



Department
for Transport

Shaping the Future of England's Strategic Roads

Summary of consultation responses

Moving Britain Ahead



October 2018

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Executive Summary

From December 2017 to February 2018, the Department consulted on Highways England's Strategic Road Network (SRN) *Initial Report*. The *Initial Report* set out Highways England's proposals for key themes and priorities for the management of the SRN during the second Road Period (RP2), from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025. This was the first step in the statutory process for setting the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2).¹

This consultation received 3,153 responses, of which 90% were from members of the public and the remainder from organisations such as local authorities, local enterprise partnerships, professional bodies and advocacy groups.

Of those respondents who expressed opinions about the proposals, 51% favoured the approach set out in the *Initial Report*, 29% opposed it. Of the latter, opinion was divided between those who wanted to see more road investment and those who favoured investing in other aspects of connectivity and limiting expenditure on roads to maintaining the existing network in a safe condition.

Campaigns

Three large-scale campaigns contributed to the consultation, representing 84% of all responses.

- Over 2,000 responses were received from a campaign by the Campaign for Better Transport, in the form of a standardised response. This expressed support for the continuation of measures to retrofit modern environmental standards to the existing road network, and for the improved maintenance of the network. However it expressed concern about the development of an Expressway standard as “motorways by stealth”, particularly in areas of high environmental value such as the National Parks.

As set out in the Draft RIS (published alongside this summary of responses), the Government intends to continue investing in the ‘green retrofit’ of the SRN through a new generation of designated funds, and to provide sufficient funds to allow the continued good maintenance of the network. We will continue to develop thinking on how and where the concept of an Expressway can be best applied

- Over 400 responses were received from a campaign to improve the A27 between Lewes and Polegate, as well as for other investment in East Sussex.

¹ The *Initial Report*, the Department's consultation document, and associated background material can be found through the consultation website at: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/shaping-the-future-of-englands-strategic-roads-ris2

- Over 170 responses were received from a campaign to create east-facing slips at M25 Junction 5, where the A21 meets the M25 and M26.

Other respondents to the consultation also took the opportunity for recommending specific proposals for enhancing the SRN. Some proposals were cited by multiple respondents, but none to any number close to these two campaigns.

The Draft RIS does not discuss individual proposals for capital projects, but the framework through which the next investment plan will be developed takes full account of the reasons cited by the two campaigns. Both these proposals, and others put forward by respondents, will be considered for investment in RIS2.

Consultation questions

The consultation asked a series of specific questions about proposals in the *Initial Report* and our analytical approach for RIS2. For all these questions, a majority of those respondents who answered them directly approved the proposals, although the extent of approval differed between them. The *Initial Report's* enhancement priorities were the ones which received least positive support. A fuller description and our responses to points raised by these questions are set out in chapter 3.

One question related specifically to the geographic extent of the SRN. 40 respondents proposed specific roads that should be added to the SRN, some of which were accompanied by roads that could be removed in exchange. Other respondents suggested categories of roads that could be added or removed; these mainly centred on the degree to which all-purpose trunk roads should be included in the SRN. Before making firm decisions on any changes to be made to the shape of the network in RP2 we will:

- Consider responses to our public consultation on the proposal to establish a Major Road Network (MRN)², which would encompass roads that are of regional rather than national significance. It may be appropriate to transfer some SRN roads to this network once it is established.
- Explore with relevant local highway authorities their perspective on those proposals for changes that best accord with the criteria for defining the SRN, to ensure that local priorities are fully understood and taken into account.

² The consultation papers are at: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposals-for-the-creation-of-a-major-road-network

General themes

Fourteen broad themes were raised by 10% or more of the non-campaign responses. On each topic views were not unified, and represented a spectrum of opinions which sometimes conflicted. These themes are summarised in the table below; a fuller description and our responses to these points are set out in chapter 4.

	Theme	Elements	%
1	Integration	- Better linkages between strategic roads and other networks, in practical and policy terms - More investment in other modes of transport	38
2	Safety	- Safety on specific routes - Safety of particular user groups	32
3	Economic Growth	- Support for continued growth - Making areas attractive for new jobs	31
4	Congestion	- Impacts negatively on business and growth - Potential for induced demand	25
5	Expressways	- Potential environmental impacts - Potential to improve safety and performance	23
6	Engagement	- Wish for continued engagement with Highways England, particularly over designated funds and local planning	22
7	Air Quality	- Negative impacts on public health	20
8	Environment	- Concern over negative environmental impacts of roads - Support for continuing the system of designated funds to address those impacts	18
9	Housing	- Capacity to support delivery of housing plans locally and nationally	17
10	Good design	- Reducing negative environmental impacts - Making better places to live	15
11	Technology	- Future-proofing the network - Using technology to improve service delivery	15
12	Non-motorised users	- Improving facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians	12
13	Regional balance	- Targeting investment to address regional imbalances	12
14	Resilience	- Ensuring that the SRN is well-equipped to deal with disruption and future change	12

1. Headline numbers

Between 13 December 2017 and 7 February 2018, the Department consulted on people's response to Highways England's *Initial Report*. The consultation sought respondents' views on: the proposals in the *Initial Report*; the analytical approach the Department is taking to support RIS2 decision-making; whether there should be any changes to the geographical extent of the SRN; and whether there was any further evidence we should take into account in developing RIS2. This document provides information on the responses received and summarises the key findings we have drawn from them.

In total, 3,153 unique responses were received to the consultation, of which the vast majority (90%) were from individual members of the public. 2,647 responses (mainly but not exclusively from members of the public) were submitted in connection with one of three campaigns that addressed a specific issue. Many of the remaining 506 responses were also focused on a specific ambition or concern related to the SRN; only a minority of all responses sought to respond directly to the *Initial Report* and the questions posed by the Department in the consultation document.

Of the 323 responses received from organisations, 44% were from local or combined authorities, underlining the strong interest in the future of the SRN shared by authorities variously responsible for local transport, planning, air quality management areas and promoting positive outcomes for the communities they represent. The table below indicates the breakdown of who responded to the consultation by group (where the same response was sent by multiple channels, the format of the first one received is that recorded):

Group	Emails	Online	Letters	Total
Individuals	2,237	577	16	2,830
Representative groups	34	22	0	56
Transport providers	9	3	0	12
Highways England suppliers	4	2	0	6
National public sector bodies	7	0	0	7
Local public sector bodies	12	2	0	14
Local or combined authorities	110	29	4	143
Local Enterprise Partnerships	13	1	0	14
Businesses	14	23	1	38
Charities	2	6	0	8
Parliamentarians	6	0	11	17
Other organisations *	0	8	0	8
Total	2,448	673	32	3,153

* This category includes trades unions, professional bodies and faith groups.

2. Campaigns

This chapter considers the themes raised by the large proportion of consultation responses (84% of the total) associated with three specific campaigns.

a. Campaign for Better Transport

The largest was that led by the Campaign for Better Transport, which gave rise to 2,074 responses from individuals, following a standardised wording. These responses expressed concern about Highways England's proposals for upgrading some all-purpose trunk roads to Expressway standard and a future study on strategic orbital routes around cities, and urged that investment should focus on reducing road traffic and making the existing SRN safer and more environmentally sensitive. They specifically sought assurance that there would be no new roads or major road widening in National Parks, ancient woodlands and other nationally important landscapes and wildlife sites.

The Government takes the protection of environmentally sensitive areas seriously. Amongst other things, the *National Networks National Policy Statement*³ sets out a presumption against major developments in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. They are only permitted in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (*A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment*⁴) will embed an 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including infrastructure. RIS2 investments will comply fully with the Government's existing and developing environmental programme.

The Government has noted the concern about the nature of Expressways that form part of this campaign and are reflected in other responses where people have sought greater clarity on what this new standard implies. Thus, while generally accepting Highways England's proposals for road standards, we intend to continue to develop thinking on how and where the concept of an Expressway can be best applied. More broadly, we are working to achieve a more sophisticated connection between different modes of transport, so that policy for strategic roads is considered alongside bus, rail and other alternative modes. We also endorse Highways England's vision of better design on the network.

We agree that RIS2 should seek to make the existing SRN safer and more environmentally sensitive. The Draft RIS proposes continuing the designated fund for investment in environmental improvements around the network and the retrofitting of modern environmental mitigation to the existing network. Another proposed designated fund will continue to support cycle-proofing of the SRN, and will provide support for pedestrians, equestrians and users of public transport.

³ At: www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-networks-national-policy-statement

⁴ At: www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan

b. Other campaigns

The other two organised campaigns focused on two specific road improvements: dualling the A27 between Lewes and Polegate (along with other investment in East Sussex); and construction of east-facing slip roads at M25 Junction 5 to enable traffic to pass between the A21 and M26.

401 responses were submitted in connection with the A27, many of which also sought dualling of the A259 and A21 routes to Hastings. The principal reasons cited were to tackle congestion, improve safety and boost the economy. There was also concern that the current problems encountered by users will worsen with planned developments increasing demand, and that these routes had suffered from under-investment in the past.

“The A27 between Eastbourne and Brighton needs to be a dual carriageway. There are multiple accidents on this road and this is sadly a common occurrence. The current road cannot cope with the volume of traffic we have at present. As more houses are built the volume of traffic will increase further.”

“Eastbourne particularly has all the elements in place for trade, tourism and conferences etc., but loses out because of the lack of a decent road connection via the A27.”

“The South East of England (particularly East Sussex) is ignored. The A21 south of Pembury (a key road which is heavily used and dangerous) and the A27 east of Lewes both need urgent and significant improvements to bring both economic benefits and safety improvements.”

172 responses proposed east-facing slip roads at M25 Junction 5 on the grounds that Sevenoaks and Tonbridge traffic on the A21 which currently uses the A25 when travelling to/from the M26/M20 junction at Wrotham could remain on the motorway, avoiding a number of towns and villages. They suggest it would address poor air quality and noise pollution in the area, and reduce congestion.

“Residents along the A25 suffer from an inordinate amount of pollution, air and noise, due to continuous traffic from and to the M26. Please include slip roads at junction 5 M25 for the M26 to relieve all the villages along the A25.”

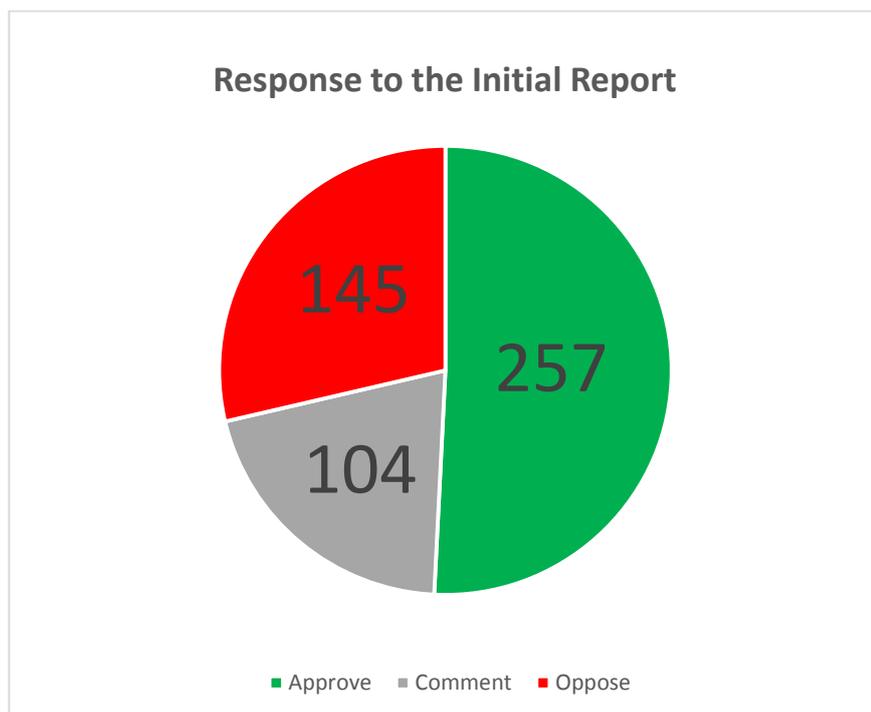
“[The slip roads] will materially relieve the present heavy traffic on the A25 between Sevenoaks and Wrotham Heath and reduce noise and pollution for Sevenoaks, Seal, Borough Green and Platt.”

We are not yet at the stage where individual RIS2 investments are decided, but the merits of the schemes proposed by these campaigns, along with those cited in other consultation responses, will be considered as we develop the Investment Plan. The Draft RIS sets out our thinking generally on issues of safety; the environment and air quality; housing, growth and productivity; and network strategy.

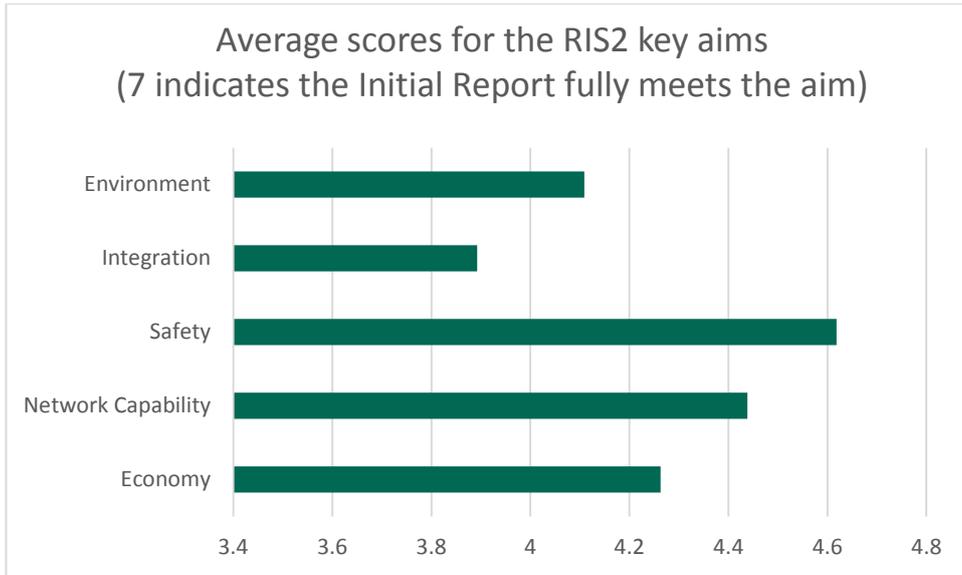
3. Consultation questions

In the rest of this document, we consider the content of the 506 other responses not submitted as part of the three campaigns described above. These respondents generally communicated a broader range of views, which present a more varied view of future priorities for the network.

Of these respondents, 51% favoured the approach set out in the *Initial Report*, 29% opposed it. The remainder focused on a specific issue of concern or opportunity from which it was not possible to discern their level of support for the proposals overall. Of the 145 responses that did not support the *Initial Report's* proposals, opinion was divided between those who wanted to see more road investment and those who favoured investing in other aspects of connectivity and limiting expenditure on roads to maintaining the existing network in a safe condition.



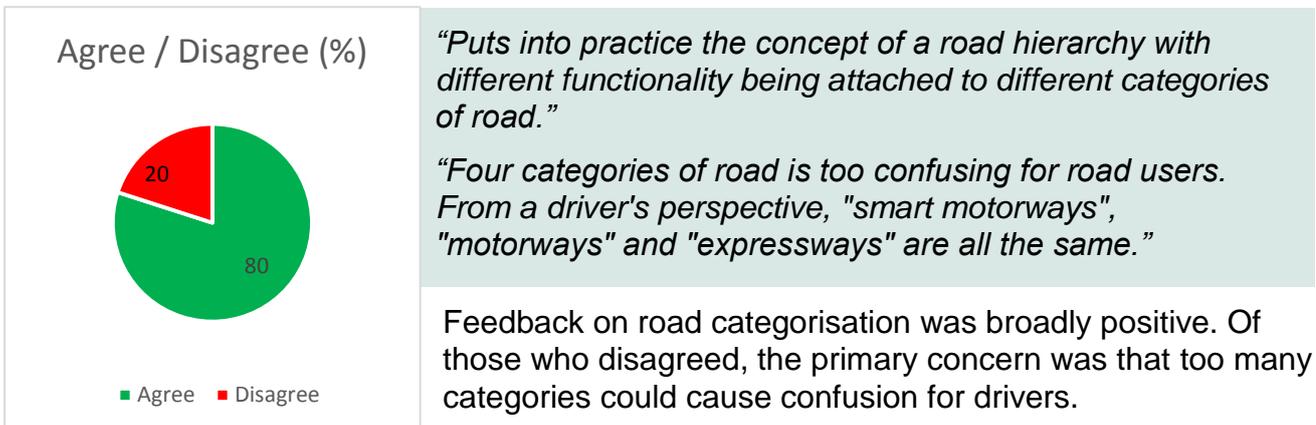
The consultation asked people to rate on a scale of one to seven how well the proposals in the *Initial Report* would meet the five key aims the Government has set for RIS2. Of those respondents who answered this question directly, the responses averaged a touch over the middle-ranking 4 (at 4.25), with the highest score (4.6) recorded for safety and the lowest (3.9) for integration. The general picture was that more could be achieved against all of the key aims.



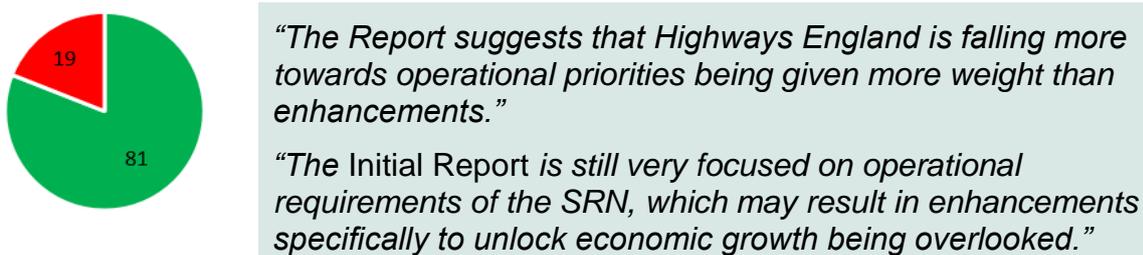
a. Highways England’s proposals

The consultation identified eight specific proposals in the *Initial Report* relating to RP2 and asked whether people agreed with them. It also asked for people’s views on Highways England’s assessment of the future needs of the SRN and the Department’s analytical approach for RIS2. Taking into account only those respondents who answered these questions directly, people responded as follows:

i. Four Categories of road and Expressway

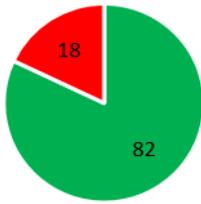


ii. Operational Priorities



Of those who opposed Highways England’s operational priorities, a common concern was around the balance between operational aims and enhancements.

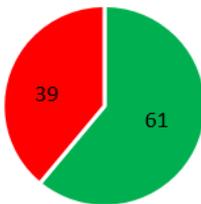
iii. Infrastructure Priorities



“Highways England could ask their supply chain to demonstrate they have reached a recognised safety standard in order to be able to tender for work on the SRN.”

Generally, people are in broad agreement with the infrastructure priorities outlined in the *Initial Report*. Some feel that more safety requirements could be implemented to ensure that the supply chain delivers infrastructure priorities in a way which ensures its workers are protected. Safety is one of the five key aims for RIS2, and this applies to everyone, including those who develop our roads.

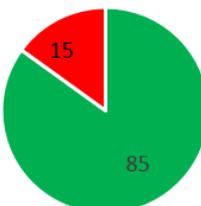
iv. Enhancement Priorities



“We welcome schemes to look at junction improvements and capacity enhancements and we believe these will have a positive impact on the air quality and noise pollution in these areas.”

As with comments on operational priorities, most concern lay with the balance of focus between enhancement and operation of the network. This was the question where respondents least agreed with Highways England’s proposals, reflecting the fact that some respondents were not in favour of any enhancement activity

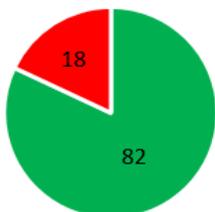
v. Local Priorities Fund



“Engage thoroughly with authorities to discuss local needs.”
“The local priorities fund is supported. A transparent process with clear criteria for applying for future funds should be developed.”

Though widely supported, clarity and engagement around the use of the proposed local priorities fund is important to those who commented on it.

vi. Future Studies

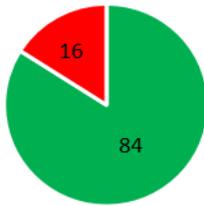


“Future studies should be supported and are necessary to progress the integration of the transport network with other modes.”

“Agree with the need to embark upon future studies looking at a wider range of solutions particularly to respond to the future challenges and demands on the network.”

Future studies are seen as an important means of addressing a multitude of scenarios that may exert pressure on both the SRN and the wider transport network.

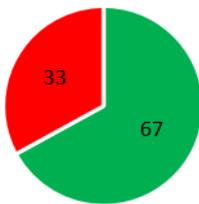
vii. Designated Funds



“We support proposals for the continuation of Designated Funds. They have potential to help deliver environmental improvements and as a green retrofit that goes beyond business as usual.”

Widely supported and with many stakeholder keen to be involved in influencing how they are spent, respondents’ main concern with the proposals for designated funds lay with the suggestion of introducing greater flexibility between funds.

viii. Performance Measures



“Journey time would be a significant indicator and would demonstrate improvement, or deterioration of network performance. Journey time variation is a vital measure that will highlight places of distress.”

A number of metrics were proposed by respondents for measuring Highways England’s performance. Most often, people suggested that journey reliability should be one of the foremost priorities for road users, and therefore this should be used as a metric to define success.

Enabling users to make rapid and reliable journeys is a key purpose of the SRN and the Department recognises that delay is a top concern for road users. We propose to have an outcome area focused on rapid and reliable journeys. This outcome area will contain a set of metrics which will encourage Highways England to take actions to reduce delays experienced by users.

Another metric proposed was around housing:

“Support for housing should be included as one of the outcomes against which we’ll measure success.”

“Enabling and accelerating housing growth should be included in Highways England’s Key Performance Indicators to ensure that growth is delivered.”

An integral part of RIS2 will be to support housing growth. Specific schemes that will be identified in the investment plan will contribute to unlocking new housing. The Department and Highways England will be proactive in working with a range of partners to contribute to the Government’s housing ambition. In developing RIS2 we will carefully consider how this ambition is best encouraged and monitored.

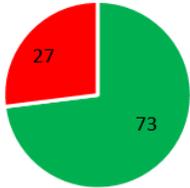
Other respondents felt that there should be fewer key performance indicators, but those that are measured should focus on user experience:

“Having fewer performance measures, that are more relevant to the road users, could provide Highways England with clarification on how to meet and exceed customer expectations.”

The Department understands that the importance of ensuring the performance specification provides the right incentives for Highways England. We will take an

evidence-based approach to ensure the performance specification and associated targets best meet this ambition.

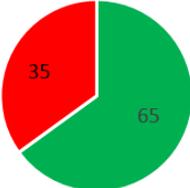
b. Future Needs



“Highways England should work closely with digital industries, at the forefront of defining how the future SRN will operate given the backdrop of high levels of digital connectivity which now exist.”

The *Initial Report* summarised the findings of the *Connecting the Country* document published alongside it, which explored the principal developments affecting the SRN and the way it is used. Technological innovation around connected and automated vehicles, smart motorways and electric vehicles have the potential to bring about a revolution in the way roads are used, and RIS2 can play a pivotal role in facilitating this revolution.

c. Analytical approach



“The RIS should better acknowledge interactions between the SRN and other road networks (the Major Road Network and the Local Road Network).”

“Road investment should take into account plans for new homes and jobs in the area.”

11% of respondents commented on our analytical approach for RIS2. Whilst there was support for the overall approach and balance between ambition, robustness and proportionality, many of the respondents were keen to further understand the details of the analysis. Particular areas where more information was asked for include:

- How we model the future – the range of scenarios considered, the assumptions that underlie them and how we deal with the challenges and opportunities that technology provides.
- The robustness of our regional transport models and their ability to deal with the induced demand, the impact of SRN interventions on the Local Road Network, and how the MRN will be modelled.
- Multimodality – the degree to which other modes will be considered when options are being developed. Examples include rail, public transport, walking and cycling.
- Understanding the regional and local environment, for example the challenges posed by housing and what our regional and local partners are planning to do.
- The level of focus we are placing on the economy both in how we assess schemes (our appraisal framework) and the robustness and effort put into the economic modelling.
- How we plan to use environmental analysis in the appraisal framework and make sure it is robust and comprehensive in approach.
- How construction delays are taken into account in the analysis, particularly for new schemes.

- How we will deal with cost and delivery uncertainty in our appraisal.
- What our plans are to publish analysis, both for the appraisal and post-implementation evaluation.

These are all areas that the Department has been addressing in its analysis and engagement with stakeholders, and will continue to do so as the content of RIS2 is developed and implemented. For example, alongside this summary of responses, we have published literature reviews on the drivers of traffic growth and induced demand, which illustrate our understanding of these debated topics. Our continuing programme of engagement will be used both to improve stakeholders' understanding of what we are doing and to strengthen our analysis by building on local knowledge.

On the first point, we have also published *Road Traffic Forecasts 2018* (RTF18, an update to RTF15).⁵ RTF18 models a range of negative and positive scenarios. The types of impact looked at include changes in Gross Domestic Product, trip rates, and the impact of movements to urban areas with more public transport. This will be used to stress test the RIS2 analysis.

d. Geographic extent of the SRN

40 respondents proposed specific roads that should be added to the SRN, some of which were accompanied by roads that could be removed in exchange. Other respondents suggested categories of roads that could be added or removed; these mainly centred on the degree to which all-purpose trunk roads should be included in the SRN. These proposals were usually driven by a desire to match the definition of the SRN with minimum road standards.

The reasons for requesting specific changes to the geographic extent of the SRN were not always clear, but mainly seemed to draw on a sense that being on the SRN would improve the performance of the road (including connectivity to ports and airports), lead to additional investment, and raise the location's profile for businesses, investors and people choosing where to live. In a few cases it was distinctly tied to other planned investments, such as the Lower Thames Crossing and HS2, and the changed pattern of traffic demand predicted as a result.

Before making firm decisions on specific changes to pursue in RP2, we will consider responses to our public consultation on the proposal to establish the MRN, which would encompass roads that are of regional rather than national significance. It may be appropriate to transfer some SRN roads to this network once it is established. We will also explore with relevant local highway authorities their perspective on those proposals to ensure that local priorities are fully understood and taken into account.

e. Investment Plan proposals

Although the *Initial Report* did not identify new road enhancement schemes, and focused on an assessment of the needs and priorities for the SRN overall, many respondents did choose to highlight specific improvements they favoured for RIS2. Scheme proposals that garnered multiple responses (in addition to the two large-scale campaigns described in chapter 2) included: improvements to the A30 between Hayle and Penzance; the A38 in Devon and Cornwall; the A35 in Dorset; the M5 in

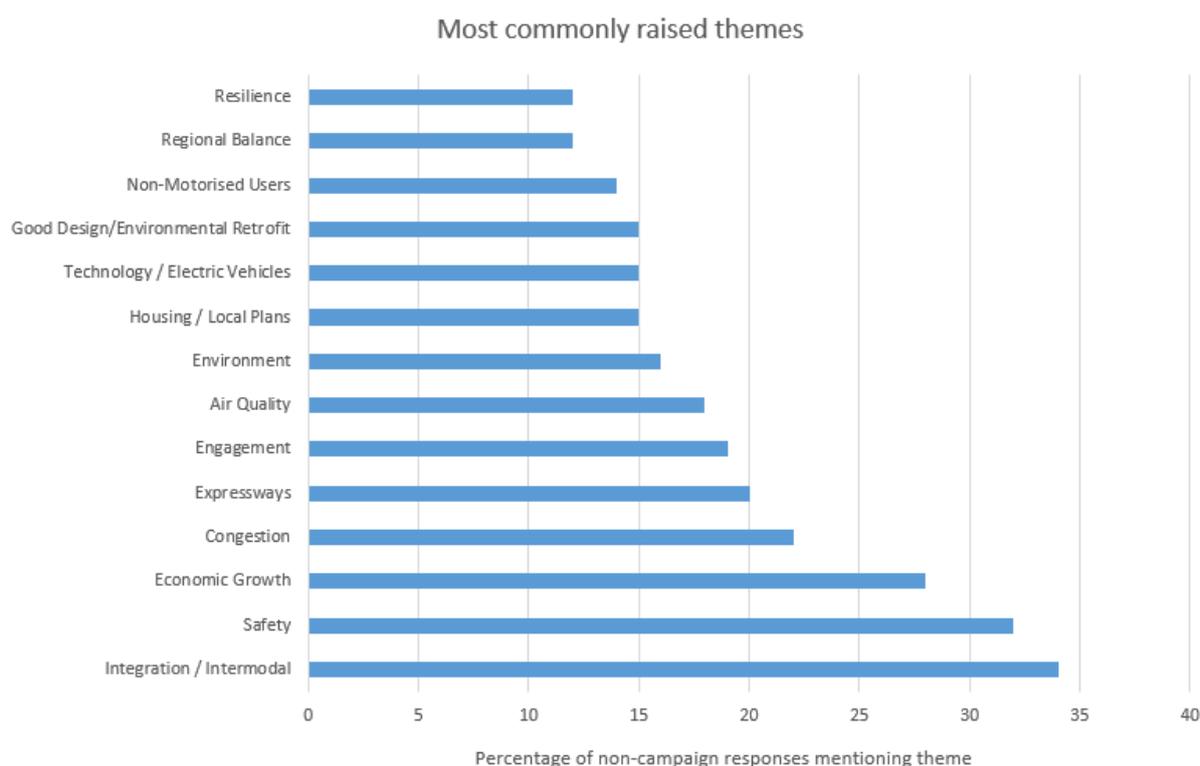
⁵ At: www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-traffic-forecasts-2018

the West of England; the A46 between the M5 and the Midlands; the A2/M2 and A23/M23 corridors; and SRN routes in Cumbria and East Anglia.

The Department will consider the case for investment in the locations cited by respondents as part of the development of the RIS2 Investment Plan, but at this stage we are not able to commit to advancing any specific scheme proposals. It is first necessary for us, with Highways England, to undertake more detailed analytical work on potential costs and benefits and understand issues around deliverability and environmental impact.

4. Response themes

In this chapter, we present the prevailing themes that emerged across the non-campaign responses beyond the specific questions described above. 14 themes have been identified that were mentioned by more than 10% of these respondents:



a. Integration with other transport networks

This is the most prevalent theme, discussed by 38% of non-campaign responses, which want to ensure that the SRN is well integrated with local roads (in particular the proposed MRN) and other transport networks (e.g. airports, ports, public transport, 'quiet networks' for non-motorised users).

“RIS2 must not be developed in isolation but as part of an integrated transport strategy, including public transport, local transport, rail freight and provision for non-motorised users.”

There was concern that the RIS should not represent an attitude of thinking about individual networks in silos, ignoring issues of connectivity as a whole system. That would be problematic for both people and businesses, who value seamless journeys for themselves and the movement of goods. In the context of the UK's exit from the

European Union, there was particular interest in the arrangements where the SRN provides access to or from international gateways and how the border will be managed to minimise impacts on the SRN and local traffic.

A common sentiment was that investment in other transport networks could yield benefits for the SRN, by encouraging modal shift or giving better alternatives for purely local traffic. Many such respondents felt this could also resolve environmental and public health issues such as air quality and noise pollution. Others suggested that investment in the SRN could encourage more road traffic and, without care, cause negative impacts for the local road network if that was not capable of handling additional vehicles connecting to or from the SRN.

In 2016, the Government identified modal integration as one of five key themes for RIS2. Roads carry a larger number of journeys than any other mode, and there are limits to how much existing traffic could be borne by other transport modes. However, the strategic studies on the M25 and M60 have both looked extensively at public transport options to address performance issues on those roads, with the M25 study recommending a ‘strategic roads last’ approach. Work we have commissioned from the Campaign for Better Transport has sought to find opportunities to shift freight away from the SRN onto rail.

In the Draft RIS, we set out plans for a ‘Users and Communities’ designated fund, which can invest in better modal integration, including buses and other forms of public transport. We also propose to continue studying multimodal options as part of some of our major strategic interventions.

b. Safety

Safety was raised by 32% of non-campaign responses. The context of this was often in describing specific roads, as many consultees, particularly individuals, complained that certain routes were dangerous. Broader insights focused on safety issues for specific user groups. For example, the particular requirements of motorcyclists in relation to road surface condition, and non-motorised users who are more vulnerable when surrounded by fast moving motor traffic or crossing busy roads and junctions on the level.

“Reducing road danger for non-motorised users – RIS2 should aim to improve cycling and equestrian provision so that routes are coherent, direct, attractive, safe and comfortable.”

Safety is one of the five key aims of RIS2, and it will therefore underpin all of the Department’s work to improve the SRN. In particular, the Department recognises the importance of providing measures to protect and, where possible, actively promote non-motorised users, as modal shift to active forms of transport yields great benefits for both the environment and public health.

c. Economic Growth

Economic growth was mentioned by 31% of non-campaign responses. RIS2 is clearly seen by many as an important enabler for economic growth, and naturally, many want investment in the areas where they live and work. There is a link to be

drawn here with another of the 14 key themes, regional balance; 14% of respondents feel that specific areas do not receive enough investment. Particularly, people felt that a road they perceived as poor was holding back economic growth in that area, and see RIS2 as a potential solution to that problem.

“This road, as a single-lane carriageway, does not adequately meet the needs of the area and directly impacts on the economic development of the region.”

The above quote is an example of how people perceive certain roads as inhibitors of economic growth. Many put forward the view that investment can facilitate growth and prosperity in an area.

Economic growth was identified by the Government as one of the five key aims for RIS2 at the outset of the process. Support for the economy is an important consideration for developing the next investment plan, and more generally the provision of a reliable, smoothly running network is a significant aid to national productivity. However, the Department also takes a wide range of other factors into account when determining the suitability of schemes, such as environmental sensitivity, advice from local stakeholders and wider public policy.

d. Expressways

As well as being cited by the campaign organised by Campaign for Better Transport, Expressways were opposed by 6% and, conversely, supported by 17% of non-campaign responses.

Respondents who opposed Expressways were concerned that a blanket standard applied across the SRN would be unresponsive to place, and lead to the degradation of areas of environmental significance. Positive responses noted the potential for improved performance and safety. In the majority of non-campaign responses, there was a clear desire for greater detail about the proposals for the design elements and long-term intention for Expressway standard roads, and concerns were expressed around the potential for additional categorisation to confuse users.

“Although the concept of Expressways should deliver small safety and small journey time benefits, it is unclear why a new designation is useful – it is likely to confuse users and probably will be inefficient in the design and planning process.”

The Draft RIS proposes continuing to develop thinking on how and where the concept of an Expressway can be best applied.

e. Congestion

Congestion was mentioned by 25% of non-campaign responses, which cited the negative impacts of congestion on journey times and reliability, often with further adverse consequences for economic growth, inward investment, or access to jobs and services. Usually responses mentioning congestion focused on specific problem areas where action was requested.

“It is no longer possible to gauge the time of arrival on even the most routine journeys due to overwhelming traffic congestion.”

Journey time reliability is one of the most important metrics for road users. This is echoed by research conducted by road user watchdog Transport Focus, which suggests that journey times are a core priority amongst drivers. Increasing the capacity of the SRN via either widening or creating new connections is often seen as a solution to congestion problems.

“Recommend an investigation of the feasibility of a dual-carriageway solution; to alleviate the current extensive traffic issues and facilitate the growth [in this area].”

However, it is worth noting that the concept of induced demand was raised by 7% of responses. These argued that increased road capacity also creates more demand on the network and increase traffic, ultimately making any attempt to increase road capacity self-defeating.

“[Expanding network capacity] may provide short-term improvements to journey times on the network. However it also generates increased traffic, adding to congestion, pollution and road danger on more local road network, notably in urban areas.”

RIS2 will address congestion through continued performance measures that monitor the effectiveness of Highways England’s management of the network. A capital investment programme will target congestion hotspots and remove pinchpoints, including through a fund for local capital enhancements. Our analytical approach allows for the impact of induced demand; the literature review published alongside this summary of responses illustrates our understanding of the issue.

f. Environment

The impact of the SRN on the environment was discussed by 18% of non-campaign responses. Often, references to the environment were linked to comments on improving public transport – intermodal investment was often cited as preferable to road-building on the basis of being more environmentally-friendly.

“Environmental mitigation and retrofit to undo the harm caused by past road building is necessary.”

“There needs to be a rebalancing of overall transport spending away from inter-urban roads spending (which will exacerbate congestion, pollution, physical inactivity, road danger, and greenhouse gas emissions) towards healthy and sustainable transport solutions which tackle these problems.”

The proposal to continue the environment designated fund was welcomed, and this will be a means of addressing some of the concerns raised on this theme.

“We support proposals for the continuation of Designated Funds. These Funds have potential to help deliver environmental improvements and as a green retrofit that goes beyond business as usual.”

As one of the Department’s five key aims for RIS2, we have thought carefully about environmental impacts, in line with the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan. We have frequently engaged with environmental interest groups throughout the RIS2 research phase, and have benefitted in particular from the *Rising to the Challenge* report⁶ provided by an alliance of environmental groups. Thoughts from this report and other discussions are informing the developing approach to assessing Highways England’s performance, our strategic vision for the SRN, and the evolution of the Environment and Wellbeing designated fund.

g. Air Quality

Air quality was mentioned by 20% of non-campaign responses. Many respondents are concerned by the impacts of air quality on public health. There is a perception among many that RIS2 will only exacerbate these problems.

“The SRN has a significant impact on air quality in the City, and the Council would like to see RIS2 acknowledge this impact through dedicated funding for air quality improvements both on and off the SRN.”

In some cases, air quality was cited as a reason for building new roads favoured by the respondent where this would remove heavy traffic from residential areas.

“Highways England could do more to tackle air pollution where the SRN passes through town centres by delivering schemes that remove congestion and provide alternative routes for through traffic.”

The Government has published *The Road to Zero*, an ambitious plan for decarbonising the vehicle fleet and reducing vehicle emissions.⁷ This will complement the UK’s plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations⁸ and the Government’s commitment to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040. There are also further shorter-term measures that we intend to take. One method of reducing air quality problems is to reduce congestion, which can be achieved by tackling pinchpoints, through modal shift and potentially through more active traffic management. These measures will be considered as we develop RIS2.

h. Engagement

22% of non-campaign responses called for more or better engagement in the delivery of the RIS. This was most often in the context of calling for the Department and Highways England to listen to organisations, both public and private, who they feel can provide local expertise and insight to inform decision-making.

⁶ At: bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/Rising-to-the-Challenge-2017_0.pdf

⁷ At: www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-emissions-from-road-transport-road-to-zero-strategy

⁸ At: www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-quality-plan-for-nitrogen-dioxide-no2-in-uk-2017

“We ask that there is continued and increased dialogue with sub-national transport bodies and other modes of transport to ensure that any future investment is relevant and beneficial to the end user.”

Another focus for increased engagement was around designated funds. Highways England’s proposal for the continuation of these funds also proposed a greater role for partner organisations in how they are allocated. 84% of those who answered the question on designated funds supported the proposals overall (see chapter 3). However, a number of respondents expressed a desire for further engagement on how such funding can be applied for, and what criteria is used to determine eligibility.

“Although there have been a series of web based presentations and workshops on this area greater clarity would be welcomed on how to access these funds, the criteria on prioritisation and selection and accountability within Highways England for delivery.”

In addition to seeking increased dialogue in planning investment, several respondents called for increased communication of planned works, so that people and businesses can plan around disruption caused by roadworks.

“Consider implications of road closures and road infrastructure development on businesses that rely on reliable and accessible transport routes. Mitigation for these impacts is needed and needs to be communicated effectively to the business community.”

The Department recognises the value of local insight in informing decision-making. Responses to the consultation have shown the great extent to which people are willing and able to provide compelling evidence that will ensure investment reflects the needs of those who depend upon and are affected by the SRN. Highways England has created many new channels of engagement since its foundation: in the creation of RIS2 it has engaged with 2,700 people, and held regional events up and down the country; and we expect this innovation will continue.

We agree with the suggestion of a greater involvement of stakeholders in the delivery of the designated funds. We expect to embrace this further in RIS2, and potentially explore the potential for doing this more under the current RIS.

i. Housing

17% of non-campaign responses mentioned the development of housing and local plans from the perspectives of local authorities, developers and other interested groups. Often, respondents were positive about RIS2’s capacity to support the Government’s ambition for building new homes across the country, and viewed housing as important for the country and its economy. Many respondents support the continuation of the growth and housing designated fund for this reason.

“With the Government’s aim of supporting economic and housing growth, which is reflected in the County Council’s priority for supporting sustainable economic growth, we welcome the continuation of the growth and housing fund.”

Many also support the sentiment that new housing can stimulate economic growth.

“The provision of increased housing is key to achieving additional economic growth in the South East.”

Other respondents expressed concern that the Government’s plans to increase housing provision would compound congestion, noise and air quality problems unless mitigating action was taken. They suggested that the SRN would need to be improved to combat the extra demand they felt new housing would create.

“There are already significant problems on parts of the SRN, which will be exacerbated by the levels of housing and employment growth proposed. Problems including congestion, journey time unreliability, mainline queuing at junctions and noise and air pollution are common problems on the SRN [in this area].”

“With the emphasis on supporting economic growth through the delivery of housing and jobs, and the need to ensure that the SRN is fit for purpose...then enhancements will be necessary.”

However, other respondents expressed concerns about the environmental implications of using RIS2 to facilitate the development of new housing sites.

“Loss of land, for both new roads and associated new housing, must be taken account of when appraising the feasibility of new schemes.”

The Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan joins up environmental and infrastructure considerations, and our proposals for RIS2 will work in partnership with the Housing Infrastructure Fund and other investments in national productivity.

j. Good Design and Environmental Retrofit

Good design, both in general terms and specifically as a means of mitigating against negative environmental impacts of roads and road usage, was raised by 15% of all respondents. Improved facilities for cycling and walking was of concern to many respondents. Many wanted mandatory measures implemented in the design of new schemes to ensure that cycling and walking are promoted as transport choices.

“Design standards must include cycling/walking provision to enable better choice for transport users.”

“Active travel (and good design) need to be included in all new roads and upgrades of existing roads, including landscaping, materials, noise and visual impacts – these should have robust recognition in business case development by DfT for funding.”

Others wanted RIS2 to not just mitigate against adverse environmental impacts, but to actively enhance the environment.

“Enhancing the landscape and natural environment – RIS2 should aim to enhance landscape, and the RIS1 aim to move to a position of no net loss of biodiversity by 2020 should be extended to secure biodiversity enhancements.”

Many respondents recognised the importance of good design in ensuring environmental sensitivity, and therefore supported the proposed designated fund for environment and wellbeing.

“Clearly much can be done to deliver sympathetic design and environmental mitigation in new schemes. We support the retention of a designated environmental fund for ‘green retrofit’ and noise abatement schemes.”

Though some advocated mandatory measures to promote good design, others supported a bespoke approach that took account of the specific aspects of the area of concern.

“Care will need to be exercised to avoid a ‘one-size fits all’ solution based purely on heavy engineering solutions. Each scheme should be tailored to the character and circumstances of each local area. Highways England’s Strategic Design Panel, scheme Design Review Panels and the Strategic Panel’s recently produced principles of good road design will be fundamental to getting this right, together with the meaningful involvement of the statutory environmental bodies, local authorities and local communities.”

Highways England has published the *Road to Good Design*⁹, setting out ten principles underlying its design of the network, and building on the work of its Design Panel. The work of retrofitting the network will be funded through the Environment and Wellbeing designated fund proposed for RIS2.

k. Technology and electric vehicles

Technology and electric vehicles were mentioned by 15% of all respondents. Many respondents regard the development of technology and Connected and Autonomous Vehicles as having the potential to radically reduce congestion and improve safety.

“Pressures on the SRN such as congestion, collisions, limited road space etc. may reduce due to driverless cars and more vehicle sharing through improved technology. Bigger roads may become redundant.”

However, some felt that there was too much uncertainty around future impacts of technology for anyone to be able to adequately plan for it.

“There are too many unknowns there, as well as around automated/autonomous vehicles to make any assumptions or plans.”

⁹ At: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-road-to-good-design-highways-englands-design-vision-and-principles

Others suggested that uncertainty can be mitigated against via frequent reviews during the ongoing planning process.

“The rate of change in technology can facilitate long-term planning, but when coupled with changing trends in car ownership levels, long-term forecasting becomes challenging, and therefore regular reviews should be built into the process.”

Many respondents want faster implementation of charging points across the SRN to help encourage electrification of the country’s vehicle fleet.

“Highways England could and should show leadership in accelerating the rollout of fast charging points for SRN users in addition to electrification of its operation fleet.”

Furthermore, improved engagement with the public on where electric vehicle charging points are located is called for, so as to encourage the shift to a decarbonised vehicle fleet.

“We ask the Department for Transport and Highways England to support the car manufacturing and sales industry by providing greater clarity to the public in a short timeframe as to where they can charge their electric vehicles.”

Some respondents encourage the Department to enhance and innovate its construction methodologies to reduce the disruptive impact of roadworks when schemes are under construction.

“We encourage the development and usage of innovative, efficient low impact strategic road network expansion and rehabilitation techniques and technologies.”

Finally, while acknowledging the desirability of future-proofing, some respondents wanted to ensure that present needs were properly addressed.

“Whilst ‘future proofing’ the network is crucial, to facilitate greater use of smart technology, autonomous vehicles etc., maintaining the existing network is also crucial. Ensuring that the existing network is in a suitable condition is crucial.”

The National Infrastructure Commission predicts a ‘roads revolution’ in the years ahead and we are determined to be ready for it. The future of mobility is one of the four grand challenges identified in the Government’s industrial strategy, and will form the basis of further work by the Department later this year. The proposed innovation and modernisation designated fund will support the trialling of new technologies as well as their adoption onto the network. We are also publishing alongside the Draft RIS a paper setting out our latest understanding of how changes in technology could affect the SRN, and how we are reacting to this challenge.

I. Non-Motorised Users

Non-motorised users (cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians) were discussed in 12% of non-campaign responses. Most often this was in the context of safety and severance concerns, with respondents saying that there was not enough focus on non-motorised users, and a fear that RIS2 will exacerbate these problems.

“Motorways and dual carriageways can sever local walking, cycling and bus routes leading to increased congestion as a result of an absence of travel choice.”

“More emphasis need to be given to safety of non-motorised users of the network through information campaigns and further action to improve crossing points and alternatives routes.”

Many respondents were particularly concerned about the potential impacts of the proposed Expressway category of road.

“The Expressway model risks increasing the exclusion of cyclists, pedestrians and bus passengers from the network.”

“Ensure any conversion of roads to Expressway or above is also met with the provision of a dedicated cycle way.”

The Government’s key aims for RIS2 include both safety and integration, which both reflect the interests of non-motorised users. The Department’s *Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy*¹⁰ has set out how we want to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or a part of longer journeys, and the proposed Users and Communities designated fund in RIS2 will contribute to this ambition. Expressways should benefit both motorised and non-motorised users; we intend to continue to develop thinking on Expressways, which would include understanding the appropriate standard of alternative provision for non-motorised users.

m. Regional Balance

12% of non-campaign responses commented on regional balance, most often to say that a particular locality was not receiving sufficient investment. Many of these respondents saw RIS2 as an opportunity to boost economic development in an area.

“The Economic development of this town needs to be considered. By improving its connections to the rest of the country it will become attractive to businesses and allow further development of the tourist trade.”

“It is important to recognise the role of the SRN in rebalancing the economy in England. Connectivity provided by the SRN is key to the development of a more balanced and sustainable economy.”

Some felt that economic development of a particular region had been constrained by a lack of investment in the SRN in that area, and that action was required to make up for a historic shortfall.

¹⁰ At: www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy

“Look at the areas that have had no investment for a long time. There is an imbalance of funding; it is not balanced to have regions of the country at different basic infrastructure standards.”

Economic rebalancing is one of the five key aims the Government has set for RIS2, and will be one of the factors considered in developing the next investment plan. We have listened carefully to the advice of sub-national transport bodies in developing our thinking about the next cycle of investment, recognising that there are areas across the country where transport connectivity is considered a barrier to growth.

n. Resilience

Resilience was raised by 12% of non-campaign responses. Often, resilience was raised in the context of a specific route; people felt that where certain roads suffer incidents, there were insufficient alternative routes for people to take.

“When an incident occurs that forces this motorway to be closed, there is a lack of resilience on the diversionary routes used.”

A number of respondents expressed interest in the impact of smart motorways on resilience in particular.

“We would be interested to see some evidence on the impact smart motorways are having on safety and resilience of the network where they have been implemented already.”

Network resilience to both traffic incidents and environmental damage, including long-term changes arising from climate change, is a priority for many.

“Greater reference to improving the resilience of the SRN, both in terms of the weather / climate change, and in response to accidents and incidents and related congestion.”

“Network resilience requires future-proofing against climate change, both through resilient design and by proactively reducing CO₂ emissions.”

One specific environmental concern is around the impact of flooding on the SRN. A number of respondents have proposed the implementation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).

“Use SUDS as standard, whereby rainfall is stored and infiltrated to nearby sources. Retrofitting SUDS to existing roadways can not only increase resilience to extreme weather, but also achieve biodiversity and landscape targets too.”

Some stress the importance of planning resilience to the impacts of planned works and events, while also expressing concerns over the cost of poor resilience to the economy.

“Network resilience is vital to maintaining economic growth and access to employment/leisure and business sectors, particularly during the construction of HS2.”

The Department recognises the importance of ensuring the SRN is resilient to disruptive incidents, and the cost and inconvenience that poor resilience can have on people and the economy. The RIS process enables the Department to devise a long-term investment plan that ensures a coordinated, holistic approach to planning interventions on the SRN. Consequently, schemes can be planned so that they complement each other and that disruption caused by roadworks can be minimised.

o. Other comments

A number of other issues were raised by multiple respondents, though fewer than 10% of the total. These issues have also been considered and factored in to the development of RIS2, but for reasons of brevity have not been explored in detail in this summary. These issues include:

Issue	Elements
Last mile access	Ensuring smooth connections between the SRN and other transport modes, especially at ports, airports and rail or HS2 terminals.
Better roadworks	Improving roadworks, through technology, organisation and innovation to minimise impact on road users.
Road surfaces	Ensuring that road surfaces are of a satisfactory standard.
Smart motorway	The design, delivery and impacts of smart motorways, with comments both for and against further rollout.
Consistency of road standard and bottlenecks	Comments on roads whose quality or features are variable along the route, often with consequent negative impacts on safety and congestion.
Roadside facilities	Improving provision of amenities for road users so that they are well-located and provide the services users need.
Fix the current SRN first	Improving current infrastructure as a priority over further expansion of the SRN.
Diversion routes	Ensuring that in the event of disruption, alternative routes appropriate for SRN traffic are clearly communicated to affected road users.
Personal travel information	Providing more personalised and relevant travel information to the public before and during journeys.
Supply chain	Ensuring that Highways England’s supply chain is prepared and able to deliver proposed measures.
Biodiversity	Preserving and improving ecological diversity across the country, being sensitive to local habitats.
Severance	Ensuring that people are not inhibited from getting around their locality by SRN roads and the traffic using them.
Noise pollution	Reducing noise pollution, both in urban and rural areas.