



Position Statement on Roads

Introduction

This represents EEH's updated position on roads and major road investment in the EEH region.

EEH published its [transport strategy](#) in February 2021 outlining the connectivity priorities for the region, underpinned by four principles:

- Achieving net zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050, with an ambition to reach this by 2040
- Improving quality of life and wellbeing through a safe and inclusive transport system accessible to all which emphasises sustainable and active travel
- Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities
- Ensuring the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to/from international gateways, in a way which lessens its environmental impact

The strategy acknowledges that to achieve these priorities it is no longer appropriate to take a 'business as usual' approach which sought to predict future demand and provide additional capacity to meet it ('predict and provide').

EEH's transport strategy (policy 24) highlights support for investment in road infrastructure where it meets one or more of the following criteria and is consistent with wider environmental objectives:

- Protects and enhances the existing infrastructure asset;
- Delivers a solution to an identified problem on the existing infrastructure asset;
- Enables access to new economic opportunities and/or housing growth; or
- Enables delivery of sustainable transport linkages such as public transport and active travel improvements.

Roads currently account for 98% of all carbon emissions from transport in the region. The Climate Change Committee on 28th June 2023 stated that a systematic review is required of current and future road-building projects to assess their consistency with environmental goals. There is therefore, a need to balance investment in roads with the needs to achieve net zero and other environmental and social considerations.

Future of Roads

Need for Roads

Roads play an important role and will continue to play an important role in the transport system of the EEH region:

- Road infrastructure is key to the delivery of economic and planned housing growth and connecting people and places across our polycentric region.
- The region has many rural areas for which road-based modes of transportation are the only realistic means of travel.
- Roads provide key links between our region and the rest of the UK and provide a vital role in supporting the freight and logistics sector.



- Roads support the delivery of several transport modes including: bus, taxi, micromobility, and active travel, providing most walking and cycling infrastructure.

Priorities for Roads

The key priorities for roads and major road investment should focus on:

- Decarbonising roads – both in construction and supporting alternative fuels;
- Delivering mode shift – roads are multi modal;
- Improving connectivity and supporting planned growth;
- Conserving and enhancing the natural, historic and built environment;
- Delivering a future-ready road network (embracing technology);
- Supporting road freight;
- Protecting and maintaining existing assets;
- Improving safety

Assessment of Alternatives

In determining the need for major additional road capacity (of significant scale):

- There should be compelling evidence that the use of existing assets has been maximised;
- The potential use of technology to achieve a solution to squeeze maximum value out of existing infrastructure must have been considered and implemented as appropriate;
- Realistic alternative solutions to reduce unnecessary traffic on the network and to potentially release capacity in other ways have been considered and sought as appropriate. Including for example increasing capacity for rail freight as a way of reducing congestion on the road network.

When major new major road based solution could be appropriate

A roads-based solution should be considered within the framework below:

- It is multi-modal or supports multi-modal integration;
- Designed in such a way as to minimise its impact on the wider community;
- It considers the transport system as a whole and new infrastructure is prioritised to support a whole corridor / route / end to end journeys;
- That the strategic narrative, safety and decarbonisation and not just journey time savings are included in key indicators of success;
- That it protects and enhances the existing infrastructure asset;
- Delivers a solution to an identified problem on the existing infrastructure asset;
- Enables access to new economic opportunities and/or housing growth; or
- Enables delivery of sustainable transport linkages such as public transport and active travel improvements.

Conclusion

This position statement identifies the need to balance the impacts of road transport (on the environment, health and wellbeing, and the character of the public realm) with the connectivity that is required to ensure continued economic prosperity; support planned housing growth; and to continue to connect people and places across our polycentric region.

The review found that the transport strategy objectives remain relevant but need to be strengthened to reflect the region's commitment to: decarbonisation; enhancement of alternative transport modes; multi-modal usage of roads; to ensure alternatives to the private car as a means of accessibility are realised; and their contribution to public realm and creating great places to live and work.

