



# Putting road users at the heart of the Road Investment Strategy for 2025-30

Transport Focus recommendations

October 2022

# Foreword

**T**ransport Focus is the independent watchdog representing the interests of users of England's motorways and major 'A' roads, the strategic road network (SRN) managed by National Highways on behalf of the Government.

To help inform preparation of the third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3), covering Road Period 3 from 2025 to 2030, we carried out extensive research with drivers and other road users<sup>1</sup> to understand their priorities for improvement to journeys on the SRN. We have also analysed responses to our Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS) to understand the factors with greatest influence on whether a road user is, overall, satisfied with their journey.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has set out six strategic objectives for the third RIS<sup>2</sup>. Under each of them we have used our insight to make recommendations about what RIS3 should require National Highways to deliver. These build

on the first two strategies (RIS1 and RIS2) and on what National Highways has achieved since it was created in 2015.

While all the recommendations are important, those of greatest importance relate to the top three road user priorities for improvement – improved quality of road surfaces, safer design and upkeep of the network and better management of roadworks – and to increasing satisfaction with journey time.

I am confident that these evidence-based recommendations will help DfT put road users' interests at the heart of its planning. As we work with the Government, National Highways and the Office of Rail and Road during the development of RIS3, Transport Focus will continue to strongly articulate the consumer interest.

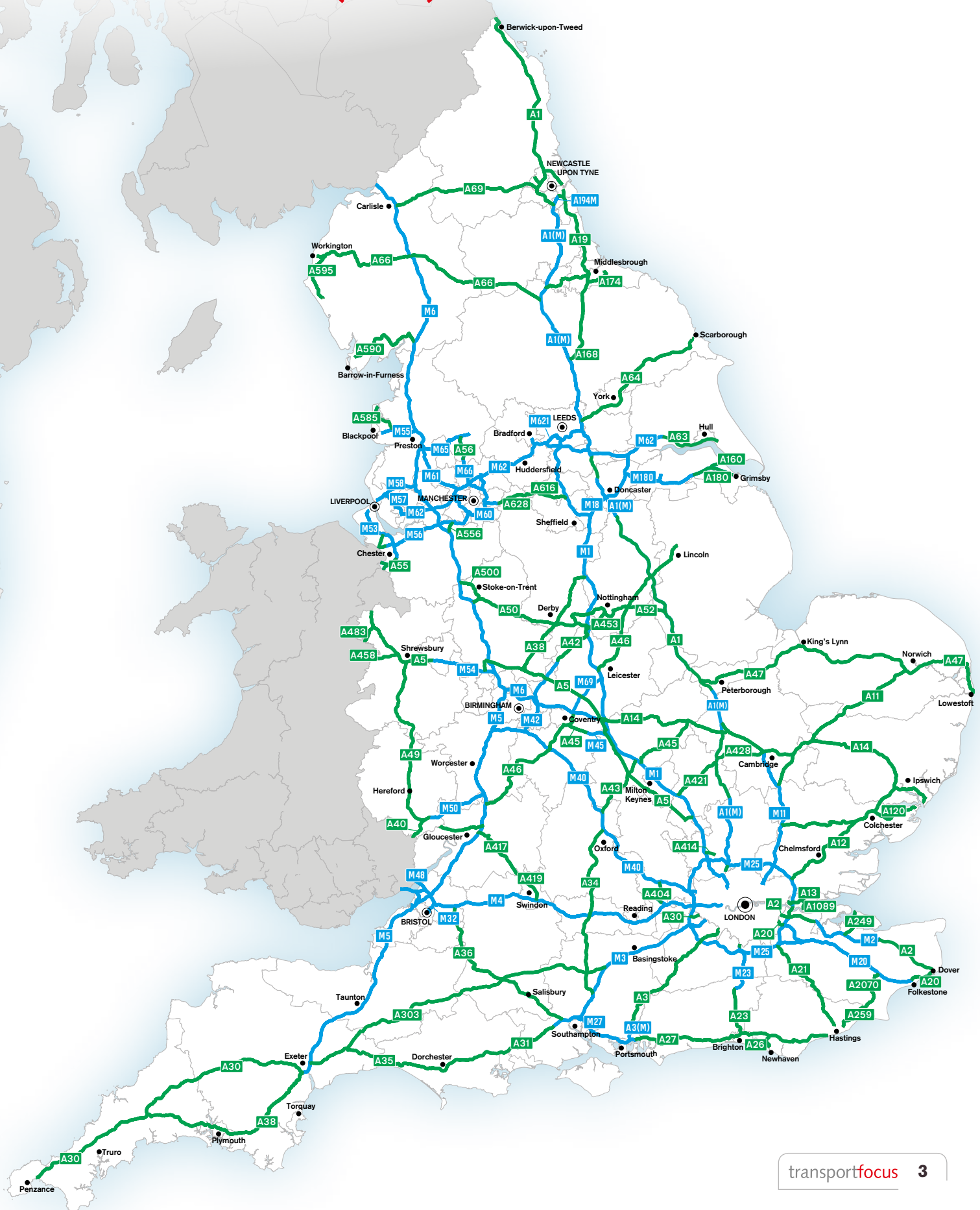
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/road-users-priorities-for-improvement/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-the-third-road-investment-strategy>

# Motorways and major 'A' roads managed by National Highways – England's strategic road network (SRN)



**Overall priorities for improvement to journeys on the SRN by type of vehicle used**  
 (showing index scores where 100 equals the average level of priority for improvement)

	Car/ van	Electric car/van*	Moped/ motorcycle	HGV/ LGV	Coach/ bus
Improved quality of road surfaces	191	128	176	165	150
Safer design and upkeep of roads	167	117	159	145	138
Better management of roadworks	146	111	130	138	123
Better management of unplanned delays such as accidents or breakdowns	127	114	116	126	127
Better information about unplanned disruptions (such as accidents)	111	104	103	113	115
Better behaved drivers	101	97	113	88	98
Better information about roadworks happening in future	90	97	92	97	101
Better lighting on the network	86	89	89	78	83
Reduced environmental impact of road travel	77	101	85	82	89
Better roadside facilities (service areas, laybys)	75	95	83	91	92
Increased reliability of journey times	74	88	72	83	80
Reduced journey times	73	88	70	83	74
Better maintenance of signs	65	78	75	73	72
Better maintained verges, including litter clearance	63	89	74	74	81
Ensuring journeys can be made in fully electric vehicles	53	103	63	65	79
<b>Base size</b>	<b>4818</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>134</b>

\*also included within overall car/van drivers.

**Factors with greatest influence on overall journey satisfaction**



# Introduction

**We welcome the Department for Transport's (DfT) desire that road users' interests are at the heart of RIS3 and its intention to continue the revitalisation of England's motorways and major 'A' roads that began in 2015. Continued focus on initiatives set out in the first and second strategies is important; few issues are resolved completely within a single five-year period.**

Before detailing road users' priorities for improvement under each of DfT's strategic objectives, we set out three overarching themes that should be integral to RIS3 and to how National Highways operates. As well as flowing through the RIS, we recommend that DfT reviews whether National Highways' Licence reflects them sufficiently.

- It should be explicit that National Highways' purpose is to provide a service to its customers, road users of many different types including those with additional needs, rather than simply be the builder, maintainer and operator of infrastructure. The latter is only the means to an end. We feel that RIS3 should have explicitly at its heart the objective to improve the consumer experience of those who use England's strategic road network (SRN), as measured by the Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS) and other Transport Focus surveys.
- While new and improved roads – enhancements to the SRN – will be welcomed by many, it is important to note that two thirds (65 per cent) of car and van drivers place greater importance on the maintenance of existing roads<sup>3</sup>. The RIS and associated Statement of Funds Available (SoFA) should reflect the capital and revenue expenditure required for the consumer experience to be maintained – and where possible improved – on existing SRN routes.
- It should be clear that roadside facilities are integral to the SRN, including for lorry drivers and the businesses they work for. And therefore National Highways should have a clear role in facilitating the provision of facilities to meet its customers' needs. That facilitation should include understanding gaps in current provision and how they might be addressed, and then working with the private sector to bring about improvements.

Although they are ultimately just a means of delivery, Transport Focus encourages retention of Designated Funds in RIS3 to facilitate investment in small-scale improvements, including for disabled people and cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. However, the fact they support only capital investment can be a problem. We recommend that DfT explores how funds could be provided to support initiatives of a non-capital nature that also achieve the Government's objectives.

References in this report to priorities for improvement among road users are those for car and van drivers, unless otherwise stated. However, the recommendations draw on all Transport Focus insight, including that as a result of engagement with cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.

Under each of DfT's strategic objectives our recommendations are presented broadly in order of their importance to road users.



<sup>3</sup> <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/road-users-priorities-for-improvement/>



# Department for Transport strategic objective 1: Improving safety for all

**Safety is rightly the first of DfT's strategic objectives. Going somewhere and getting back again safely is an underlying consumer requirement of any transport system.**

Overall, therefore, Transport Focus recommends that in RIS3 DfT reaffirms its commitment to achieving zero harm on the National Highways network by 2040 – that is, zero deaths and serious injuries.

**Four aspects of road users' priorities for improvement relate to safety.**

## 1 Improved quality of road surfaces

Road users consistently say that road surface quality is their top priority for improvement to journeys on National Highways' roads. They see good quality road surfaces on busy, high-speed roads as crucial to maintaining safety, not least by removing the need for swerving around defects. In drivers' minds, safety features such as road markings and 'cats eyes' are part of the road surface; they want lanes well defined and junctions properly marked. Drivers are also alert to the danger of surface water.

Of course, they also want smooth surfaces – that is, without dips, bumps, ruts and potholes – to reduce discomfort to those in vehicles and on motorbikes and bicycles. Smooth surfaces are of particular importance to road users with certain disabilities and medical conditions. Alongside current work to ensure that it defines a 'good' road surface in the same way that road users do, our sense is that National Highways' main task in this area is to eliminate – through better maintenance and/or earlier renewal – lengths of road surface which users judge to be poor.

Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- measure and demonstrate improvement in road surface quality through Road Period 3, as measured by the new user-focused metric to be introduced in October 2022
- measure and demonstrate improvement through Road Period 3 in the visibility of road markings, in their various forms, and the effectiveness of 'cats eyes'
- measure and progressively reduce through Road Period 3 the number of locations where it is necessary to put up 'flood' or 'road liable to flooding' signs.

Recognising that revenue budgets are likely to be under pressure, we encourage DfT to consider whether increased capital investment through RIS3, for example in more and higher quality surface renewals, would allow National Highways to reduce its expenditure on reactive maintenance. This would also reduce the number of occasions when roadworks disrupt people's journeys.

## 2 Safer design and upkeep

Safer design and upkeep is road users' second highest priority for improvement to journeys on National Highways roads, with better lighting eighth highest. Design matters because of its role in minimising conflicting movements and making road infrastructure forgiving of human error.

Transport Focus's Sort My Sign campaign has seen drivers tell us about signs that cannot be read because of damage, dirt or vegetation. Where that happens road users are at risk from late manoeuvres or of missing safety-critical information altogether.

Road users remain anxious about what would happen if they broke down on an all-lane running smart motorway, in particular those disabled people who are less able to get out of a car quickly. Sharpened focus on design

and upkeep will help reduce the anxieties of cyclists and pedestrians who are in close proximity to fast-moving traffic. Litter along National Highways' roads undermines the visual quality of a journey, and debris can affect user safety; there is a particular challenge from human waste at laybys.

Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- work at pace to complete any remaining actions from the Secretary of State's March 2020 smart motorways evidence stocktake and action plan<sup>4</sup> and from the Government's January 2022 response to the Transport Select Committee recommendations<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/smart-motorway-evidence-stocktake-and-action-plan>

<sup>5</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmtrans/1020/report.html>

- consistent with the zero harm by 2040 objective, maintain and deliver a programme to progressively upgrade its roads to the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) 'three stars or above' standard
- work with councils to tackle safety deficiencies at junctions with local roads so as to improve safety, and user perceptions of safety, when joining or leaving the SRN
- measure and demonstrate improvement in the number of its signs that are 100 per cent visible to drivers as they approach, including at night and in relation to drivers' line of sight being wholly unobstructed by vegetation
- measure and demonstrate improvement in the proportion of its lighting which is functioning correctly, including a specific focus on illumination of safety-critical signs

- We note that increased investment in longer-life, lower energy lighting would not only minimise outages but also costly, disruptive lane closures when repairs are needed.
- measure and demonstrate improvement in its adherence to requirements of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 where it is the litter duty holder.

Transport Focus also recommends that Government transfers the litter duty in relation to SRN 'A' roads from district and unitary councils to National Highways. It is the body that has the experience of litter picking on high-speed roads, it knows when routes will be closed for maintenance that would facilitate litter picking, and its customers are the ones who judge it when these roads are a mess.

### 3 Better behaved drivers

The sixth highest priority for improvement among road users is 'better behaved drivers'. The behaviours many want to see tackled are a mix of the more antisocial, such as lane hogging, and the flagrant disregard for the law, such as significantly excessive speed or using a mobile device at the wheel.

Achieving zero harm by 2040 will require National Highways to deepen its understanding of driver behaviour. We would welcome continuation of the Chief Road Safety Adviser and Head of Road User Safety posts in Road Period 3. Road users tell us that they want it to be clear how to use National Highways' roads safely, but they also want the law enforced. National Highways should use all the levers at its disposal to encourage good driving, while helping the police and others enforce the law.

Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- continue and deepen its work to understand the human factors involved in driver behaviour and what it can do

to improve it, including through better design and taking forward learnings from the Road Collision Investigation Branch once it is up and running

- continue and deepen its work with police forces, as well as with Traffic Commissioners, to improve compliance with traffic law and other regulations
  - This should include investment to help the police enforce the law cost-effectively on the SRN in ways that draw broad support from road users.
- measure and reduce instances of 'wrong way driving': that is, where vehicles travel on the wrong side of a dual carriageway resulting in high risk of catastrophic collision
  - This should involve a comprehensive review of access points to the SRN and, in partnership with councils, result in measures to reduce the risk of driver error.
- Examine the case for more widespread introduction of average speed cameras as part of achieving zero harm by 2040, starting with the most dangerous stretches of the SRN including National Highways' 'A' roads.



## 4 Better roadside facilities

As set out in our introduction, RIS3 should make clear that roadside facilities are an integral part of providing the SRN. It should therefore give National Highways a clear role in facilitating the provision of roadside facilities that meet the needs of its customers.

Almost all roadside facilities are commercially provided, but longer-distance journeys on the SRN cannot safely be made without them. Rest plays a vital safety role for all drivers, and is legally binding for lorry and coach drivers. For road users with disabilities or medical conditions requiring frequent use of toilet facilities and taking of medicines, they are essential. Services can also play an important role in enhancing journey experience. Successive Motorway Services User Surveys show the positive impact of taking a break on drivers' mood ahead of safe resumption of their journey.

Among lorry drivers, 'better roadside facilities' is a higher priority for improvement to journeys on the SRN than it is for car and van drivers. Better facilities for lorry drivers that make the SRN a higher quality workplace should make those professions more attractive and help ease recruitment and retention challenges.

In addition, improved roadside facilities should also help speed the switch to electric vehicles by making the time spent recharging more productive and enjoyable.

Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- refresh its knowledge of the roadside facilities on its roads, including what is provided where and its quality, so identifying where there are weaknesses in current provision
  - Weaknesses may be geographic, in relation to particular amenities like showers, or be relevant to particular groups of road user such as disabled people or lorry drivers.
- assess where demand exceeds supply of spaces to park heavy lorries at services and other sites along the SRN so drivers can take statutory and other breaks while using its network
- develop a strategy to plug the gaps identified by the preceding two bullets, working with the private sector and where appropriate investing in partnership with it
- work with DfT to overhaul the regulations governing provision of signs to roadside facilities on its 'A' roads, with the objective of improving safety and ensuring road users can make an informed choice about where they stop
- maintain and develop its initiative on behalf of disabled road users to coordinate provision of site-specific information about the accessibility of roadside facilities and the amenities at them.





# Department for Transport strategic objective 2: Network performance

**Road users' top five priorities for improvement to SRN journeys include better management of roadworks, better management of unplanned delays such as collisions and breakdowns, and better information about that unplanned disruption. The freight logistics sector places great weight on reliable information about future roadworks so it can efficiently deploy its vehicles and staff.**

In some cases improving network performance will require alterations to the infrastructure and therefore capital investment, but it will also require the right budgets

for running costs (for example to employ sufficient traffic officers to ensure prompt reopening of roads after accidents). It is important that the SoFA provides adequately for both.

While road users tend to take it for granted that bridges, embankments and other structures are maintained properly, it is important to recognise that network performance – and ultimately safety – will depend on an ongoing requirement that National Highways inspects, maintains and renews these assets so journeys can be made efficiently and safely. The third RIS should ensure that this is the case.

**Three aspects of road users' priorities for improvement relate to better network performance.**

## 1 Better management of roadworks and unplanned delays

Roadworks management and incident response are core functions of National Highways. Improved metrics coming into place in the current road period will help National Highways better understand its performance at keeping traffic moving, and should lead to continuous improvement.

The need for focus in these areas will increase with more intensive use of the network and the ongoing programme of roadworks related to maintenance and enhancement.

'Better signage on diversion routes' is identified as a priority for improvement in reducing journey times, particularly by lorry drivers, who need to be confident the route is suitable for them throughout.

Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- demonstrate reduction in user delay as a result of roadworks, as measured by the metric currently being developed
- demonstrate reduction in user delay as a result of incidents, as measured by the metric currently being developed
  - This should cover the major 'A' roads National Highways manages as well as the motorways.
- demonstrate continuous improvement in its focus on protecting road user welfare, including among disabled people and others with particular needs, and achieving the best possible consumer experience when people are stuck on the SRN, for whatever reason, for lengthy periods

- work with councils to ensure that by the end of Road Period 3 all sections of the SRN are backed up by agreed diversion routes that are suitable (including for lorries), and meet minimum standards in terms of signing and maintenance condition.



## 2 Better information about roadworks happening in future

It is important to have good forward visibility of which roads will be closed completely and when. This has been one of National Highways' success stories in Road Period 2, albeit with work still to do to fully meet road user needs, including the freight logistics sector.

Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- further improve the accuracy of public-facing information about roadworks that completely close any part of the SRN

- The RIS should require accuracy to be measured 14 days in advance and improved through Road Period 3, as well as maintaining focus on information being correct seven days ahead and at 1pm on the day in question.
- increase its efforts to manage traffic demand when roadworks will reduce capacity, including through joint working with councils and others to promote alternative routes and modes of travel, as well as encouraging people to travel at less busy times.

## 3 Increased reliability of journey times, and shorter journey times

Road users put more reliable, and shorter, journey times just outside their top ten priorities for improvement to journeys on the SRN. However, our insight shows that users feel the current RIS2 objective of preventing delay getting worse is insufficiently ambitious. And we know from the Strategic Roads User Survey (SRUS) that overall satisfaction with a journey is closely linked with journey time satisfaction and whether actual journey time matches user expectation.

Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- reduce average delay across the SRN during Road Period 3 (as opposed to preventing it rising, as required by RIS2)
- measure journey time reliability through Road Period

- 3 using the metric currently being developed and take steps, in each region, to improve it during Road Period 3 by picking 'low-hanging fruit'
  - If enhancements are required, it should draw up proposals to be considered for Designated Fund investment or for inclusion in the fourth Road Investment Strategy (RIS4).
- measure delay and journey time reliability when joining or leaving the SRN, and work with councils to address problems identified.
  - This should include, in each region, taking steps to pick 'low hanging fruit' during the Road Period, while – if enhancements are required – drawing up proposals to be considered for Designated Fund investment or for inclusion in the fourth Road Investment Strategy (RIS4).



# Department for Transport strategic objective 3: Improved environmental outcomes

**Reduced environmental impact of road travel is ninth in users' priorities for improvement to SRN journeys. They expect to see action both on the adverse environmental impact of vehicle traffic**

**and to promote alternatives such as walking or cycling and travel by bus or coach. In this section we also cover the interests of people already using alternatives to driving.**

## Ensuring that electric vehicles can be charged at services on the SRN

Road users understand that an important way to reduce the environmental impact of road use is to shift away from petrol and diesel to electric power. Our Plugging the Gap research in 2021<sup>6</sup> showed the importance of sufficient, functioning, facilities for electric vehicles to be charged.

Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to work with the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), the private sector and others to ensure that:

- installation of rapid chargers at services on the SRN keeps ahead of demand as the end of sales of new petrol and diesel vehicles approaches
- chargers at services on the SRN are maintained to give a high level of reliability to consumers
- information about the location of chargers on the SRN is readily available to road users planning where to recharge, including whether they are working and available/currently in use.



## Making bus and coach more attractive for journeys on the SRN

National Highways is a supplier to bus and coach companies who operate services on its roads, and by extension to passengers using those services. Of course, very few bus and coach journeys are made entirely on the SRN – so getting on and off it smoothly is crucial. Meeting the needs of these SRN users is important in its own right, but also because making bus and coach attractive alternatives to the private car contributes to transport decarbonisation and congestion relief.

Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- implement a range of improvements which help bus companies run punctual, reliable services which passengers can trust, including
  - 1 measures to help buses get on and off the SRN with minimum delay and maximum journey time predictability
  - 2 measures to reduce the impact on buses of congestion which occurs on the SRN itself.
- progressively upgrade bus stops on its roads to meet the standard that was developed in Road Period 1, grasping opportunities to 'piggyback' on renewals and enhancements as well as making stand-alone interventions
- in its day-to-day operations, strive to minimise the impact on bus timetables, whether caused by roadworks, an event or an accident.
  - This should include taking account of 'first and last' bus times when deciding when to close roads for overnight maintenance and other works.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/plugging-the-gap-drivers-experiences-with-electric-cars/>



## Better, separate facilities for cyclists and pedestrians

Most cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians recognise that they are not the primary users of the SRN – and are of course barred from motorways. And most would prefer not to be sharing road space with cars and lorries, both on safety grounds and because it is simply not pleasant. However, some currently have no choice but to travel on a National Highways route.

RIS2 set out a long-term vision that cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians should be able to make their journeys segregated from motorised traffic. That approach should be restated in RIS3, but pursued with greater pace and depth. And it should include improvements on existing roads as well as ensuring that segregation happens when new or significantly upgraded infrastructure is built. It is important that thinking in this area is about the SRN as a whole, rather than confined to where an enhancement project is taking place.

Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- develop a vision and strategy to provide segregated infrastructure over successive road periods and remove the need for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians to use the carriageway or unsuitable paths that are merely inches from it

- develop and implement proposals to identify and correct defects on its cyclist, pedestrian and equestrian infrastructure
  - This will address the user perception that repairs to other infrastructure are prioritised over ‘theirs’, despite the marked impact on their journeys.
- continue to invest, in partnership with others like councils as appropriate, in improving the safety and experience of journeys involving its network that are made on foot, bike or involving a horse
  - This should be targeted at addressing both the generic themes and the specific issues identified in Transport Focus’s ongoing research among these road users.
- continue its work to improve the safety and experience of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians crossing the SRN.
  - This should include actively investing in small-scale enhancements to progressively eliminate locations where, because public rights of way are not directly opposite each other, it is necessary to venture into the carriageway for a short distance.

## Park and ride as an alternative to driving all the way on the SRN

Transport modes can exist in isolation when they could be complementary. For transport decarbonisation and congestion relief reasons, National Highways has a role to play in integrating travel by car with other modes more effectively than in the past. It should aim to marry the convenience of the private car for the ‘first mile’ with the benefits other modes can offer in terms of sustainability, convenience and, in some cases, journey time over driving the whole way on the SRN.

Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- work with transport companies and councils to:
  - 1 identify where across its whole network park and ride could offer an advantage to its customers over using the SRN to drive the whole way, including bus, coach, rail and other ‘ride’ options
  - 2 bring forward proposals to implement new or expanded park and ride options at the most promising locations.
- in partnership with transport companies and councils, coordinate an ambitious marketing campaign – as a pilot at one or more locations – designed to increase use of park and ride for journeys that would otherwise have been made using the SRN to drive the whole way

- review the adequacy of signage from its roads to all existing park and ride locations adjacent to the SRN and to all railway stations close to the SRN (with suitable car parking capacity and train frequency), and make improvements where desirable.





# Department for Transport strategic objective 4: Growing the economy

**A well-performing network of strategic roads provides the mobility that businesses and individuals need to be economically productive. National Highways must, in particular, provide the best possible service for businesses moving goods. Whether the right roads are part of the SRN is an important consideration.**

## Meeting the needs of freight logistics

National Highways is in effect a monopoly provider as far as most of the freight logistics sector is concerned. Those running lorries and vans on its roads are largely captive. Our Logistics and Coach Survey: Strategic Roads shows that only 50 per cent of logistics and coach operators are satisfied overall with how well these roads met their business needs.

In addition to other recommendations that benefit the freight logistics sector, including under strategic objective 1 about better roadside facilities, Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- develop and implement a strategy intended to better meet the needs of its freight customers. It should aim to increase satisfaction as measured by the Logistics and Coach Survey: Strategic Roads.



## SRN 'network extent' – focusing on road users and their whole journey

There is a risk that decisions about SRN 'network extent' focus on the infrastructure rather than the people making journeys – and tend to favour the status quo. Transport Focus believes there are three aspects of SRN 'network extent' that should be adjusted to better meet the needs of road users – in terms both of safety and journey experience.

Transport Focus recommends that prior to finalising RIS3 DfT:

- uses origin and destination data to determine where a significant volume of traffic, including lorry traffic, uses a section of council-managed road in the 'middle' of a predominantly SRN journey and brings forward proposals to incorporate relevant routes into the SRN
  - This would ensure that one organisation is responsible for providing the whole service on more strategic, through journeys.
- adjusts the boundary between the SRN and council-managed roads at junctions, to place all parts of junctions under the control of National Highways
  - This would improve safety and user experience. The absence of one organisation 'owning' these elements at a junction is likely to result in poorer outcomes for users than would otherwise be the case.
- incorporates into the SRN short sections of council-managed road between the current National Highways boundary and 'services' provided for SRN users.
  - Because of the volume and nature of traffic using them, these short sections are often in poor condition, creating safety and journey experience issues.

## Department for Transport strategic objective 5: Managing and planning the SRN for the future

**It is likely that road users' core requirements will not change fundamentally over time, with ongoing need for focus on facilitating smooth journeys – that is, uneventful, delay-free and (in terms of road surface) literally smooth. However, they expect National Highways to be thinking ahead about new technology, particularly related to electric vehicles and information, and about how additional demand will be accommodated.**

We have covered various elements of planning the SRN for the future earlier in this document. However, Transport Focus also recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- build on initiatives in Road Period 2 to deepen its understanding of the additional needs of older, disabled and other particular groups of road users, and adapt its approach – short and long term – to ensure it meets everybody's needs
- consider how it will facilitate the decarbonisation of heavy freight, whether achieved through electrification, hydrogen or other means
- ensure the resilience of its infrastructure to changes in the climate, in particular increased rainfall, high temperatures and high winds
- consider how capacity on the SRN should be viewed in future.
  - Should success be regarded as maximising the throughput of people and goods, rather than vehicles? This could incentivise National Highways to facilitate greater use of bus and coach, potentially to the advantage of all road users.





## Department for Transport strategic objective 6: A technology-enabled and enabling network

**Effective use of technology is implicit in all our recommendations, including the potential for safety and journey experience improvements arising from a growing number of connected vehicles. This applies particularly to information for road users: those already on the road, those about to set off and those still planning a trip.**

### Better information for users

'Better information about unplanned delays' is road users' fifth highest priority for improvement to journeys on the SRN. We know from *Road Information: the User Perspective*<sup>7</sup>, our 2019 joint research with National Highways and the Office of Rail and Road, that road users want accurate, timely information that helps them make an informed choice. They want warnings of disruption provided further in advance and they want greater confidence when diverted off a strategic road.

Initiatives to 'transmit' information into vehicles that allows drivers to make informed decisions are important. But many still want, and rely on, information presented on signs at the roadside.

Transport Focus recommends that RIS3 requires National Highways to:

- work with satnav companies, mapping providers and road users to ensure that the data it makes available is as accurate and useful as possible in helping road users make informed decisions
  - This should include before travel and while on the journey, covering undisrupted and disrupted scenarios, whether caused by roadworks or incidents.
- ensure that Variable Message Signs across the SRN are upgraded to provide better information to facilitate informed decisions by road users, including those with cognitive disabilities, making greater use of graphics where appropriate
- be transparent about how its network is used, the network's performance and the organisation's performance.
  - This should be published regionally, but available under open data principles to facilitate further disaggregation where required. Access to information has the potential to allow others to develop tools that will help better use of scarce capacity, improve safety and give road users better information.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/road-information-the-user-perspective/>

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