

Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) response to the RIS3 Variation Consultation

The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) is a charity, learned society and membership body, with over 10,000 members across 12 UK regions and several international groups. CIHT represents and qualifies professionals who plan, design, build, manage, maintain and operate transport and infrastructure.

Question 1

Do you support or oppose the changes to RIS3 outlined above, including the overall £428 million reduction proposed and the specific areas for savings proposed to achieve it?

Response: Oppose

CIHT opposes the proposed changes, including the overall £428 million reduction and the potential cancellation of the A38 Derby Junctions and A46 Newark Bypass schemes.

CIHT recognises the increasingly challenging international environment and the Government's need to strengthen national defence capabilities. Investment in defence is necessary and justified. However, transport infrastructure funding should not be viewed as competing with defence investment. A reliable and resilient transport network is itself a strategic national asset, supporting economic security, military mobility, supply chains, access to employment and services, and the economic growth needed to fund national priorities over the long term.

The proposed reductions raise important questions about the balance between short-term fiscal savings and long-term economic, social, environmental and security impacts. Strategic transport investment can improve productivity, connectivity and resilience, reduce congestion, and support housing and employment growth. Funding certainty and a stable infrastructure pipeline are also important for effective long-term planning, value for money, industry confidence, and retaining the skills and capacity needed across the sector.

CIHT would reinforce the need for a transparent, evidence-led approach rather than a blanket reduction. This should cover the impacts on:

- The effect of reductions on road safety, including National Programmes and Designated Funds.
- The cancellation of schemes after substantial planning, consenting and development work.
- The effect of uncertainty on specialist skills and the infrastructure supply chain.
- The consequences for regional connectivity, freight, housing and employment growth.
- The need to assess schemes according to their strategic importance, economic benefits, safety contribution and deliverability.

CIHT therefore recommends that the Government assess the proposed reductions against their full economic, social, environmental and security consequences before reaching a final decision. Where construction cannot proceed within the present funding period, the Government should examine whether schemes can be retained within the investment

pipeline rather than cancelled outright. This would help preserve previous work and provide greater certainty about future transport investment.

Defence and transport investment should be treated as complementary national priorities. Decisions taken to strengthen national security should not inadvertently weaken the transport connectivity, economic capacity and resilience on which national security also depends.

Question 2

Do you agree or disagree with the prioritisation of capital funding for maintenance and renewals?

Response: Agree, subject to a balanced approach

CIHT agrees that maintenance and renewals should remain a high priority. Maintaining roads, bridges, structures and associated infrastructure in a safe, reliable and resilient condition is essential. Investment in maintenance can avoid higher future costs by improving road surfaces, signs, markings and lighting, and by addressing deterioration before it results in more disruptive or costly interventions.

However, maintenance and enhancement should not be treated as mutually exclusive. Maintaining the existing network is essential, but long-term network resilience can also require action to address significant bottlenecks affecting safety, reliability, freight movement, connectivity, housing and economic growth.

CIHT therefore supports a balanced investment portfolio that:

- Protects safety-critical maintenance and renewals.
- Uses evidence of asset condition, risk and need to determine priorities.
- Retains enhancement schemes where there is a strong and evidenced strategic case.
- Considers the maturity and deliverability of investment across the whole capital programme.
- Avoids treating all enhancement investment as discretionary simply because it does not fall within a maintenance budget.

The need for stable, multi-year funding applies to maintenance, renewals and enhancement projects alike. Funding certainty enables infrastructure owners, local authorities and the supply chain to plan effectively, retain capability and obtain better value from investment.

Prioritising maintenance should therefore not automatically mean cancelling strategically important enhancement schemes. Each element of the programme should be assessed transparently according to need, risk, deliverability and its contribution to the wider RIS3 objectives.

Question 3

Do you have any views on how the RIS3 objectives may be prioritised in any capital funding reductions?

Response: Prioritisation should be evidence-led and based on safety, resilience, economic and security contribution, connectivity, environmental consequences, deliverability and value for money.

The RIS3 objectives are closely connected and should not be considered in isolation. For example, investment that improves network reliability may also support safety, customer experience, freight movement and economic growth.

If reductions are unavoidable, CIHT considers that decisions should be guided by the following priorities:

1. Safety

Investment needed to protect road users and maintain the network safely should be the first consideration. Responses specifically cautioned against reductions affecting road-safety activity within National Programmes and Designated Funds.

2. Network resilience and reliability

Funding should protect the ability of the network to continue functioning safely and reliably, including maintenance of existing assets and action where significant bottlenecks undermine network performance.

3. Economic and security contribution

Decisions should consider how investment supports economic security, military mobility, supply chains, employment and access to services. Transport infrastructure is a critical enabler of economic growth and national resilience, rather than a competing alternative to defence investment.

4. Connectivity, housing and employment growth

The assessment should include the contribution that schemes make to regional and national connectivity and to planned housing and employment development.

5. Environmental consequences and net zero

Changes should be assessed against their wider environmental consequences and their effect on the Government's net zero ambitions.

6. Deliverability and value for money

The Government should consider scheme maturity, expenditure and work already undertaken, the consequences of delay or cancellation, and whether an investment can be delivered effectively within the funding period.

The criteria, evidence and trade-offs used to make reductions should be published. This would give infrastructure owners, local and regional partners, the supply chain and communities a clearer understanding of why particular investments have been protected, delayed or cancelled.

A uniform reduction would not adequately reflect the different contributions made by individual programmes and schemes. Prioritisation should instead be based on transparent assessment of the benefits, risks and consequences associated with each decision.

Question 4

Regarding the two enhancement schemes, is there any further information or evidence you can provide to supplement the assessment information provided in Annex A?

A46 Newark Bypass

The A46 is a strategically important corridor connecting the East Midlands with the Humber ports, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire and the wider motorway network. The proposed bypass was identified as addressing the remaining single-carriageway bottleneck on the route and as being important for freight, logistics, regional connectivity and network resilience.

Evidence submitted by Leicestershire County Council to CIHT stated that the scheme would:

- Prevent an estimated 1,875 casualties over the appraisal period.
- Deliver approximately 89.9 million person-hours of journey-time savings.
- Support around 9,610 homes and employment growth.
- Improve the resilience and attractiveness of the wider A46 corridor as an alternative north-south route.
- Support freight movement and connections with ports and logistics infrastructure.

CIHT assume that the Department will verify the evidence submitted above against the underlying scheme appraisal before being relied upon in the final decision.

The Newark section is the remaining single-carriageway section of the A46 between Warwick and Lincoln and represents a longstanding bottleneck on the wider corridor. The route provides connectivity between the Midlands, the A1, Lincolnshire, the Humber ports and logistics infrastructure including East Midlands Gateway.

The corridor supports sectors dependent on reliable movement of goods, employees and services, including manufacturing, logistics, distribution, food production and construction. It also connects businesses and economic assets across a geographically distributed defence, engineering and advanced manufacturing base.

The assessment should therefore consider not only conditions immediately around Newark but the consequences for the performance and resilience of the wider corridor, including connections to ports, logistics infrastructure, employment locations and supply chains

The A46 has wider regional significance, including its role in connecting communities and businesses with Leicester, the M1, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and destinations further north. Cancellation would affect a corridor used by freight distribution, manufacturing, logistics and businesses dependent on regional supply chains.

A38 Derby Junctions

The A38 Derby Junctions scheme addresses congestion, safety and reliability issues at the Kingsway, Markeaton and Little Eaton junctions. These junctions affect the movement of people and goods through Derby and connections between the East and West Midlands.

The corridor provides links to the M1, A50, M42, M6, East Midlands Airport and East Midlands Freeport. It also serves an area with a significant concentration of advanced manufacturing, engineering, aerospace and logistics activity, including major employment locations around Derby and connections to Infinity Park Enterprise Zone.

The Department's assessment should consider the effect of cancellation on access to employment, freight movement, supply-chain reliability, planned housing and employment development, and the attractiveness of the area for future industrial investment.

The potential cancellation of the A38 Derby Junctions scheme raises concerns around:

- Existing congestion and the scheme's potential role in relieving pressure on the M1 corridor.
- Connectivity and the movement of people and goods across the Midlands.
- Investment already undertaken through planning, consenting and legal processes.
- The effect of cancellation on the infrastructure pipeline, technical expertise and specialist workforce.
- The need to consider the scheme's strategic and economic case alongside its contribution to safety and network resilience.

CIHT recommends that the Department publish or update comparable evidence for both schemes covering:

- Safety benefits and risks.
- Current and forecast congestion.
- Journey-time reliability.
- Freight and supply-chain connectivity.
- Housing and employment dependencies.
- Wider economic consequences.
- Carbon and environmental impacts.
- Network resilience.
- Expenditure and development work already undertaken.
- The consequences and costs of cancellation, postponement or later redevelopment.

The assessment should also recognise that defence investment and transport connectivity are interdependent. Defence and advanced manufacturing supply chains are geographically distributed and depend on reliable links between employers, smaller suppliers, research and innovation assets, logistics hubs, airports and ports.

The A38 and A46 corridors serve areas with important defence, aerospace, engineering and advanced manufacturing activity. Reducing investment in these corridors could therefore affect the wider infrastructure supporting the Government's defence and industrial objectives. These considerations should form part of the assessment of national resilience and security rather than being treated as separate from it.

CIHT's published position is that modern roads, bridges and transport networks support economic growth, community resilience, connectivity and national security. Decisions on RIS3 should therefore consider those wider strategic benefits before planned investment is reduced.

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