

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Response

Introduction

1. Your (used for contact purposes only):

Name:

Email address:

2. Are you responding: *

On behalf of an organisation?

3. Your organisation's name is?

4. Your organisations type is best described as:

A government department or executive agency?

Proposals

RIS3 strategic objectives

RIS3 has six strategic objectives, a summary of these objectives is stated below.

1. Growing the economy

If the SRN performs its role of supporting long distance journeys, then businesses prosper, by dependably connecting people to jobs and companies to customers. This includes ensuring resilient integration with our ports, airports, and rail terminals through which we access global markets. It also means using roads to unlock housing and improving connectivity for communities that are poorly served. As we seek to build a stronger economy the role the SRN will play is vital.

2. Improving safety for all

Safety is our top priority for the SRN. RIS3 investments should increase reductions on the numbers of people killed or injured and working on our roads. England's SRN is already one of the safest in the world and we plan to do even more to prevent incidents arising and reduce the severity when they do occur. We may build the safest roads in the world, but if there are users who use them in an unsafe way these safe roads become dangerous. Working with National Highways and others we will invest in tackling behaviours that make road traffic collisions more likely.

3. Network performance to meet customer needs

We will explore what can be done to make journeys more reliable, less congested, and safer while protecting the environment plus health and wellbeing. This will involve trying to meet the particular needs of all users, from freight firms to pedestrians, and where they interact with the network. The SRN is an aging asset with many structures nearing the end of their design life. As these assets age they are less predictable and resilient. To reduce this deterioration and retain the networks capacity we will need to continue to invest in maintenance and renewals.

4. A technology-enabled network

The context in which National Highways and the SRN operates is evolving. Changing ways of living, working, new services and technologies will change what we expect from the SRN and how it interacts with the local roads and wider transport. RIS3 will not be able to predict all these changes, but it should help prepare the ground for them, building in flexibility to respond as they emerge. We want to be ready to harness the possibilities of new technology to change the way people think about transport plus how vehicles and physical infrastructure respond to each other. Technology is not an end in itself, but it will play an important role to help improve network capability.

5. Managing and planning the SRN for the future

To develop a more sustainable and resilient economy, it will be crucial for the SRN to be in a good condition. We need to continue to improve our understanding of the condition of the SRN, its structures and associated equipment and ensure they are systematically renewed so they continue to serve the country while still well placed to deal with the challenges of climate change.

6. Improved environmental outcomes

Road travels future is decarbonised, with vehicles powered by electricity, hydrogen, and biofuels, running on infrastructure that has been built, maintained, and operated using near zero carbon products and techniques. The SRN's impact on the natural, built, and historic environment is something that can, and must, continue to be reduced. In particular, we will consider how best to

achieve biodiversity net gain, minimise light pollution and flooding risks, reduce impacts of air pollution and noise plus protect water quality.

5. What level of importance, if any, do you assign to the RIS3 strategic objective of:

	Very important
Growing the economy?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving safety for all?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Network performance to meet customer needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technology-enabled network?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing and planning the strategic road network for the future?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved environmental outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Why?

Improving safety of the network and stimulating economic growth in the region are key drivers for investment within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The SRN within our region allows the through movement of strategic traffic to key growth areas, international gateways, and providing connectivity to our communities.

The RIS3 objectives are very important to the Combined Authority.

Growing the economy

Stimulating economic growth is a key priority for the Combined Authority, EEH and the East. Good infrastructure is vital to this. This objective closely aligns to two key objectives of the Combined Authority, contained within our emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. It is essential that an integrated, joined-up approach is demonstrated by government and its partners including NH and Network Rail when it comes to investment priorities both within and beyond our boundaries. Investment in other forms of transport such as improvements in the rail network may deliver the objectives of the National Highways.

Improving safety for all

The safety of people on and around the SRN is highly important. A number of the routes across the region have particularly poor safety record and it important that investment is forthcoming from NH on our key route to provide improvements in the short-, medium- and longer-term.

Network performance to meet customer needs

Congestion and unreliable journey times are also issues experienced on the A1 between Black Cat and Buckden, M11 and A47. Solving these issues would benefit people and businesses in the county and encourage inward investment into the area. The Combined Authority is supportive of action to improve safety, meet customer needs and grow the economy. There are sections of these routes regularly queue or have accidents which result in long delays and make the route unreliable for businesses.

A technology enabled network

The Combined Authority strongly supports the use of a more technology-enabled network and the steps that need to be taken to support the roll out of electric vehicles. Technology can be used to deliver a safer more reliable and efficient network.

Managing and planning the strategic road network for the future

It is essential that the SRN is maintained to the appropriate standard and able to cope with the changing climate. The extreme heat in summer 2022 caused damage to much of the network causing road closure and delays. The Combined Authority will continue to work with NH to ensure both the condition of the network is maintained and mitigation against the impacts of extreme weather is implemented in a timely manner. Some sections of the region's SRN are ageing and have surface materials that are not suited to today's standards. Heavy goods vehicles, public transport and electric vehicles have increased in weight and size and the volume of vehicles using our roads has increased over the years leading to a greater need for regular maintenance. The Combined Authority will ensure that NH are thoroughly engaged during the development and implementation of our Freight Strategy due to the key inter-relationships between our networks.

Improved environmental outcomes

The Combined Authority strongly supports improved environmental outcomes to help achieve decarbonisation targets and minimise the impact of road infrastructure on the environment and people. This ambition strongly aligns to the Environment and Climate objectives with our emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

The SRN has a 4-point definition of:

1. Linking our main centres of population.
2. Facilitating access to major ports, airports, and rail terminals.
3. Enabling access to geographically peripheral regions of England.
4. Providing the main cross-border routes to Scotland and Wales.

We are inviting suggestions about trunking and de-trunking. We propose to continue to use this four-point definition and any suggestions we receive will be judged against those criteria.

6. What, if any, other specific roads do you think we should consider as:

Trunking candidates?

N/A

Detrunking candidates?

N/A

National Highways Strategic Road Network initial report (SRN IR)

7. Do you think National Highways has identified the right focus areas?

Yes

How much its customers will travel

How its customers will experience travel

How it will manage its network

Planning for the third road period (2025 to 2030)

To meet National Highways' vision for the third road period and address the forecast challenges, the SRN Initial Report sets out a series of proposals. These proposals are grouped under five core themes:

Improving safety for all

This will involve reducing the risk on our 1-star and 2-star iRAP (International Road Assessment Programme) rated roads, lifting the rating to A 3-star or better rating where possible, and play a stronger role in influencing user behaviour and vehicle standards.

Making the most of the network

This will be done by operating increasingly connected roads, undertaking increasing proactive maintenance, making our technology more resilient and investing in vital renewals to deliver safer, more reliable journeys.

Evolving NH customer and community services

This will be done by improving the data and information we provide to our customers. Taking a broader approach to supporting end to end journeys, including improved facilities for freight and non-motorised users. Supporting growth and development alongside the SRN and addressing legacy impacts on our network, including air quality and noise

Driving decarbonisation and environmental sustainability

National Highways is to achieve net zero corporate emissions and reduce maintenance and construction emissions between 40 and 50%. Facilitate low-carbon travel and demonstrate wider environmental leadership, including around biodiversity and climate resilience. Invest in low carbon technology to drive a step change in manufacturing

Taking a targeted approach to enhancing the network

National Highways will continue to invest in the network, following the carbon management principles of PAS 2080M and only building when the problem cannot be fixed by other approaches. Meeting network needs by completing committed schemes, investing in Lower Thames Crossing, and producing more, smaller value, £2 million to £25 million schemes.

Improving safety for all

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with National Highways' approach to improving safety on its network?

Agree (Go to 'Approach to making the most of the existing network')

9. Why do you disagree with the approach?

The Combined Authority strongly agrees with the need to improve safety on the SRN and short-term safety improvements to create a zero-harm network. The Combined Authority would like to see a real mix of small and larger scale investment to improve safety in the short-, medium and longer-term as demonstrated by the SRN report outlining that National Highways will "look to deliver more, smaller value, £2-25 million enhancement schemes".

The Combined Authority supports the need to protect vulnerable users such as walkers, cyclists and horse riders and the need to engage with network users to both understand their safety needs and encourage safe use of the SRN network.

Making the most of the existing network

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with National Highways' approach for making the best use of the existing Strategic Road Network?

Agree (Go to 'Evolving National Highways' customer and community services')

11. Why do you disagree?

The Combined Authority agrees that it is important for NH to be making the most of the existing network and hope to see improvements where necessary on the SRN. These improvements should include a commitment by NH to further enhance the A428, A1, A47, M11 and A14 in line with their overarching objectives outlined earlier in the paper. The necessary improvements on these key routes through Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will need to vary on the local circumstances and therefore it is essential that the NH recognise the importance of these key strategic corridors and work with the Combined Authority to find the best possible solutions for each of these. With the much-needed improvements at the Black Cat Junction it is important for NH to recognise that a key priority should be improvements to the A1 between this key interchange and Buckden.

The Combined Authority support the need to better maintain assets, particularly to be more resilient to extreme weather events. The extreme heat in summer 2022 led to damage on many of the region's road network which has adversely impacted on traffic flows and exacerbated congestion.

Evolving National Highways' customer and community services

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that National Highways should evolve its:

- Agree
- Customer offer?
- Community offer?
- Proposals for designated funds?

Decarbonisation and environmental sustainability

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with National Highways' approach for driving decarbonisation and environmental sustainability on the SRN?

- Agree (Go to 'Taking a targeted approach to enhancing the network')

14. What proposals do you disagree with and why?

The Combined Authority strongly agrees with the need to decarbonise transport and safeguard the environment.

Taking a targeted approach to enhancing the network

15. To what extent, do you agree or disagree with National Highways' approach for its future enhancements programme?

- Disagree

16. Why do you disagree?

The Combined Authority would like to see more significant interventions to improve the region's highway network. It is disappointing that for the majority of the network it is unlikely to investment in the short- and medium-term options. The Combined Authority would like to see a commitment to improvements to the key north-south and east-west corridors across our region, such as the A1(M), M11, A428 and A47. These improvements would improve the safety of all users, enable more effective use of public transport, and stimulate economic growth through greater connectivity.

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National Highways performance

17. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the assessment in the SRN Initial Report on the most important performance outcomes to measure?



Disagree

18. Why do you disagree?

The safety of the SRN should continue to be the important measure of performance. In addition, the measures should closely align to those of the objectives and therefore more thought should be given to:

- Economic growth and how the SRN can improve the performance of a region's economy;
- Rural connectivity – the rural nature of some of the SRN within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough heightened importance on the SRN's ability to connect people to essential services. Measuring the SRN's ability to provide these connections effectively could be useful to ensure investment is being made in the right places and at the right scale; and
- Journey time reliability is also an important measure. This leads to increased costs for businesses and freight.

Cross cutting proposals

19. What, in your view, could be done differently to meet the needs of people affected by the:

Presence of the SRN?

Adverse effects from the SRN such as noise pollution, air pollution, impacts on biodiversity, severance of communities and foot and cycle paths should be mitigated. Our SRN passes through a number of communities potentially creating a hostile environment to move around in. The Combined Authority support designated funds as a way to benefiting local communities and addressing the issues local communities face in the presence of the SRN.

Operation of the SRN?

The operation of the SRN needs to be fast, reliable, and safe. There is a strong case to suggest improvements to our network in an integrated and holistic way would deliver this and there is a strong need for large-infrastructure improvements to improve the flow of traffic and safeguard the people using the network. Technology will also help to manage traffic flows particularly where there is an incident on the SRN. Technology can help to divert road users and minimise congestion from incidents. There is a need to join this up with local authorities and engage with the highway authority to ensure that proposed diversions are appropriate, and the local road network is able to cope.

Digital technology set out in the SRN initial report

20. Do you think the approach to digital technology set out in the SRN initial report puts National Highways on the right track for meeting its vision for 2050?

Yes (Go to 'Equality impact assessment')

21. Why not?

The Combined Authority agree with NH that digital technology can support the reliable, fast, efficient, and safe running of the SRN network and welcome the proposals. The Combined Authority would like to ensure join-up in digital technology for end-to-end journeys as many journeys that use the SRN also link to the local MRN. It is important that any digital technology complements the complete journey and not just that on the SRN and feel this can be done through effective engagement with the Combined Authority, Connecting Cambridgeshire, Local Authorities and Sub National Transport Bodies.

Equality impact assessment

22. What, if any, evidence, and other insights can you supply towards the development of our RIS3 equality impact assessment?

An appropriate EqIA must allow for the consideration of the likely impact of the work of NH on different population groups including likely disproportionate impacts on persons from protected characteristic groups and those living in communities experiencing deprivation.

The EqIA must consider the impacts on equalities groups based on the three tests NH is required to address:

- Does this policy eliminate discrimination for each of the nine protected characteristics (PC)? If not, is the discrimination justifiable? Can it be mitigated?
- Does this policy advance equality of opportunity for PC groups?
- Does this policy foster good community relations between people of PC groups?

Any consultation on the RIS3 and the specific schemes/projects/initiatives must ask what positive or negative impacts the proposals will have on:

- Particular groups of people, with particular reference to 'protected characteristics' listed above;
- Children and young people;
- People facing socioeconomic disadvantages; and
- People living in island communities.

Analytical approach

Analysis is a complex and important part of how we both gather and utilise evidence as part of the development of RIS3. Alongside this consultation we have also published a strategic outline of the approach we are taking on analysis for RIS3 for which we are seeking your views.

23. What, if any, comments do you have on the analytical approach?

It is important that NH collate better evidence on the need to support large infrastructure projects across our region. The Combined Authority, alongside the Sub National Transport Bodies and other interested groups, have undertaken a significant amount of work to progress options and plans over recent years and it is important that NH take account of this in analysis and evidence gathering.

Final comments

24. Are there any other issues you think the government should consider as part of this consultation?

The key priority for the Combined Authority is the funding and subsequent construction of the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement (EACE) scheme. While a key rail project this junction improvement will significantly reduce the amount of freight on the SRN by increasing capacity for rail freight on the vital Felixstowe-Midlands freight corridor.

Work undertaken by Network Rail so far demonstrates that the improvements would deliver substantial national economic, levelling up and decarbonisation benefits through the planned doubling of freight capacity, alongside increased passenger services on poor frequency routes. With the benefits being felt well beyond the East, supporting access and growth in the Midlands and North as well.

The importance of the scheme has been further reinforced by England's Economic Heartland and Transport East outlining recently that EACE will return £4.89 for every pound invested in the £466 million project. With around 70% of intermodal containers coming into the UK from Felixstowe are destined for distribution hubs in the Midlands and northern England. EACE will increase capacity around the key East Anglia hub from 6.5 trains per hour to ten, with an extra six freight trains running to and from the port per day – 2,900 per year.

As a consequence, an estimated 98,000 lorry movements would be removed from the roads every year, in addition to an estimated 277,000 extra passenger journeys. Road congestion would be expected to be cut by 5.6 million hours per year. Carbon emissions due to fewer lorry movements are predicted to be 1.7 million tonnes lower over 60 years. Therefore, the Combined Authority wish for RIS3 and NH to examine its budgetary position and provide a significant proportion of the funding required for EACE due to the significant benefits that the scheme would have on the SRN, particularly in relation to east-west movement.

25. Any other comments?

The Combined Authority welcomes future improvements for the connectivity of the transport network there are a number of key considerations that should be carefully considered and embraced;

- The health and welfare of the regions.
- The inclusion of active travel considerations and future proofing of both existing and future highway infrastructure, especially in locations of potential or current severance. Whilst NH are conscious of severance, further commitment is required.
- Inter connectivity of transport systems, in particular local public transport capability and priority.
- When published NH should carefully consider the local strategic requirements detailed within our emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and other key strategies at the local and regional level; and
- The NH's Environment and Sustainability Strategy clearly lists their seven priorities are:
 - Improving health and well-being;
 - Promoting Active Travel;
 - Using Natural flood management;
 - Good Road Design;
 - Promoting sustainable resource use;
 - Increased connectivity; and
 - Enhance cultural heritage.

The Combined Authority support these seven items; however, with the NH's infrastructure passing through local communities it is imperative that due consideration must be given to their concerns.