

December 2025

Working with National Highways
to deliver a vision-led approach
for Local Plans

Contents

Introduction	3
Section 1 – Our Policy, Guidance & Strategies	4
DfT Circular 01/2022: Strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development	5
Planning for the Future	6
Connecting the Country our long-term strategic plan to 2050	7
Route Strategies	8
Section 2 – Our Priorities	9
Developing Your Transport Evidence	10
Considering Key Issues: Lorry Parking	11
Considering Key Issues: Travel Choice	12
Next Steps / Areas for Further Joint Investigation	13
National Highways Regional Spatial Planning Teams	14

Introduction

As a statutory consultee, National Highways aims to be a proactive partner in the planning system. We want to engage with you from the initial stages of preparing your Local Plan.

This brochure aims to provide you with useful information about our policies and priorities, as well as signposting to further sources of information to assist you as you develop your Local Plan. We have also produced a short [video which outlines our approach](#).

Vision-led planning is a policy requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Department for Transport's Circular 01/2022 and we have already adopted vision-led planning within our guide Planning for the Future.

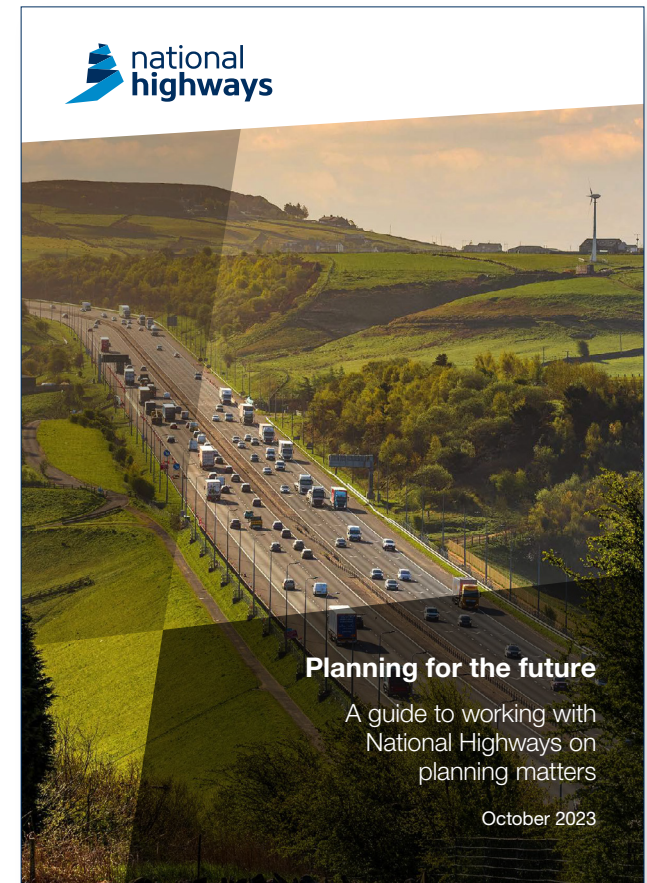
Vision-led planning involves three core features in relation to transport and spatial planning:

- Transport vision statements are the foundation, capturing the ambition and desired outcomes for a Local Plan or new development.
- A vision-led approach incorporates the vision as the central guiding principle of all planning, assessment, and decision-making processes.
- Transport monitoring should accompany the transport vision statement and vision-led approaches to ensure the real-world impacts of a local plan or development are understood and realised.

Guidance on applying a vision-led approach is still emerging. Whilst National Highways continue to work with the DfT and others to develop further guidance, the [Planning for the Future](#) guidance document outlines a broad approach.

The brochure is split into three sections:

1. Our relevant Policies, Guidance and Strategies
2. Our Priorities
3. Next Steps



Section 1 – Our Policy, Guidance & Strategies

We have various policy, guidance and strategy documents which inform our approach to engaging in plan-making. These documents are a useful source of information about our priorities.

<u>DfT Circular 01/2022</u>	Our policies on engagement in all aspects of the planning system
<u>Planning for the Future</u>	Guidance on working with us on planning matters, including Local Plan transport evidence
<u>Connecting the Country</u>	Our long-term strategic plan for the SRN to 2050
<u>SRN Initial Report</u>	The initial planning report to prepare for the third road investment strategy (2025-2030)
<u>Route Strategies</u>	Part of the development of the Road Investment Strategy, include analysis of issues and challenges, route-based objectives and locations for further consideration/study
<u>Net Zero Highways Plan</u>	Our approach to achieving Net Zero carbon
<u>Environmental Sustainability Strategy</u>	Our vision to support the environment around the SRN

DfT Circular 01/2022: Strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development

The **DfT Circular 01/2022** sets out the policy of the Secretary of State in relation to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) which should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and all other material considerations.

It explains how National Highways will engage with the development industry, public bodies and communities to assist the delivery of sustainable development. As such, these policies should be read by those involved in development proposals which may result in any traffic or other impact on the SRN. Key points include:

- Advocates a shift from transport planning based on predicting future demand and providing capacity ('predict and provide') to planning that sets an outcome which communities want to achieve and provides the transport solutions to deliver such outcomes (a vision-led approach).
- New development should be facilitating a reduction in the need to travel by private car and focused on locations that are or can be made sustainable.
- The policies and allocations that result from plan-making must not compromise the SRN's prime function to enable the long-distance movement of people and goods.
- Third-party proposals are obliged to consider future-proofing of the SRN. This is particularly relevant when considering land-allocations near to the SRN and its junctions and to take account of potential improvements should the 'vision' not be achieved.
- New connections and capacity enhancements to the SRN which are necessary to deliver strategic growth should be identified as part of the plan-making process. Where this has not occurred, there will be a presumption against new connections to the SRN.



Department
for Transport

Policy paper

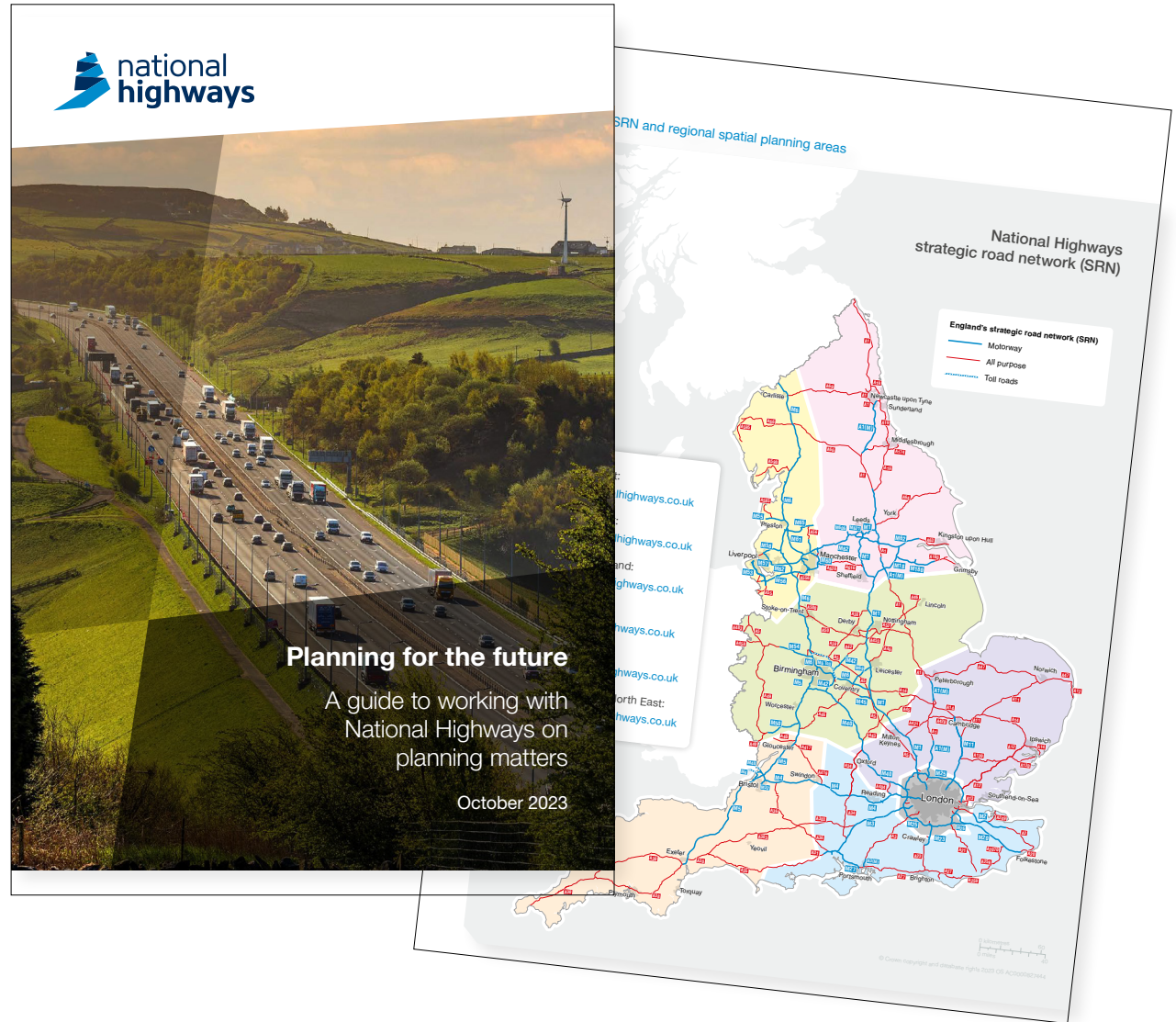
Strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development

Updated 23 December 2022

Planning for the Future

- Describes our role and the approach we take to engaging in the planning system.
- Includes the issues we look at when considering draft planning documents and planning applications.
- Provides advice on the information we would like to see included in a planning proposal
- Outlines the support we can offer at every stage of the planning process.

View our **Planning for the Future document**.



Connecting the Country our long-term strategic plan to 2050

- Connecting the Country is our long-term plan that sits at the centre of the business to bring together a wide range of existing strategies alongside robust horizon scanning and trend analysis.
- It outlines our 2050 vision that the SRN is part of a seamlessly integrated transport system that meets our customers' needs by connecting the country safely and reliably, delivering economic prosperity, social value and a thriving environment.
- The plan has nine focus areas which are grouped into three core themes that will:
 - Support growth as part of an integrated transport system;
 - Ensure travel on the network will be safe, sustainable and more connected; and
 - Enable National Highways to work 'beyond roads' to improve quality of life in local communities.

View our [Connecting the Country document](#).

How much our customers will travel



Growth and levelling up



Car travel



Freight and logistics

How our customers will experience travel



Safety



Digital



Decarbonisation

How we will manage our network



Customer experience



Sustainable network development

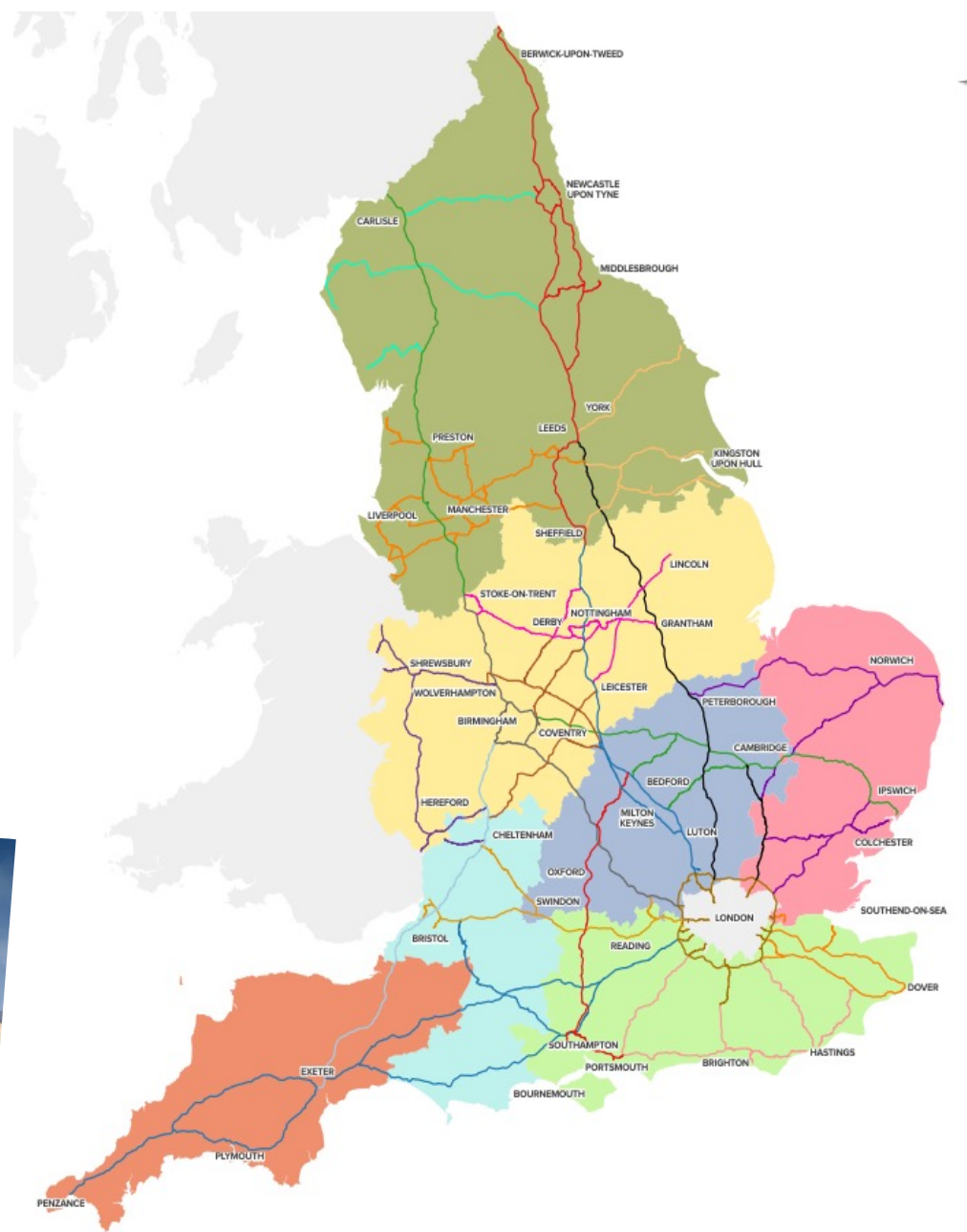
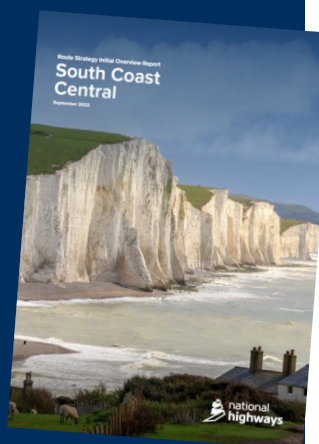
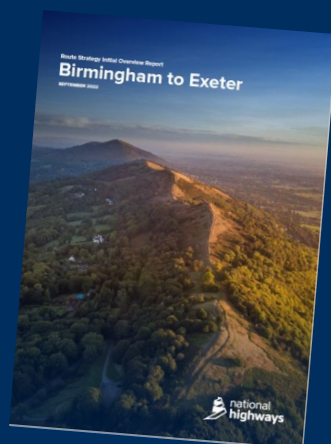
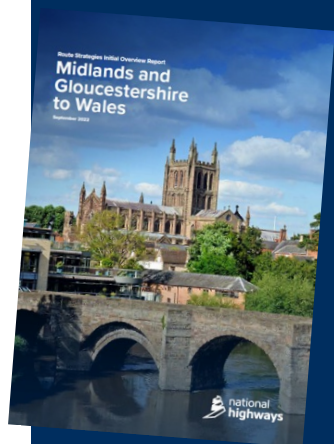


Asset resilience

Route Strategies

- Route Strategies are one of the key steps of initial research and evidence required by the Department for Transport in developing the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) and may also be utilised as evidence for plan-making.
- Route Strategies take account of as part of wider network performance evidence, relevant local plans and priorities concerning local road and other transport networks, wider socio-economic developments, and government policy to:
 - Build a robust evidence base of current performance and future challenges that are published and publicly available.
 - Outline operational and indicative investment areas of interest covering operational, maintenance and road improvement needs for all routes across the network for road investment periods.

View the full set of **Route Strategy reports and interactive online StoryMaps**.



Section 2 – Our Priorities

The SRN is arguably the biggest and single most important piece of infrastructure in the country.

The trunk motorways and all-purpose trunk roads that comprise the SRN are the most heavily used part of the national road network; they carry a third of all traffic and two-thirds of all freight.

In everything we do, we focus on our three core priorities:

Safety	We want everyone who uses or works on our roads to get home safe and well.
Customer service	We aim to meet our customers' needs.
Delivery	We aim to deliver the services and improvements that enable our customers to connect with people and places.

Maintaining the safety and efficiency of the SRN is of vital importance in our role as a statutory consultee in the planning process.

We want to work with you as your plan develops to make sure you have the information and data needed to consider our priorities.

Developing Your Transport Evidence

It is important that the Local Plan is based on clear, transparent, proportionate and robust transport evidence to identify any links that may have capacity, operational or safety issues, but to also present a vision for future sustainable development. We would wish to be involved in the scoping of this evidence at the initial stages.

As a starting point this should include:

- Assessment of the existing situation and likely generation of trips over time by all modes and the impact on the locality in economic, social, and environmental terms;
- Assessment of the opportunities to support a pattern of development that facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport;
- Highlight and promote opportunities to reduce the need for travel where appropriate;
- Identify opportunities to prioritise the use of alternative modes in both existing and new development locations if appropriate;
- Assess the quality and capacity of transport infrastructure and its ability to meet forecast demands; and
- Identify the short, medium, and long-term transport proposals across all modes.

With regards to land allocations, we will provide comments on the suitability of locations where there is potential impact on the SRN, including from a safety, congestion, amenity and carbon emissions perspective.

To this end, we will work with plan-making authorities to:

- Identify the impact that the proposed allocations are likely to have on the SRN on an individual and, insofar as is necessary, a cumulative basis, factoring in the demands arising from development planned in adjacent authorities where appropriate;
- Assess the impact of the SRN on the development potential of sites that are proposed to be allocated (for example, vehicle emissions, light pollution and noise);
- Assess the need for future-proofing to ensure the SRN is not constrained which would restrict future growth;
- Consider travel plan, travel demand and off network improvements; and
- As necessary, identify the infrastructure requirements and delivery of strategic infrastructure for the proposed allocations.



Considering Key Issues: Lorry Parking

The Department for Transport (DfT) tasked National Highways with the evaluation of lorry parking facilities and identification of areas experiencing high demand and insufficient provision. Having enough lorry parking and rest areas near the SRN (within approximately 5 kilometres) is important for National Highways to meet three main goals: Safety, Customer Service, and Delivery.

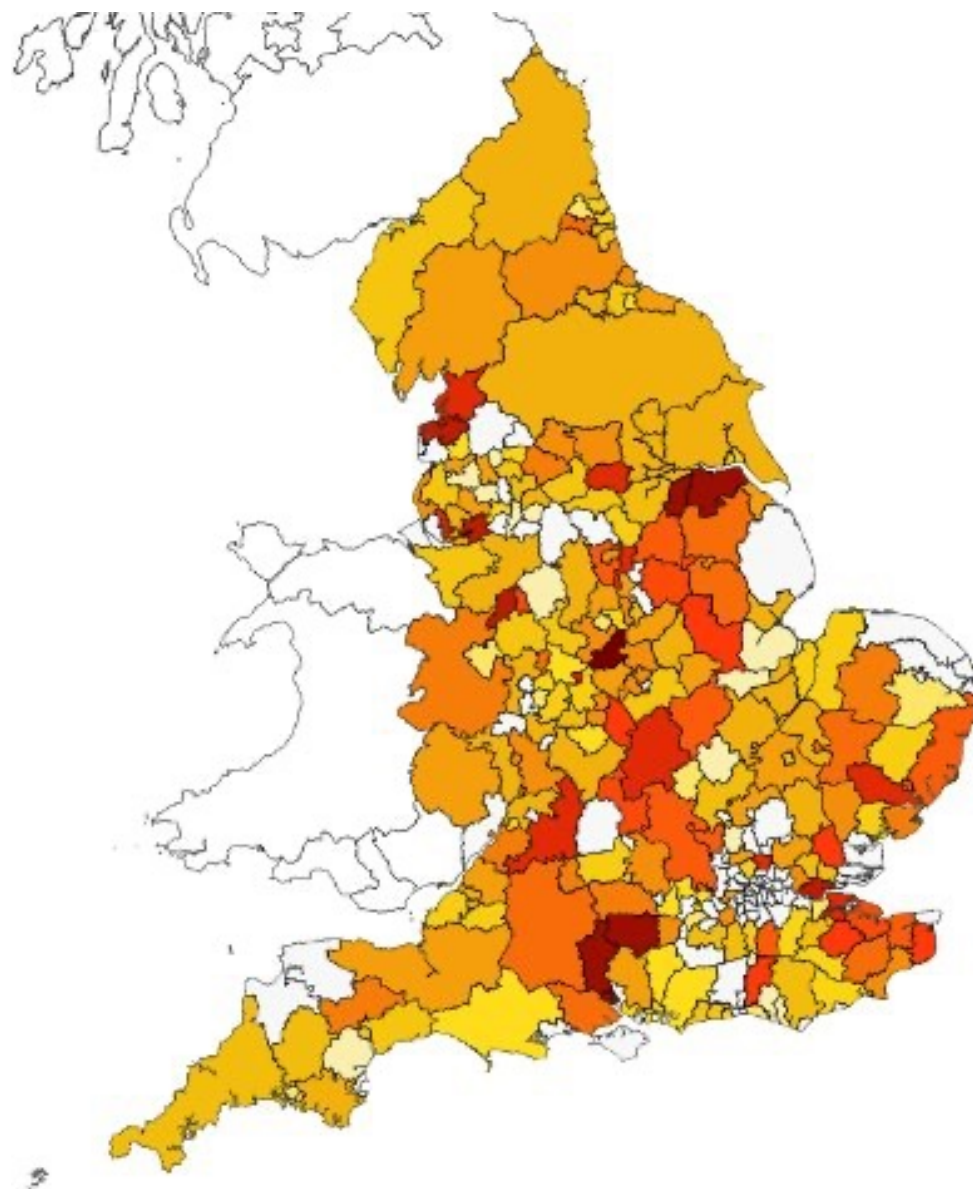
We have carried out research on the availability of Lorry Parking at a Local Authority level based on:

- Off-site lorry parking counts;
- On-site lorry parking utilisation; and
- Number of lorry parks over-utilised.

Where there are severe issues, we will work with you to ensure that local plan policies and allocations are developed to help address any shortage in lorry parking provision on or near to the SRN (DfT Circular para 81).

You can either read the [**Lorry Parking Demand Assessment report**](#) or use the [**Lorry Parking Demand Assessment App**](#), which makes it easier to explore and understand the data.

The DfT have created a [**video to guide developers on submitting applications for new lorry parks and driver welfare facilities**](#). Further information can be found on the [**DfT's website**](#).



Considering Key Issues: Travel Choice

A vision-led plan for sustainable development has the opportunity to benefit all; through enabling integrated travel choices from a site, customers have a range of low carbon and healthy travel options, and the SRN is protected for dependent sectors.

Choice is about making public transport, walking, wheeling, cycling, and shared mobility a reliable and realistic offer for journeys that reduce car-based trips on the network. It also means providing infrastructure which connects to transport hubs, to unlock the ability for longer-distance journeys to be undertaken by a blend of modes.

We want to support visions of sustainable development that support active trips through quality dedicated and safe active travel networks that connect with national and local active travel networks.

Providing customers and development site occupiers with information about choices can allow people to make better travel decisions about how, when, why and where they travel. This behavioural change can help optimise the demand on the network, thereby alleviating congestion at critical times and locations and provide increased benefits for health, the environment and economy.



Next Steps / Areas for Further Joint Investigation

We want to work with you **to establish a shared vision** for your Plan, including consideration of:

- The most appropriate locations for development
- Assessing the potential impact of development proposals on the SRN
- Enabling appropriate sustainable development
- Promoting journeys made by a range of modes other than private car,
- Maintaining the safety and efficiency of the SRN.



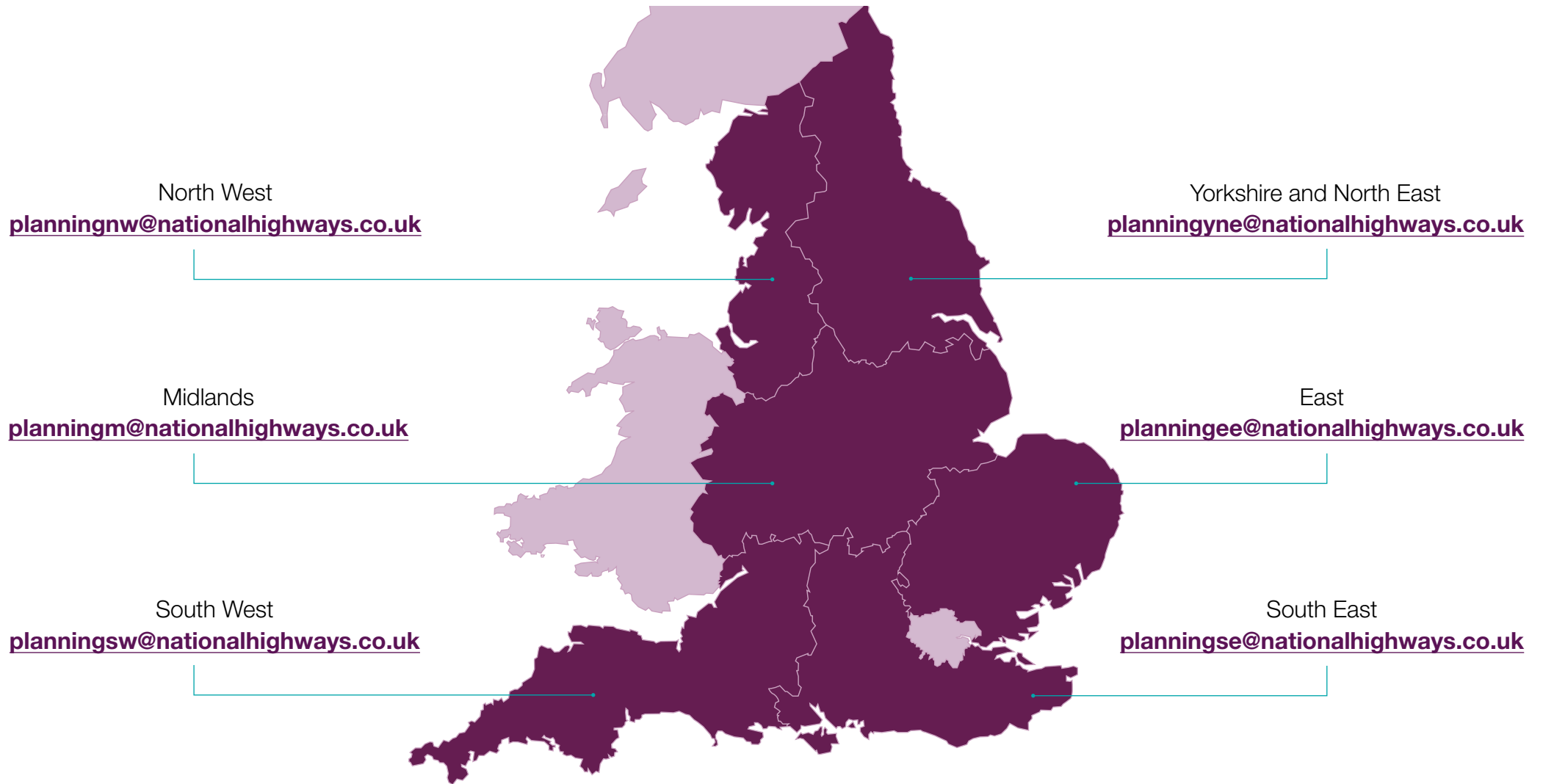
Information Sharing

Where possible, we are willing to share data, analysis, studies and other information to help you understand the current and future issues identified on the SRN in more detail.

Collaborative Approach

We can provide comments on any draft site selection work, to provide a view on where there may be potential impacts on the SRN and highlight any locations of concern. We would also like to continue to work closely throughout your Local Plan preparation and suggest future progress meetings are arranged on a regular basis initially to enable updates on progress and any new intelligence to be shared.

National Highways Regional Spatial Planning Teams



If you are unsure which regional team to contact you can view [**Regional leads by county and local authority.**](#)

Contact:

Economic Development and Spatial Planning Team

Phone: 0300 123 5000 (Customer Contact Centre)

Email: SpatialPlanning@nationalhighways.co.uk

Website: nationalhighways.co.uk

© Crown copyright 2025.

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence.

To view this licence: **visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/**
write to the **Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU**,
or email **psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk**.

Mapping (where present): © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 OS 100030649. You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

This document is also available on our website at **nationalhighways.co.uk**
For an accessible version of this publication please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.
If you have any enquiries about this publication email **info@highwaysengland.co.uk**
or call **0300 123 5000**.*

*Calls to 03 numbers cost no more than a national rate call to an 01 or 02 number and must count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls.

These rules apply to calls from any type of line including mobile, BT, other fixed line or payphone.

Calls may be recorded or monitored.

Registered office Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4LZ
National Highways Limited registered in England and Wales number 09346363