

Proposals for the creation of a Major Road Network

Page 2: Respondent details

Q1. Your contact details. We will only contact you if we need to clarify any of the answers you give us.

Your name Joshua Harris

Your email jharris@brake.org.uk

Q2. In what capacity are you responding?

Other (please specify):
Road safety charity

Q3. In which region are you based?

Yorkshire and the Humber

Page 3: MRN core principles

Q4. In order to deliver our objectives for the MRN, we believe there are a number of fundamental principles that must be at the heart of our plans for a MRN and its programme of investment. These are: increased certainty of funding a consistent network a coordinated investment programme a focus on enhancement and major renewals clear local, regional and national roles local and regional contributions strengthening links with the Strategic Road Network Q1. Do you agree with the proposed core principles for the MRN outlined in the consultation document?

No

Page 4: MRN core principles

Q5. If you answered no, which core principle(s) do you disagree with? Provide an explanation why.

A fundamental omission from both the central policy objectives and core principles for the Major Road Network (MRN) is road safety and a commitment to reducing collisions, deaths and serious injuries on these roads.

The Government's British Road Safety Statement (2015) notes a Manifesto commitment to "reduce the number of cyclists and other road users killed or injured on our roads every year", and any such road investment plan must therefore have safety at its core [1].

Highways England's Delivery Plan for 2015-2020 includes a target of achieving a 40% reduction in the number of people who are killed or seriously injured on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) by the end of 2020 [2], and such an approach needs to be replicated for the MRN. Although the exact scope of the MRN has yet to be defined, a report by the Rees Jeffrey Road Fund [3] identifies that the rate of deaths and serious injuries per billion vehicle miles travelled on the proposed MRN is nearly four times that of the SRN. The report also highlights that although the LHA network (the term used to refer to the proposed MRN roads) represents only 2.1% of total road mileage, it accounts for 8.9% of all deaths and serious injuries. Such figures indicate the need for targeted action on these roads to deliver widespread safety improvements – as is stated in the report: "there are likely to be relatively more opportunities to make effective and value-for-money interventions on the LHA network than on the SRN" [3].

The central policy objective of supporting all road users is welcome, but the Government must do more to encourage road users to choose to cycle, walk or use public transport rather than make a journey by car. Cycling is one of the healthiest, cheapest, most environmentally friendly forms of transport available but, unfortunately, the UK lags behind many other countries when it comes to cycling levels. A study by the European Commission in 2010 found that just 2% of people aged 15 and over in the UK use a bicycle as their main form of transport – the seventh lowest level in Europe [4].

A survey of UK drivers, by Brake and Direct Line [5], has found that investment in the creation of segregated, tarmacked cycle paths alongside the single-carriageway A road network could significantly increase the take up of cycling: 70% of drivers stated that at present they never cycle on these roads, but more than half of respondents (53%) indicated that they would consider cycling more often if there was a demarcated space for cyclists. Respondents to the survey were also twice as likely to call for government investment in single-carriageway A roads to go towards providing segregated cycle paths, made of tarmac, separated from the road, rather than developing these roads into dual carriageways with central reservations and crash barriers. The Government has recently launched a call for evidence on cycling safety, as part of its drive to encourage more people to take up cycling at all ages, and it should show commitment to this aim through utilising all available investment opportunities, such as the development of the MRN, to improve cycling safety and cycling facilities.

References:

[1] Working Together to Build a Safer Road System: British road safety statement, Department for Transport, 2015

[2] Delivery Plan 2015-2020, Highways England, 2015

[3] A Major Road Network for England: Supporting Document 8 – Safety Management on the MRN, Rees Jeffreys Road Fund, 2017

[4] Future of Transport: analytical report, European Commission, 2011

[5] Safe Roads Between Places, Brake and Direct Line, 2018

Page 5: Defining the network

Q6. The extent of the network must strike a balance between capturing the most economically important regional roads and ensuring that its size is appropriate, enabling investments that can drive an improvement to the level of funding available. Any definition must make the best use of local and regional knowledge to ensure that the most economically important roads are captured. To strike this balance appropriately, we are proposing the use of both quantitative and qualitative criteria to define the network. This approach ensures: the network is coherent, ie more than just a set of fragmented sections of road the network has a sound, objective analytical basis, yet also has the flexibility to factor in local knowledge and requirements Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the quantitative criteria outlined in the consultation document and their proposed application?

Disagree

Page 6: Defining the network - quantitative criteria

Q7. If you disagree or strongly disagree, what should be the quantitative criteria?

The Government's criteria to define the MRN, whether quantitative or qualitative, is based upon the economic importance of these roads. However, the criteria chosen do not include the economic impact of road deaths and injuries, which, as detailed below, accounts for an estimated £650m annually and is therefore highly significant.

According to estimates detailed in Supporting Document 8 of the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund report [1], the proposed MRN (termed 'LHA' by Rees Jeffrey) would account for 8.9% of people killed or seriously injured in England, an estimated 2038 in 2016 [2]. This metric does not distinguish between road deaths and serious injuries but, assuming that the ratio of deaths to serious injuries on the MRN is similar to the ratio of deaths to serious injuries on roads in Britain in 2016 (7.4%) [3], we can estimate that there are approximately 151 road deaths and 1887 serious injuries on the proposed MRN every year [4].

The latest government figures indicate that the average cost, or value of prevention [5], is £1,841,315 for every road death and £206,912 for every serious injury [6]. We can therefore estimate the cost to the economy of road deaths and serious injuries on the proposed MRN as being over £650 million annually [7]. To put this sum in context, over the current investment period, Road Period 1 (2015-2020), Highways England is looking to spend just £320 million on the Strategic Road Network on additional road safety schemes, cycling schemes, and its innovation and design fund.

The Government must therefore include a 'road safety' criteria within its quantitative assessment criteria for the MRN, using road crash statistics to identify which roads would gain the greatest benefit from strategic safety interventions.

References:

[1] A Major Road Network for England: Supporting Document 8 – Safety Management on the MRN, Rees Jeffreys Road Safety Fund, 2017

[2] Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2016, DfT, RAS30008: 22,900 KSI in England. Calculations: 8.9% of 22900 = 2038

[3] Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2016, DfT, RAS30001: 1,792 road deaths and 24,101 serious injuries.

[4] Calculations: 7.4% of 2038 = 150.8. 2038 – 151 = 1887.

[5] Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2016, DfT, RAS60001

[6] A valuation of road accidents and casualties in Great Britain, DfT, 2012 "Prevention can be interpreted in two ways here: on the one hand it is the amount of money the Government should spend to likely prevent all road accidents. On the other hand it can be considered as the loss to society due to the current level of road accidents."

[7] Calculations: $(151 \times 1841315) + (1887 \times 206912) = £668,481,509$

Page 7: Defining the network - qualitative criteria

Q8. Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the qualitative criteria outlined in the consultation document and their application?

Disagree

Page 8: Defining the network - qualitative criteria

Q9. If you disagree or strongly disagree, what should be the qualitative criteria?

The qualitative criteria of linking economic centres is supported by Brake, but this support is predicated on the Government meeting its commitment to support all road users. The development of the MRN provides the Government with a unique opportunity to invest in the delivery of facilities for non-motorised transport. This investment would encourage people to make more journeys by bike or on foot and, as a result, reduce the number of vehicles on our roads, improving road safety for everyone and contributing to a cleaner, healthier environment.

A survey of UK drivers by Brake and Direct Line [1] has found that investment in building segregated, tarmacked cycle paths, alongside the single-carriageway A-road network, would significantly increase the numbers of people choosing to cycle: whereas 70% of drivers stated that at present they never cycle on these roads, more than half of respondents (53%) indicated that they would consider cycling more often if there was a demarcated space for cyclists. Prioritising investment in facilities that connect cyclists between places is therefore a must for government, in line with its commitment to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey, as detailed in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy [2].

References:

[1] Safe Roads Between Places, Brake and Direct Line, 2018

[2] Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, DfT, 2017

Page 9: Defining the network

Q10. Q4. Have both the quantitative and qualitative criteria proposed in the consultation document identified all sections of road you feel should be included in the MRN?

No

If no, explain how the criteria are failing to identify a section of road you feel should be included.
See response to questions 2-3 noting the need for safety to be a determining factor.

Q11. Q5. Have the quantitative or qualitative criteria proposed in the consultation document identified sections of road you feel should not be included in the MRN?

Don't know

If they have, explain why these roads should not be included in the MRN.
See response to questions 2-3 noting the need for safety to be a determining factor.

Page 10: Defining the network – refreshing the MRN

Q12. It will be important for the MRN to remain relevant and reflect the latest data and changes to economic centres and road use. However, this must be balanced against the need to provide a stable platform on which the MRN investment programme can be delivered. We propose to review the MRN every 5 years to coincide with the existing Road Investment Strategy (RIS) timetable. This will involve updating and reviewing the data that are used and engagement with all bodies involved in the delivery of the MRN programme. Q6. Do you agree with the proposal for how the MRN should be reviewed in future years?

Yes

If you answered no, how should the MRN be reviewed in future years?

We understand the need for consistency and stability in delivering investment in the MRN and support the proposal detailed in the consultation. However, as referenced in previous questions, matters of road safety should be a determinant when choosing which roads to include in the MRN.

Page 16: Investment assessment criteria

Q20. To support the development of regional evidence bases and a national investment programme we are proposing that a clear set of criteria be developed. These support the government's overarching objectives for the MRN programme whilst providing local and regional bodies the flexibility to develop proposals that support the delivery of local and regional objectives. We propose that these criteria should be as follows: Objective Criteria Reduce congestion Alleviate congestion Environmental impacts: improve air quality and biodiversity reduce noise and risk of flooding protect water quality, landscape and cultural heritage sites Support economic growth and rebalancing Industrial strategy - support regional strategic goals to boost economic growth. Economic impact - improve ability to access new or existing employment sites. Trade and gateways impact - improve international connectivity, eg access to ports & airports. Support housing delivery Support the creation of new housing developments by improving access to future development sites and boosting suitable land capacity. Supporting all road users Deliver benefits for non-motorised users, including cyclists, pedestrians and disabled people. Safety benefits - reduce the risk of deaths/serious injuries for all users of the MRN. Supporting the SRN Improve end to end journey times across both networks. Improve journey time reliability. Improve SRN resilience. Q14. Do you agree with the investment assessment criteria outlined in the consultation document?

No

If you answered no, what should the investment assessment criteria be?

Safety should be the issue of primary importance for the investment assessment criteria. As outlined in our response to question 6 of this consultation, the estimated cost to the economy of deaths and serious injuries on the MRN (extrapolating from the data provided in the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund report [1]) is well over £650 million. However, this does not fully illustrate the true devastation, for victims and their loved ones, caused by deaths and serious injuries on our roads. It is the duty of the Government to ensure the safety of its citizens, and its infrastructure and the investment criteria for the MRN should reflect this. References: [1] A Major Road Network for England: Supporting Document 8 – Safety Management on the MRN, Rees Jeffreys Road Fund, 2017