

Highways Policy Position Statement

V7.0 October 23 2023



Context

Roads are an important part of our wider transport network. 95 percent of all journeys use the highway network whether for our personal use or for moving goods around the region.

An efficient, safe, and reliable highway network is therefore essential, and this reality is unlikely to change even though increased highway usage can lead to increased levels of carbon emissions, environmental impacts, and safety concerns.

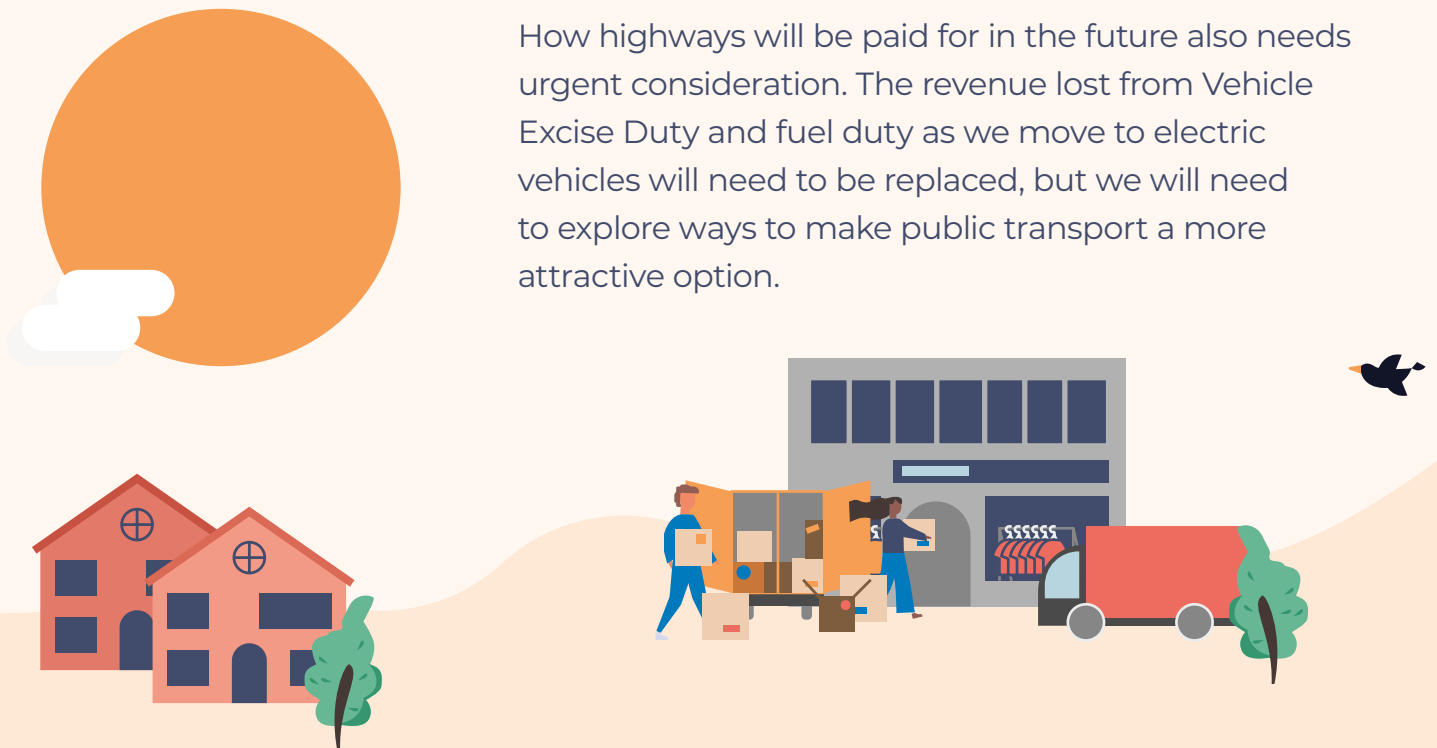
However, a well-planned and designed highway network can also help us tackle the unprecedented challenges of social exclusion, public health, climate change, biodiversity loss, and economic productivity.

To achieve this, we must shift our approach to deliver a highway network that meets the following principles

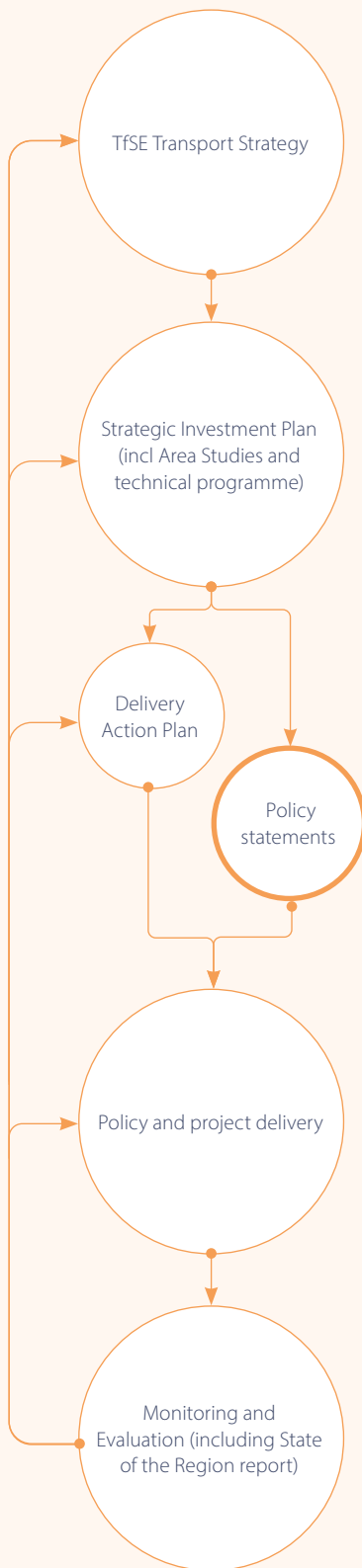
- makes best use of what we already have;
- is well maintained, safe and resilient;
- supports all forms of travel in the route to net zero; and
- provides the connectivity the communities and businesses need.

This will require targeted investment in the multi-modal solutions laid out in our Strategic Investment Plan.

How highways will be paid for in the future also needs urgent consideration. The revenue lost from Vehicle Excise Duty and fuel duty as we move to electric vehicles will need to be replaced, but we will need to explore ways to make public transport a more attractive option.



Transport for the South East



In the south east we need a different approach if we are to address these challenges and ensure no part of the south east is left behind. Doing nothing is not an option and “business as usual” will not work either. The goals we seek require an integrated, multi-modal approach that makes best use of what we already have.

Our **Transport Strategy**, published in 2020, sets out how we will tackle these challenges and achieve our goals. In the Transport Strategy, we set out the following vision for 2050:

By 2050, the south east of England will be a leading global region for net zero carbon, sustainable economic growth where integrated transport, digital and energy networks have delivered a step change in connectivity and environmental quality. A high-quality, reliable, safe and accessible transport network will offer seamless door-to-door journeys enabling our businesses to compete and trade more effectively in the global marketplace and giving our residents and visitors the highest quality of life.

To support our vision, Transport for the South East submitted a **Strategic Investment Plan** to government in 2023. We have engaged widely with stakeholders to ensure what we put forward in the plan aligns with both their needs and their expectations in a sustainable and financially responsible manner. It is a plan developed by the south east, for the south east.

The Strategic Investment Plan is supported by thematic plans, including one about highways. This document builds on the thematic plan and presents Transport for the South East’s position on the continuing role of **highways** in realising our vision. It also sets out the actions Transport for the South East will lead on and deliver with our partners.

What we're going to do to deliver our 2050 vision



We will continue to work with National Highways and local transport authorities as well as planning authorities, operators, statutory bodies and communities to deliver the interventions and infrastructure improvements across the network identified in the Strategic Investment Plan. We have identified four priorities to support delivery:

- changing the approach to highway planning;
- balancing the needs of all road users;
- delivering our targeted priorities; and
- learning from our delivery.

Our role will focus on advocacy and promotion, guidance and policy development, and early-stage scheme development.

Changing the approach to highway planning

Traditional approaches to highway planning have been based on “predict-and-provide” (i.e. extrapolating current traffic growth trends to continuously add capacity). This approach has placed the strategic movement of vehicles above our places and communities which has led to negative impacts on our environment and public health.

We will outline a vision for the integrated role of highways and define what is needed to achieve it. Taking this vision-led approach will allow us to better support our economy and communities, and help ensure we only progress capacity enhancement construction schemes which are aligned with our vision and the objectives cannot be met through off network or alternative solutions.

Action 1 – Facilitate the adoption of vision-led planning approaches

Through our Regional Centre of Excellence, provide guidance to local transport authorities to ensure that vision-led approaches are adopted when developing and updating Local Transport Plans and Local Plans to avoid unnecessary highway capacity enhancement schemes.



Balancing the needs of all road users

In addition to optimising the right “supply” of highways infrastructure, there will be a greater need to manage the demand for travel on our highways. This can be achieved through a range of interventions, including mode shift to more sustainable modes, but also ‘demand management’ interventions¹.

These interventions could include a national road user charging system, local clean air zones, workplace parking levies, parking restraints, behaviour change campaigns and improved communications.

Charging users for the use of all, or part, of the highway network is emerging as a strong candidate for securing sustainable, long-term funding for other transport interventions, including highways maintenance and subsidising public transport. This case is further supported by the forecast reduction in revenue generated from taxes such as fuel duty, as more people, operators and businesses convert to zero emission vehicles.



Action 2 – Promote the need for national road user charging

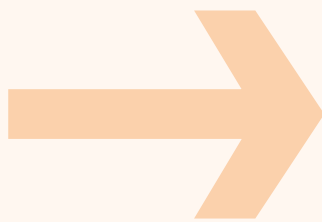
Advocate for studies of road user charging at a national level to understand the impacts across the south east on different communities and realising our 2050 vision, and how it could operate in practice.



¹ Travel Demand Management (Department for Transport, March 2021)

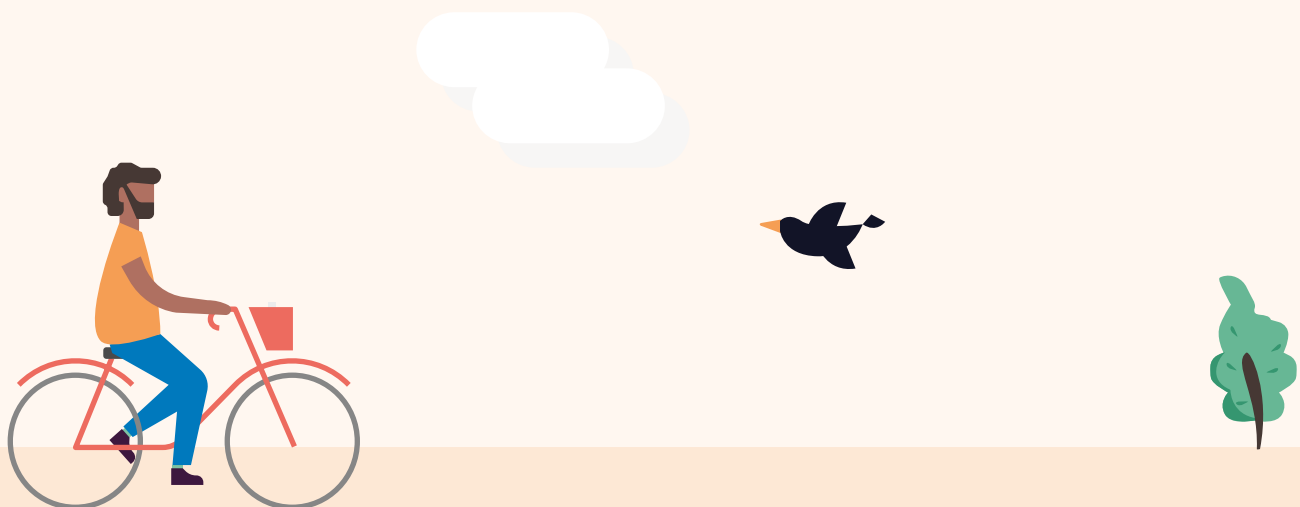
Beyond motorways, our highway network should support walking and cycling so that all modes can move safely throughout the south east. The introduction of new nationwide cycle infrastructure design guidance in 2020 has improved the quality of cycle schemes being delivered across the country². It has also led to an increasing number of discussions on the reallocation of limited road and pavement space for different users and types of travel. Improving walking and cycling infrastructure across the south east will, at times, reduce space for driving and parking cars.

As central government funding now depends on alignment with this and similar guidance, local authorities must attempt to find the middle ground and avoid unreasonable compromise (e.g. segregated cycleways being undeliverable without significant adverse impacts on buses).



Action 3 – Facilitate the use of movement and place frameworks

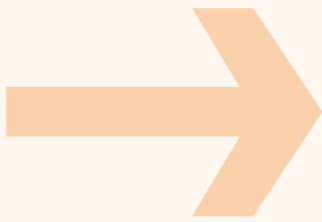
Through our Regional Centre of Excellence, provide guidance on the development and application of Movement and Place Frameworks and share best practice in the delivery of multi-modal solutions.



² Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20)(Department for Transport, July 2020)

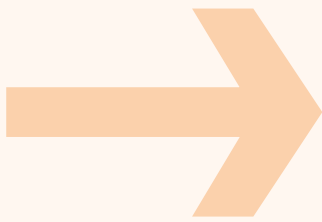
Delivering our targeted priorities

To secure funding for highway interventions, business cases aligned to central government guidance and requirements will be instrumental in making a compliant and compelling case for investment. The best way of securing funding is, therefore, to prioritise those schemes with a clear narrative that aligns with central government and local policy, presenting the most economic case with the greatest community and environmental benefit.



Action 4 – Resource early-stage scheme and business case development

Secure and allocate resource funding for early-stage scheme and business case development for local highways schemes, including support from both our analytical framework programme and our Regional Centre of Excellence.



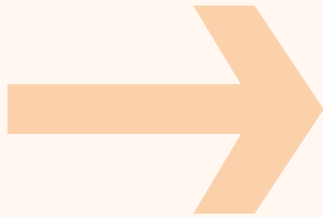
Action 5 – Secure targeted investment in our highways priorities

Work with central government to review and make the case for the priorities for the Road Investment Strategy 3 and 4 that support our 2050 vision and principles for the highways network.

Over the last two years, we have been working with key stakeholders and technical advisors to develop 'packages of interventions' that aim to deliver our vision and objectives for the south east's highways. Further information on these packages can be **found on our website.**



Some of the interventions identified to improve our highway network are large and complex. At the time of writing some do not have an identified scheme promoter (such as National Highways). This should not prevent the initial stages of scheme development being considered and making the case for future investment or involvement from our strategic partners.



Action 6 – Lead on long-term planning for the most complex highways challenges

Develop strategic studies for the largest and most complex cross-boundary interventions that do not have a scheme promoter, providing the foundations to be built upon once funding opportunities or scheme delivery partners have been identified.

Learning from our delivery

Without a monitoring and evaluation framework and plan in place, it is not possible to accurately measure the inputs such as spend and time/staff resource. Effective monitoring and evaluation, including the sharing of information between partners, will also allow us to establish lessons learnt to feed back into strategy and scheme development.



Action 7 – Establish monitoring and evaluation frameworks

Work with partners to develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks and scheme specific plans to measure delivery and performance and gather insights and share lessons learnt.



Next steps

Reflecting our status as the Sub-national Transport Body for the south east we will work with our delivery partners and other stakeholders to implement the actions included in this policy position statement. We will tailor our approach to the mode, scale, and level of development of each prioritised intervention.

We will use our Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to report our progress against these actions on an annual basis.

Contact us

For more information contact us via tfse@eastsussex.gov.uk or 0300 3309574



You can reach us at:

Transport for the South East
County Hall
St Anne's Crescent
Lewes
BN7 1UE

tfse@eastsussex.gov.uk

[@TransportfSE](https://twitter.com/TransportfSE)

