

DFT NEWS FOR WESTERN SOUTH WEST STB TRANSPORT BOARDS

This is not an exhaustive summary of the Department's and UK Government announcements, but a collection of some of the key announcements made since February 2023.

Spring Budget

Transport related announcements contained in the 15 March spring budget were as follows:

- a) £200m for local highways maintenance and pothole repair, with funds being allocated to eligible local authorities within the 2023/24 financial year. This is in addition to the existing highways maintenance funding settlement announced at SR 2022.
- b) £8.8bn for CRSTS Round 2. This will provide further integrated transport settlements for 5 years from 2027.
- c) Trailblazer devolution deals with Greater Manchester (GMCA) and West Midlands Combined Authorities (WMCA).
- d) A third round of the Levelling Up Fund this year, with a further £1bn on top of the £3.8 billion already allocated across rounds 1 and 2.
- e) 12 Investment Zones aimed at catalysing high-potential clusters through tax incentives and a flexible funding pot. Each zone will get £80m over 5 years which may be used on local transport infrastructure, alongside areas such as skills and specialist business support.
- f) Restating the intention to bring forward new laws for self-driving vehicles when parliamentary time allows and confirming publication of a government response to the Future of Transport Regulatory Review consultation in the coming weeks.
- g) Consultation on the future of LEPS and proposals for their functions to be undertaken by democratically elected leaders.

Prior to the spring budget, the SoS made a written statement to Parliament which outlined that:

- Pipeline schemes being developed for construction in RIS3 will now be considered for inclusion in RIS4, post 2030. This will enable the prioritisation of those already in construction and which can be delivered now.
- Rephasing certain parts of HS2 to help balance the nation's books.
- Capital funding for active travel will reduce to £100m across 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Strategic Roads

On 18 May, the DfT published its public consultation on the third road investment strategy (RIS) for the strategic road network (SRN) in England. The outputs of the consultation will inform the draft RIS, which will be published later in 2023. The draft RIS will include details of the requirements to be delivered by National Highways between 2025 and 2030, along with the financial resources to be provided. The consultation runs for 8 weeks, closing on 13 July.

Bus

On 23 May DfT announced a long-term approach to support and improve bus services with an additional £300 million to support services from July 2023 until April 2025.

As part of the £300 million to support services until 2025, £160 million will be provided to local transport authorities to improve fares, services and infrastructure while £140 million will go directly to operators to help protect essential services across England.

In addition, the £2 bus fare has been extended until 31 October to help passengers with the cost of living, when it will then increase to £2.50 until November 2024.

Active Travel

On 19 May Active Travel Funding (Round 4) was announced, totalling £200 million to improve walking and cycling routes. This included over £23m of funding for schemes across the South West.

Safer Roads Fund

On 6 April £47.5 million of government investment was announced to improve safety of 27 of the country's most dangerous roads. This included investment on the A35 in Bournemouth and A3102 in Wiltshire.

Local Transport Plan Guidance

The formal consultation on the proposed revised Local Transport and Quantifiable Carbon Reductions guidance has been delayed, but is expected to be released shortly.

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