GOV•UK

Department for Transport

National Highways

Guidance

Strategic road network and the delivery of sustainable development

Updated 23 December 2022

Contents

National Highways and the strategic road network
The role of this document
Principles of sustainable development
New connections and capacity enhancements
Engagement with plan-making
Engagement with decision-taking
Special types of development
Roadside facilities
Annex A: Roadside facilities tables

OGL

© Crown copyright 2022

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development

National Highways and the strategic road network

1. National Highways ("the company") has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport ("the Secretary of State") as a strategic highways company under the provisions of the Infrastructure Act 2015. In accordance with the company's licence issued by the Secretary of State, it is the highway authority, traffic authority and street authority for the strategic road network[footnote 1] (SRN) in England. It is a condition of the licence that the company must comply with or have due regard to relevant government policy, which includes this document.

2. The government sets the company's budget and takes decisions on key areas of investment such as major road schemes. It does this through the road investment strategy (RIS), which sets out an investment plan for a five-year period. This means that, at any one point, there will be investment commitments in place for the current RIS period, and for the following period towards the end of the five-year cycle.

3. The company will deliver on the commitments set out in each RIS and work with the government and key stakeholders to investigate future investment needs on the SRN. This is facilitated through the preparation of route strategies by the company, which must take account of relevant strategies and priorities concerning local road and other transport networks as set out in the licence.

4. The principal purpose of the SRN[footnote 2] is to enable safe, reliable, predictable, efficient, often long distance, journeys of both people (whether as drivers or passengers) and goods in England between our:

- main centres of population
- major ports, airports and rail terminals
- geographically peripheral regions of England and
- chief cross-border routes to Scotland and Wales

5. In this regard, the SRN provides critical links between our cities and other urban areas, serves as a gateway to global markets and travel destinations, connects our communities with families and job opportunities, and binds and strengthens our union. It drives productivity and prosperity by unlocking growth, encouraging trade and attracting investment, and plays a vital role in levelling up the country.

6. The SRN also has an essential role in supporting the government's commitments in Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain ("the transport decarbonisation plan"). In particular, the company will prepare and plan for the delivery of future transport technology on the network, such as the installation of high-powered chargepoints for electric vehicles (EV). Further, it will support initiatives that reduce the need to travel by private car and enable the necessary behavioural change to make walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport the natural first choice for all who can take it.

7. These actions must be carried out alongside effective engagement in the planning system, to enable the delivery of sustainable development, support the needs of the freight and logistics sector, and mitigate the impact of growth on the natural environment. As such, the company will share evidence, data, knowledge and experience, and work collaboratively and constructively with public bodies and other key stakeholders.

The role of this document

8. This document is the policy of the Secretary of State in relation to the SRN which should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), planning policy for traveller sites, national planning policy for waste, planning practice guidance, national design guide, National Model Design Code, Manual for Streets (MfS), local transport note (LTN) 1/20 and all other material considerations when strategic policy-making authorities[footnote 3] are setting policies and making decisions on planning and development proposals under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The policies may also be considered important and relevant to decisions on nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) in the absence of a stated position in the relevant national policy statement. This document replaces the policies in the Department for Transport circular 02/2013 of the same title.

9. This circular also sets out the way in which the company 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 development promoters and their consultants, strategic policy-making authorities, local highway authorities, sub-national transport bodies, local enterprise partnerships, community groups and others involved in

development proposals which may result in any traffic or other impact on the SRN.

10. The circular is applicable to the whole of the SRN, comprising the trunk motorways (“motorways”) and all-purpose trunk roads (APTRs) in England, including those roads managed by the design, build, finance and operate companies. For the avoidance of doubt, the circular will not apply to the Major Road Network[footnote 4], except in relation to its junctions with the SRN.

Principles of sustainable development

11. The company will act in a manner which conforms to the principles of sustainable development. In this context, the company’s licence agreement defines sustainable development as encouraging economic growth while protecting the environment and improving safety and quality of life for current and future generations. Alongside this, the company has an important role to play in the drive towards zero emission transport through its commitment to net zero maintenance and construction emissions by 2040 and net zero road user emissions by 2050[footnote 5], and its role as a statutory consultee in the planning system.

12. 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. In this regard, recent research on the location of development[footnote 6] found that walking times between new homes and a range of key amenities regularly exceeded 30 minutes, reinforcing car dependency. Developments in the right places and served by the right sustainable infrastructure[footnote 7] delivered alongside or ahead of occupancy must be a key consideration when planning for growth in all local authority areas.

13. As set out in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, Gear Change, Bus Back Better and the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport must be the natural first choice for all who can take it. However, where developments are located, how they are designed and how well delivery and public transport services are integrated has a huge impact on people’s mode of travel for short journeys. The company will therefore expect strategic policy-making authorities and community groups responsible for preparing local and neighbourhood plans to only promote development at locations that are or can be made sustainable[footnote 8] and where opportunities to maximise walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared travel have been identified[footnote 9].

14. This approach seeks to make the most efficient use of capacity within the overall transport network, improve health and wellbeing, and support government policies, strategies and guidance that aim to reduce the negative environmental impacts of development, which includes:

- the NPPF
- transport decarbonisation plan
- Clean Growth Strategy
- Clean Air Strategy
- Net Zero Strategy
- national design guide
- National Model Design Code
- local authority toolkit
- inclusive mobility
- local transport note 1/20
- the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

Local transport plan guidance and an update to Manual for Streets will also be published in due course.

15. The Transport Decarbonisation Plan and the Future of Freight Plan also recognise that local planning and highway authorities need help when planning for sustainable transport and developing innovative policies to reduce car dependency. This includes moving away from transport planning based on predicting future demand to provide capacity ('predict and provide') to planning that sets an outcome communities want to achieve and provides the transport solutions to deliver those outcomes (vision-led approaches including 'vision and validate,' 'decide and provide' or 'monitor and manage'). The company will support local authorities in achieving this aim through its engagement with their plan-making and decision-taking stages, while recognising the varying challenges that will be presented by certain sites based on their land use, scale and/or location.

16. In the context of achieving sustainable development, the creation of high-quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. The NPPF is clear that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of development proposals. Plan-making and decision-taking should ensure that developments optimise the potential of sites to support local facilities and sustainable transport networks.

17. Successful development depends upon a movement network that makes connections to destinations, places and communities, both within the site and beyond its boundaries. The company will support development

promoters and local authorities in applying the principles of Manual for Streets, the National Design Guide on Movement, inclusive mobility and local transport note 1/20 to ensure priority is given to pedestrian and cycle movements, and that well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users is incorporated into development proposals.

New connections and capacity enhancements

18. New connections (for example, new junctions or direct accesses) on the SRN lead to more weaving and turning manoeuvres, which in turn create additional risk to safety and reduce the reliability and efficiency of journeys, resulting in a negative impact on overall national economic activity and performance.

19. On this basis the principle of creating new connections on the SRN should be identified at the plan-making stage in circumstances where an assessment of the potential impacts on the SRN can be considered alongside whether such new infrastructure is essential for the delivery of strategic growth. Moreover, the company will need to be satisfied that all reasonable options to deliver modal shift, promote walking, wheeling and cycling, public transport and shared travel to assist in reducing car dependency, and locate development in areas of high accessibility by sustainable transport modes (or areas that can be made more accessible) have been exhausted before considering options for new connections to the SRN. There may also be limited opportunity for new connections to be considered as part of public funding programmes to support new development, although necessary infrastructure in up-to-date plans and strategies should be favoured in such instances.

20. Where this has not occurred, there will be no new connections on those sections of the network designed for high-speed traffic[footnote 10] other than for the provision of signed roadside facilities, emergency vehicle access, public transport interchanges and the company's construction and maintenance compounds, where these can be provided safely. The presumption against new connections includes temporary access points for construction vehicles.

21. The company will adopt a graduated and less restrictive approach to the formation of new connections on the remainder of the SRN, determining each case on its own merits. However, the preference will always be that new development should make use of existing junctions. In line with the standards contained in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), new connections to slip or connector roads will not be permitted for safety and operational reasons.

22. Where a new direct access or priority junction serving a single development has been agreed, decision-making authorities should appropriately restrict any change in the permitted land use of the associated development unless otherwise agreed by the company. Additionally, further through access to other developments should be restricted by the decision-maker.

23. Capacity enhancements such as modifications to existing junctions or road widening to facilitate development should be determined on a case-by-case basis. The general principle should be accepted where proposals would include measures to improve community connectivity and public transport accessibility, and this will be weighed against any negative safety, traffic flow, environmental and deliverability considerations, impacts on the permeability and attractiveness of local walking, wheeling and cycling routes, and alternative options to manage down the traffic impact of planned development or improve the local road network as a first preference.

24. Where new connections and capacity enhancements to the SRN would be accepted, the relevant authorities and development promoters should fully consider this outlay with respect to the viability of development[footnote 11].

25. The DMRB sets out the details of the Secretary of State's requirements for access, design and audit in the highway scheme design process to which development proposals must conform[footnote 12]. In this regard, GG 104 (or its subsequent update) identifies the framework and approach for safety risk assessment to be applied when undertaking any activity that may have an impact on safety on the SRN. Moreover, a Walking, Cycling & Horse-Riding Assessment and Review in compliance with GG 142 must be completed during the options or concept stage of a development that proposes modifications to the SRN, which enables opportunities for new or improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders to be identified. In turn, development promoters should prepare a preliminary design and Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (see GG 119) before planning permission is applied for, to demonstrate that road safety issues have been considered. Early engagement with the company is therefore encouraged to ensure that the above and further highway standards in the DMRB are appropriately addressed.

Engagement with plan-making

General principles

26. The NPPF prescribes that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and in development proposals so that sustainable transport can be promoted. In relation to the preparation of local plans and spatial development strategies, the government expects that the relevant authorities will engage with the company from the outset of this process, to understand the interaction between land use designations and the impacts on road safety and future performance of the SRN. The involvement of the company will ensure that the strategic transport evidence base will provide a robust assessment of any positive and negative impacts on the SRN and inform a transport strategy and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the study area that aligns with the safe operation and long-term integrity of the SRN.

27. In exercising its function as a statutory consultee in the planning system, the Infrastructure Act 2015 sets out that the company must co-operate as far as reasonably practicable with other parties. Consequently, it is obliged to provide appropriate, timely and substantive responses in the plan-making process.

28. 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. When the company assists local authorities[footnote 13] in the development of their plans and strategies, the local authority should ensure that the SRN is not being relied upon for the transport accessibility of site allocations except where this relates to roadside facilities or SRN-dependent sectors (such as logistics and manufacturing). The company will also work with local authorities to explore opportunities to promote walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared travel in plan-making, in line with the expectations set out in the NPPF and the Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

29. 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, as this provides the best opportunity to consider the cumulative impacts of development (including planned growth in adjoining authorities) and to identify appropriate mechanisms for the delivery of strategic highway infrastructure. However, there cannot be any presumption that such infrastructure will be funded through a future RIS. The company will therefore work with local authorities in their strategic policy-making functions in identifying realistic alternative funding mechanisms, to include other public funding programmes and developer contribution strategies to be secured by a policy in a local plan or spatial development strategy.

30. The NPPF is clear that planning policies should recognise the specific locational requirements of different economic sectors, including for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations. To operate efficiently, the freight and logistics sector requires land for distribution and consolidation centres at multiple stages within supply chains including the need for welfare facilities for the drivers of commercial

vehicles. For instance, some hubs serve regions and tend to be located out-of-town near the SRN, while others are ‘last-mile’ facilities that will support more sustainable freight alternatives in urban areas. The Future of Freight Plan sets out that a joined-up approach between the planning system, local authorities and industry can safeguard and prioritise the land needed for these uses, such that all parties should work together to identify the specific requirements in their area[footnote 14].

Evidence base

31. The NPPF expects local plans and spatial development strategies to be underpinned by a clear and transparent evidence base which informs the authority’s preferred approach to land use and strategic transport options, and the formulation of policies and allocations that will be subject to public consultation. The company will expect this process to explore all options to reduce a reliance on the SRN for local journeys including a reduction in the need to travel and integrating land use considerations with the need to maximise opportunities for walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared travel.

32. The Transport Decarbonisation Plan indicates that carbon emissions from car and van use is the largest component of the United Kingdom’s total transport emissions. While action is being taken to decarbonise transport such that all new cars and vans will be fully zero emission at the tailpipe from 2035, the proposed location of growth in current plan periods and whether new developments would be genuinely sustainable remain important factors in demonstrating that a local authority area is on a pathway to net zero by 2050 and therefore compliant with the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008.

33. Alongside this, the local authority should identify the key issues within their study area regarding transport provision and accessibility, setting out how the plan or strategy can address these key issues in consultation with the company[footnote 15]. It is the responsibility of the local authority undertaking its strategic policy-making function to present a robust transport evidence base in support of its plan or strategy. The company can review measures that would help to avoid or significantly reduce the need for additional infrastructure on the SRN where development can be delivered through identified improvements to the local transport network, to include infrastructure that promotes walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared travel. A robust evidence base will be required, including demand forecasting models, which inform analysis of alternatives by accounting for the effects of possible mitigation scenarios that shift demand into less carbon-intensive forms of travel.

Infrastructure delivery

34. The company's engagement with plan-making will help inform the preparation of the local authority infrastructure delivery evidence base. From a transport perspective, this evidence should provide a means of demonstrating to the examining inspector, development industry and local communities that planned growth is deliverable, and that the funding, partners and relevant processes are in place to enable the delivery of infrastructure; or that there is a realistic prospect that longer term investment can be secured within the timescales envisaged.

Integration strategies

35. Local plans and spatial development strategies should seek to better integrate the SRN with the wider road network and other transport modes to enhance connectivity, maximise opportunities to facilitate economic growth and support transport decarbonisation across the country.

36. In line with the aims of promoting sustainable development and the commitment in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan to deliver a world class cycling and walking network in England by 2040, planned improvements to the SRN must include the consideration or development of safe and integrated networks for pedestrians, wheelers, cyclists and horse-riders.

Other plan-making and site allocations

37. The company is a statutory consultee to the 'permission in principle' process and for local development orders, neighbourhood plans and associated neighbourhood development orders; all of which have the potential to impact on the SRN. Where applicable, the company will collaborate with the relevant authorities and community groups in the development of their proposals.

38. The company will also engage with authorities and bodies involved in producing strategic transport plans, local transport plans, strategic economic plans and local industrial strategies, and other such plans and strategies that seek to promote economic growth and reduce carbon emissions.

Engagement with decision-taking

Statutory requirements

39. The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (“the DMPO”) sets out the requirements for consultation with the company in respect of applications submitted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the provisions for the company to respond to such consultations.

40. When consulted on an application for planning permission, the company will issue a formal response to the relevant local planning authority within statutory timeframes. Where appropriate, planning conditions will be recommended to mitigate any unacceptable impacts on the SRN that are identified through the assessment process.

41. The DMPO also confers the power for the Secretary of State to make a direction to restrict the grant of planning permission as may be specified. In this regard, The Town and Country Planning (Development Affecting Trunk Roads) Direction 2018 sets out that where the company makes a recommendation as to the determination of an application for planning permission, and the local planning authority does not propose to determine the application in accordance with that recommendation, the local planning authority must first consult the Secretary of State in accordance with the terms of article 4 in the direction. The local planning authority must then not determine the application otherwise than in accordance with the terms of article 5 in the direction.

General principles

42. Local planning authorities and development promoters are encouraged to identify any potential impacts on the SRN that may result from development proposals and discuss them with the company at the earliest opportunity. In the first instance, new developments should give priority to walking, wheeling and cycle movements and facilitate access to high-quality public transport where possible. The needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility should be appropriately addressed in relation to all modes of transport. This can be achieved through good design and proper

consideration of the needs of our communities in accordance with local design codes[footnote 16] and Manual for Streets.

43. The company expects development promoters to enable a reduction in the need to travel by private car and prioritise sustainable transport opportunities ahead of capacity enhancements and new connections on the SRN. For residential-led developments, due consideration should be given to home and street layouts, broadband infrastructure, safe and secure cycle parking, and access to local amenities and open space in support of these aims, while mobility or micromobility hubs should be provided in larger schemes. In addition, high-powered and open-access EV chargepoints should be installed where developments include on-street or communal parking[footnote 17] to support the government's objective to end the sale of new conventional petrol and diesel cars/vans by 2030 and HGVs by 2040, and its commitment to decarbonise transport by 2050.

44. Travel plans are an effective means of incentivising the use of sustainable modes of transport. Where these are required, development promoters must put forward clear targets and commitments to manage down the traffic impact of development and maximise the accessibility of and within sites by walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared travel. Targets for achieving a modal shift to sustainable transport will need to be subject to sustained monitoring and management by an appointed travel plan coordinator. Advice on preparing and monitoring travel plans is contained in the planning practice guidance.

45. Where development proposals are fully in accordance with an up-to-date development plan, considerations at planning application stage in respect of impacts on the SRN will normally be limited to agreeing the final form and phasing of any supporting infrastructure (where required), measures to reduce the need to travel by private car and any relevant environmental impacts. The company will also respond to 'technical details consent' applications in the same way it treats planning applications that are consistent with an up-to-date development plan.

46. With specific regard to HGV parking, government policy is clear in the Future of Freight Plan, 'Planning reforms for lorry parking' Written Ministerial Statement (8 November 2021) and the NPPF that development proposals for new or expanded goods distribution centres should make sufficient provision for HGV drivers, which should include overnight parking and an adequate level of welfare facilities. The need to increase provision for HGV drivers at roadside facilities is set out in paragraphs 79-82 of this circular.

Assessment of development proposals

47. Where the company is requested to do so, it will engage with local planning authorities and development promoters at the pre-application stage on the scope of transport assessments/statements and travel plans. This process should determine the inputs and methodology relevant to establishing the potential impacts on the SRN and net zero principles that will inform the design and use of the scheme. Development promoters are strongly encouraged to engage with the company to resolve any potential issues and maximise opportunities for walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared travel, as early as possible[footnote 18].

48. Where a transport assessment is required, this should start with a vision of what the development is seeking to achieve and then test a set of scenarios to determine the optimum design and transport infrastructure to realise this vision. Where such development has not been identified in an up-to-date development plan (or an emerging plan that is at an advanced stage[footnote 19]), developers should demonstrate that the development would be located in an area of high accessibility by sustainable transport modes[footnote 20] and would not create a significant constraint to the delivery of any planned improvements to the transport network or allocated sites.

49. A transport assessment for consideration by the company must also consider existing and forecast levels of traffic on the SRN, alongside any additional trips from committed developments[footnote 21] that would impact on the same sections (link or junction) as the proposed development. Assumptions underpinning projected levels of traffic should be clearly stated to avoid the default factoring up of baseline traffic. The scenario(s) to be assessed, which depending on the development and local circumstances may include sensitivity testing, should be agreed with the company; where a scenario with particularly high or low growth is proposed, this should be supported by appropriate evidence. Planned improvements to the SRN or local road network should also be considered in any assessment where there is a high degree of certainty that this will be delivered[footnote 22].

50. An opening year assessment to include trips generated by the proposed development, forecasted growth and committed development shall be carried out to establish the residual transport impacts of a proposed development. For multi-phase developments, additional assessments shall be provided based on the opening of each phase.

51. Where a transport assessment indicates that a development would have an unacceptable safety impact or the residual cumulative impacts on the SRN would be severe, the developer must identify when, in relation to the occupation of the development, transport improvements become necessary.

52. The scope and phasing of necessary transport improvements will normally be defined by the company in planning conditions that seek to manage development in line with the completion of these works. In such circumstances, modifications to the SRN must have regard to the need to

future-proof the network, while its delivery may require a funding agreement between the development promoter and the company.

53. As a result of investigations undertaken by the company, development promoter and/or local highway authority, it may become apparent that a different form of intervention would better address cumulative development impacts than the option(s) already identified through the plan-making process. In this situation, the company will work with the local planning authority and development promoter(s) to explore a cost sharing mechanism or the phased delivery of a more comprehensive scheme.

54. Due consideration must be given to the geotechnical integrity of land within the SRN where development would increase the load of, or otherwise alter, an embankment. In such cases, supporting plans and reports must identify the extent of the proposed works and how any risk would be managed in accordance with the DMRB.

Environmental assessments

55. The company will engage in the relevant screening or scoping process where a potential impact on the SRN is identified. Environmental assessments must be comprehensive enough to establish the likely impacts on air quality, light pollution and noise arising from traffic generated by a development, along with the impacts from any proposed works to the SRN and identify measures to mitigate these impacts. Requirements and advice for undertaking environmental assessments in respect of transport impacts can be found in the DMRB.

56. This position will be updated when details of the new approach to environmental assessment are developed.

Physical infrastructure

57. For reasons of safety, liability and maintenance, any physical infrastructure that is necessary to mitigate the environmental effects of or on development must be located outside of the highway boundary of the SRN. In general terms, structures should be sited sufficiently far from the highway boundary of the SRN so that they cannot topple on to the SRN or undermine its geotechnical integrity[footnote 23]. Alternatively, an appropriate structural assessment that accords with the DMRB must be provided. A Road Restraints Risk Assessment must also be carried out where any furniture, structures or other features would be sited adjacent to the SRN.

58. An exemption to the requirement to site structures outwith highway land can be made for those owned and provided by the company, and otherwise only in exceptional circumstances where there is no practicable alternative and safety is not compromised.

59. To ensure the integrity of the highway drainage systems, no new connections into those systems from third party development and proposed drainage schemes will be accepted. Where there is already an existing informal or formal[footnote 24] connection into the highway drainage system from a proposed development site, the right for a connection may be allowed to continue provided that the flow, rate and quality of the discharge into the highway drainage system remains unaltered or results in a betterment. The company may require a drainage management and maintenance agreement to be entered into to secure this requirement in perpetuity.

Special types of development

Advertisements

60. Advertisements within the highway boundary of the SRN are not permitted and the company will remove any unauthorised advertisements placed within its land. An exception will be made for any functional or other advertisement by the company that is deemed necessary for information purposes, or for roundabout sponsorship, where this can be sited safely.

61.The company will not object to proposals for advertising consent for displays outside of the highway boundary of the SRN unless it has specific reason to consider that a road safety hazard resulting from driver distraction would be a direct consequence of the advertisement. The company will particularly consider whether distraction is heightened owing to factors such as size, luminance and the accumulation of advertisements. These factors could present a safety concern for advertisements that are located where particular attention should be given to the driving task, or where the advertisement incorporates elements of traffic sign design, such as directional arrows.

Gateway structures and public art

62. In general terms, the siting of gateway structures and public art within the highway boundary of the SRN will not be permitted for safety and operational reasons, although some exceptions can be made where it can be demonstrated that there would be no additional risk to road users (for example, small features on large roundabouts). Similarly, the siting of such features near to the SRN will only be acceptable where no additional risk to road users is presented. The promoters of such proposals should discuss the design and delivery of their proposals with the company at the earliest opportunity.

Electronic communications apparatus

63. Infrastructure for the provision of electronic communications networks must not cause a safety or environmental hazard to any road users, workers or third parties, and must not interfere in the company's ability to carry out routine or structural maintenance. Neither should any harm be caused to the long-term integrity of the highway including pavement, earthworks, structures, drainage works and ancillary equipment, while visibility to traffic signs and around connections must not be obscured. In addition, all operations must be carried out without an unacceptable interference to traffic flow on the SRN.

64. To these ends and where planning permission or a street works licence would be required to install such apparatus within the highway boundary of the SRN, network providers must obtain technical approval from the company and prepare a road safety audit. Details of the submission requirements can be found in the DMRB.

On-shore wind turbines

65. Wind turbines should not be located where motorists need to pay particular attention to the driving task, such as the immediate vicinity of connections, sharp bends, and crossings for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders.

66. To mitigate the risks to the safety of road users arising from structural or mechanical failure, wind turbines should be sited a minimum of height[footnote 25] + 50 metres or height x 1.5 (whichever is the lesser) from the highway boundary of the SRN.

67. The company recognises that, in certain circumstances, a variation to the above distances may be appropriate subject to the findings of a site-specific assessment. This may apply where there is a significant difference

in elevation between the highway and proposed turbine location. The promoter will be required to demonstrate that any relaxation of the standard requirements in paragraph 66 would not pose an unacceptable risk.

68. The promoter of a wind turbine development must identify any impacts on the operation of the SRN from the construction, operation and de-commissioning stages and identify measures to mitigate these impacts. Swept path analyses must be provided for any abnormal load deliveries to the site via the SRN.

69. Access to the site for construction, maintenance and de-commissioning should be obtained from the local road network. A direct connection to the SRN will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

Developments with solar reflection

70. Some developments, notably solar farms, wind turbines and those with expansive glass facades, have the potential to create glint and glare which can be a distraction for drivers. Where these developments would be visible from the SRN, promoters must provide an appropriate assessment of the intensity of solar reflection likely to be produced, which satisfies the company that safety on the SRN is not compromised.

Roadside facilities

General principles

71. The primary function of roadside facilities is to support the safety and welfare of road users. Roadside facilities should be sympathetic to the character of the site and its surrounding area, and create a safe, inclusive and accessible environment. In most cases it is for the private sector to promote roadside facilities, although there may be a role for the company and local highway authorities to provide these where a need arises.

72. This section sets the government’s policy on the provision of roadside facilities on or near to the SRN and their eligibility for signing, to enable installation of service signs prescribed in The Traffic Signs Regulation and General Directions 2016 (“the TSRGD”) or its replacement.

73. All roadside facilities that are accessed directly from a motorway or motorway junction must be signed for safety reasons. As such, new or improved facilities must meet the requirements for signing as set out in table 1 of Annex A. The operation of all signed roadside facilities will be the subject of a legal agreement between the company and operator of these facilities.

Spacing of general-purpose facilities

74. Roadside facilities perform an important safety function by providing opportunities for the travelling public to stop and take a break during their journey. Government advice is that motorists should stop and take a break of at least 15 minutes every 2 hours.

75. The network of signed roadside facilities on the SRN is intended to provide opportunities to stop at intervals of approximately half an hour. However, the timing is not prescriptive as travel between services may take longer on congested parts of the SRN.

76. On this basis, the maximum distance between signed motorway service areas should be 28 miles. Speed limits on the SRN vary and therefore, applying the same principles, the maximum distance between signed services on APTRs should be the equivalent of 30 minutes driving time.

77. The distance between services can be shorter, but to protect the safety and operation of the SRN, the access/egress arrangements of facilities must comply with the design requirements in the DMRB, which includes provisions in respect of junction separation. The installation of the latest technology to enable a reduction of carbon emissions should also be a consideration for reduced spacing between services.

78. In determining applications for new or improved sites, local planning authorities should not need to consider the merits of spacing between different facilities, for safety reasons, as informed by the maximum recommended distances set out above.

Spacing of freight facilities

79. Drivers of many heavy goods and public service vehicles are subject to a regime of statutory breaks and other working time restrictions, such that roadside facilities are critical enablers of compliance with such requirements.

80. It is recognised that on certain parts of the SRN and at certain times a shortage of parking facilities for HGVs can make it difficult for drivers to find safe space to stop and adhere to requirements for mandatory breaks and rests. To alleviate the shortage, the expansion of existing facilities on the SRN is likely to be needed alongside the creation of new parking sites. As a result, existing truckstops (including closed facilities) on or near to the SRN must be retained for their continued and future use unless it can be clearly demonstrated that a need no longer exists.

81. In areas where there is an identified need[footnote 26], the company will work with relevant local planning authorities to ensure that local plan allocations and planning application decisions address the shortage of HGV parking on or near to the SRN. In these circumstances, local planning authorities should have regard to the following spacing requirements:

(i). the maximum distance between motorway facilities providing HGV parking (being service areas, rest areas or truckstops) should be no more than 14 miles; and

(ii). the maximum distance between APTR facilities providing HGV parking (being service areas or truckstops) should be the equivalent of 20 minutes driving time for HGVs.

82. Where the general spacing distances above are met but a need for HGV parking still arises, the company will support the case to address unmet demand, subject to an assessment of the safety of the proposed access or egress arrangements.

Trip generation

83. Roadside facilities should be well-designed to serve passing traffic and not be destinations in their own right. Consequently, the transport assessment to accompany a planning application for a new or improved facility must show that there would only be a minimal overall increase in trip mileage to be acceptable in this regard. An exception will be made for any predicted increase in HGV mileage, as the provision of facilities that would meet the needs of commercial drivers should be encouraged.

Location

84. On-line (between junctions) service areas are more accessible to users of the SRN and as a result more conducive to encouraging drivers to stop

and take a break. They also help to avoid an increase in traffic demand at junctions with all-purpose roads.

85. Therefore, in circumstances where competing sites are under consideration and on the assumption that all other factors are equal, new facilities must be provided at on-line locations.

86. However, where an on-line service area cannot be delivered due to planning, safety, operational or environmental constraints, the development of a site that shares a common boundary with the highway at a junction with the SRN, and which provides the mandatory requirements to be eligible for signing as set out in table 1 of Annex A, is to be preferred to the continued absence of facilities.

87. The company will not support proposals for roadside facilities adjacent to a junction with a motorway that would not meet the minimum requirements for signing as shown in Table 1, as these can prevent or reduce the provision of more appropriate facilities.

88. An exception to these location requirements is permitted for truckstops[footnote 27] that would be within 2 miles of a junction on the SRN, where these would meet the minimum requirements for signing and would not direct traffic through an established residential area.

Eligibility for signing

89. The minimum requirements for roadside facilities to be eligible for signing from the SRN are set out in table 1. For the purpose of managing traffic anywhere in the United Kingdom, the requirements set out in table 1 may be temporarily waived by the company at any roadside facility.

90. The signing of roadside facilities and signing arrangements within sites must comply with the TSRGD or its replacement, while further guidance on the authorisation, funding, installation and maintenance of signs is available from the company. Only in exceptional circumstances will non-prescribed signs be appropriate, and these must be authorised by the Department for Transport.

Access to the strategic road network

91. The suitability of connections to roadside facilities from the local road network will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the relevant local planning authority as part of the planning process. However, there must be

no route through a roadside facility or its access link between the local road network and the SRN. In addition, any subsidiary accesses must be restricted to staff, deliveries, parties carrying out duties for and on behalf of the Secretary of State, the company, the emergency services, and breakdown recovery and assistance.

92. Access to other developments through a roadside facility or from its connection to the SRN is not permitted. Furthermore, where a new connection is agreed for a proposed roadside facility, the company will expect any subsequent change in the permitted land use to be in accordance with paragraph 22 of this circular.

Retail activities and picnic areas

93. The scope and scale of retail activities at roadside facilities is a matter for consideration by the relevant local planning authority in line with planning policy and any other material considerations. However, local planning authorities should have regard to the primary function of roadside facilities which is to support the safety and welfare of the road user.

94. Picnic areas will be permitted at all types of roadside facility.

Hotels, conference centres and business centres

95. Such development will be a matter for consideration by the relevant local planning authority in line with planning policy and any other material considerations.

96. As a statutory consultee to such proposals, the company will not object to the provision of hotels, conference centres and business centres at the sites of roadside facilities where the impacts on safety and network capacity would be acceptable. However, separate parking must be provided to service such developments to avoid any reduction in the general parking provision available to other road users.

Coach interchanges, park & ride and park & share

97. Such development will be a matter for consideration by the relevant local planning authority in line with planning policy and any other material considerations.

98. As a statutory consultee to such proposals, the company will take account of the local transport benefits, particularly any reduction in trip mileage, and will not object where the impacts on safety and network capacity would be acceptable.

Driver and tourist information

99. Operators of roadside facilities are encouraged to provide live traffic information and make local, regional and national tourist information available.

Parking charges

100. Where a charge is to be levied for parking beyond the mandatory 2 free hours for signed roadside facilities as set out in table 1, the charging regime must be clearly displayed within parking areas and the amenity building(s). Drivers must at all times be afforded the opportunity to pay the charge at the site before leaving, and without the necessity to use a mobile phone. Cash payments must be accepted.

Mandatory parking provision

101. Where a site is subject to a pre-existing sealed agreement which specifies the levels of parking provision, this must continue to apply until such time as the scale and/or scope of on-site activities is extended or reduced.

102. Where the scale and/or scope of on-site activities is altered, the methodology set out in paragraphs 104-108 of this circular must be used for calculating the number of parking spaces by vehicle type. This methodology will also be used for calculating the level of parking provision for all new sites under consideration. For the avoidance of doubt, the provision of spaces for EV charging will contribute to the overall parking numbers on site.

103. Notwithstanding the provisions of the previous 2 paragraphs, parking levels may be adjusted to reflect local conditions and/or site constraints on a case-by-case basis where the company is satisfied that any departure from the requirements is appropriate in such circumstances. In this regard, due

consideration will be given to any site constraints where proposals are made for an increased number of spaces for EVs.

Parking requirements

104. The parking requirements for a motorway service area (MSA) are set out in table 2 of Annex A. In calculating this, the most recent complete year data should be used to identify the peak monthly traffic flow, which should then be averaged to find the daily flow for the number of cars and light goods vehicles (A) and number of HGVs and coaches (B). The company can advise on obtaining and interpreting traffic flows.

105. The parking requirements for a motorway rest area are half of those required for a MSA as set out in table 2 of Annex A, rounded up to a whole number, as necessary.

106. The parking requirements for an APTR service area are set out in table 3 of Annex A.

107. The parking requirements for motorway truckstops are the same as the HGV requirement for a MSA as set out in Table 2. For safety reasons, a minimum of 10 car parking spaces, 1 space for a car with caravan, 1 space for a coach and 1 abnormal load space must also be provided.

108. The parking requirements for non-motorway truckstops (APTR truckstops and those to be signed from the SRN) will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Provision for zero emission and hybrid vehicles

109. The Rapid Charging Fund was announced in the March 2020 Budget as part of the government's commitment to roll out EV charging infrastructure. By 2035, government expects around 6,000 high-powered, open-access chargepoints (150-350 kW capable) to be installed across the SRN[footnote 28].The purpose of this programme is to ensure that there is a high-powered and open-access charging network ready to meet consumer demand for EVs ahead of need, and to enable the phase out of new conventional petrol and diesel cars/vans by 2030 and HGVs by 2040.

110. In line with this, operators of motorway and APTR service areas must support the uptake of zero emission and hybrid vehicles through the installation of EV chargepoints at their sites. All chargepoints should be user-friendly and accessible. In this regard, operators are expected to

adhere to user-centred design principles: providing easy-to-read prices in p/kWh that do not fluctuate once charging sessions have started; ensure that chargepoints are working all year round; and provide free 24/7 helplines for users. Due consideration should be given for some chargepoints being located where they can be safely accessed by a recovery vehicle and car towing a caravan.

111. The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) has worked with Motability and the British Standards Institution to develop a Publicly Available Specification for accessible charging (PAS 1899), the United Kingdom's first accessibility standard for the design and installation of public chargepoints. PAS 1899 was published in October 2022[footnote 29] and should be considered by any party involved in providing public chargepoints.

112. In addition, plans submitted with applications for roadside facilities must show how they can support the conversion of spaces initially allocated for petrol or diesel vehicles (including HGVs, vans and coaches) to spaces with an EV chargepoint in the future without detriment to the overall parking numbers on site.

Annex A: Roadside facilities tables

Table 1: Minimum requirements for roadside facilities to be eligible for signing from the SRN

Minimum requirements to be eligible for signing M = Mandatory P = Permitted	Motorway service area	Motorway rest area	APTR Service Area*	Motorway truck-stops	APT trucl stop
Available 24 hours a day throughout the year.	M	M	-	M	-
Available at least between 8am and 8pm on every day	-	-	M	-	M

Minimum requirements to be eligible for signing M = Mandatory P = Permitted	Motorway service area	Motorway rest area	APTR Service Area*	Motorway truck-stops	APT truck stop
except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day					
Free parking for a minimum of 2 hours for all vehicles permitted to use the facility	M	M	M	M	M
Segregated parking for refrigerated vehicles with access to appropriate mains electrical supply and noise abatement	P	P	P	P	P
Provision of security monitoring equipment including appropriate lighting and CCTV systems	M	P	M	M	M
Free-to-use toilets with hand washing facilities, and at least 1 changing places toilet and 1 for people with disabilities,	M	M	M	M	M

Minimum requirements to be eligible for signing M = Mandatory P = Permitted	Motorway service area	Motorway rest area	APTR Service Area*	Motorway truck-stops	APT truck stop
and no need to make a purchase during opening hours					
Shower and washing facilities for HGV drivers (separate provision for men and women), including secure lockers in the shower/washing area	M	P	P	M	M
Provision of fuel for petrol and diesel vehicles and EV chargepoints	M	P	M	M	P
Hot drinks and cooked hot food available for purchase during all opening hours for consumption on the premises	M	P	P	M	P
Hot drinks and hot food available at least between 8am to 8pm for	-	P	M	-	M

Minimum requirements to be eligible for signing M = Mandatory P = Permitted	Motorway service area	Motorway rest area	APTR Service Area*	Motorway truck-stops	APT truck stop
consumption on the premises					
Access to a free-of-charge telephone for emergency use, Wi-Fi and power points available for device charging	M	M	M	M	M
Use as an operating centre for the purposes of the Goods Vehicles (Licensing of Operators) Act 1995 or the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	P

Table 2: Parking requirements at motorway service areas

	Calculation***	Variable	Notes
Traffic flow (Vehicles per day) [footnote 30]			
Cars and light goods vehicles		A	

	Calculation***	Variable	Notes
HGVs and coaches		B	
No. of parking spaces required [footnote 31]			
Cars	0.5% of A	C	
HGV	0.5% of B, or 1% of B in areas where there is an identified need	D	
Abnormal load	Minimum of 1		
Coach	0.1% of B	E	
Coach interchange [footnote 32]	No. of spaces subject to agreement	E1	
Caravan/motorhome/vehicle and trailer	0.015% of A	F	
Motorcycle	0.015% of A (where the number falls below 10, a minimum of 10 spaces shall be provided)	G	Dedicated motorcycle spaces for securing bikes
Additional car parking spaces for lodges	One space per 2 bedrooms	-	
Car parking for disabled users	5% of C (where the number falls below 5, a minimum of 5 spaces shall be provided) Minimum of 2 spaces for lodges	-	Located adjacent to the front entrance of the amenity building/lodges

	Calculation***	Variable	Notes
Caravan/motorhome/vehicle and trailer parking for disabled users	5% of F (where the number falls below 2, a minimum of 2 spaces shall be provided)	-	

Table 3: Parking requirements at all-purpose trunk road service areas

	Calculation***	Notes
No. of parking spaces required [footnote 33]		
Cars	0.1% of A (see Table 2)	Minimum of 10
HGV	Minimum of 2	
Abnormal load	Minimum of 1	
Coach	Minimum of 1	
Coach interchange [footnote 34]	No. of spaces subject to agreement	
Caravan/motorhome/vehicle and trailer	Minimum of 2	
Motorcycle	0.015% of A (where the number falls below 10, a minimum of 10 spaces shall be provided)	Dedicated motorcycle spaces for securing bikes
Additional car parking spaces for lodges	One space per 2 bedrooms	

	Calculation***	Notes
Car parking for disabled users	Minimum of 3 spaces and an additional minimum of 2 spaces for lodges	Located adjacent to the front entrance of the amenity building/lodges
Caravan/motorhome/vehicle and trailer parking for disabled users	Minimum of 1	Located adjacent to the front entrance of the amenity building/lodges

*Limited to a single or exceptionally 2 interconnected premises, accessed directly from the trunk road or a junction on the trunk road.

**See paragraph on exception to these location requirements.

***The company can assist with these calculations.

---

1. The strategic road network comprises the trunk motorways and all-purpose trunk roads in England as shown: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/677493/s170085_Network_Manangement_Map.pdf (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/677493/s170085_Network_Manangement_Map.pdf)
2. As set out in the Road Investment Strategy 2: 2020-2025 report.
3. Local planning authorities, and elected mayors or combined authorities where planning powers have been conferred.
4. The Major Road Network forms the middle tier of the busiest and most economically important local authority ‘A’ roads.
5. Net zero highways: our 2030 / 2040 / 2050 plan.
6. RTPI Research paper: The Location of Development (December 2021).
7. This will include (but is not limited to) fibre-optic broadband and co-working/home office spaces as well as sustainable transport infrastructure.
8. The NPPF sets out the national policy position in respect of sustainable development considerations for rural housing.
9. Active Travel England will also champion the delivery of sustainable transport options within the planning system.

10. High-speed traffic routes are motorways, and all-purpose dual carriageways with partially or comprehensively limited access.
11. This will include construction costs, relevant fees and a commuted lump sum regarding future maintenance.
12. Design agents appointed by development promoters will be expected to demonstrate conformity with the quality management systems that the DMRB requires for designers working for the company; failing which designs may be subject to additional checks and approvals.
13. Local authority refers to the public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning or highway functions for a particular area. All references to local authority include the district council, London borough council, county council, combined authorities, mayoral authorities, sub-national transport bodies, local enterprise partnerships, Broads Authority, National Park Authority, the Mayor of London and a development corporation, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.
14. This may include opportunities for a rail network connection in addition to having a close proximity to the SRN and customers.
15. Strategic policy-making authorities must also refer to the planning practice guidance when producing their transport evidence.
16. Or the principles of the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code where these have not been prepared.
17. Inclusive mobility establishes spacing requirements and other relevant considerations in providing for an inclusive environment.
18. Details of the company's pre-application advice service can be found at: https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/planning-and-the-strategic-road-network-in-england/ (https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/planning-and-the-strategic-road-network-in-england/)
19. The NPPF establishes the weight to be given to policies in emerging plans.
20. Opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.
21. Where development proposals are consistent with an up-to-date plan or strategy (or where there is no up-to-date plan or strategy), this should include all relevant development that is consented or allocated where there is a reasonable degree of certainty will proceed within the next 3 years and include the full amount of development to be built. Where development proposals are not consistent with an up-to-date plan or strategy, this should include all relevant development that is consented or allocated over the entirety of the plan period. In some instances, due regard should be had to permissions and allocations in neighbouring authorities. The inclusion or exclusion of specific developments should be agreed with the local planning authority at pre-application stage.

22. This will normally be instances where the improvement is identified in the company's RIS, has funding secured by other means and/or where this is linked to a committed development scheme; and for works to the SRN, the scheme should be at PCF Stage 3 preliminary design or later in its development process.
23. The special considerations which apply to the siting of wind turbines are set out in this paragraph.
24. An informal connection refers to surface water run-off and a formal connection to an engineered connection.
25. The height measurement of a wind turbine shall be taken from ground level to the tip of the rotor blade.
26. This will be informed by regular updates to the Department for Transport's National Lorry Parking Survey and demand assessments undertaken by the company to ensure that appropriate evidence is available on the national picture.
27. Including facilities which provide services to general motorists as a secondary activity.
28. Rapid charging fund guidance (September 2021)
29. Publicly Available Specification for accessible charging: https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/standards/pas-1899/ (https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/standards/pas-1899/)
30. Where supporting information is available, operators may wish to increase the number of parking spaces for particular types of vehicles in recognition of the make up of the road users served by the facility.
31. Parking for disabled travellers should be clearly signed at the entrance to the services.
32. Where such a facility has been permitted.
33. Parking for disabled travellers should be clearly signed at the entrance to the services.
34. Where such a facility has been permitted.

OGL

All content is available under the Open Government Licence v3.0, except where otherwise stated

© Crown copyright