



Department
for Transport

Road Investment Strategy 2: 2020–2025



March 2020

The South and West

Severn Resilience Package

A404 Bisham Junction

A2 Brenley Corner

A303 Phase 2 upgrade

A3/A247 Ripley South

A21 safety package

A2 Dover Access

A27 Lewes to Polegate

A27 Chichester improvements

M27 Southampton Access

A38 Trerulefoot-Carkeel safety package

* The A120 Braintree to A12 proposal is currently affected by outstanding funding contributions related to the development of the Colchester/Braintree Border Garden Community and contributions from local authorities. Subject to decisions in these areas, the scheme may become committed for delivery.

** In cooperation with work funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the A5 Transport Corridor.

Strategic studies

Strategic studies are a method to tackle problems that are too large to be resolved through one single project; or where the impacts of action are more complex or conditional, and must be considered in ways that are not standard. The development of RIS2 has used this tool to consider what can be done at some of the most difficult points on the network, and the findings have led to RIS2 committing to complex projects. In particular, the study into Northern Trans-Pennine links has been endorsed by the Government, and RIS2 commits to delivering the coordinated dualling of the A66.

Strategic studies also serve as a useful mechanism to find opportunities to link new infrastructure with substantial development. This is particularly relevant for the Government's ambitions for growth and housing. In some cases, strategic studies can be expected not to create a proposal for infrastructure, but to identify opportunities where wide-ranging local development can cohere around plans for a single piece of infrastructure.

The first generation of strategic studies have already created an ambitious programme of forward work, which will affect Highways England's forward plans into RIS3 and RIS4. The scale of this work, coupled with the potential for further proposals to evolve from other strategic studies, limits the extent to which we are commissioning new strategic studies at present. However, we have identified some areas where new studies can serve a useful purpose.

Existing strategic studies

- **M60 Manchester North West Quadrant** – The North West Quadrant of the M60 is one of the busiest roads in the North, providing for both local and

strategic traffic. The current constraints on the route have negative impacts on both users and local residents. Working closely with Transport for the North and Transport for Great Manchester, our study has so far supported the importance of the Simister Island Interchange in mitigating some impacts and there is now a committed scheme in RIS2. However, the transformational options identified by the study would have significant adverse impacts on local people and communities, and overall would not provide value for money. The study will therefore continue to identify packages of smaller schemes that can be developed through RP2. Working closely with Transport for Greater Manchester, we will complete a parallel local study which has sought to identify if meaningful relief can be delivered through improvements to public transport or to the local road network.

- **Trans-Pennine Tunnel** – Manchester and Sheffield are not connected directly by a high-quality road. Work during RIS1 has shown that traffic between the two cities is one fifth of that between Manchester and Leeds. However, the presence of the Peak District National Park means that any action to correct this must take full account of potential environmental consequences. We will work in partnership with Transport for the North, local highways and national park authorities to finalise whether high-quality but cost effective connections can provide an appropriate balance between the levelling up of the economy and the environmental impacts on a valued and protected landscape.
- **A1 East of England** – The A1 in Bedfordshire is some of the oldest dual carriageway on the SRN, and has

profound impacts on the people who live on or near to it. It also creates a limit on how much growth the area can absorb without placing existing infrastructure under visible strain. Our existing study shows that congestion and safety issues on the route are not substantial enough in their own right to justify the full costs of moving the road to a new, more appropriate location. Substantial plans for local development (as proposed by the National Infrastructure Commission) has the potential to change this, and further work on the project will be considered if development becomes likely.

- **Oxford to Cambridge Expressway –** Oxford to Cambridge Expressway – the Oxford-Cambridge Arc is already home to some of the most productive towns and cities in the country. The Government’s ambition is for further growth within the Arc that will help make it a world class economic hub, and delivering the right infrastructure is vital to support this. The Government has investigated the potential for a new high-quality link road between the M1 and M40 which could support this growth and examined the costs and benefits of a range of options, taking account of the views of local authorities and residents in the Arc. We are now pausing further development of the scheme while we undertake further work on other potential road projects that could support the Government’s ambition for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, and benefit people who live and work there, including exploring opportunities to alleviate congestion around the Arc’s major economic centres such as Milton Keynes. We will work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and local partners on the

proposed Spatial Framework to identify the role transport can play alongside the proposed economic and housing growth ambitions for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

- **M25 South West Quadrant –** The M25 between Junctions 10 and 16 is the busiest section of road in the UK and our study has considered how congestion can be relieved on this route. The study recommends against conventional widening of the existing road and has sought to find other ways of reducing pressure on the motorway. It assessed whether wider transport measures could have a role to play in easing congestion on this section, but has indicated that these are insufficient to meaningfully improve the road’s performance. We have identified options for getting more capacity out of the existing M25, but in the long-term it may be that to reduce congestion significantly new infrastructure off the existing line of route would prove necessary. We will now look to review and consider these options further taking full account of any effects on surrounding communities.

New studies

- **Central Pennines –** This new study was announced in March 2019 to consider how road connections from the eastern end of the M65 in Colne could be improved. The study is considering if there maybe potential to better connect communities in east Lancashire and West Yorkshire, provide more resilient links to Leeds Bradford Airport and between the M6 and the A1(M), relieving the M62. The study is looking at what the issues are before assessing if there are plausible, cost effective options.

- M4 to Dorset Coast** – There are few north-south connections across the South West of England. The present strategic road for this area is a mixture of the A36 and A46, via Bath, Warminster and Salisbury. Local authorities in the area have suggested that there is a strategic case for adopting an alternative corridor – the A350 – as the main strategic route for the area; and then beginning a coordinated programme of upgrades to provide a high-quality route linking the M4 to the Dorset Coast including Bournemouth and Poole, with its economically-important port facilities. This raises a number of related questions, which are best considered together as part of a strategic study. We expect that this study will identify which corridor provides the main strategic route for the area; may recommend the trunking and detrunking of key routes; and may identify priority investments in the area that can be taken forward after the dualling of the A303/A358 is complete.
- Role of the Urban SRN** – As mayoral and combined authorities develop strategies and working arrangements for

their transport and environmental activities in many of our urban centres, an important question emerges about how the SRN and Highways England can play their part most effectively in those places. In RP2, Highways England will undertake a study into the role of the urban SRN, balancing the desire to better integrate these roads with local planning and transport operations while not adversely impacting on their national strategic role. This study will consider options such as improved collaboration on operations and changes in road ownership.

In considering where to locate new strategic studies, we have taken into account the developing role of STBs. These organisations, each at a different stage of maturity, are increasingly carrying out work similar to the strategic studies commissioned by RIS1, and in some cases have requested that they take the lead in carrying out work of this kind. For this reason, RIS2 looks to the existing studies on key corridors carried out by Transport for the North and Midlands Connect when planning for their respective areas, instead of commissioning studies to re-examine the same questions.

