

RIS3 briefing

On 1 December 2021, the Department for Transport (DfT) published a [policy paper](#) (Planning ahead for the strategic road network: developing the third road investment strategy) for preparing RIS3 setting out its six draft objectives and approach to developing its plan and vision for the Strategic Roads Network between 2025-2030. The DfT has said that it welcome questions and suggestions, to be sent to RIS3Engagement@dft.gov.uk. Unfortunately, the RIS3 policy paper looks set to repeat the same mistakes as RIS1 and RIS2.

Headline issues with RIS3

1. Its budget should be significantly smaller than RIS2
2. There should be a moratorium on road capacity expansion and a review of all road building proposals against climate change and mode shift objectives
3. Maintenance and renewal should be its primary focus
4. Safety should be a bigger priority and have more targeted interventions on the most dangerous roads on the SRN
5. Designated funds should be significantly expanded to address historic issues such as community severance, poor active travel and public transport provision and environmental pollution
6. It should fund off network improvements in sustainable transport to reduce pressure on the SRN and the surrounding road network

Need for a new strategic approach

- Reframe the Road Investment Strategy as a key instrument to tackle the climate emergency
- Follow the lead of the Welsh Government and review all road schemes against their ability to reduce traffic and carbon emissions and encourage modal shift, including any proposed to be carried over from RIS2
- Accept the Climate Change Committee (CCC) recommendation that all road investment decisions must “*demonstrate that the proposals would not lead to increases in overall emissions*”
- Remove reliance on outdated traffic forecasts, and remodel RIS3 as a strategy to achieve traffic and carbon reduction and modal shift
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the entire RIS (which should include schemes brought over from RIS2).

Comments on draft objectives

Improved safety for all

- Scheme inclusion in RIS3 should be contingent on improving safety without increasing capacity
- There should be small scale targeted interventions on the most dangerous roads

- No new Smart Motorways

Improved environmental outcomes

- All schemes should be contingent on the CCC recommendation that all schemes must demonstrate they will not increase emissions
- Construction (embodied) emissions must be considered at this strategic stage
- Transparency on construction emissions, with no offsetting
- Massively increased environmental fund, to rectify the harms of the existing SRN

Network performance

- Support the use of RIS3 funds to encourage modal shift, including off the SRN, especially where there “could be opportunities to support the Government’s ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choice for short journeys”
- Strongly support renewal of road surfaces, to reduce noise, which is a priority for road users

Growing the economy

- Use RIS3 budget outside the SRN to benefit road users, e.g. invest in rail freight
- Targeted small scale safety interventions would improve route reliability

Managing and planning the SRN for the future

- Strongly support the emphasis on maintenance and renewal
- Consultations must not be rushed or inadequate, as this will inevitably cause more delays and bad decision making

A technology-enabled network

- Strongly support the use of technology to reduce vehicle speeds and to address safety issues on the SRN

Other comments / concerns

Strategic Studies

- Transparency and full consultation needed on development of the new strategic studies, particularly the M4 to Dorset Coast study, which has excluded local stakeholders to date

Sub-national transport bodies (STBs)

- Transport and decarbonisation policies of the STBs are often contradicted by wish lists of road schemes, while their policies and targets ignored by DfT / National Highways

[TAN's full response can be found here](#)