

Press release

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CECA: Roads Investment Cuts A False Economy

Civils contractors today expressed disappointment at the Government's decision to cancel two major road improvement schemes and reduce capital funding for England's strategic road network by £428 million.

The Department for Transport yesterday confirmed a variation to the third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3), including the cancellation of the A46 Newark Bypass and A38 Derby Junctions schemes, to support increased investment in defence.

Commenting, Director of Policy & Public Affairs for the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) Ben Goodwin said: "Although CECA recognises the need for increased investment in the UK's defence capabilities, it is disappointing that the Government has opted to cancel two economically important road schemes rather than retain them in the longer-term infrastructure pipeline.

"As we argued in our response to the Government's consultation, postponing rather than cancelling these schemes would enable National Highways and its supply chain to take them forward when economic circumstances allow.

"While investment in the maintenance and renewal of our strategic road network is rightly a priority, we must not lose sight of the importance of enhancing network capacity to tackle congestion, unlock economic growth, and support the delivery of new housing.

"Moreover, cancelling major infrastructure projects within months of their inclusion in a Government investment strategy risks undermining the confidence businesses need to invest in skills, innovation and delivery capability.

"We would urge National Highways to work closely with industry to ensure that the remaining RIS3 funding delivers maximum value for money, while protecting investment in the development of the RIS4 pipeline.

"There is also a compelling case for Government and industry to work together to explore alternative funding mechanisms and more effective commercial models that can put investment in our strategic road network on a more sustainable long-term footing.

"A strong economy is the bedrock of our national security. While CECA strongly supports investment in the UK's national defences, we cannot build a growing economy on an uncertain infrastructure pipeline.

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Notes to editors

1. The Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) represents over 300 contractors of all sizes, covering approximately 80% of the civil engineering market in Great Britain. Our members build infrastructure that provides the basis for economic sustainability and quality of life in communities across the country.

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