

Strategic Transport Leadership Board

2 October 2025

Item 8 – Impact of Road Decisions

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Strategic Transport Leadership Board:

- a) Note the recent announcements by the government on roads investment decisions**
- b) Agree to send a letter to the Secretary of State for Transport regarding the impact of delays in decision making on the MRN Programme**

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper outlines the impact of recent government announcements on roads and implications for the EEH region.

2. Key points to note

- 2.1. The Government recently announced that the A47 Wansford to Sutton had been cancelled, and that it was “reviewing” the majority major road network and large local major schemes.
- 2.2. Throughout the summer EEH has supported local authorities make the case for their MRN schemes to DfT.
- 2.3. There is significant concern over how much local authorities have already spent on progressing their schemes, should they end up being cancelled within the review.
- 2.4. Following publication of the draft Roads Investment Strategy 3, EEH will be making representations to National Highways on the importance of road priorities within the region.

3. Context

- 3.1. On 8 July, the Government announced the road and rail investment that will be supported as a consequence of the Spending Review 2025.
- 3.2. This resulted in the cancellation of the A47 Wansford to Sutton dualling in Peterborough from National Highways current second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) programme.
- 3.3. The Spending Review also prompted a review of Major Road Network (MRN) and Large Local Majors (LLM) that concluded over the summer.
- 3.4. In addition further details about the third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) have been made public.

4. A47 Wansford to Sutton Dualling – Peterborough

- 4.1. The National Highways RIS2 scheme A47 Wansford to Sutton proposed a new stretch of dual carriageway following the existing A47. The scheme included a dedicated slip road from the A1 southbound to the A47 eastbound to alleviate congestion at the current junction.

- 4.2. The objective of the proposal was to:
- improve road safety for all road users, including a safer route between local communities for cyclists, pedestrians, equestrians and other non-motorised users
 - support Peterborough's Local Plan by providing for sustainable economic growth by supporting opportunities for employment and residential developments
 - reduce congestion delays, making journey times more reliable and increasing the overall road capacity of the A47
- 4.3. EEH will work with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Peterborough City Council, and National Highways to determine the impact of the scheme not being progressed.

5. Major Road Network and Large Local Majors (LLM) review

- 5.1. The Spending Review also confirmed funding for 28 Major Road Network (MRN) and Large Local Majors (LLM) schemes and set out that there would be further consideration of 42 other MRN/LLM schemes.
- 5.2. Of the 28 confirmed schemes, only one is in the EEH region: South East Aylesbury Link Road in Buckinghamshire, this was a Local Growth Fund project that is currently being constructed.
- 5.3. The decision to proceed with a review of other schemes was set out in a letter from the Minister for the Future of Roads to Leaders of local and combined authorities. The letter outlined DfT concerns around the delays within the programme.
- 5.4. Of the 42 MRN/LLM schemes under review, seven are in the EEH region:
- A10 Corridor Scheme, Broxbourne in Hertfordshire
 - A1139 University Access in Peterborough
 - A43 Northampton – Kettering Phase 3 in West Northamptonshire
 - A509 Isham Bypass in North Northamptonshire
 - Aylesbury Eastern Link in Buckinghamshire
 - Ely to Cambridge A10 Improvement (Dualling and Junction Improvements) in Cambridgeshire
 - Vauxhall Way Improvements in Luton
- 5.5. The review included an engagement phase with local authorities, including an online "smart-survey". DfT announced the survey on 1 August and required promoting authorities to complete their submissions by 12 September.
- 5.6. The review focuses on four main criteria:
- Deliverability – will it be in construction before the end of the spending review period, and why have there been delays to the process so far?
 - Affordability – local authority contributions and affordability of any post-OBC cost increases
 - The need for the scheme – locally and the strategic fit with Government missions of housing and growth
 - Benefits of the scheme – benefit to cost ratio
- 5.7. To support our impacted authorities, EEH convened several meetings, including one with DfT, and collated questions and feedback about the survey process to the DfT from officers. These sessions became an informal source of peer review and support for the officers involved.
- 5.8. EEH and its local authority partners have for some time highlighted concern around the wider MRN/LLM business case processes, the delays that have been outside of LA control, and the significant financial commitment already made by local authorities to progress major scheme business cases.



- 5.9. For example, several authorities have been working at risk to develop elements of their outline business case, whilst still awaiting sign-off of the strategic outline case, and in some cases, this has been pending for over a 18 months.
- 5.10. *Next steps:* The questionnaire has now been completed and we are expecting the outcome of the review later this year. However, it is suggested that EEH send a letter to the Roads Minister expressing concern both over the review process and the finality of the review on schemes that authorities have invested significantly in progressing. The letter is attached as Annex 1 to this document.

6. Third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3)

- 6.1. In August, the government published its draft Third Road Investment Strategy. This is the long-term strategy for managing and improving England's motorways and major A-roads. It sets out:
- Investment priorities
 - Performance expectations
 - Funding allocations
 - Oversight mechanisms
- 6.2. The strategy does not name specific schemes but does outline investment priorities and includes the Statement of Funds Available (SoFA) for the Road Investment Period £24.9bn.
- 6.3. The RIS3 will have a far greater focus on investment supporting integration with the local road network, as well as promoting modal choice for long distance journeys, and support active travel and public transport provision for shorter journeys.
- 6.4. The Strategy's key objectives are:
- Improve Safety for All - Continue reducing casualties and enhancing safety for road users and workers.
 - Enhance Network Performance -Improve traffic flow, reduce delays, and better manage incidents.
 - Support Economic Growth - Invest in infrastructure that unlocks housing, jobs, and business connectivity.
 - Environmental Outcomes - Align road development with net-zero goals, reduce pollution, and enhance biodiversity.
 - Technology-Enabled Network - Integrate smart technologies for traffic management and future mobility.
 - Community Integration - Reduce severance effects, improve accessibility, and respond to local needs.
- 6.5. The investment priorities include:
- Enhancements, focused on maintenance of the network;
 - RIS3 pipeline, the pipeline of projects developed in RIS2 to be considered for possible delivery in RIS3. These are being delayed until after 2030. RIS3 will also set out the pipeline of schemes that will continue to be considered for construction in RIS4 or late RIS3 if funding becomes available;
 - Strategic Studies: This would include the Oxford-Cambridge roads study and therefore we will be making the case for priorities highlighted in this study to be progressed.
 - Inward Investment Projects, supporting various large-scale development projects. For the EEH region this would include developments such as Universal, Oxford SFRI and PuyDuFou in Bicester.
- 6.6. It also confirmed that Smart Motorways were cancelled in April 2023 so the 11 schemes already paused from the second Road Investment Strategy (2020-25) are cancelled including A1 through Hertfordshire.



- 6.7. National Highways is required to produce a draft Strategic Business Plan (dSBP). The dSBP will set out how the company intends to deliver the Government's objectives within the SoFA. The ORR will then review the draft plan to assess whether it is deliverable and agree the publication of the final Road Investment Strategy by March 2026.
- 6.8. EEH will work with National Highways, ORR and DfT to ensure this region's priorities for inclusion in RIS3, including the RIS3 pipeline schemes, remain a commitment as RIS3 investment is prioritised over the coming months.

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