

Officer Response on behalf of Brighton & Hove City Council to DfT's Consultation on HE's 'Shaping the Future of England's Strategic Roads: Initial Report'

Question 1 - Do you think Highways England's proposals will deliver what users of the SRN want? If not, what could be done differently?

The approach taken to prepare the Initial Report includes extensive research in order to inform the HE's 9 investment priorities. However, greater consideration and advice about the relative importance of each of the priorities would assist the council in its consideration of the HE's future investment strategy in the SRN.

Question 2 - Do you think Highways England's proposals will deliver what businesses want? If not, what could be done differently?

The needs and views of the broad spectrum of businesses within the city and the wider Greater Brighton City Region vary, and the council therefore very much hopes that they, or the umbrella organisations that represent them or that they participate in, have submitted their own responses to this consultation.

A strong case was made for improvements to the SRN within the Coast to Capital LEP's original SEP in 2014, which the council assisted in preparing and supported in principle. Primarily focused on the east-west A27 corridor, recognition of the role of the ports and airports within the City Region in terms of the movement of goods and people, and their connectivity and reliance on the SRN, is particularly key to the city's economy.

Question 3 - Do you think Highways England's proposals meet the needs of people affected by the presence of the SRN? If not, what could be done differently?

The consideration of noise, air quality and visual impacts on local communities and environments within the Report are clear. However, the impacts associated with the severance that A27 has on the northern periphery of the city are acute in some locations.

In Brighton & Hove, the A27 is crossed by a number of local Highway Authority roads and/or public rights of way, which are used by non-motorised users [NMUs]. Therefore, it can represent an east-west barrier to achieving comprehensive and continuous north-south connections between the built-up area and its rural hinterland and green/open spaces, especially when considering the proximity and attraction of the environmentally designated landscape of the South Downs National Park which includes Stanmer Park, Ditchling Beacon and Devil's Dyke. Problems can also be experienced by some other local road-users at certain times of the day owing to the levels of traffic using or joining the Trunk Roads.

In response to RIS2, the council has previously highlighted the need for measures on the local road network connections to/from the SRN. For example, the creation of a new, shared surface cycle and pedestrian path along Ditchling Road between the edge of the city has highlighted an issue whereby its continuation across the A27 directly into the National Park has

not been possible due to sub-standard parapet heights on the Ditchling Road overbridge. To overcome these safety/severance issues requires the introduction of appropriate changes to parapet design/height.

The designated funds to mitigate the adverse impacts of the SRN and address the needs of those affected are welcomed, especially those related to sustainable travel and transport. Consistent and comprehensive approaches to consultation and engagement with local communities as well as stakeholders and partners will also ensure that any proposals are suitable and acceptable to meeting the needs of those affected by the SRN.

Question 4 - Do you agree with Highways England's proposals for:

<p>Four categories of road and the development of Expressways (Initial Report sections 4.4.3 and 5.3.6) ?</p>	<p>The four categories of roads identified are welcomed and supported. The approach highlights the need to adopt the concept of a road hierarchy with different functionality being attached to each category.</p> <p>The principle of introducing Expressways is generally welcomed as it takes a comprehensive approach to improvements that will maximise the benefits road users and should deliver better and more reliable journey times on the SRN.</p> <p>The indicative plan showing the potential introduction of Expressways on SRN A roads in the wider south-east area is welcomed and supported, given that it includes the A23 and parts of the A27. The council is also keen to ensure that the A roads will be upgraded to expressways and continued consideration will need to be given to those sections of road which will remain all-purpose trunk road category at the bottom of the hierarchy to ensure that they are brought up to a higher standard along their entire length. For example the A259 from Brenzett in Kent heading to Hastings in East Sussex is of markedly lower quality and consideration should be given to upgrading the route.</p>
<p>Operational priorities (Initial Report section 5.1)?</p>	<p>The operational priorities identified are a key part of the effective and efficient day-to-day running of the SRN, and adequate funding to enable their continued maintenance and management to address increasing demand and use by all road users, including NMUs, is essential.</p> <p>Particular support is expressed for:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the use of real-time information to improve the access to, quality of, and integration of information for all forms of transport for users, to enable them to make more informed decisions before or during their journeys; ➤ improvements to SRN diversion routes, focused on their condition and signage; ➤ the commitment to improve the co-ordination of traffic management activities with local highway authorities to improve traffic flow between the two networks; ➤ supporting the use of electric vehicles to enable drivers to contribute towards the reduction of emissions which are harmful

	to both public health and the environment.	
Infrastructure priorities (Initial Report section 5.2)?	A planned and proactive approach to maintenance based on extending the life of assets or replacing those in need to maintain the performance of the network is one that is also adopted, and supported, by the council. However, the council also recognises the difficulties faced by the HE in prioritising and funding such an approach with limited funds as it is also experiencing a significant maintenance backlog on its local road network in terms of road and footway surfaces, drainage, structures and street lights. Ensuring that infrastructure priorities and the investment in them ensures safety, economic connectivity and environmental enhancement are achieved requires a balanced and transparent approach.	
Enhancement priorities (Initial Report section 5.3)?	Completing RIS1 schemes	The council participated in, and supported, the list of priority schemes submitted for potential inclusion in RIS2 submitted by TfSE in 2017. The council remains concerned that delays to RIS1 scheme delivery will adversely affect the amount of funding available for the RIS2 programme and will therefore await the DfT's publication of the RIS2.
	Strategic studies and other studies	Strategic studies are supported and should continue as they will be the primary basis for identifying longer term solutions to a number of challenges on the SRN and the associated delivery programmes.
	RIS1 for RIS2 schemes	The development of possible designs for a number of additional schemes which could be part of the RIS2 process if they can demonstrate good value for money, deliverability and affordability is supported to ensure that the RIS programme is able to deliver the maximum level of benefit within the timeframes and available funding.
	Smart upgrades to the busiest motorways	Adopting technological and innovative solutions to managing <u>all</u> roads will be a fundamental part of the evolving, future approach to increasing the efficiency of the SRN and supporting economic connectivity. It is therefore important to recognise that measures on roads that connect with the SRN will also be required to achieve improvements that will offer seamless journeys, and which will need to include providing for, and encouraging, greater use of sustainable forms of transport.
	Developing expressways	Please refer to the above response to Question 4.
	New schemes	The development of a regularly reviewed and refreshed pipeline of improvement schemes for the SRN is supported and will ensure that economic connectivity continues to be the focus of the available funding.
	Tackling local	The continued use of designated funds to support the

	<i>priorities</i>	delivery of local priorities on growth and housing, environment, cycling, safety and integration, innovation and air quality is supported.
	<i>Co-ordination with HS2 and Heathrow Airport expansion</i>	The council has no formal view about the co-ordination of the SRN and either of these proposals.
	<i>A stable pipeline of improvements</i>	This is supported, as indicated in above responses to this consultation, in order to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the SRN. It will also be necessary to ensure that any complementary schemes or improvements on the local road network are brought forward in a similar way and at a similar pace.
A local priorities fund (Initial Report section 5.3.8)?		As indicated in previous responses to this consultation, the council supports the continued use of designated funds to support the delivery of local priorities on growth and housing, environment, cycling, safety and integration, innovation and air quality.
Future studies (Initial Report section 5.3.11)?		The council supports the programme of future studies to support the development of a wider range of solutions across the network to assist in helping to identify location-specific improvements that will improve the economic connectivity of the SRN network.
Designated funds (Initial Report section 5.4)?		As previously stated in above responses to this consultation, the council supports the continued use of the designated funds to support the delivery of local priorities on growth and housing, environment, cycling, safety and integration, innovation and air quality.
Performance measures and targets (Initial Report section 6.3)?		The development of a comprehensive and informative Performance Framework that covers all relevant goals and objectives and enables improvements to be achieved for both road users and stakeholders, and HE as an organisation, is supported.

Question 5 - Are there any other proposals in the Initial Report that you do not agree with? If so, which ones and what could be done differently?

There are no other proposals in the Report that the council does not agree.

Question 6 - Do you agree with Highways England's assessment of the future needs of the SRN (Initial Report section 4.4)?

The council considers that Highways England's assessment of the future needs of the SRN, which includes social and technological changes that are likely to affect travel and the SRN in

the future as part of scenario planning, is sufficient to enable it to plan head, although a more proactive approach to considering the effects of potential technological changes.

Question 7 - How far does the Initial Report meet the Government's aims for RIS2 (economy, network capability, safety, integration and environment – described in paragraph 2.3)? Which aims could Highways England do more to meet and how?

The importance of new housing to the Government's overall economic strategy is significant and therefore this needs to be reflected in RIS2, as it is a key determinant in the amount and location of mitigation that is required on the SRN and wider transport network to enable planned growth to be accommodated.

Question 8 - Do you think there should be any change in the roads included in the SRN (described in paragraph 1.3)? If so, which roads would you propose are added to or removed from the SRN, and why?

The council does not seek to achieve any change in the roads included in the SRN.

Question 9 - Is there anything else we need to consider when making decisions about investment in the SRN? If so, what other factors do you want considered? Please provide links to any published information that you consider relevant.

In addition to the current survey and research database used by Highways England, the DfT should ensure that it seeks the full views of the Coast to Capital LEP and Greater Brighton City Region to ensure that the SRN requirements of those wider economic functional areas which the city of Brighton & Hove supports are taken into account.

Question 10 - Does the analytical approach taken have the right balance between ambition, robustness, and proportionality? If not, what do you suggest we do differently?

The analytical approach taken is considered to be balanced, but needs to be regularly reviewed and refreshed to ensure that it remains current and takes account of the effects of future growth and technological change on the SRN.

AJR
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