4 Pipeline		
1	A19 Moor Farm Junction	8	M27 Junction 3
2	A404 Corridor Improvements	9	M6 Junction 15
3	A5/M42 Junction 10	10	*A11 Fiveways Junction**
4	A5 Dodwells to Longshoot	11	*A12 – A14 Capdock Interchange**
5	A5 Gibbet Hill	12	*M1 Junction 13**
6	A50 Corridor	13	*M62 / A57 Link**
7	M1 Junction 28	14	A14 Junction 10a (To begin delivery in RIS3, subject to Third Party Funding and obtaining the necessary planning approvals)

* Subject to further Business Case development

	Large Renewals – Significant Structures		
1	M6 Lune Gorge Structures Improvements	9	M42 Eastway Bridge
2	M55 Broughton Circle	11	M32 Eastville Viaduct
3	M62/M1Lofthouse Interchange	12	M5 Junctions 19-20 Wynhol Viaduct
4	M62 Goole & Airmyn Refurbishment	15	A27 Arundel Railway Bridge Replacement
8	A47 Great Ouse Refurbishment		

	Large Renewals – Concrete Roads		
5	A180 Brocklesby Interchange A16 to Barnetby Interchange A15	10	A120 Wix Bypass Eastbound and Westbound
6	M180 Junctions 2-3 Eastbound and Westbound	13	M271 Junction 2 Redbridge to M27 Junction 3 Northbound and Southbound
7	A46 Concrete Reconstruction Scheme	14	M27 Junctions 5-7 Concrete Overlay


North West region
Major Enhancements: Continuing Construction in RIS3
Major Enhancements: Starting in RIS3
RIS4 Pipeline
Major Enhancements: RIS2/Interim Settlement Open for Traffic
Large Renewals: Structures
Large Renewals: Concrete Roads
Small Schemes National Programme
Safety National Programme
Environment National Programme: Priority Water Quality locations identified to date
M6 Lune Gorge Structures Improvement
The M6 Lune Gorge project will start construction in RIS3. It will renew ageing bridges along a 10km stretch between Junctions 37 and 38. These structures were built in the late 1960s and are now deteriorating due to their design and today's heavier traffic. Without intervention, traffic would eventually face lane reductions and full closures. This project will address the underlying issues and keep this key route reliable.
CARLISLE
BLACKPOOL
PRESTON
BURNLEY
BLACKBURN
SOUTHPORT
ROCHDALE
BOLTON
BURY
WIGAN
OLDHAM
SALFORD
MANCHESTER
ST HELENS
LIVERPOOL
BIRKENHEAD
WARRINGTON
STOCKPORT
CHESTER
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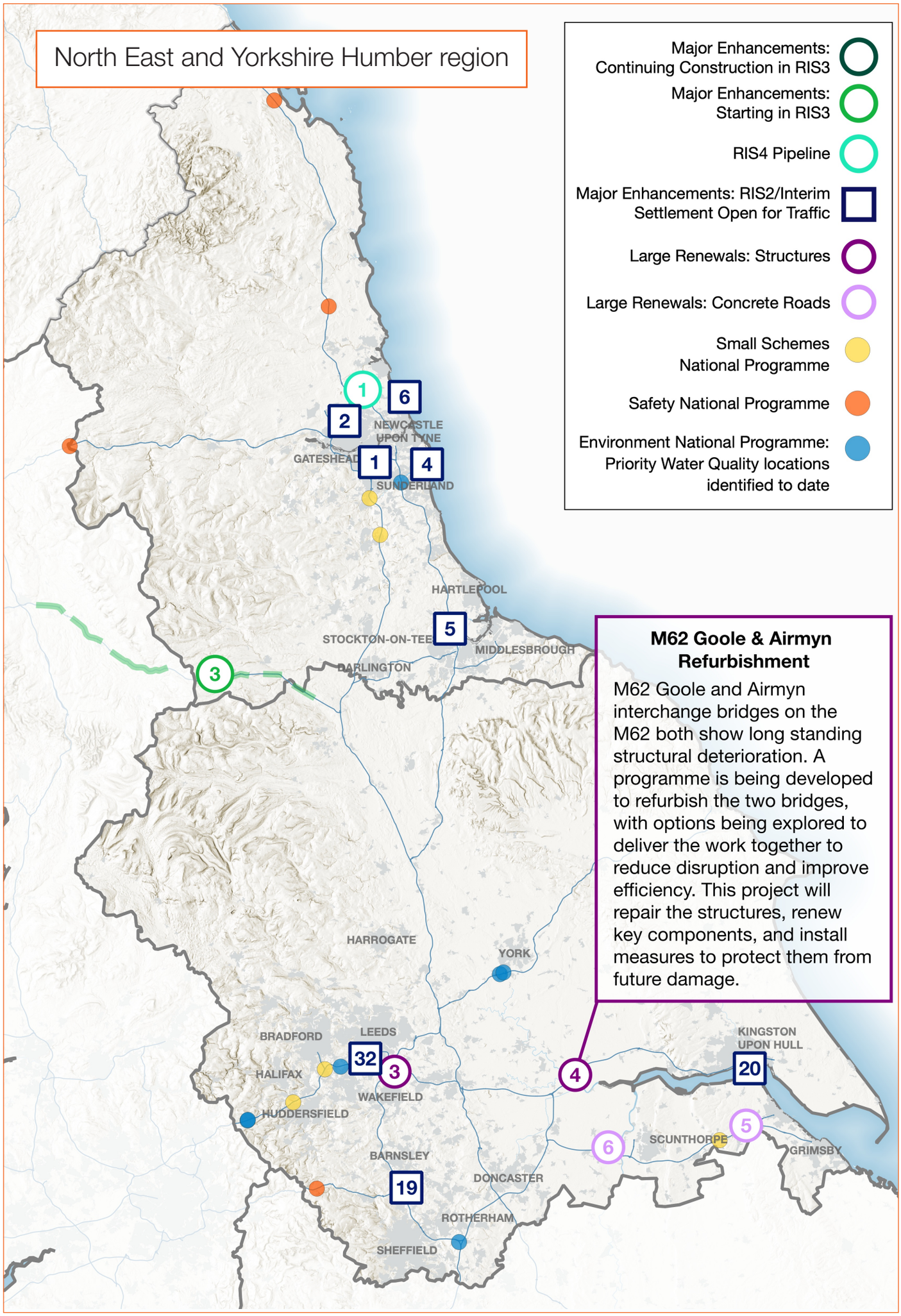
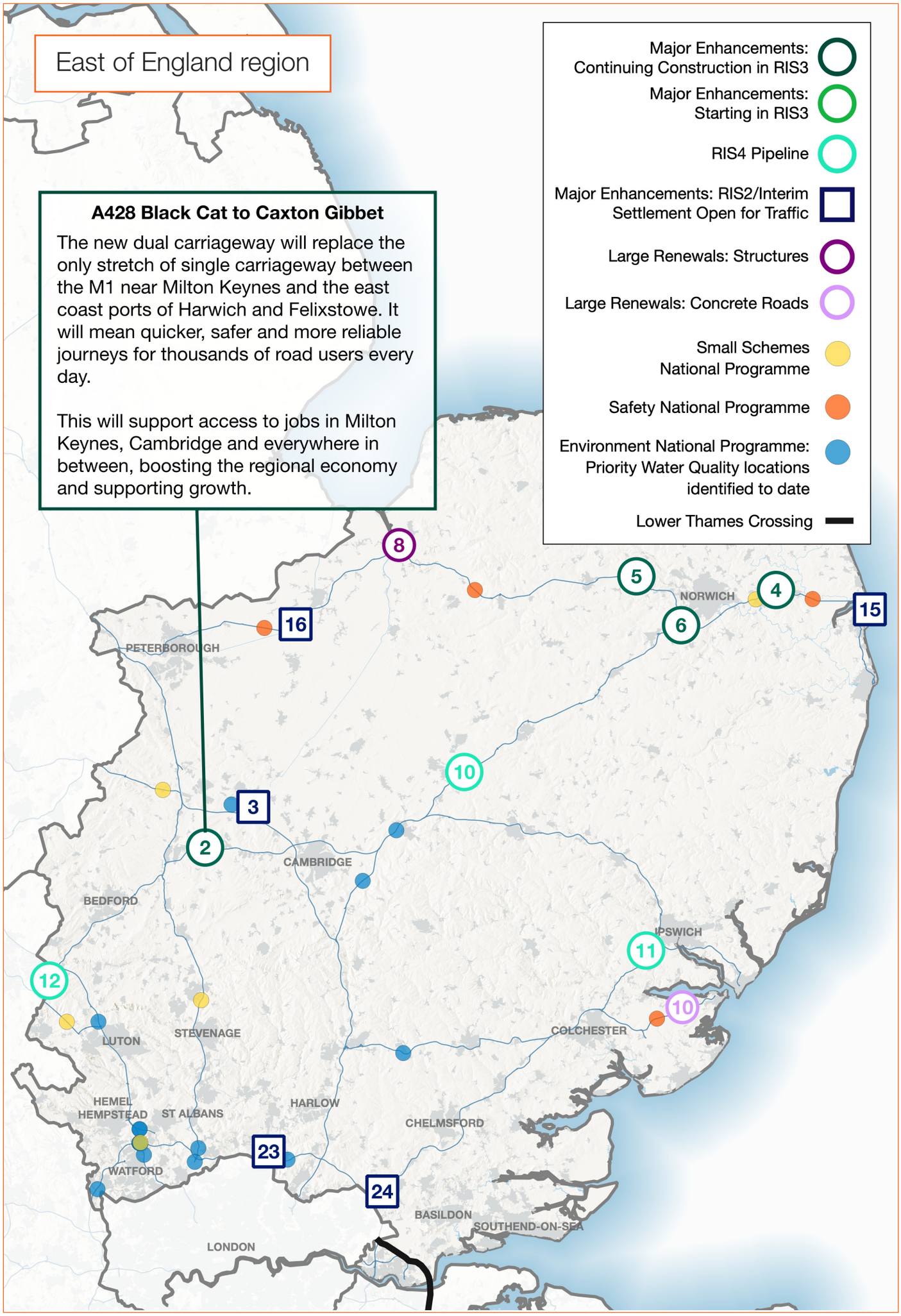
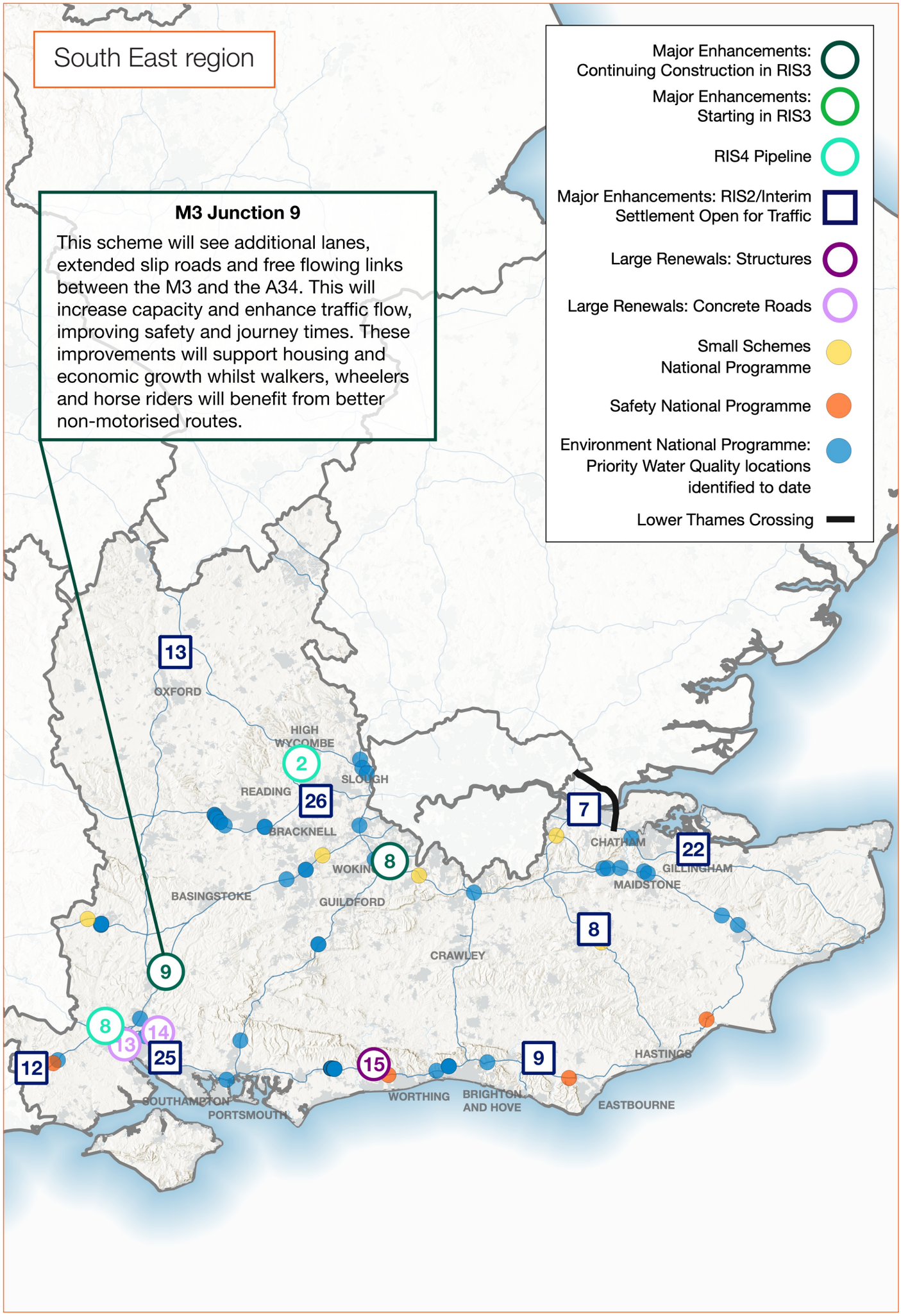


M62 Goole & Airmyn Refurbishment

M62 Goole and Airmyn interchange bridges on the M62 both show long standing structural deterioration. A programme is being developed to refurbish the two bridges, with options being explored to deliver the work together to reduce disruption and improve efficiency. This project will repair the structures, renew key components, and install measures to protect them from future damage.


East of England region
A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet
The new dual carriageway will replace the only stretch of single carriageway between the M1 near Milton Keynes and the east coast ports of Harwich and Felixstowe. It will mean quicker, safer and more reliable journeys for thousands of road users every day.
This will support access to jobs in Milton Keynes, Cambridge and everywhere in between, boosting the regional economy and supporting growth.
Major Enhancements: Continuing Construction in RIS3
Major Enhancements: Starting in RIS3
RIS4 Pipeline
Major Enhancements: RIS2/Interim Settlement Open for Traffic
Large Renewals: Structures
Large Renewals: Concrete Roads
Small Schemes National Programme
Safety National Programme
Environment National Programme: Priority Water Quality locations identified to date
Lower Thames Crossing
8
5
4
15
16
6
NORWICH
PETERBOROUGH
10
3
2
CAMBRIDGE
BEDFORD
IPSWICH
11
12
10
LUTON
STEVENAGE
COLCHESTER
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD
ST ALBANS
HARLOW
CHELMSFORD
23
WATFORD
24
BASILDON
SOUTHEND-ON-SEA
LONDON


South East region
M3 Junction 9
This scheme will see additional lanes, extended slip roads and free flowing links between the M3 and the A34. This will increase capacity and enhance traffic flow, improving safety and journey times. These improvements will support housing and economic growth whilst walkers, wheelers and horse riders will benefit from better non-motorised routes.
Major Enhancements: Continuing Construction in RIS3
Major Enhancements: Starting in RIS3
RIS4 Pipeline
Major Enhancements: RIS2/Interim Settlement Open for Traffic
Large Renewals: Structures
Large Renewals: Concrete Roads
Small Schemes National Programme
Safety National Programme
Environment National Programme: Priority Water Quality locations identified to date
Lower Thames Crossing
OXFORD
HIGH WYCOMBE
SLOUGH
READING
BRACKNELL
WOKING
BASINGSTOKE
GUILDFORD
CRAWLEY
CHATHAM
GILLINGHAM
MAIDSTONE
HASTINGS
EASTBOURNE
BRIGHTON AND HOVE
WORTHING
SOUTHAMPTON
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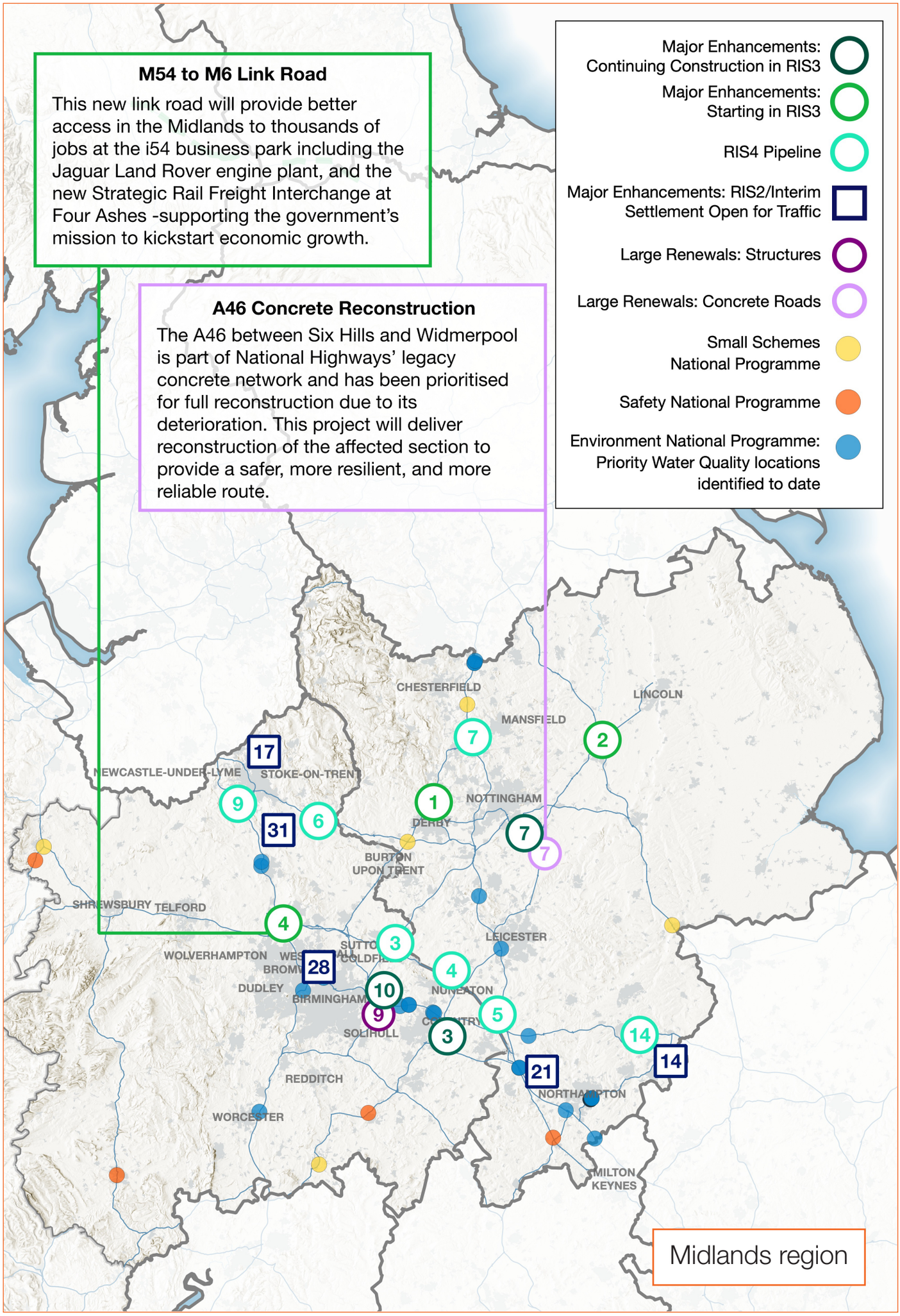
M54 to M6 Link Road
This new link road will provide better access in the Midlands to thousands of jobs at the i54 business park including the Jaguar Land Rover engine plant, and the new Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Four Ashes -supporting the government's mission to kickstart economic growth.
A46 Concrete Reconstruction
The A46 between Six Hills and Widmerpool is part of National Highways' legacy concrete network and has been prioritised for full reconstruction due to its deterioration. This project will deliver reconstruction of the affected section to provide a safer, more resilient, and more reliable route.
Major Enhancements: Continuing Construction in RIS3
Major Enhancements: Starting in RIS3
RIS4 Pipeline
Major Enhancements: RIS2/Interim Settlement Open for Traffic
Large Renewals: Structures
Large Renewals: Concrete Roads
Small Schemes National Programme
Safety National Programme
Environment National Programme: Priority Water Quality locations identified to date
CHESTERFIELD
MANSFIELD
LINCOLN
NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME
STOKE-ON-TRENT
NOTTINGHAM
DERBY
BURTON UPON TRENT
SHREWSBURY
TELFORD
WOLVERHAMPTON
DUDLEY
BIRMINGHAM
LEICESTER
NUNEATON
SOLIHULL
REDDITCH
WORCESTER
NORTHAMPTON
MILTON KEYNES
17
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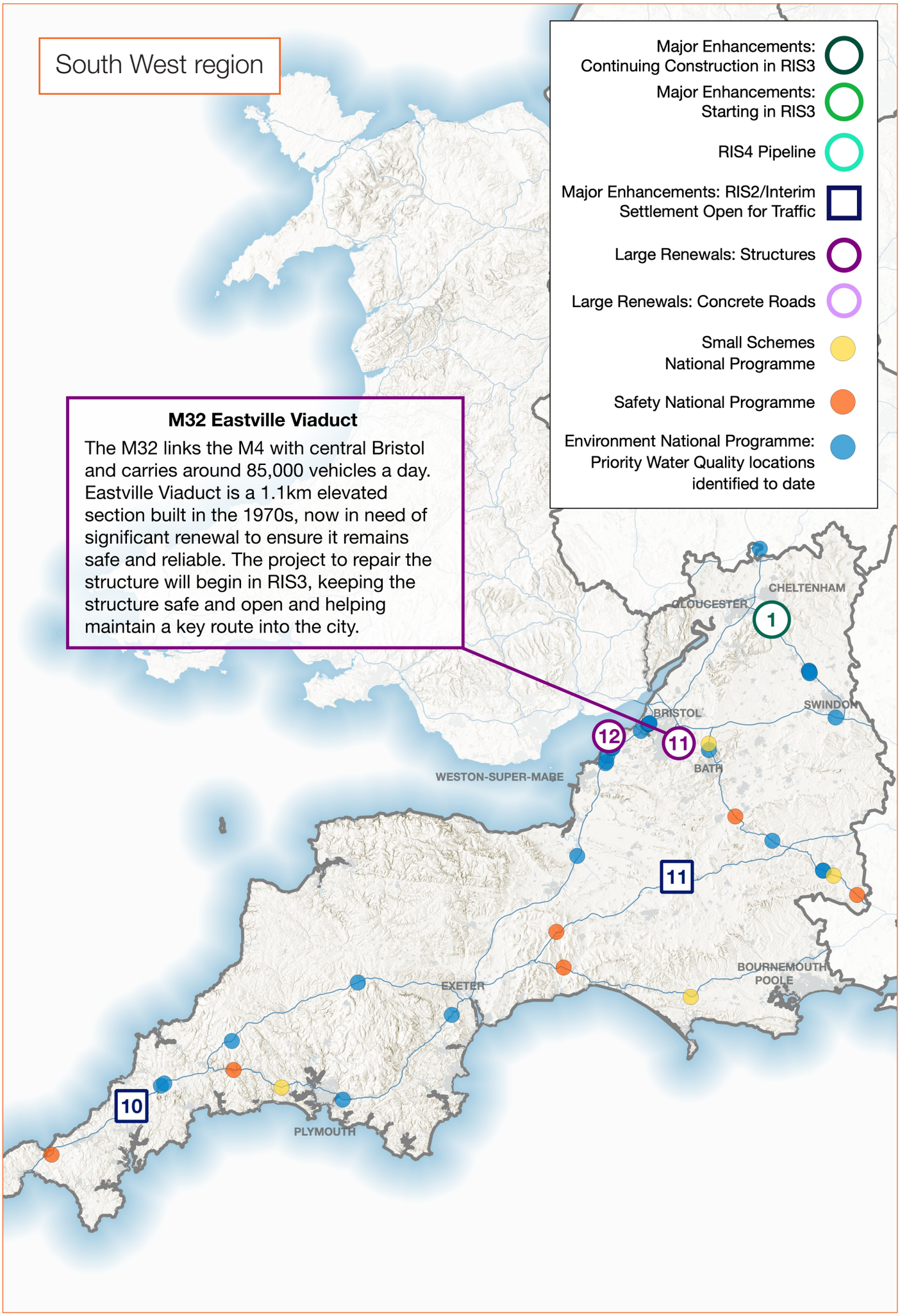
Midlands region


South West region
Major Enhancements: Continuing Construction in RIS3
Major Enhancements: Starting in RIS3
RIS4 Pipeline
Major Enhancements: RIS2/Interim Settlement Open for Traffic
Large Renewals: Structures
Large Renewals: Concrete Roads
Small Schemes National Programme
Safety National Programme
Environment National Programme: Priority Water Quality locations identified to date
M32 Eastville Viaduct
The M32 links the M4 with central Bristol and carries around 85,000 vehicles a day. Eastville Viaduct is a 1.1km elevated section built in the 1970s, now in need of significant renewal to ensure it remains safe and reliable. The project to repair the structure will begin in RIS3, keeping the structure safe and open and helping maintain a key route into the city.
CHELTENHAM
GLOUCESTER
1
SWINDON
BRISTOL
12
11
BATH
WESTON-SUPER-MARE
11
BOURNEMOUTH
POOLE
EXETER
10
PLYMOUTH

Financial Framework

Risk reserve

In line with RIS2 and accepted best practices, there is a centrally managed risk reserve which will allow National Highways to respond to unexpected risk events, mitigating the impacts of such risks on delivery of the RIS3 outcomes.

Efficiency savings

One of the key benefits of long-term funding for National Highways is the substantial efficiency savings that can be realised across a road period. Over the second road period, the efficiency savings totalled over £2.1 billion.

Across the third road period, National Highways will demonstrate efficiency of £1,401 million on capital and operational expenditure by the end of the road period. This level of efficiency has been assessed by ORR as in line with expectations. As National Highways matures as an organisation, the levels of incremental efficiencies possible will reduce as improvements are made and embedded across the business. Differences in the makeup of the portfolio in each RIS, such as proportion of spend on each programme and the maturity of enhancements being delivered, also determine the levels of efficiency possible across each road period.

As discussed in the performance specification, the savings made as part of the efficiency target will continue to be assured by ORR. Performance against this target, as with other key indicators of performance, will be publicly reported in ORR's annual reports on National Highways' performance.

We also expect enhanced reporting of efficiency. Demonstrating efficiency is important to support RIS4 investment cases. National Highways must enhance its annual efficiency reporting throughout the third road period by, in conjunction with ORR, developing productivity and unit cost measures, cost and capability benchmarking and improving its efficiency forecasts early in the road period.

Flex arrangements

National Highways has the flexibility, subject to approval from the DfT, to bring forward or defer up to 10% of its capital funding each year to optimise investment to deliver the RIS3 outcomes.

It is also able to flex up to 10% of a funding line into another within a financial year. This may be subject to further DfT approvals in some areas. This is in line with practice in previous road periods.

Further funding

National Highways continues to deliver road enhancements in partnership with developers and local partners. In certain situations, particularly those where an enhancement predominantly benefits a new development, National Highways will be expected to secure suitable contributions from key beneficiaries. There may also be other government programmes on behalf of which National Highways delivers improvements on the network.

Abbreviations of terms used

AHI – Asset Health Indicator.

AI – Artificial Intelligence.

ALR – All Lane Running – Parts of the network where the hard shoulder is permanently converted into an active traffic lane.

CAV – Connected and Autonomous Vehicle.

CCTV – Closed Circuit Television.

CWIS – Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

DBFO – Design, Build, Finance and Operate; a form of project financing in which a private entity is awarded a concession to design, build, finance and operate a piece of infrastructure for a period of time.

DfT – Department for Transport.

DMRB – Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

dSBP – draft Strategic Business Plan – National Highways' response to the draft RIS, setting out how it proposes to meet the government's objectives.

EV – Electric Vehicle.

GGC – Greening Government Commitment.

GHAF – Growth and Housing Accelerator Fund – a RIS3 National Programme designed to unlock and enable new housing and employment sites on or near the SRN.

GVA – Gross Value Added.

HGV – Heavy Goods Vehicle.

HRE – Historic Rail Estate; a collection of structures, assets and land linked to closed lines, which were once part of Britain's rail network. Now managed by National Highways under a protocol arrangement.

IIPs – Inward Investment Projects – Road infrastructure projects directly supporting new industries backed by foreign direct investment, fostering innovation and creating high-quality jobs.

i**RAP** – International Road Assessment Programme; the programme provides tools for assessing and improving road safety performance.

KPI – Key Performance Indicator.

KSI – Killed or Seriously Injured.

LED Lighting – Light Emitting Diode Lighting, offering a power-energy alternative to conventional road lighting.

LTC – Lower Thames Crossing.

MRN – Major Road Network; the most important local roads, managed by local authorities and which complement the SRN.

MSA – Mayoral Strategic Authorities – A Mayoral Strategic Authority is a legal partnership between two or more local councils that collaborate on regional issues including transport, planning, and economic development, led by a directly elected "metro mayor".

NIA – Noise Important Areas - Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs has identified locations experiencing the highest noise levels as part its Noise Action Plan: Roads.

NPR – Northern Powerhouse Rail.

OMR – Operations, Maintenance and Renewals.

ORR – Office of Rail and Road; the independent highways monitor.

PI – Performance Indicator.

RAB – Regulated Asset Base – the preferred funding model for Lower Thames Crossing.

RIS – Road Investment Strategy; government's statement of its long-term vision for strategic roads, what it expects National Highways to deliver in the next road period, the performance it is buying and the funding it will make available for that purpose. RIS1 was published in 2014; RIS2 in 2020. RIS3 is this document.

RP – Road Period; the period of time to which a RIS applies. RP1 is financial years 2015/16 to 2019/20 inclusive; RP2 is 2020/21 to 2024/25. The Interim Settlement Year ran 2025-2026. RP3 will commence 2026/27 to 2030/31.

SBP – Strategic Business Plan – National Highways response to the final RIS publication outlining how it will deliver on the government's objectives.

SME – Small and medium-sized enterprises.

SoFA – Statement of Funds Available.

SRN – Strategic road network; the motorways and main 'A' roads in England managed by National Highways on behalf of government.

SRUS – Strategic Roads User Survey; delivered by Transport Focus.

STBi – Science Based Targets initiative.

TfL – Transport for London.

TF – Transport Focus; the road user watchdog, providing the voice of all users of the SRN.