

# **National Highways (NH) verbal update for WG Board Meeting – February 2026**

## **Roads Investment Strategy - Overview**

The Roads Investment Strategy (RIS) is the statutory framework through which the UK government plans and funds improvements to England's strategic road network. Established under the Infrastructure Act 2015, it provides a structured, multi-year approach to setting investment levels, performance expectations, and delivery priorities for motorways and major A-roads.

RIS is set by the Department for Transport, which specifies the funding settlement, key performance indicators, and a portfolio of enhancement schemes. Delivery responsibility sits with National Highways, which must operate, maintain, renew, and improve the network in line with these requirements. Performance is independently monitored by the Office of Rail and Road, providing external scrutiny and reporting on efficiency and outcomes.

Each RIS period typically lasts five years, with the next RIS covering 2026 - 2031. The strategy covers three broad areas:

- Operations and maintenance – day-to-day running of the network, asset renewals, and resilience.
- Enhancements – major improvement schemes such as capacity upgrades, new junctions, bypasses, and smart motorway technology.
- Performance and customer outcomes – targets for safety (e.g., reducing killed and seriously injured casualties), reliability, environmental impact, and user satisfaction.

Overall, the Roads Investment Strategy is designed to ensure that England's strategic road network supports economic growth, improves safety and reliability, and delivers value for money for road users and taxpayers.

DfT are finalising RIS3 and anticipate the publication by end of March 2026. Once published we will then respond with our Strategic Business Plan and Delivery Plan, which will outline our overall approach for 2026-2031 and how we plan to deliver it.

## **Roads Investment Strategy – Western Gateway**

Engagement with Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs), including Western Gateway, is an important part of the development process ensuring that regional insight informs the development of the RIS. This includes informing our Route Strategies, Strategic Studies and wider thematic programmes.

In RIS3 we will: complete our current programme of major projects at A417 Missing Link and A303 Sparkford – Ilchester; building on the recommendations of the M4 – Dorset Study we take forward a programme of targeted enhancements to improve safety and reduce delay, as well as develop a future programme of interventions for RIS4; and continue to deliver a significant programme of renewals and maintenance across the network. This work will continue to be informed by close collaboration with Western Gateway.

## **Scheme Updates – For Information Only**

### **M48 Severn Bridge**

National Highways has successfully utilised the traffic light system to allow HGVs over the M48 Severn Bridge during planned closures of the M4 Prince of Wales Bridge. We are on target to deliver the medium-term mitigation of allowing HGVs to return to the bridge in late 2026 by controlling the number of HGVs on the bridge at any one time. We are regularly updating all key stakeholders, industry and customers through our various comms channels.

### **A417 Missing Link**

- Works continue on all the 7 bridges- Gloucestershire Way Crossing, Cotswold, Shab, Cowley, Stockwell, Grove Farm and Bat underpass
- First stretch of new road is being used for customers driving down Crickley Hill
- Concrete pours on Cowley completed and Grove Farm, GWC, Shab Hill and Ullenwood works ongoing
- Landscaping works on Crickley Hill
- Temporary traffic switch in April at Air Balloon/Ullenwood junction
- Open for Traffic on programme for Spring 2027 however we will be finishing planting and landscaping up to the end of 2027

Our project Customer Hub is now open every Tuesday and Wednesday between 10am and 2pm. Location: Kier Crusher Plant, GL4 8JX (past Acorn House)

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-west/a417-missing-link/>

### **A432 Badminton Road Bridge**

We're building earthworks on both sides of the M4. After earthworks, we'll move on to lighting, signals, crossing points and surfacing. Then we'll connect the bridge to A432 and A4174 Bristol Ring Road.

To work safely, from 7am Monday 16 February we have closed the junction of Cuckoo Lane with the A432 to all traffic. The link to Bury Hill and Down Road will remain open to allow access to the A432.

The closure will remain until we finish connecting work. We'll then return Cuckoo Lane to the current set up. We'll also return the through route from Bury Hill to the A432 by Cuckoo Lane to its previous restrictions.

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-west/a432-badminton-road-bridge-crossing-the-m4/>