

MRN Consultation
Department for Transport
2/15 Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

19 March 2018

RoSPA Response to Department of Transport Consultation Paper “Proposals for the Creation of a Major Road Network”

RoSPA supports the proposal to create a Major Road Network with new funding from the National Roads Fund, to be paid for by Vehicle Excise Duty from 2020. This will fund upgrades and improvements, such as bypasses, missing links between existing routes, road widening, major junction improvements and the use of technological and safety enhancements along stretches of the network.

We agree with the proposed central policy objectives:

- Reduce congestion, alleviating local and regional congestion, reducing traffic jams and bottlenecks.
- Support economic growth and the delivery of the Industrial Strategy, contributing to a positive economic impact that is felt across the regions.
- Support housing delivery, unlocking land for new housing developments.
- Support all road users, recognising the needs of all users, including cyclists, pedestrians and disabled people.
- Support and complement the Strategic Road Network (SRN), creating a more resilient road network.

However, we believe that other key road safety objectives should be more clearly specified: reducing road risk, crashes and casualties for all types of road users, and especially vulnerable road users, and promoting and improving walking and riding. Although these are implicit in the fourth objective, support all road users, (which states that “we will expect the needs of all users, including cyclists, pedestrians and disabled people, to be considered and benefits for them delivered as part of the solutions proposed.”) they could be more clearly specified.

We suggest that the safe systems approach be adopted as a fundamental design principle for the MRN.

We also suggest that clear reference to public health objectives, such as improving health quality, be added.

It would also be useful to include clear references in the central objectives to supporting and reflecting the changes in vehicle technology that will occur over the timeframe of the MRN’s development.

RoSPA agrees that developing the MRN should provide a framework to match and complement that of the Strategic Roads Network.

RoSPA supports the proposed criteria to define the MRN, to:

- use current traffic data as the starting point to identify those roads that should be considered for inclusion in the MRN.
- use qualitative criteria in order to create a coherent and consistent network.
- take into account evidence from local and regional partners concerning regional variations.
- include, where appropriate, previously de-trunked roads.
- review the MRN every five years in line with the existing Road Investment Strategy cycle.

RoSPA agrees that the Government should work with local and regional bodies to develop and prioritise interventions for the MRN.

While we support the proposal to fund the MRN from the new National Roads Fund, which from 2020 will be paid for by Vehicle Excise Duty, care should be taken to ensure that the new fund does not come at the expense of existing funding schemes for roads. Currently, VED funding goes into a general funding pot, and roads are funded from that pot, which means that they benefit from additional income streams not just from VED.

Equally, the funding and development of the MRN should not result in unintended consequences (for example, reduced road maintenance funding), whether or not they are included in the MRN.

We agree that Highways England's experience in road investment, planning, and developing and managing the SRN, means it makes good sense for Highways England to be involved in the development and delivery of the MRN Programme. This would also help to ensure a strong relationship between the SRN and the MRN, and to ensure that the two networks complement each other.

RoSPA thanks the Department of Transport for the opportunity to comment on the proposals. We have no objection to our response being reproduced or attributed.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Clinton
Head of Road Safety