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working for infrastructure

Consultation Response

11 September 2026

Department for Transport RIS3 Variation Consultation

Executive Summary

This submission sets out the **Civil Engineering Contractors Association's (CECA)** response to the Department for Transport's RIS3 Variation Consultation.

Specifically, it recommends the following:

- **Rather than outright cancellation of the A38 Derby and A46 Newark Bypass schemes, CECA recommends that they are postponed and that their viability is revisited as part of the future planning and development of the strategic road network.**

- **The roads sector must increase innovation in design and construction practice, alongside the adoption of commercial models that provide National Highways with more outcome certainty and that enable appropriate risk sharing so that costs are less likely to spiral.**

- **The potential of different road user charging models to support investment in the strategic road network should be revisited, alongside continuing to review the regimes for fuel duty and vehicle taxation to create more attractive conditions for private investment.**

- **To achieve the 2% reduction in other capital funding that is being put forward as part of this consultation, National Highways, in partnership with the roads sector, should undertake targeted analysis to understand which areas of spending are most likely to support the optimum delivery of the RIS3 objectives.**

About CECA

CECA is the representative body for companies that work day-to-day to deliver, upgrade, and maintain the country's infrastructure.

With more than 300 members based across six English regions and the devolved nations of Scotland and Wales, CECA represents firms that together carry out an estimated 70-80 per cent of all civil engineering activity in the UK, in the key sectors of transport, energy, communications, waste and water.

CECA members deliver work worth an estimated £30 billion per annum to the UK economy and directly employ more than 250,000 people, with many more jobs represented across our members' extensive supply chains.

Consultation Response

Q1. 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? Please let us know the reasons for your response and any other comments you have on the proposals or any alternatives.

CECA recognises the need for the UK to make significant and consistent investment in the defence sector considering the volatile geopolitical situation that currently exists. We also acknowledge that every government department has been asked to contribute from its capital budget to help fund the Defence Investment Plan (DIP), which will include a significant pipeline of civils works that our members will have the opportunity to deliver and benefit from.

Furthermore, CECA understands that Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS 3) has been developed to prioritise spending on renewal projects and programmes, so the decision to cut funding from the enhancement budget to help support funding for the DIP is a logical one specifically in this context.

However, the proposed reduction of £428 million in capital spending, and in particular on the A38 Derby and A46 Newark Bypass schemes, will mean the loss of potential traffic and growth benefits for road users in these areas.

As such, rather than outright cancellation of these schemes, CECA recommends that they are postponed and that their viability is revisited as part of the future planning and development of the strategic road network (SRN). This would help ensure that National Highways and the market are ready to take the schemes forward if the economic climate becomes more conducive to their development and delivery.

Q2. Do you agree or disagree with the prioritisation of capital funding for maintenance and renewals? Please let us know the reasons for your response.

The effective management, maintenance and renewal of assets is imperative to ensure that the SRN continues to deliver for all of its users and does not risk deterioration that would likely mean that the cost of restoration would become substantial.

However, over the medium to long term, capital funding also needs to be directed into enhancing the SRN as demand and traffic levels continue to rise.

To help avoid future situations whereby the capital budgets for road investment are redirected to other government spending priorities, there is an onus on the roads sector to increase innovation in design and construction practice, alongside the adoption of commercial models that provide National Highways with more outcome certainty and that enable appropriate risk sharing so that costs are less likely to spiral.

More significantly, CECA also believes that now is the time to reconsider the potential of different road user charging models to support investment in the SRN, alongside a continued review of the regimes for fuel duty and vehicle taxation to create more attractive conditions for private investment.

Q3. Do you have any views on how the RIS3 objectives may be prioritised in any capital funding reductions?

RIS3 aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Grow the economy
- Improve safety for all

- A level of network performance that meets customers' needs
- A technology-enabled and enabling network
- A resilient network that is planned and managed for the long term
- Deliver improved environmental outcomes

To achieve the 2% reduction in other capital funding that is being put forward as part of this consultation, National Highways, in partnership with the roads sector, should undertake targeted analysis to understand which areas of spending (be that national programmes, designated funds and so on) are most likely to support the optimum delivery of the RIS3 objectives.

From a strategic perspective, continuing to prioritise spending on RIS4 pipeline development and strategic studies is logical as this will best help support medium- and long-term SRN performance improvements.

Q4. Regarding the two enhancement schemes, is there any further information or evidence you can provide to supplement the assessment information provided in Annex A?

CECA does not have any further information available, but would be willing to consult members and other stakeholders with an interest in the two enhancement schemes to gather additional evidence if this would be helpful to National Highways.