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Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

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Dear Michael Gove

### **M3/A322 Junction Improvements**

Thank you for your email of 21 February 2022 with enquiries about the M3/A322 junction and M3 noise, following your meeting with Paul Benham and Duncan Smith. Duncan has asked that I reply to you as these issues fall within my area of responsibility.

I can confirm we'll include Councillors Richard Tear and Rebecca Jennings-Evans of Surrey County Council when we provide updates on the tree planting scheme and I have passed this request on to our environment team.

The next round of route strategies is underway and establishing an evidence base of current network performance and future pressures, is one of the key steps of research in developing future Road Investment Strategies and informing the long-term planning of the Strategic Road Network (SRN).

The evidence identified through this process will be vital in informing the development of the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) 3 period, 2025 – 2030 and beyond, to allow informed decisions to be made on recommendations for potential future scheme options across the whole of our network. This will consider the views of a range of interested parties, including road users and communities.

Using insights from the evidence gathering process we'll publish a SRN Initial Report that assesses the current state of the network and user needs. The Department for Transport (DfT) will then consult widely on the report in late 2022 ahead of producing the draft RIS. Our 'Vision for route strategies: Planning for the future of our roads' can be found here: <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/media/w0vhd3un/vision-for-route-strategies.pdf>

As far as the M3/A322 junction is concerned, it's included in the new 'London to South West Peninsula' route strategy, and Surrey County Council have identified it as a high priority location for future investment.

As part of an earlier initial study we looked at a range of options to improve the performance of the junction, most of which were discounted based on initial feasibility assessment as little benefit could be realised. The only option that appeared viable in performance terms was a complete segregation of the A322 crossing the M3, possibly in the form of a so-called 'hamburger' style roundabout arrangement with the A322 widened and as a flyover.

We would, of course, need to consider this location and its priority when compared with others across the region before considering possible solutions any further. We'll be happy to arrange a public meeting to discuss this location at the appropriate time within the process, likely to be later this year.

In the short term we're still hoping to progress improvements to the signal timings to improve the performance of the junction. We're currently carrying out assessments to make sure all the traffic signals are working efficiently and a validation exercise to give information on traffic patterns and signal timings required to maximise the performance of the junction, with a view to implementing any agreed changes during April.

In response to your questions about noise, we can confirm that we don't monitor noise on the SRN ourselves. The management of traffic noise issues on the SRN is directed by the requirements of the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006, via the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

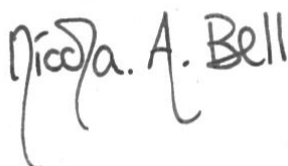
These regulations require DEFRA to produce strategic noise maps and action plans every five years, which set out guidelines for managing noise, rather than proposing specific solutions. The current strategic noise maps were published in July 2019.

This joint Noise Important Area (with Surrey County Council) was mitigated in 2019 by re-surfacing of the road with a lower noise material. Should this area be identified for further mitigation in the next round of mapping we'll consider all options.

More information on how the strategic noise mapping was created can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-noise-mapping-2019>

If you would like any further information, please contact our Route Manager, Greg Stone, who will be pleased to respond. Greg can be contacted by email at [greg.stone@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:greg.stone@highwaysengland.co.uk) or by telephone on 07540 101047.

Yours sincerely



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