

DfT Draft Third Road Investment Strategy
Via email

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Email: RIS3Engagement@dft.gov.uk

Date: XX/10/2025

Dear Sir/ Madam,

England Economic Heartland Response to the Draft Third Road Investment Strategy

England's Economic Heartland (EEH) is the Sub-national Transport Body (STB) for the region stretching from Swindon across to Cambridgeshire, and Northamptonshire down to Hertfordshire. We provide a single voice on the region's strategic transport infrastructure and connectivity priorities.

Eight of National Highways' Strategic Route Strategies cross the region and includes the Strategic Road Networks, managed by National Highways, of: M25, M1, M40, M4, A1M motorways; and key Strategic A roads that act as key connectors – especially east west including: A34, A404, A43, A45, A5, A1, A47, A419, A421, A428 and A14.

EEH welcomes the opportunity to provide additional comments on the Draft Third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) following its publication and the workshops held in September of this year. Since EEH's previous RIS3 consultation response there have been key Government announcements and other commitments and developments that provide significant additional growth in the EEH region. These will impact an already constrained strategic road network.

These include:

- The Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor, with a focus on transformational economic growth
- Three new towns, Tempsford, Upper Heyford and Milton Keynes (and Crews Hill on the Enfield/ Hertfordshire border)
- Proposed Universal Studios destination resort in Bedford Borough
- Puy-Du-Fou theme park in Oxfordshire
- New Strategic Rail Freight Interchange near M40 Junction 10 in Oxfordshire
- Approved Luton Airport Expansion (and potential expansion of Heathrow and Stansted, on the Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire borders respectively)
- Continued delivery of East West Rail.

The Strategic Road Network (SRN) plays a key role in EEH's transport network that will be vital in unlocking and supporting the success of these developments.

The SRN also provides strategic links between our region and the rest of the UK supporting the freight and logistics sector, connecting the ports in the south, west and London travelling through the region to access Midland's logistics Hubs.

EEH works collaboratively in partnership with local partners, National Highways and DfT to identify and find solutions to transport challenges in the region. An excellent example of this is the Oxford to Cambridge Road Study where we worked collaboratively to identify the road priorities needed to ensure the economic growth of the region.

These priorities need to continue to be developed and potentially brought forward to be delivered in RIS3 period if the significant growth in the region is to be realised. On the SRN these include:

- M1 Junction 13: a key priority that needs to be brought forward and delivered within RIS3 period to realise the ambitions of EWR, Milton Keynes new town and Universal Destination resort.
- A404: The A404 has a strategic role as a key link between M40 and M4 and provides resilience for the wider SRN, including outer orbital journeys as an M25 alternative.
- A34: The A34 links the ports in the south with midlands logistics hubs and is sub-standard solution for the A34 was put on hold and Bicester, which has significant growth, is identified as a key priority in the Oxford to Cambridge Road Study.
- A1 Corridor: Sandy – Biggleswade (3 specific junctions – but the corridor as a whole needs to be addressed to support new town at Tempsford and address the cancellation of the A1 smart motorway through Hertfordshire.
- A421-A428: Although being addressed through improvements at Black Cat junction on A428 the corridor will be key to unlocking the new town at Tempsford.
- A5: The A5 accommodates long distance movements and acts as an alternative route to M1. Key junctions include: Old Stratford Roundabout; Kelly's Kitchen Roundabout; Hockliffe Signals; and a new relief road through Towcester.
- Bicester: M40 Junctions 9 and 10 and A43. There is significant growth in Bicester with a new town at Upper Heyford, proposed Oxford Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, and a new tourist destination Puy Du Fou along with significant local growth.
- A14: Connects the ports in Felixstowe to freight logistics centres in the Midlands. Junctions A14 J33-J36 (Cambridgeshire) were highlighted as key challenges in the Oxford to Cambridge Road Study and is key to supporting increased freight demands and housing/economic growth. In the long-term investment in Ely Junction is required to move more freight to rail if the road can continue to perform.

As the strategy points out, the performance of the local road network, including the major road network, is crucial for the successful integration with the SRN. It is imperative that both strategic and non-strategic road priorities are taken forward in the region and that collaborative working between National Highways, DfT and EEH and other Government departments such as MHCLG is key if the growth and economic success of the region are to be realised.

EEH as the STB voice for EEH region, we would also wish to convey the impact and consequences of the outcomes for our region relating to uncertainty surround setting the priorities (and delivery) of the future RIS programme, especially in such a high-growth region where timely delivery is key to unlocking the region's potential that benefits the UK as a whole.

EEH full response to the Draft Third Road Investment Strategy is included as an annex to this letter.

Yours faithfully,

Naomi Green

Managing Director, England's Economic Heartland



Annex 1 EEH Response to the Draft Third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3)

EEH welcomes the opportunity to provide additional comments on the draft third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3) following its publication and the workshops held in September of this year.

Since EEH's previous RIS3 consultation response there have been key Government announcements and other commitments and developments that provide significant additional growth in the EEH region. These will impact an already constrained strategic road network.

These include:

- The Oxford to Cambridge Growth Corridor, with a focus on transformational economic growth
- Three new towns, Tempsford, Upper Heyford and Milton Keynes (and Crews Hill on the Enfield/ Hertfordshire border)
- Proposed Universal Studios destination resort in Bedford Borough
- Puy-Du-Fou theme park in Oxfordshire
- New Strategic Rail Freight Interchange near M40 Junction 10 in Oxfordshire
- Approved Luton Airport Expansion (and potential expansion of Heathrow and Stansted, on the Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire borders respectively)
- Continued delivery of East West Rail.

Eight of National Highways Strategic Route Strategies cross the region and our region that predominantly focus on connectivity to and from London and includes the Strategic Road Networks, managed by National Highways, of: M1, M40, M4, A1M and M25 motorways; and key Strategic A roads that are relied upon for strategic east west and inter-motorway connectivity: A34, A404, A43, A45, A5, A1, A47, A419, A421, A428 and A14.

Objectives and Priorities: EEH supports the Draft RIS3 objectives and welcomes the Draft RIS3 focus on 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. This is aligned with EEH's transport strategy and EEH's integration programme that will form a key focus of EEH's work going forward.

The draft RIS3 sets out investment priorities: Enhancements, focused on maintenance of the network; RIS3 pipeline, the pipeline of projects developed in RIS2 to be considered for possible delivery in RIS3; Strategic Studies, such as the Oxford-Cambridge roads study and therefore we will be making the case for priorities highlighted in this study to be progressed.

RIS3 pipeline: This includes the pipeline of projects developed in RIS2 to be considered for possible delivery in RIS3. While we realise that these are being delayed until after 2030, we support that 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. In the EEH region this includes key priorities:

- M1 Junction 13: With the amount of committed growth in the region especially impacting M1 Junction 13, EEH consider this to be a key priority that needs to be brought forward and delivered within RIS3 period in order to realise the ambitions of EWR, Milton Keynes new town and Universal Destination resort.
- A421-A428: Although being addressed through improvements at Black Cat junction on A428 the corridor will be key to unlocking the new town at Tempsford.
- A404: The A404 has a strategic role as a key link between M40 and M4 and provides resilience for the wider SRN, including outer orbital journeys as an alternative to the



- M25. The A404 junctions; M40 Junction 4 (Handy Cross in High Wycombe), Westthorpe interchange (Marlow) and Bisham roundabout (in Berkshire, just south of Marlow) are well-known areas of congestion in an area of high economic productivity.
- A34: A solution for the A34 was put on hold and Bicester, which has significant growth, is identified as a key priority in the Oxford to Cambridge Road Study. There is a need for a new solution and measures for A34 especially with junction 9 of the M40.
- A1 Smart Motorway Scheme – A solution is required to address the on-going challenges that were to be addressed by the now cancelled A1 Smart Motorway through Hertfordshire
- A47 - There is a need to find a new solution to the cancelled A47 Sutton to Wandsford scheme from RIS2 as this supports growth in Peterborough.

Strategic Studies: National Highways in collaboration with DfT and EEH undertook a strategic road study, Oxford-Cambridge Roads Study, to identify road priorities key to delivering the economic growth of the region. The priorities identified in this Study includes:

A1 Corridor: Sandy – Biggleswade (3 specific junctions) – but the corridor as a whole needs to be addressed to support new town at Tempsford and address the cancellation of the A1 smart motorway through Hertfordshire.

A5: The A5 accommodates long distance movements through the region as part of the strategic road network. In EEH, it connects Luton, Milton Keynes, Towcester and Daventry and acts as an alternative route to M1. Key junctions include: Old Stratford Roundabout; Kelly's Kitchen Roundabout; Hockliffe Signals; and a new relief road through Towcester.

Bicester: M40 Junctions 9 and 10 and A43. There is significant growth in Bicester with a new town at Upper Heyford, proposed Oxford Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, and a new tourist destination PuyDuFou along with significant local growth means there is a need to address M40 junctions 9 and 10, A43 as well as local routes connecting with Bicester.

A421 / A6: A key corridor connecting the SRN and MRN key to unlocking growth in Central Bedfordshire. And the A421 (A43 to M1 J13) Which although is not SRN is a key connector between the SRN A43 and M1.

A14 J33-J36 (Cambridgeshire): Connects the ports in Felixstowe to freight logistics centres in the Midlands. Junctions A14 J33-J36 (Cambridgeshire) were highlighted as key challenges in the Oxford to Cambridge Road Study and is key to supporting the Port's ambitious increased freight demands alongside housing/economic growth. In the long-term investment in Ely Junction is required to move more freight to rail if the road can continue to perform.

Other key locations identified in the study not on the SRN include:

- A1139 East of Peterborough a key MRN scheme that is linked to unlocking growth in Peterborough.
- Aylesbury – one of the most poorly connected towns in the EEH region that is not directly served by the SRN but relies of substandard over capacity MRN A41 and A418.
- A605 (south of Peterborough)
- A43 Corby and Broughton
- A141/A142 (Cambridgeshire)
- A507 (Central Bedfordshire)

In addition to these we are waiting the outcome of the current MRN review that includes key priorities on the MRN including:

- Aylesbury Eastern Link Road, Buckinghamshire
- A10 Ely to Cambridge Junction and Corridor Improvements CPCA
- A10 Corridor Scheme, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire



- A1139 University Centre Access Road in Peterborough
- A505 Vauxhall Way Improvements, Luton
- A509 Isham Bypass, North Northamptonshire
- A43 Northampton-Kettering Phase Three, West and North Northamptonshire

These are key to the continued functioning of the SRN. As the strategy points out, the performance of the local road network, including the major road network, is crucial for the successful integration with the SRN. It is therefore imperative that both strategic and non-strategic road priorities are taken forward in the region as journeys on the SRN start and end on the local road network.

Inward Investment Projects. The EEH region has a significant amount of growth and we assume that this area of the RIS commitments would include developments such as Universal, Oxford SFRI and Puy Du Fou in Bicester, as well as the recently announced new towns in Tempsford, Upper Heyford and Milton Keynes, with an additional one just across the border in London at Crews Hill in Enfield that significantly impacts Hertfordshire. With so much growth across the region it is imperative that both strategic and non-strategic road priorities are taken forward in the region and that collaborative working between National Highways, DfT, EEH and other Government departments such as MHCLG is managed and integrated at a regional level so that the growth and economic ambitions of the region can be realised. EEH as the STB voice for EEH region have an important role in convening this.

Finally, for a high-growth region where timely delivery is key to unlocking the region's potential (benefitting the UK as a whole), it is vital that uncertainty surrounding priorities (and delivery) of the future RIS programme is minimised.

