



Department for Transport

Milda Manomaityte
CEO, ACE

Max Sugarman
CEO, Intelligent Transport Systems

Chris Cassley, Policy Director, CPA

Ben Goodwin
Director of Policy & Public Affairs, CECA

Richard Smith, Managing Director, RHA

Sue Percy, CEO, CIHT

From the Secretary of State
Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: heidi.alexander@dft.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Our Ref: MC/00073191

8 October 2026

Dear all,

Thank you for your letter of 3 July on behalf of organisations across the UK roads and highways supply chain, about the Defence Investment Plan and strategic roads investment. I apologise for the delay in replying to you.

The Government recognises the critical role that the Strategic Road Network (SRN) plays in supporting economic growth, national connectivity and resilience. We also understand the value of a stable multi-year funding pipeline in giving delivery partners the clarity they need to plan, invest and retain capability.

This approach is reflected in both the Government's 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy, which highlights the importance of long-term infrastructure planning and investment, and in the Department's third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3), which together provide a strategic framework for infrastructure investment and improvement. Through RIS3, the Government has provided a funding settlement of over £27 billion over the period 2026–2031 to ensure the SRN continues to support people, businesses and freight movements while improving reliability, safety, resilience and network performance.

While the Department will provide £428 million from this settlement in support of funding for the Defence Investment Plan, we remain committed to the long-term operation, maintenance, renewal and enhancement of the SRN, including important enhancements, such as the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine in the North and Lower Thames Crossing in the South-East.

The proposals relating to the A38 Derby Junctions and the A46 Newark Bypass enhancements reflect difficult choices and we recognise these proposals may create a degree of uncertainty across the highways sector, particularly given the importance of providing clear sight of the forward programme to support workforce planning and capability development.

As you are aware, the Department consulted on these proposals, and I am grateful for your engagement throughout the process, that came to an end on 14 September 2026. I note the Associations for Consultancy and Engineering's formal response, and the points raised will be carefully considered alongside all other responses before any decision is reached.

While it would not be appropriate to pre-empt the outcome of the consultation or comment further on specific matters relating to the proposals, RIS3 remains the basis for investment across the SRN. The strategy includes record levels of investment in operations, maintenance and renewals, including £8.4 billion investment to maintain road surfaces and protect safety critical structures like bridges and tunnels, demonstrating the Government's commitment to rebuilding Britain's infrastructure. We are not currently proposing changes to any other major enhancement schemes. We recognise the importance of certainty for the highways sector and are working to provide clarity on RIS3 changes in due course.

The Government will continue to work closely with the supply chain to maintain capability and minimise disruption. We recognise the importance of providing visibility of future investment to support workforce planning, skills retention and business confidence. Investment through RIS3 supports around 50,000 jobs, both directly and through National Highways' supply chain. The UK Infrastructure Pipeline will continue to provide forward visibility of major infrastructure projects valued in excess of £25 million. While National Highways will continue close engagement with suppliers to support long-term investment, innovation and the development of the skills and capability required to support the government's infrastructure ambitions.

Thank you for taking the time to raise these important issues. I hope this response is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Alexander', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT