Government investment in roads: third Road Investment Strategy

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Secretary of State for Transport announces £27 billion strategy to maintain, upgrade and improve England’s major roads, boosting safety, growth and connectivity.

I am pleased to inform the House that the government will today (26 March 2026) publish the third Road Investment Strategy (RIS3). Backed by over £27 billion of investment over 5 years, this will support our drive to deliver the biggest overhaul to transport in a generation.

The investment delivers on the government’s ambition to kickstart economic growth, supporting living standards and jobs. The roads which form our Strategic Road Network are the key economic arteries which keep people and goods moving throughout the country. Keeping them flowing supports mobility and jobs, and helps to boost essential sectors like manufacturing, construction and retail. Overall, RIS3 is expected to support tens of thousands of jobs, bolstering supply chains across the nation and helping British businesses.

The Strategic Road Network is a critical national asset, and our priority is to ensure that it remains a network which people and businesses can rely on for decades to come. RIS3 therefore includes an unprecedented £8.4 billion of investment in renewals to strengthen the performance and long-term resilience of the network through replacing structures and worn-out road surfaces, as well as modernising roadside technology to support safe, smooth journeys.

It also includes £3.8 billion of targeted enhancements to tackle pinch points and unlock national, regional, and local economic growth and housing opportunities. These improvements will benefit the whole economy, tackling capacity issues as well as improving safety and journey time reliability.

In the North, the strategy commits over £4.4 billion to key enhancement and renewal schemes. This will support the government’s Northern Growth Strategy and complement investment across other modes such as Northern Powerhouse Rail. Enhancement schemes include upgrades to the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine route, which plays an essential role in connecting people and places across the North and is critical for freight and links to international ports.

The Midlands is at the heart of the country’s connectivity, and investment to upgrade the A46 at Newark will support sectors such as logistics and manufacturing which are dominant in the local economy and reliant on roads for growth, as well as improving access to Humber ports.

Elsewhere, the Lower Thames Crossing will be the most significant road-building scheme in a generation. It will provide a significant boost to the UK economy, easing congestion at the Dartford Crossing, strengthening connectivity across the UK to major ports, and improving resilience and reliability for all road users.

RIS3 will contribute to the ambitions set out in the recently published Road Safety Strategy to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on roads across Great Britain. It includes a Safety National Programme to deliver targeted safety improvements on major A roads with poor safety performance such as the A1 between Morpeth and Scotland; and it sets National Highways a stretching target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on its roads.

It also includes a Small Schemes National Programme aimed at reducing congestion to unlock economic growth; and a new Growth and Housing Accelerator Fund to help unlock development sites where infrastructure is currently a constraint.

It balances the requirements of the network with our obligations to the environment, and includes programmes to improve water quality, reduce noise exposure and support biodiversity, as well as to tackle air quality issues on the network. It includes a performance indicator for National Highways on litter collection, and includes a commitment to explore options to give National Highways new powers as a litter enforcement authority when Parliamentary time permits.

Major Road Network and Large Local Majors Programme

I am also today making an announcement on schemes in the Major Road Network and Large Local Majors programme, further to my statement to the House on 8 July 2025. The previous government left us with an unrealistic and unaffordable programme of schemes which we have had to review in the best interests of local and national taxpayers.

I am today able to confirm that my department will continue to support 16 of these schemes across the country, with the details set out on GOV.UK. In total, this represents a government funding commitment of around £1 billion, subject to each scheme securing the necessary business case and other approvals in due course. Each of these schemes has the potential to deliver benefits such as unlocking housing and economic growth and reducing congestion at key locations. Funding for each will be conditional on their satisfying the department that they have an acceptable business case.

Many of the other schemes that formed part of the review are being withdrawn on the grounds that the local authority can no longer afford its funding contribution, and my department is confirming the details of these with the relevant authorities. In respect of the remaining schemes, the department is finalising the way forward and will announce next steps in the early summer.