

National Highways Update: Western Gateway STB Board Meeting 11-07-22

RIS3 Update

Work continues at pace to finalise the first stage of the RIS3 development process. NH's initial report - together with the SRN masterplan which sets out the long-term demands of the SRN and vision for this – is looking to be published in the Autumn. Alongside these two documents will be the draft versions of the 17 Route Strategies.

Thank you to the STBs for continuing to support this work, including contributing to the extensive evidence gathering work which took place over the autumn and spring. Informed by this evidence gathering, work is ongoing to draw out our recommendations for Government as to the objectives and priorities for each route.

Once published, there will be further opportunity for input to inform the final route strategy reports and the Government's Road Investment Strategy for 2025 onwards, and we and DfT would very much welcome further feedback from the STBs and other stakeholders.

In parallel, we are continuing to take forward early development work on the RIS pipeline schemes set by DfT, amongst a wider portfolio of scheme and intervention options which DfT can consider investing in as part of their RIS3 decisions.

Scheme updates

A358 scheme (committed scheme)

The planning of this scheme has moved another step forward recently as the supplementary consultation on the A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme reached its conclusion on Sunday 26 June 2022.

During this consultation period NH held three in-person events, which saw more than 900 people join us to talk to project experts and see the consultation material in person. We also held four webinars and hosted a virtual exhibition room.

All feedback we have received during the consultation period will be formally reviewed by the project team and compiled into a consultation report. This report will form part of our planning application for a Development Consent Order (DCO), which will be submitted later this year.

A417 - The Planning Inspectorate's examination of NH's Development Consent Order application for the A417 Missing Link project finished in May 2022. We are awaiting their recommendation to the Secretary of State and a final decision is expected to be made later this year. In the meantime, we have selected a contractor to develop the scheme design and construction plans - subject to the Minister's decision, construction will start in early 2023.

Good design

National Highways has this month published several documents highlighting our commitment to high-quality and sustainable design – for example ensuring road upgrades are sympathetic to their local surroundings while also prioritising safety, reliability and affordability. These publications follow up on our design vision which was published a few years ago.

1. Guidance for project teams including highlighting some key principles to improving the design quality of the network
 - Addressing climate change is a clear thread as good road design can help minimise emissions and their impact on the climate, as well as contributing to future resilience.
 - How good road design can improve other environmental impacts on local communities such as noise, air quality, severance and biodiversity.
 - Designs reflect road users' needs
 - Focus on 'place', fitting with surroundings
 - Improving safety including through supporting good driver behaviours

The document includes principles around ways of working - collaborative, thorough and innovative to ensure long-lasting benefits to users and the wider community.

2. The design and construction of NH schemes over a four-year period to draw out successes and lessons.
3. Case studies from UK and abroad illustrating the value and wider benefits of good design.

The purpose of these publications is

- challenge thinking about road design,
- look at NH performance in this regard,
- promote good design amongst our supply chain and other infrastructure providers.