

Press release: Highways England Strategic Design Panel vision and progress report published

Among the recommendations of the multi-partner panel is the need for a Good Design Guide and design being central to a review of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges which is used across the world. (See the [published report](#)).

The [panel was set up](#) to support the development of a culture where good design is at the heart of everything within Highways England and the wider road sector. This coincides with Highways England delivering the biggest programme of Government investment in a generation. The panel's focus is on strategic input rather than scheme specific details, targeting where its expertise, insight and guidance will have most positive impact and wider benefit such as standards, procurement and evaluation.

Highways England Chief Highway Engineer Mike Wilson said:

As we continue to successfully deliver the first Road Investment Strategy, I share the aspiration that as well as our roads being safe, efficient and affordable, that they are also beautiful. I do not underestimate the challenge of this; it requires a culture shift for Highways England and the wider roads sector. We will now review the recommendations and provide an update in due course.

The Panel has made the following key recommendations:

- Highways England should publish the design vision and principles recommended by the Panel and should work to develop a Good Design Guide.
- Highways England should ensure that its design vision and principles are implemented effectively and that the Good Design Guide becomes a practical tool across its projects and wider operations.
- Highways England should establish a specific objective aimed at ensuring that a design led approach, as set out in the design vision and principles, is at the heart of the review of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

The panel members come from a range of disciplines and represent stakeholders who have a passionate interest in the design of the Strategic Road Network:

- Campaign for Better Transport
- Design Council/Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)
- Transport Focus
- Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation
- Institution of Civil Engineers
- Landscape Institute

- Historic England
- The Prince's Foundation
- Institution of Structural Engineers
- Royal Institute of British Architects
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Natural England
- National Trust

Sarah Weir OBE, Chief Executive, Design Council said:

Highways England are to be congratulated on the approach they have taken in establishing its Design Panel and having it focus on the strategic aspects of design, and we are delighted to have contributed to its work and proud to be a part of it. The Design Panel's report sets a design challenge for Highways England that puts design processes and thinking at the heart of the planning and development of the strategic road network. The Design Council fully endorses the Design Vision and comprehensive '10 Principles of Good Design' and welcomes the focus on valuing both the beauty of the places through which roads pass and the experience of people that live with and use road infrastructure. The Design Council supports Highways England's use of these principles through its planned Good Design Guide for the review of its overarching Design Manual, and encourages Highways England to use these as the means by which designs for future road infrastructure are measured, so that the full benefits of good design can be released through their work.

Phil Carey, Policy Advisor to Transport Focus, said:

As the Panel's report makes clear, at the heart of good design must be a road that works well for users – one that puts safety first, is easy to use, and is as far as possible a pleasure to travel on.

Clare Warburton, Senior advisor for Transport at Natural England and one of the report authors said:

Consideration for communities, the natural beauty and character of places as well as their surrounding landscapes in road design, is essential if we are to create a lasting, resilient transport legacy that contributes positively to the natural environment.

Ian Wilson, Assistant Director Operations (South West), National Trust, said:

The National Trust is hugely supportive of Highways England's emphasis on improving the design and environmental standards of our roads. Building or improving roads in sensitive landscapes such as

World Heritage Sites or AONBs is not easy. We are delighted to be working with Highways England and other partners to lift the standard of design and ensure that our roads function well and respect the places and communities through which they pass.

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.