

Appendix 1 Draft TfSE Response to Consultation on Strategic Road Network Initial Report

Dear Jesse Norman MP

Shaping the Future of England's Strategic Roads Consultation on Highways England's Initial Report

I am writing to you as Chair of Transport for the South East (TfSE), the Shadow Sub-National Transport Body (STB) for the South East, in response to the Department for Transport's (DfT) consultation on the future of the Strategic Road Network (SRN).

TfSE welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation, the focus of which is a set of proposals made in Highways England's Initial Report. The SRN is a vital element of the South East's transport system, connecting key population centres and areas of economic activity with the international gateways in the South East and destinations across the UK. As an emerging STB, TfSE is seeking to build an effective partnership with Highways England. This will be particularly important given the interrelationship between the future SRN investment programme and TfSE's Transport Strategy, as well as the role envisaged for STBs in shaping the investment programme for the proposed Major Road Network.

Highways England has made significant progress in its approach to the development of RIS2. Many of the lessons from RIS1 have been taken into account and it is clear from the Initial Report that a considerable amount of research has been undertaken to inform its priorities for RIS2. The Government is yet to set out its emerging thinking on the balance between the competing priorities within the RIS2 programme and the specific schemes that are to be taken forward. In view of this, we see the need for further engagement with TfSE and the other STBs, once the Government has responded to the consultation on the Initial Report.

TfSE has recently commenced work on the development of its Transport Strategy, with the first stage comprising an Economic Connectivity Review. The draft vision and strategic objectives for the Transport Strategy align closely with the aims of the Government's Transport Investment Strategy and the Industrial Strategy White Paper as well as the key aims for RIS2 set out in the consultation document. The Economic Connectivity Review and the subsequent Transport Strategy will provide an evidence base to help shape the infrastructure investment priorities across the South East. It is vital that there is further opportunity for engagement into the RIS2 process to ensure that the emerging TfSE investment priorities and the Government's RIS2 priorities are as closely aligned as possible.

TfSE has already set out its initial list of priority schemes for the RIS2 period in response to a request from the DfT. These priorities for investment are set out in Annex 1. The sixteen enhancement schemes identified were prioritised from a longer list of candidate schemes following consultation with each of our constituent local transport authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnerships. These schemes are essential for the country as a whole if the nation is to meet the growth agenda set out in the Industrial Strategy to further our growth ambitions for the South East and the

contribution we can make to meet the priorities that the Government has established for RIS2.

Responses to each of the questions contained in the consultation document are set out in Annex 2. There are a number of key points from the responses that I wanted to draw to your particular attention to, which are set out below.

Support for the creation of new housing is one of the four goals for infrastructure investment set out in the Government's Transport Investment Strategy and Industrial Strategy White Paper. However, this goal has not translated into the five key aims for RIS2 set out in the consultation document. Increase in the housing supply will be vital if the increase in economic output which is a key aim of the Government, both for RIS2 and TfSE, is to be delivered. There should be a stronger link between this objective and the RIS2 priorities and the performance measures that are established for Highways England.

Given the emphasis on the economy, the views of Local Enterprise Partnerships, businesses and the road freight sector in particular need to be given greater consideration to ensure the SRN develops in a way that will better serve their particular needs.

Effective integration between the SRN, the local road network and the soon to be formed Major Road Network will be vital to ensure the country's road network delivers the seamless end to end journeys that users want. In the future, solutions to issues identified on the SRN are likely to require improvements on the MRN or local road network, including initiatives to increase the use of sustainable forms of transport. Effective liaison will be required to ensure the strategies of the different bodies involved in the management of the road network are aligned effectively and operation efficiencies realised.

Highways England places a strong emphasis on its operational priorities in the Initial Report arguing for increased funding for these in future years. Highways England will need to meet both its operational and enhancement priorities if the Government is to achieve its aims and careful consideration will need to be given to the allocation of funds to these two competing areas.

It is clear from the Initial Report that Highways England have undertaken a thorough assessment of the what the future may look like and which tries to take account of the social and technological changes that are likely to affect travel in the future. In the face of the uncertainty HE is adopting more of a 'wait-and-see' approach, opting to watch emerging trends and develop responses as needed. However, given the importance of the SRN network to the country's mobility, Highways England should adopt a more proactive approach to influence what that future looks like to ensure that the potential benefits to their operations that future technological change could bring about can be realised. The DfT as Highways England's main shareholder will have a key role in influencing this.

As set out in the Initial Report, many of the schemes included in RIS1 will not be constructed until the early years of RIS2 and will take up a significant proportion of any funding available in the early years of the second Roads Period. Further clarification is

sought on what the implications of this are likely to be for the RIS2 programme. As far as possible the RIS1 schemes which are currently under development will need to be kept under review to ensure they align with the priorities set out for RIS2 including the introduction of expressways, free flow junctions and last mile improvements.

The SRN has a vital role in connecting people, places and businesses in the South East. Given this, TfSE and the other STBs must continue to be engaged in the RIS2 process. We would welcome the opportunity for further discussions about how this could be taken forward.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Keith Glazier
Chair of TfSE Shadow Partnership Board and Leader of East Sussex County Council

CC:

Members of the TfSE Shadow Partnership Board - Steve Allen, Cllr. Paul Carter CBE, Geoff French CBE, Cllr. Bob Lanzer, Cllr. David Hodge CBE, Cllr. Rob Humby, Cllr. Alan Jarrett, David Lees, Cllr. Gill Mitchell, Cllr. Tony Page, Margaret Paren, Cllr. Jacqui Rayment, Cllr. Ian Ward, Cllr Garry Wall.

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Annex 1 – TfSE's RIS 2 Priorities

22 August 2017

Dear Jesse Norman MP

Road Investment Strategy (RIS 2) 2020-2025 Priority Schemes in the South East of England

I am writing to you as Chair of Transport for the South East (TfSE), the Shadow Sub-National Transport Body (STB) for the South East, setting out our initial list of priority schemes for possible inclusion in the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS 2) covering the period 2020 to 2025.

Although TfSE is in the early stages of its development, we welcome the opportunity your Department provided for us to demonstrate how we work together to represent the wider interest of the South East. The request was also a clear recognition of the significant progress that has been made in establishing an STB in the South East and places us on an equal footing with the other STBs which are in the process of being established elsewhere in the country.

We have considered our priorities as those which benefit the wider South East. We initially considered twelve schemes and, mindful of the impact the Lower Thames Crossing will have on the surrounding network, we have extended this to sixteen. I enclose a table which sets out the list of priority schemes (in no particular priority order).

In addition to the sixteen schemes, two corridors have been identified for strategic studies for RIS 2. The Oxford to Cambridge Expressway is also identified as a nationally significant priority scheme. Although this scheme is outside the TfSE geography, it will provide a continuation of the A34 between the South East and the Midlands.

In submitting this list of schemes we have assumed that all the RIS 1 commitments are delivered. We also recognise that the priorities may change, either as a result of the ongoing RIS 2 consultation work or that of our own developing Transport Strategy.

We look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,



Chair of TfSE Shadow Partnership Board and Leader of East Sussex County Council

CC: Members of the TfSE Shadow Partnership Board - Steve Allen, Cllr. Paul Carter CBE, Geoff French CBE, Cllr. Louise Goldsmith, Cllr. David Hodge CBE, Cllr. Rob Humby, Cllr. Alan Jarrett, David Lees, Cllr. Warren Morgan, Cllr. Tony Page, Margaret Paren, Cllr. Jacqui Rayment, Cllr. Ian Ward.

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Priority Schemes in the South East for inclusion in RIS 2

Scheme	
Lower Thames Crossing including Option C Variant (M2 Junction 3 and M20 Junction 6 via A229)	
Lower Thames Crossing - wider network improvements	M2 Junction 7 Brenley Corner
	Dualling of the A2 from Lydden to Dover
A21	Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst – offline dual carriageway
	Flimwell and Hurst Green – Bypasses
A27/M27 South Coast Corridor	A27 Lewes to Polegate
	A27 Between B2123 Falmer Interchange and A293 Junctions
	A27 Worthing & Lancing
	A27 Chichester
	M27 Junction 12 to A27/A3(M) Junction – upgrade to motorway standard and smart motorways
	M27 J3 to M271/A35 Junction
Solent Metro – City to City – part of a phased investment to bring forward the Solent Metro to transform city to city connectivity which is primarily linked by the M27. This will be an off network investment to strengthen the rail based link in the West Phase 1 and 2 to include Eastleigh to Southampton Central and Southampton Central through to Fareham	
M23/A23 Corridor	Crawley to Burgess Hill
	Hooley Interchange
A3 Ripley to Guildford	
M25 South West Quadrant (J10-16) including new or improved link between M3 and M4 and offline improvements to A329/A322 corridor in Bracknell	

Strategic Corridors for investigation in RIS 2

Strategic Corridor
M23 Corridor (M23 and M25 Junction 6 to 8)
Upgrade A34 to motorway standard, including the southern section between Junction 13 of M4 and Junction 9 of the M3 and A34 safety improvements north of the A34/M4 junction at Chieveley

Other nationally significant schemes for inclusion in RIS 2

Other nationally significant scheme
Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

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Annex 2 - Response to consultation questions

Question 1

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

It is clear from the Initial Report that Highways England have undertaken extensive research to understand their customers' requirements. Section 4.1 of the Initial Report sets out the research that has been undertaken, with a great deal of it having been conducted independently by Transport Focus. It is recognised that the needs of different user groups are varied and nine key user priorities have been identified and used to inform Highways England's views on their investment priorities. These are:

1. Enhanced safety
2. Improving journey times
3. Improved surface quality, signage and lighting
4. Better information
5. Improved roadside facilities
6. Better integration with other roads
7. Meeting the needs of bus and coach operators and their passengers
8. Improved provision for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians
9. Future-proofing new investment

It is not clear from the Initial Report or from the Transport Focus background report, about the level of priority given to each of these areas either by different user groups (motorists, road hauliers, pedestrians, cyclist or bus users) or users making trips for different purposes (commuting, business, leisure). No information is given in the Initial Report about the user profile of the SRN across the network to enable an assessment to be made of the relative priority that should be afforded to each of the priority areas. This would seem a particularly important step to aid an understanding of how the proposals that have been developed by Highways England, and how the investment strategy that will be produced during the subsequent decision making, will meet the needs of users.

Section 5 of the Initial Report sets out Highways England's proposed investment priorities for RIS2, covering operational, infrastructure and enhancement priorities which are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Highways England’s operational, infrastructure and enhancement priorities for the 2020-25 period.

Operational priorities	Infrastructure priorities	Enhancement priorities
Customer service	Road surface	Completing RIS1 schemes
Better information	Structures	Strategic studies and other studies
Better roadworks	Drainage	RIS1 for RIS2 schemes
More reliable journeys	Geotechnical	Smart upgrades to the busiest motorways
Seamless journeys	Vehicle restraint systems	Developing expressways
Managing more smart motorways and expressways	Lighting	New schemes
	Road signs and markings	Tackling local priorities
Preparing for connected and driverless vehicles	Tunnels	Coordination with HS2 and Heathrow Airport expansion
	Soft estate	
Supporting electric vehicles	Traffic signals and roadside technology	A stable pipeline of improvements

Given the comprehensiveness of list of priority areas set out in the Table 1 it has to be the case that it will deliver what users want to some degree. However it is not possible to determine at this stage the extent to which any one of the priorities will be met as neither the relative importance of the priorities nor the weight that is going to be given to the operational, infrastructure and enhancement priorities has been identified at this stage in the process. It will not be until the investment strategy has been produced that this will be possible.

Question 2

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

The work that Highways England commissioned looking at the views of their users did include some specific work with businesses. However, no analysis is presented in the Initial Report about their specific views and whether the priorities they identified are any different from the list for all users presented on Page 29 of the Initial Report and listed in the response to Question 1 above. In view of this, and for the reason already given in the response to Question 1, it is not possible to assess the extent to which Highways England Proposals will deliver what businesses want. The views of businesses are particularly important given that one of the key aims of the Transport Investment Strategy is to build a stronger economy and support the delivery of the priorities set out in the Industrial Strategy White Paper in relation to employment and productivity.

More specific information on what businesses want from RIS 2 was presented in the CBI/AECOM, report ‘Thinking Globally, Delivering Locally: Infrastructure Survey’⁷ which was a surveyed of 728 businesses. In response to a question about what outcomes need to be secured in the longer term greater integration with alternative modes of transport (e.g. rail, ports, airports), investment in new road capacity and improvements to the motorway

⁷ CBI/AECOM, Thinking Globally, Delivering Locally: Infrastructure Survey, November 2016

network all score particularly highly, although investment in maintenance and local road networks were also seen as critical or important by a majority of firms.

Clearly improved connections to ports and airports is something which businesses see as key outcomes of the next RIS 2 period and improved connectivity to international gateway ports and airports in the South East will need to be a key component of this. More prominence should be given to this in planning for the future particularly given the need to strengthen international trade links following Brexit.

As set out in the Highways England's Roads to Growth document the SRN carries two thirds of all freight traffic in England. Given this it is surprising that more attention has not been given in the Initial Report to the specific needs of the road freight sector. A significant amount of the freight that passes through the key ports and airports in the South East is transported on to other parts of the UK. An understanding of the needs of the road freight sector is important to understand how the SRN can be improved to meet their needs in the South East and beyond to help create a more balanced 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 need to manage the impact of the SRN on surrounding communities is recognised at a number of points in the document. In particular, the noise, visual and air quality impacts have been actively considered in the Initial Report. However no mention is made of the severance impacts of the SRN which is an important consideration for those affected by the presence of the SRN.

The system of designated (ring fenced) funds outlined in section 5.4 of the Initial Report provides the mechanism for Highways England to meet the needs of those affected. The funds cover:

- Growth and housing
- Environment
- Cycling, safety and integration
- Innovation
- Air quality

Given the Government and TfSE's aim of supporting economic and housing growth the continuation of the growth and housing fund is particularly welcomed. Much of the SRN in the South East passes through environmentally designated landscape and the funds designated for environment will be particularly important to ensure that further work can be undertaken to mitigate the adverse impacts of the SRN.

The availability of designated funds to improve conditions for those using sustainable travel modes to help people make sustainable travel choices is strongly supported.

There is recognition that Highways England can improve the administration and delivery of these funds in the future including delivering through others. Liaison and consultation with those that are impacted by the presence of the SRN and who would be affected by enhancements schemes funded through designated funds is key to this. The introduction of measures off the SRN on the local road network will need to be considered and

engagement and liaison with local highway authorities will be key to ensuring these are planned and delivered effectively. The development of expressways which would see non-motorised users displaced from the SRN will need to involve careful liaison with the communities affected where additional measures have to be provided on the local network to accommodate these user groups.

A stronger emphasis to commitment to community involvement in addition to the references to stakeholders as representatives of wider groupings is needed to ensure that any proposals meet the needs of those affected by the presence of 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 categorisation of roads identified by Highways England into four categories is supported, as it puts into practice the concept of a road hierarchy with different functionality being attached to different categories of road. The motorways at the top of the hierarchy are engineered for longer distance higher speed movement with all-purpose trunk roads having a more local access function with a lower volumes and a lower speed environment.</p> <p>The principle of upgrading some A-roads to expressways is welcomed as it will involve a whole route approach and move away from piecemeal improvements that fail to deliver significant and meaningful journey time benefits for longer distance users, which the SRN is aiming to cater for.</p> <p>The staged approach to the development of expressways set out in section 5.3.6 is supported as it will allow many of the benefits to be delivered sooner. Careful thought will need to be given as to how the roll out of the expressway concept across the country is prioritised. Whilst it is accepted that the indicative map on Page 56 of the Initial Report showing the network classification over the medium term does not constitute a plan, the general approach to the potential roll out of expressways on the A roads which form part of the SRN in the South East is supported. This would possibly see expressways introduced on the A34, A3, A23 and parts of the A27, A21, A2, A20 and A249 with ongoing investigations about the possible introduction of expressways on other parts of the SRN network. Consideration should also be given to introducing the Lower Thames Crossing Schemes as an expressway. The roll out of any future expressway programme would need to be the subject of further discussion as the expressway concept is refined and a firmer programme is developed. The transport strategy that is currently being prepared by TfSE will provide a key input into these discussions as it will identify priority corridors for further investment.</p> <p>Not all of 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>As identified in the Initial Report, it is Highways England's operational activities that keep the SRN running. A number of operational priorities for investment in RIS 2 have been identified by Highways England, which are listed in Table 1 above. Highways England is lobbying the Government for increased funding for its operational activities given increasing levels of demand and additional expense associated with some operational activities, such as smart motorways.</p>

	<p>There are a number of aspects of the operational investment priorities which are particularly welcomed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the updating of the investment decision methodology to expand on traditional economic analysis to properly capture scheme benefits which matter most to customers; ○ the commitment to a proactive dissemination of real time information through various channels to improve information flow to customers and the commitment to providing integrated travel information with public transport services allowing them to make more informed choices and enable the roll out of the mobility as a service concept. Better coordination and improved interfaces with local highways authority communication systems is required to improve information provision on and off the SRN network; ○ the commitments to improve SRN diversion routes through upgrades to their condition and signage; ○ the commitment to improve the coordination of traffic management activities with local highway authorities to improve traffic flow between the two networks; ○ supporting the roll out of connected and driverless and electric vehicles which provide the opportunity to enable more efficient use of the network and reduce harmful emissions.
<p>Infrastructure priorities (Initial Report section 5.2)</p>	<p>The Initial Report lists out a comprehensive list of asset types and is seeking to adopt a planned approach to maintenance based on extending the life of assets or replacing those in need to maintain the performance of the network. The alternative reactive approach involving potentially expensive works to keep traffic moving is not being recommended by Highways England. The Initial Report makes the point that the funding for a planned approach has not always been available for a planned approach to be implemented and clearly Highways England is seeking the funding to move forward with a proactive planned approach. The Initial Report states in section 5.2 that Highways England have developed a number of investment options for a number of different asset types to inform the government's decision moving forward. However, the option appraisals are not set out in the report so it is not possible to assess the trade-off that is being put forward across the different asset types.</p> <p>Obviously with limited funds available difficult decisions will have to be made about the amount of funding that is to be spent either on operational improvements to maintain the network and enhancement schemes to improve network performance. The situation on the local road network is equally challenging with a significant maintenance backlog. Better coordination between Highways England and local highways on maintenance planning is required to reduce disruption and improve outcomes. The sense from the Initial Report is that Highways England considers that operational priorities should be given more weight than enhancements. However, the enhancements will be necessary</p>

	to meet the requirements of the Department for Transport and other stakeholders, such as the Sub National Bodies, whose priorities are more focussed on improving economic connectivity which enhancement schemes will deliver.	
Enhancement priorities (Initial Report section 5.3)	Completing RIS1 schemes	<p>The list of priority schemes for potential inclusion in RIS 2 submitted by TfSE to the DfT in 2017 was based on the assumption that all of the schemes included in RIS 1 would be completed. The Initial Report restates Highways England's commitment to achieving this although a small number of schemes are in the process of being re-evaluated. As set out in the Initial Report many of the schemes included in RIS 1 will not be constructed until the early years of RIS 2. Section 5.3.1 includes the following statement:</p> <p><i>"Based on our forecasts completing these [RIS 1] schemes will take up a significant proportion of any funding available in the early years of RP2"</i>⁸</p> <p>This will obviously have an impact on the level of funding available for 'new starts' in RIS 2. The full implications of the statement above will only become clear once the Government produces its RIS 2 document.</p>
	Strategic studies and other studies	<p>The Strategic Studies have provided a suitable vehicle for identifying long term solutions to significant and complex challenges on the SRN including the M25 South West Quadrant. TfSE supports Highways England's advice that these studies should continue to inform a long term programme of delivery over successive roads periods and we are anxious to see the outcomes of the next stage of the work on the M25 South West Quadrant Study.</p>
	RIS1 for RIS2 schemes	<p>Section 5.3.4 of the Initial Report Sets out a list of 15 schemes for which design solutions have been identified so that they could be ready to enter the planning process and construction in RIS 2 if an appropriate solution can be identified which offers good value for money. The schemes inside and adjacent to the TfSE area that fall into this category are the Lower Thames Crossing and A3 at Guildford.</p> <p>Work will only continue on the design of these schemes if they continue to demonstrate value for money, deliverability and affordability. TfSE supports this approach as it means that the merits of these schemes can be set against those which have been identified for potential inclusion in RIS 2 as 'new starts'.</p>

⁸ Highways England Strategic Road Network Initial Report. P 72

Smart upgrades to the busiest motorways	We agree that smart motorways have a role to play in adding capacity and supporting economic connectivity. In many locations they represent the last chance to squeeze additional capacity out of the existing carriageways. However, it is also important to keep looking to the future to ensure that the need for additional schemes either on or off the network are identified through strategic studies particularly where it is clear that additional capacity is required. The M25 South West Quadrant Strategic Study provides an example of this with the recognition that interventions off the SRN will be required involving improvements to encourage greater use of sustainable forms of transport. There are other emerging technologies such as connected and autonomous vehicles that could improve the capacity of the network. Highways England's Smart Motorway Approach will need to develop to embrace these emerging technologies.
Developing expressways	As set out in answer to question 4, TfSE supports the continued roll out of expressways and the staged approach to their development set out in section 5.3.6 of the Initial Report.
New schemes	TfSE fully supports the development of improvement schemes on the network and has already submitted a list of priority schemes for potential inclusion in RIS 2. These schemes will be critical to ensure that connectivity to the international gateways in the South East can be improved and enhance the delivery of new homes and jobs in the South East to increase its contribution to the Exchequer.
Tackling local priorities	TfSE supports the continued use of the designated (ring fenced) funds to support the delivery of local priorities on growth and housing, environment, cycling, safety and integration, innovation and air quality.
Coordination with HS2 and Heathrow Airport expansion	Highways England must continue to work to ensure that the impact of the possible expansion of Heathrow and HS2 on the SRN is minimised if and when both of these take place and that any increase in future demand arising from these proposals is taken into account.

	A stable pipeline of improvements	It is vital the Highways England develops a stable programme of work to ensure it is able to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of its overall business. It is clear that a number of lessons have been learned from RIS 1 that will be put into practice in RIS 2 to ensure a stable programme is in place.
A local priorities fund (Initial Report section 5.3.8)	A set out above, TfSE 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.	
Future studies (Initial Report section 5.3.11)	The programme of future studies to support the development of a wider range of solutions across the network including free flow junctions, last mile improvements, and multimodal integration hubs is supported as these will help identify location specific improvements that will improve the economic connectivity of the SRN network. For those RIS 1 schemes which are still in development consideration need to be given where possible to potential enhancements to reflect the emerging thinking from these future studies such as the introduction of free flow junctions and last mile improvements.	
Designated funds (Initial Report section 5.4)	A set out in answer to a previous question, TfSE 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. The proposal for roadside facilities being included in a designated fund is welcomed and would help the private sector and Local Authorities provide good facilities for drivers and thereby remove the many problems associated with inappropriate overnight lorry parking – including noise, anti-social behaviour, littering, road safety problems, damage to verges and kerbs.	
Performance measures and targets (Initial Report section 6.3)	<p>The development of the Performance Framework that Highways England operates in line with the recommendations from the recent review by the Office of Road and Rail (ORR) is supported leading to a two part assessment with the first part dealing with performance measures that will be of interest to users and stakeholders and the second part which deals with the performance of HE as an organisation.</p> <p>Given that supporting economic and housing growth are two of the four goals of the Government's Transport Investment strategy and the key role of the SRN in delivering these, consideration needs to be given to including performance measures on these two aspects.</p>	

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 Initial report that TfSE disagrees with.

Question 6

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

It is clear from the Initial Report that Highways England have undertaken a thorough assessment of the future may look like and which tries to take account of the social and technological changes that are likely to affect travel in the future. These findings are presented in a supplementary report 'Connecting the Country - Planning for the longer Term'. This work has included the use of scenario planning to look at different future worlds and examine the impact these different futures would have on the SRN.

In the Initial Report no specific mention is made in the section on future trends (section 4.4.1.) about housing and employment growth given that report recognise that this is something that government has said it is alert to and something to which the SRN will have to respond.

In the face of the uncertainty about the future the approach that HE is adopting (like many other organisations) is more of a 'wait-and-see' approach, opting to watch emerging trends and develop responses as needed. However, given the importance of the SRN network to the country's mobility, HE should adopt a more proactive approach to influence what that future looks like and realise the benefits to their operations that future technological change could bring about. The DfT as the HE's main shareholder will have a key role in bringing this about.

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?

There is no specific reference to the need to support the creation of housing in the Government's RIS 2 priorities despite this being one of the four stated goals of the Transport Investment Strategy and is a key element of the Industrial Strategy White Paper. The provision of additional housing is necessary to facilitate additional economic growth in the South East, which is essential if the Government is to meet its national growth aspirations. The identification of strategic transport interventions that could facilitate housing growth is a key priority for TfSE. The current system of designated (ring fenced) funds which HE recommends should be continued in RIS 2 includes a growth and housing category. The Department for Transport has allocated £900 million of funds to Highways England over the 6 year spending period covering 2015 to 2021. Of this £100 million is allocated to Growth and housing. Careful consideration needs to be given as to whether the amount of funding allocated to this area should be substantially increased in RIS 2.

The Initial Report outlines how the Government's aims for RIS2 will be met in the period 2020-2025. However, more could be done to demonstrate how the operational, infrastructure and enhancement priorities (summarised in Table 1 above) are linked to the Government priorities for RIS 2.

As network operator Highways England places great emphasis on the need for it to meet its operational and infrastructure priorities in the future and sees the need for increasing emphasis on these two priorities particularly as additional cost pressures emerge. Arguably, it is the enhancement priorities set out in Table 1 above which will contribute more towards the Government's stated aims. The Department for Transport will need to ensure that it achieves an effective balance between these three priority areas when establishing the allocation of funding as during the decision making phase of the RIS 2 process.

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?

Kent County Council is asking for the A249 Detling Hill (M2 Junction 5 to M20 Junction 7), A229 Blue Bell Hill (M2 Junction 3 to M20 Junction 6), and A299 (M2 Junction 7 to Port of Ramsgate) to be added to the SRN as key strategic links between the two motorway corridors in Kent, connecting major population centres and links to the port

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.

Highways England has commissioned a number of surveys of its users to better understand their needs and the results of these are set out in the Initial Report. Given the importance of the need to ensure that forthcoming investment programme delivers increased economic output and improved productivity of the SRN to the economy and greater engagement with business representatives and freight operators to understand the problems they have with SRN network, what their priorities for improvement would be and the relative importance they attach to each of these.

Careful consideration needs to be given to the potential implications of Brexit both in terms of the need for enhanced connectivity to the international gateway ports and airports to facilitate increased trade. Account possible changes to the customs arrangements following Brexit and knock on impacts for roll on roll off ports such as Dover where congestion problems have been encountered before leading to the initiation of Operation Stack on the M20 which is extremely disruptive and expensive. A permanent solution to this problem which will remain an issue regardless of Brexit must be identified.

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 takes the right balance between ambition, robustness and proportionality. However, the approach must ensure that it takes into account future housing growth and traffic demand, and that modelling takes into account additional traffic flow from other SRN schemes.