

# Our Route Strategies

## Planning for the future of our roads

The roads we manage play a critical role in enabling businesses to transport products and services, providing access to jobs and suppliers, and facilitating trade and investment across the country. In combination with local roads they also support journeys connecting people and places.

Looking to the future, we will embrace the potential for change by taking a long-term view of our network, including influences that could revolutionise transport, road travel, and personal and commercial mobility.

Route strategies are one of the key steps of initial research in the development of the Road Investment Strategy (RIS). This is a rolling programme that sets our plan for the strategic road network (SRN) and determines how we secure investment for the work we need to do.

We are required to produce route strategies as a condition of our operating licence, to inform future decision making though we recognise that not all aspirations can be funded or delivered.

## Planning for the future

We are now preparing the route strategies for RIS 3 (2025 to 2030) and beyond, which will cover strategic routes, centres of population and industry. We will also include international gateways served by the routes, types of road and patterns of use. These will build upon our route strategies in 2015 and 2017.

Our route strategies will describe the current performance, constraints and anticipated performance of routes.

Where appropriate, we will consider influencing driver behaviour and examine other modes of travel.

Our approach is outlined in our document [Vision for route strategies – planning for the future of our roads](#). *(Clerk's comment – document attached)*

## What's different this time

We want our next round of route strategies to:

- establish a strategy for our routes that takes account of the performance of today as well as the challenges and opportunities of the future
- be grounded in evidence informed by interested parties and road user input
- meet wider connectivity needs of communities and economies as well as the significantly changing needs of people who use our network or live nearby

Our route strategies will be:

### **Forward looking**

We will collaborate with interested parties and road users to identify future requirements for each route. These requirements will balance:

- local plans and priorities for roads and other transport networks, taking into account wider socio-economic developments and government policy
- the need for effective integration with other forms and systems of transport
- the need to connect communities and support their growth aspirations
- the views of national and local interested parties and road users. These include Transport Focus and the Office of Rail and Road, as well as sub-national transport bodies and elected representatives

### **Widely supported**

We will work with our interested parties to ensure that route strategies are recognised externally as the principal network planning tool for the strategic road network.

If we are to develop successful route strategies, it's vital for us to engage with interested parties and road users throughout the route strategy process, ensuring that:

- their priorities are reflected in our current route priorities
- we consider their needs for our roads at a local and strategic level when developing each route requirement
- we incorporate their data and intelligence in the evidence base that supports our route requirements and our programme of potential interventions
- we collaborate wherever we can to develop route requirements, including joint studies where they will benefit the strategic road network

### **Integrated and collaborative**

We will consider the needs of interested parties and road users. Our approach being widely accessible and integrated with the rest of the transport system where it benefits the strategic road network.

We will consider opportunities for integrated and collaborative solutions as we develop our programme of potential investment priorities.

We want to make sure that we take into account how our strategic routes interact with other transport networks, particularly the interfaces between our network and local roads.

## Broad

We will identify a full range of options and opportunities in each Road Investment Strategy cycle informing operational and investment priorities.

## Dynamic and easy to maintain

We will adapt and update route strategies when significant changes occur. Our route strategies will be dynamic, rather than fixed at a particular point in time.

We will achieve this by using regularly updated digital platforms to visually represent future opportunities.

## How we will deliver the next route strategies

We are taking a phased approach to route strategies:

Phase	When	What it involves
1	Complete	A baseline review of all interventions we've identified through previous route strategies and subsequent network changes, consolidated into an easily accessible format.
2	2021 to 2022	Engaging with interested parties and road users, to understand their future aspirations for the network. Publishing our high level initial overview reports for each route with our Strategic Road Network Initial Report (SRNIR).
3	2021 to 2023	Undertaking a gap analysis between the current state and future requirements for our network. This will influence how we deliver work and investment in the RIS period.

We've already started engagement. We will be contacting road users and a wide range of interested parties to assemble our evidence base from summer 2021.