highways england

South West Peninsula
Route Strategy

March 2017

Contents

1. Introduction 1
- Purpose of Route Strategies 2
- Strategic themes 2
- Stakeholder engagement 3
- Transport Focus 3

2. The route 5
- Route Strategy overview map 7

3. Current constraints and challenges 9
- A safe and serviceable network 9
- More free-flowing network 9
- Supporting economic growth 9
- An improved environment 10
- A more accessible and integrated network 10
- Diversionary routes 15
- Maintaining the strategic road network 16

4. Current investment plans and growth potential 17
- Economic context 17
- Innovation 17
- Investment plans 17

5. Future challenges and opportunities 23

6. Next steps 31

Route strategies

The division of routes for the programme of route strategies on the Strategic Road Network

1. Introduction

The modernisation of England's motorways and major A roads, also known as the strategic road network (SRN), is making a vital contribution to economic wellbeing and growth. This Route Strategy – one of 18 such reports – provides a statement on the current performance of, and perceived pressures on, the South West Peninsula route to inform the planning of future investment.

The SRN supports national and local economic prosperity by:

- linking together major cities
- connecting with extensive local road networks
- providing links to major ports, airports, and rail terminals
- enabling good access to regions and cross-border routes between the nations of the United Kingdom

The establishment of Highways England through the Infrastructure Act 2015 has changed fundamentally the way we plan investment in the network. Funding is now determined every 5 years, in the Road Investment Strategy (RIS), which is set by Government. We are currently delivering on the commitments that were set out in the first RIS covering 2015 to 2020, which are already making a difference for road users across the network.

At the same time, we are working closely with the other 3 bodies with statutory responsibility for the RIS – Department for Transport, Office of Rail and Road and Transport Focus – on preparing for the next RIS (RIS2) for the period after 2020.

Purpose of Route Strategies

Route Strategies provide a high level view of the current performance of the SRN as well as issues perceived by our stakeholders that affect the network. They are one of the key components of research required for developing the RIS. This suite of Route Strategies builds upon the analysis underpinning the first set of Route Strategies undertaken between 2013 to 2015, which together provided the first comprehensive assessment of the entire network. This time the Route Strategies aim to:

- bring together information from key partners, motorists, local communities, construction partners, environmental groups and across the business
- achieve a better understanding of the condition and performance of our roads, and local and regional aspirations
- shape our investment priorities to improve the service for road users and support a growing economy
- help inform the next RIS[1]

Strategic themes

The Government's vision for transforming the SRN is described in the Road Investment Strategy post 2020: Planning Ahead document available on www.gov.uk. This vision builds on the 5 broad aims published in the Road Investment Strategy for 2015-2020: economy; network capability; integration; safety; and the environment. It also builds on Highways England's 5 strategic outcomes (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2). Using the evidence from this and the other 17 Route Strategies, we will develop proposals that can help bring the Government's vision for roads to life.

RIS1 Strategic Vision as reiterated in "RIS Post 2020: Planning ahead"

Figure 1.1 - RIS1 strategic vision

Highways England Strategic Business Plan's key outcomes

Figure 1.2 - Highways England strategic outcomes

[1]See Chapter 6 for more information on the next RIS

Stakeholder engagement

Building on the engagement we started in the first round of Route Strategies, we have continued to work closely with a wide range of stakeholders to enhance our understanding of the strategic road network, and identify where users and other stakeholders feel investment is needed.

We used a number of methods to collate information. For example, we launched an online tool for customers and stakeholders over the summer of 2016 to inform us of the issues and challenges on our roads that affected them. As well as information collated from a range of people within Highways England, more than 300 different stakeholder organisations provided important feedback on the network during the evidence collection period. There were also more than 370 individual members of the public who contributed information. In total, around 2,700 individual points were raised by external stakeholders.

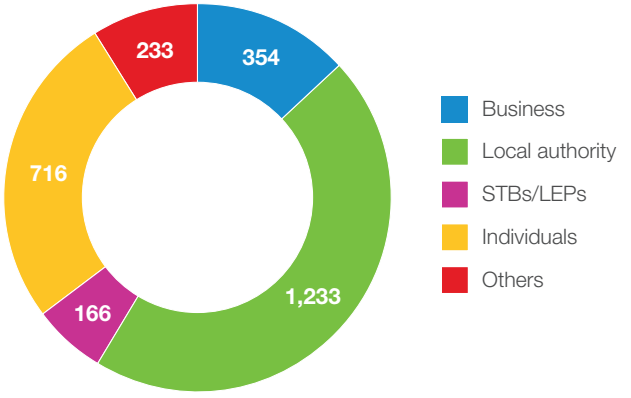


Figure 1.3 - External stakeholder responses

We are increasingly working with subnational transport bodies (STBs), including Midlands Connect, England's Economic Heartland and Transport for the North, so we can ensure that their developing strategies and planning are integrated into our thinking (and vice versa).

Transport Focus

We commissioned Transport Focus, the road user watchdog, to undertake research on road user priorities. More than 4,400 interviews were undertaken with drivers across the SRN. Figure 1.4 below shows the breakdown by user type and purpose.

	Completed interviews	
	3,487	79%
	322	7%
	407	9%
	206	5%
Commuting	501	11%
Business	1,367	31%
Leisure	2,457	56%

Figure 1.4 - Driver sample breakdown

250 fleet managers from a mix of industries, size and regions

The research found that 61% of the users of the South West Peninsula route rated their experience of the route as either extremely good or fairly good. However, as Table 1.1 shows, 41% of users still experienced problems using the route, with congestion and then roadworks cited as the two main causes.

The full report has been published on Transport Focus's website www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/road-to-the-future.
We will continue to work closely with Transport Focus to understand customer priorities to ensure that the next RIS reflects their needs.

Experienced problems %	Route impacted	Largest problem	Second largest problem
61%	M25 to Solent		
58%	London Orbital and M23 to Gatwick		
50%	South Coast Central		
46%	Solent to Midlands		
44%	East of England		
43%	Birmingham to Exeter		
41%	**South West Peninsula**		
41%	North and East Midlands		
40%	London to Scotland East		
40%	South Pennines		
39%	Kent Corridor to M25		
37%	London to Scotland West		
32%	Midlands to Wales and Gloucestershire		
30%	Felixstowe to Midlands		
30%	South Midlands		
28%	London to Leeds East		
27%	London to Wales		
17%	North Pennines		

Congestion/ traffic queuing

Roadworks

Delays caused by accidents/ roads closed

Roads busy/ high volume of traffic

Table 1.1 - Transport Focus summary

2. The route

The South West Peninsula Route is key in connecting the South West to the rest of the United Kingdom, and plays an important role in providing access to major holiday destinations in the South West.

The route comprises a large proportion of the South West SRN, and runs along the A30, A38, A35, A303, A36 and the A46. It passes through or near key towns and cities including Plymouth, Bath, Exeter, Yeovil, Salisbury and Dorchester.

The route consists of A-roads, with a mixture of dual (some with grade-separated junctions) and single carriageways.

Parts of the route have long lengths of dual carriageway, such as sections of the A30 and A38, while others have single carriageways, such as the Axminster bypass on the A35, the A46 and A36.

The route links a number of important towns and cities, including Bath, Salisbury, Yeovil, Plymouth, Exeter and Dorchester, and provides access from these to other nearby locations such as Southampton, Winchester, Basingstoke and Truro. The popularity of the area for leisure activities means that large numbers of walkers and cyclists use these routes. The A30 itself is often used as part of the Land's End to John O'Groats long-distance route.

The section between the M5 and the A38/A380 junction is the busiest section of the entire route, carrying around 70,000 vehicles on an average day and around 80,000 vehicles a day on a peak in August 2014. A high proportion of journeys on the route are leisure-related trips to tourist destinations in the South West, although the route is also used for local traffic and freight. Within the larger conurbations in the peninsula, such as Plymouth, Exeter, Salisbury and Bath, there are a lot of shorter locally-based journeys using the route.

Figure 2.1 - Route overview map

Nationally, the route provides a gateway linking the South West to the east and the west of England. It is a major point of connection to conurbations in the South West. The route also interconnects with a number of motorways including the M5 to Bristol, the M27 to Southampton and the M4 to the north of the route. The A35, A36 and A46 have large proportions of freight traffic as they provide links from the south coast ports to the south-west and north to the M4. The A36-A46 provides the only strategic north–south link between the south coast and the M4.

The route plays an important function as a link to connect people, businesses and communities. The A38 is one of the key roads connecting Cornwall and Devon to counties in the east. Exeter is a major source of employment opportunities, as is the Bournemouth–Poole conurbation and Salisbury. The route also provides a gateway to airports and ports in Plymouth, Exeter, Bournemouth, Southampton and Weymouth.

It provides a gateway to the popular holiday destinations of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, Stonehenge and Bath World Heritage Sites. Inevitably there is an important seasonal aspect to the travel demands on the route. It often has high flows of traffic and congestion that are common during the holiday periods and on Saturdays. Increased traffic is experienced on the route during the summer break and the south-west section also has many public rights of way and other designated routes.

Key environmental areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) along the route include Cornwall, east, south and north Devon, Tamar Valley, Blackdown Hills, Dorset, and Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs. Other attractions include sites of special scientific interest in the area, the Goss and Tregoss Moors and Bodmin Moor and 3 large national parks: Exmoor, New Forest and Dartmoor.

“The route provides a gateway to the popular holiday destinations of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, Stonehenge and Bath World Heritage Sites.”

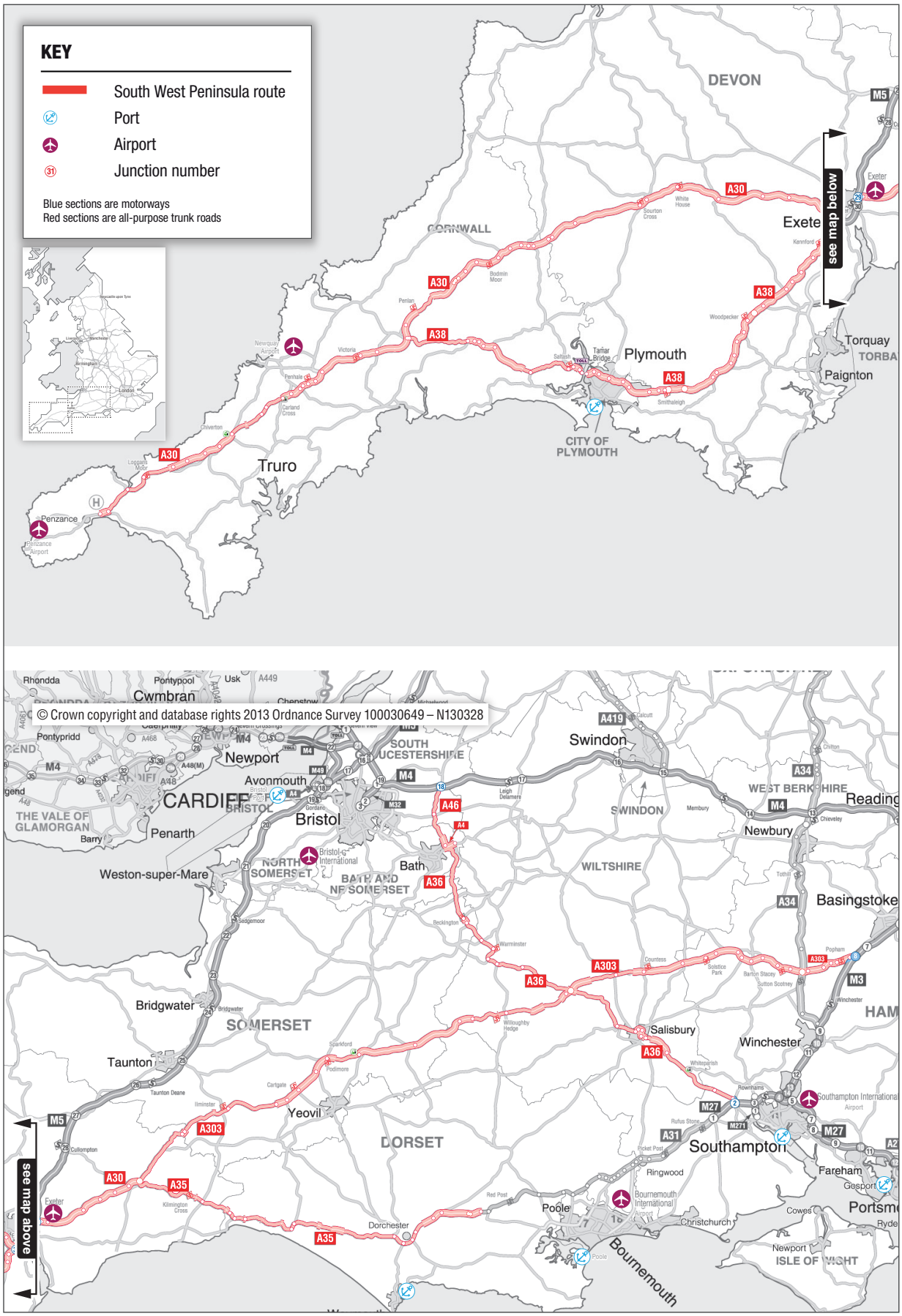


Figure 2.2 - Route Strategy overview map

3. Current constraints and challenges

This chapter outlines the emerging issues raised by stakeholders and is supplemented by Highways England information.

The following text and figures within this chapter provide a summary of the information collected and applied to our strategic themes.

A safe and serviceable network

There are concentrations of safety issues at various points on the route, especially where it passes through villages or close to homes. As the route is made up of single and dual carriageways, incidents can be related to the route passing through small villages, such as Crowlas and Chideock.

Accident cluster sites have been recorded at Chiverton Cross on the A30 while there are high accident rates near Bodmin Moor and between Bodmin and Plymouth. Cluster sites have also been recorded along the A303 west of the A350, the A35 south of Honiton and the A31 between Bere Regis and the A350. Poor safety records and poor performing sections include the A35, A36 and the A303, where there is increased conflict between pedestrians and traffic. Safety issues are also of concern on the A36 at Claverton Village and on the A46 at Hartley Bends.

Many roads are narrow and not suitable for HGVs, leading to long diversion routes. Some sections of the route, such as the A36, are in need of surface repair.

A part of the route through the Blackdown Hills, parts of the A36 south of Bath (Limpley Stoke) and the A46 north of Bath also suffer with geological stability issues.

The suitability and function of the A36 as part of the SRN, and the absence of a strategic, improved north–south link through Wiltshire is the focus of a wider study being led jointly by Wiltshire, Bath and Northeast Somerset and Dorset Council (in partnership with Highways England). The study focuses on the current problems associated with a lack of north–south connectivity and the extent of wider benefits that are effectively being lost as a result of this.

More free-flowing network

Congestion is a problem on a number of sections along the route, especially on roads that lead to key popular tourist destinations such as the A35 and the A30, and along the single carriageway sections, such as the Dorchester bypass. Congestion also affects the ability of the route to cope with traffic volumes. Seasonal increases in traffic flow in Dorset, Devon and Cornwall, which are popular tourist destinations, has a marked effect on journey time reliability.

Congestion is a problem at junctions that provide a link to urban areas along the route. For example, the Marsh Mills Junction, which is a key gateway to Plymouth, experiences congestion and disruptions at peak periods.

Within Salisbury all of the junctions along the A36 Southampton Road are currently operating at or above capacity which acts as a constraint along this section of the route.

Supporting economic growth

The route is a critical strategic link, joining the South West to the south coast ports and the rest of the UK. It is vital to a pan-regional economy as well as providing local access to many urban areas. The route plays a major role in supporting the national economy. Bournemouth, Plymouth and Exeter are areas of relatively high employment concentration. The route serves relatively high employment growth areas around the A36 and A303 (Wiltshire/Bristol/Somerset) and high growth areas across Dorset, Devon and Cornwall.

The evidence base identifies a number of current and proposed development opportunities, which should come forward along the route or near to other major highway corridors that access the route. In the southern section of the route, the single carriageway sections are seen as an impediment and affect tourism and the transport of goods as well as the regeneration of the port towns of Newlyn and Penzance.

Further east, investment and growth is expected at Plymouth and around Exeter, with developments such as: Plymouth Eastern Corridor Growth Area; Derriford and the Northern Corridor Growth Area; and the east of Exeter area. Growth along the A35 at Dorchester is likely to have an impact on the route.

Capacity problems on the links at Dorchester and at the junctions through Salisbury constrain potential for improved strategic movements, particularly for freight traffic. Significant new housing and employment developments are planned in the following areas:

- on the A303 in Yeovil
- on the A36 near Salisbury eg Porton Down, Garrison Towns
- near the A36 and A46 at Bath
- in the Poole–Bournemouth conurbation at the eastern section of this route

An improved environment

The route passes through a number of areas experiencing different environmental challenges. As a major tourist attraction with popular areas of outstanding natural beauty, the route provides good access to such areas.

There are several AQMAs such as at Salisbury City Centre adjacent to the A36, others are shown on figures 3.1 to 3.4.

The A36–A46 strategic north–south link routes heavy traffic through the historic cities of Salisbury and Bath which have noise important areas (NIAs). There are other noise issues on the network as traffic impacts on properties in the surrounding areas. For example, NIAs have been identified on the A38, the A30, the A36 and the A35.

Flooding also causes disruption on sections of the SRN such as at the A36 and A303 junction as well as east of the Launceston Tamar Valley. To the south, flooding occurs at Hayle as well as locations on the A30 such as Carland Cross.

Furthermore, other impacts on the environment include: littering along sections of the route such as the A35; constraints on single carriageway sections that have not been improved, as well as rail connections along the line to Plymouth being vulnerable to severe weather.

Harsh weather conditions can also be an issue on some sections of the route such as the A30, which is affected because of the high altitude of the road. Flooding is another problem in Plymouth and near Dorchester and there is a lack of alternative routes if roads are closed or blocked along sections of the route.

A more accessible and integrated network

Locations have been identified on the route where there are missing links, causing severance. This includes gaps in the network between the A36 and A46 where traffic currently routes through Bath. To the south there are missing links on the A38 and A30 at Carminow Junction. Severance is also an issue for vehicle access across the A30 to and from local communities.

The evidence also highlighted locations where cycling is affected. Cycle routes are an important part of the network and there is a petition calling for improvement on the Alderbury to Salisbury cycle route. On the A38, there is a lack of facilities for cyclists and it is recognised that the A38 Ivybridge to Plymouth cycle link needs updating. Furthermore, cycle access at the A303 Countess roundabout is part of a key route for residents of Durrington to access Amesbury and a potential tourist route from Amesbury to Stonehenge.

While the route provides a good means of access to Exeter Airport and railway station and to Plymouth and its port, there is a lack of north–south routes within Exeter, constrained by the River Exe. The volume of traffic on the network can affect local communities when unsuitable routes are being used as alternatives.

There is also a lack of north–south connectivity from the south coast ports to the M4 and the Midlands. The A36/A46 provides a strategic route, most of which is unimproved single carriageway and with the missing link traffic routes through Bath. A recent study linked this lack to a loss of wider benefits for the area.

There are also severance issues on the A35, A36 and A38 where the route runs through communities. On the single carriageway sections, through traffic and inadequate crossing facilities create problems which are exacerbated by increasing vehicle flows.

South West Peninsula - Route Strategy: Map 1 of 4

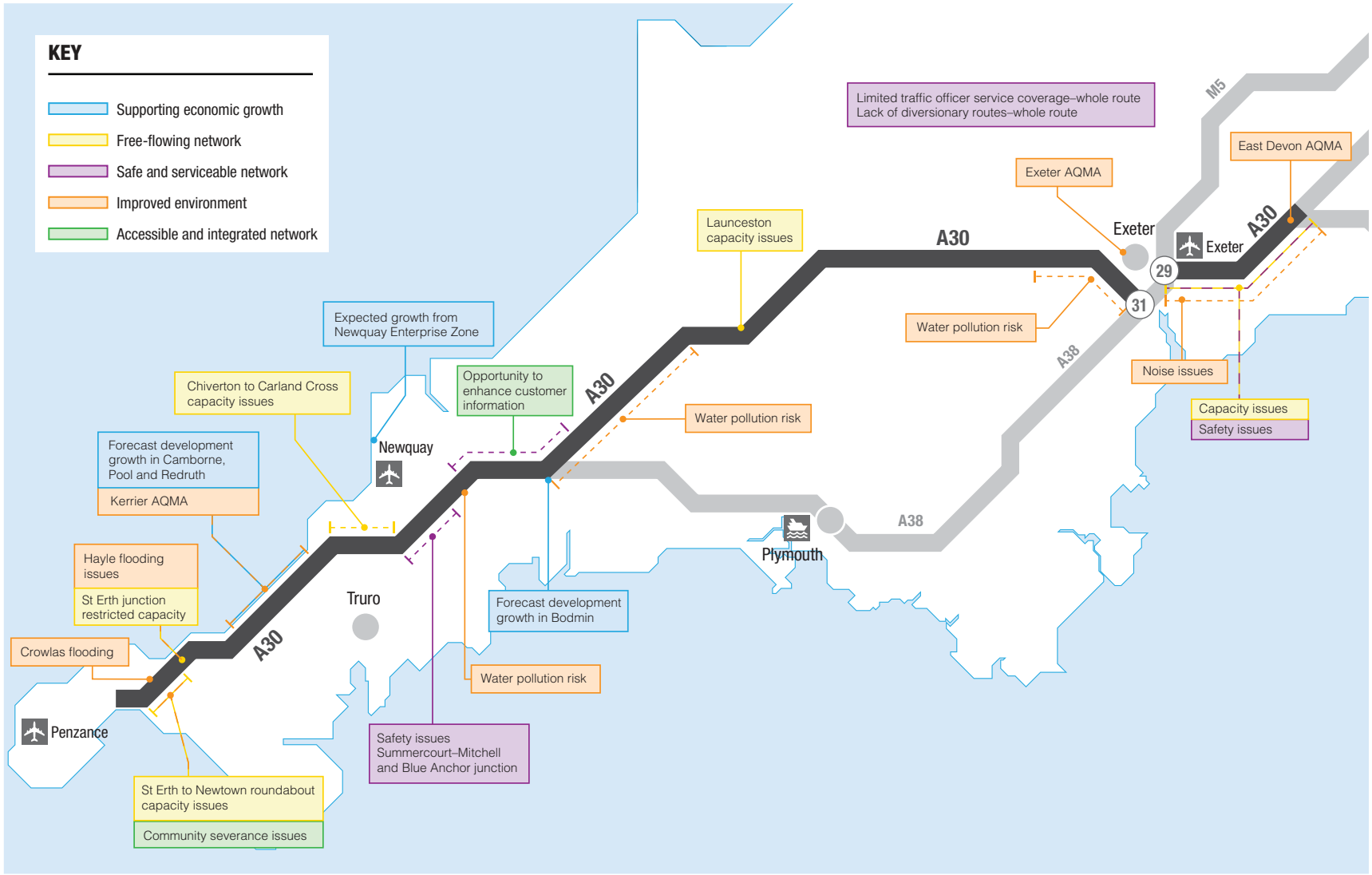


Figure 3.1 - Key challenges for the route

South West Peninsula - Route Strategy: Map 2 of 4

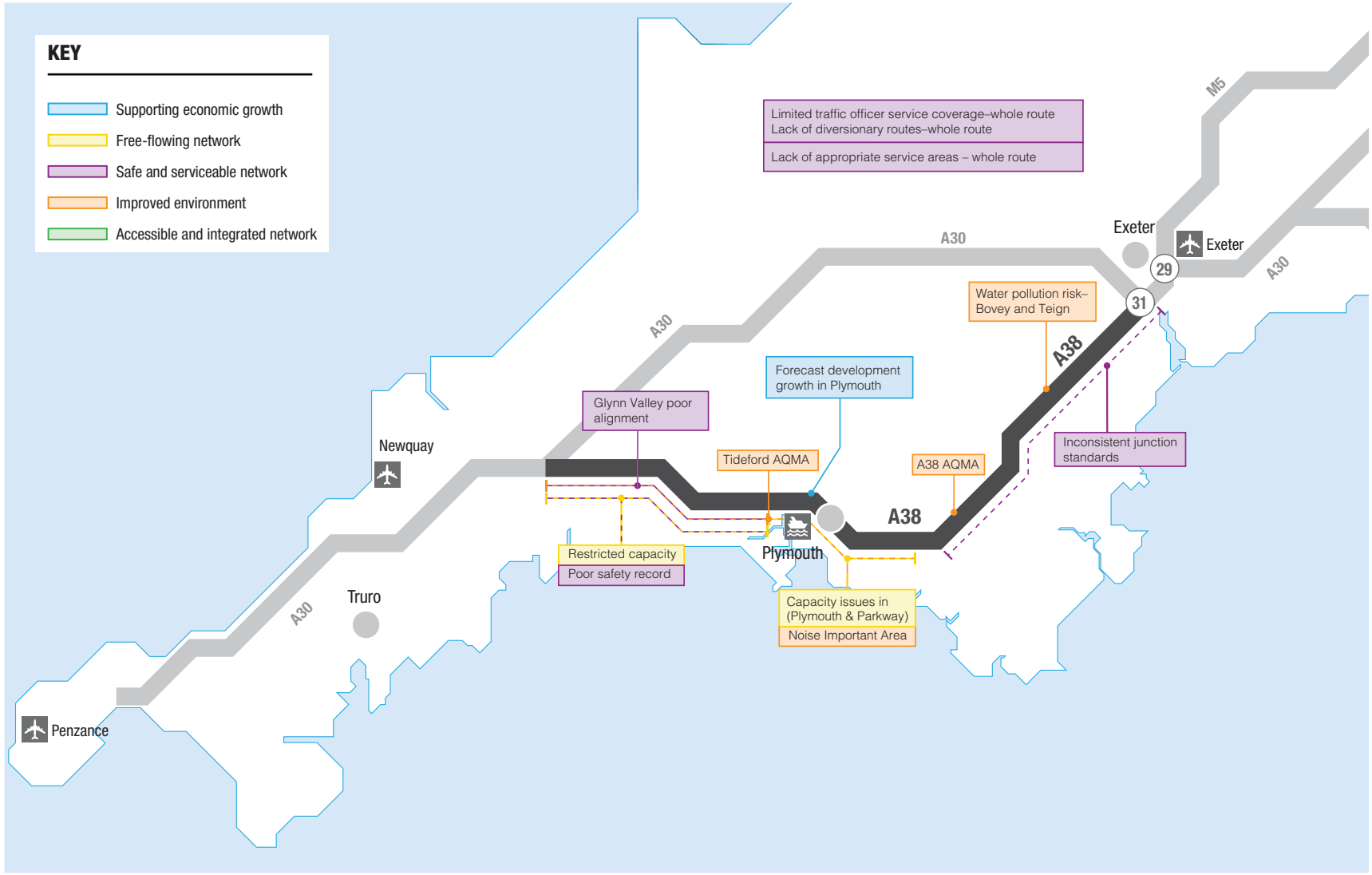


Figure 3.2 - Key challenges for the route

South West Peninsula - Route Strategy: Map 3 of 4

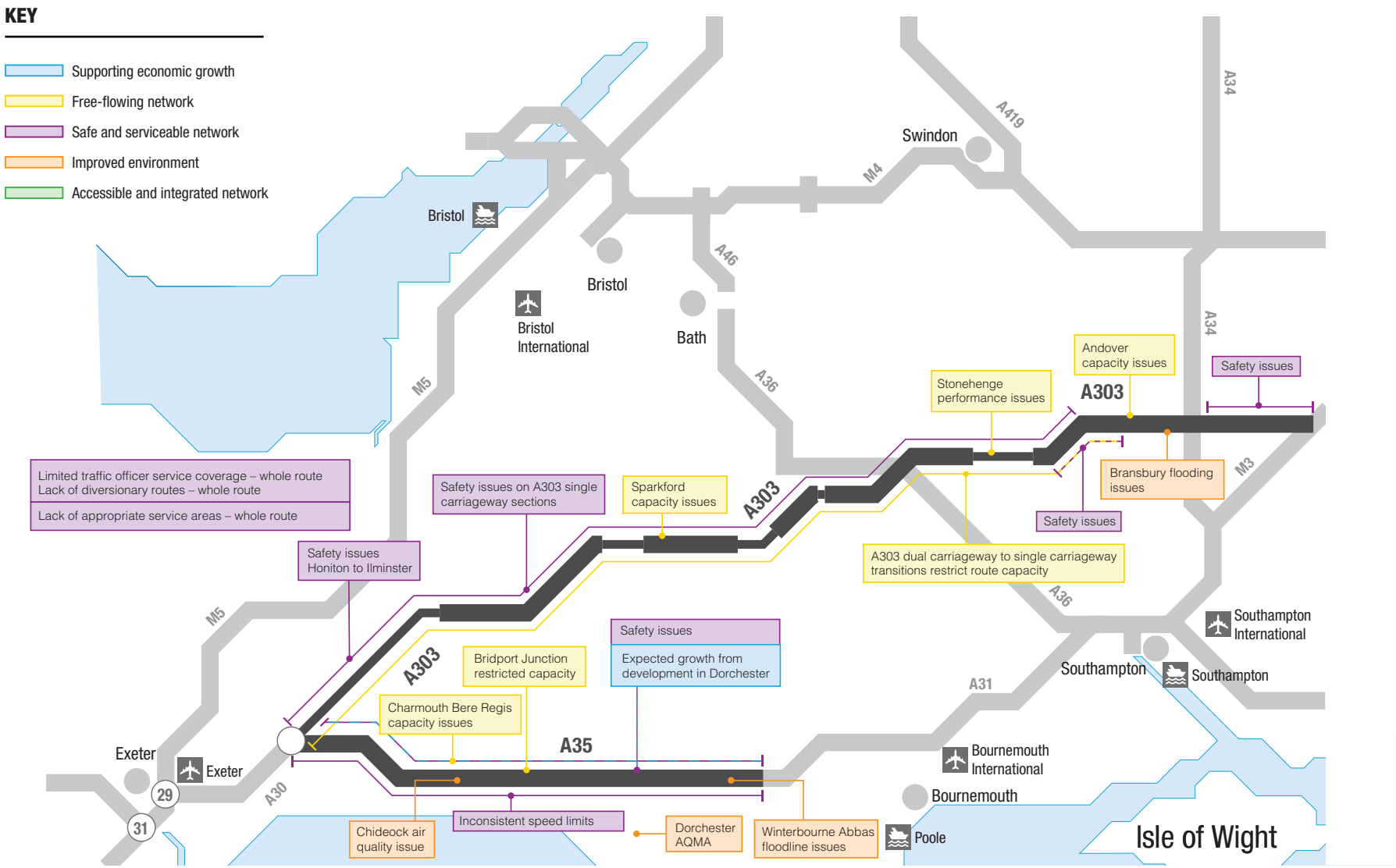


Figure 3.3 - Key challenges for the route

South West Peninsula - Route Strategy: Map 4 of 4

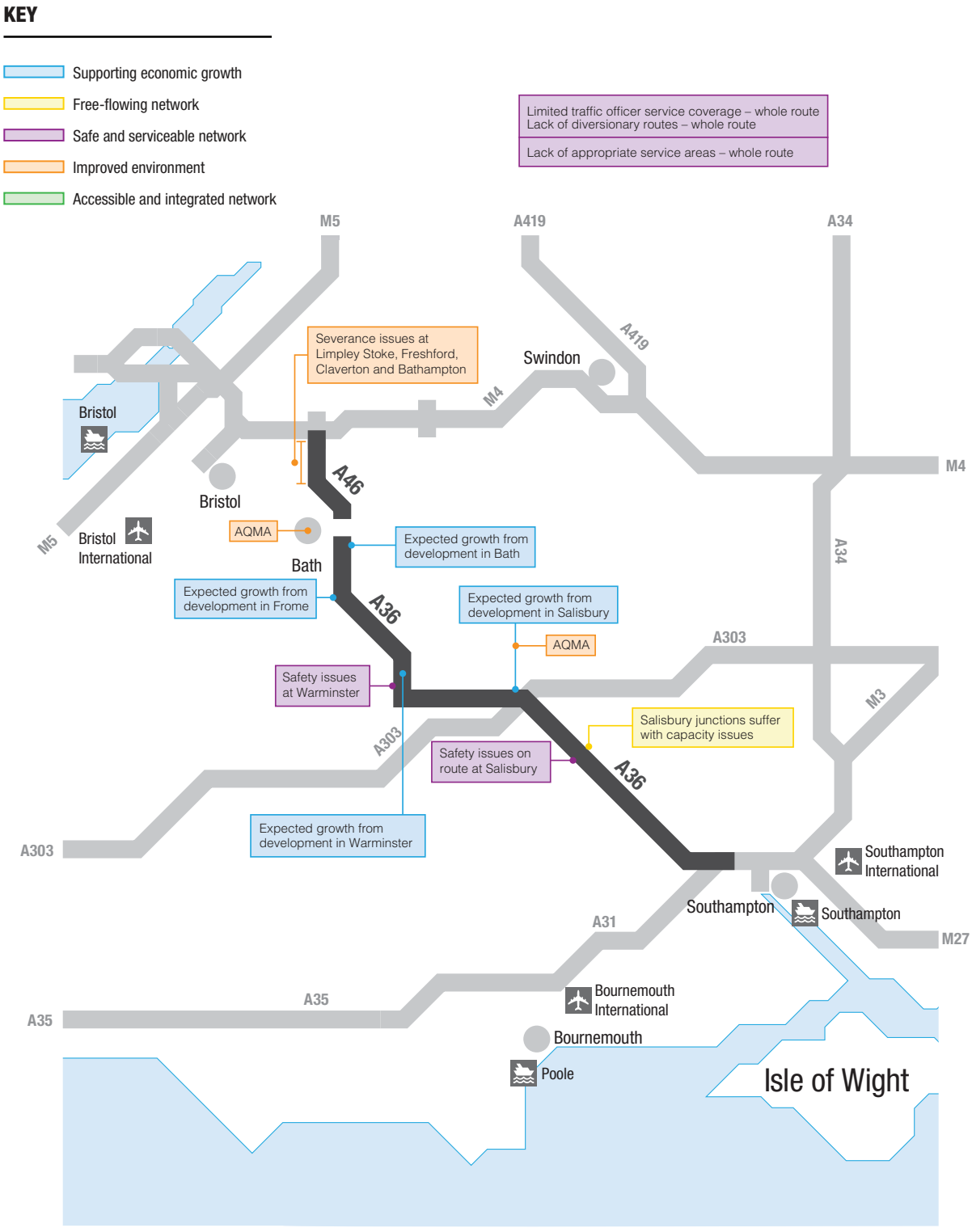


Figure 3.4 - Key challenges for the route

Diversionary Routes

An essential facet of a resilient road network is the ability to effectively divert traffic away from closed carriageways in the event of an unplanned incident. The map indicates the diversionary routes that currently exist on this route and that have been agreed with the local road network operator. However, it should be noted that the provision of these routes is dependent upon the nature of the incident and the suitability and availability of the surrounding network. In some instances, the diversion route may not be suitable for HGV traffic or might not be available due to events on the local road network. A review is currently underway to improve the quality and coverage of these routes, and to improve the traffic management procedures that are relied upon to implement these routes in the event of a carriageway closure.

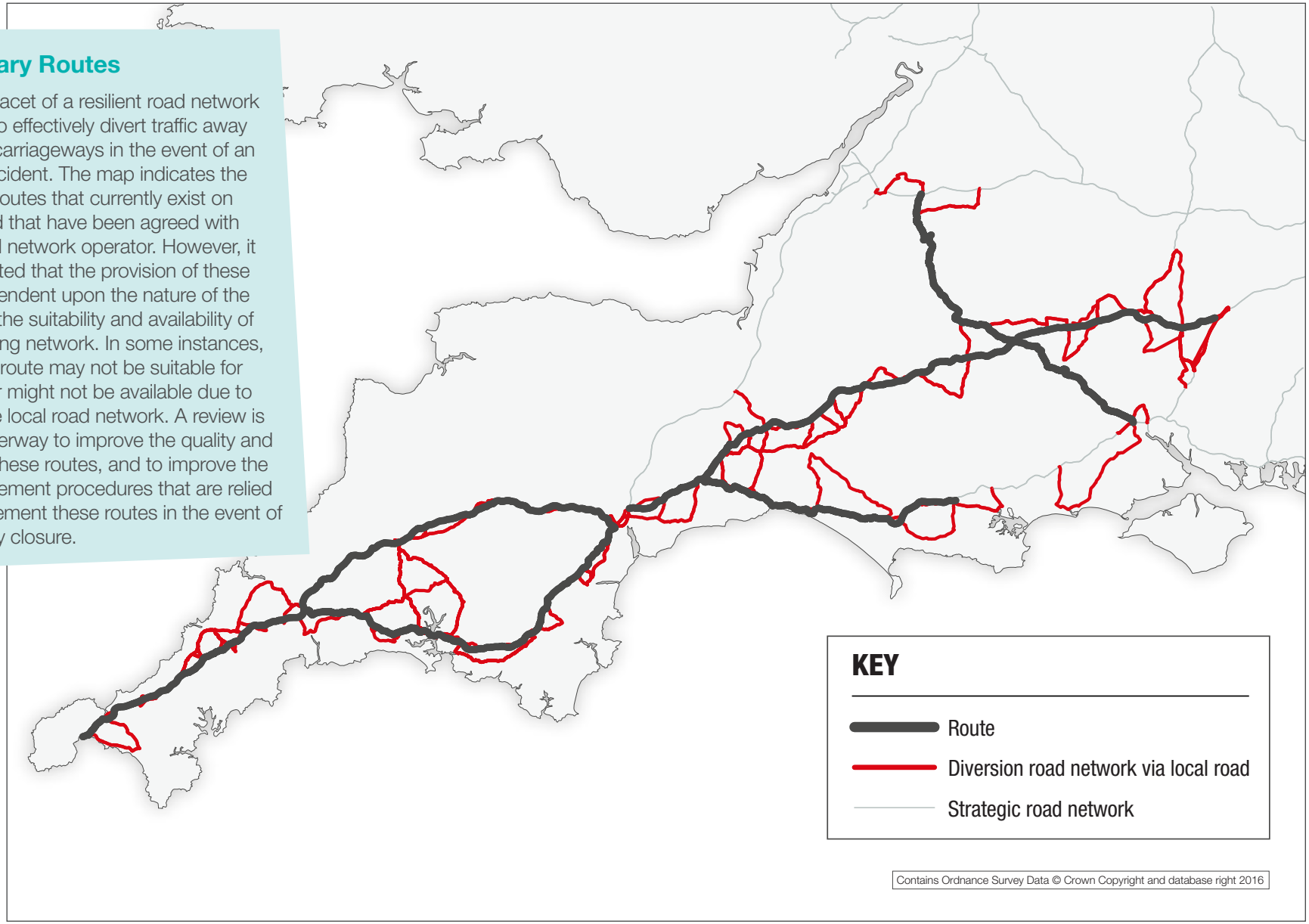


Figure 3.5 - South West Peninsula diversionary routes

Maintaining the strategic road network

We carry out routine maintenance and renewal of roads, structures and technology to keep the network safe, serviceable and reliable. We also ensure that our contractors deliver a high level of service on the SRN to support operational performance and the long-term integrity of the asset.

The heavy year-round use of all our routes means that they require regular maintenance and inspections for repairs to keep them fully operational, in order to support economic growth. Our maintenance regime focuses on 4 key aspects of the routes: road surfaces, bridges and structures, drainage and earthworks. The summary condition of each on this route is set out below:

Road surface

The surface condition across the route is considered to be sound or having some deterioration with less than 0.5% having severe deterioration that would require focused investigation.

Bridges and structures

The structures across the route are mostly in very good or good condition. According to an analysis of current data, fewer than 3% of our structures are in poor or very poor condition.

Drainage

Drainage assets are represented by both linear assets (for example pipes, channels, ditches, drains) and non-linear assets (for example gullies, chambers). Across the route, drainage assets are considered to be in fair condition for linear assets and very good condition for non-linear assets. Of those assets inspected, over 45% of assets have been assessed as having no defects for both linear and non-linear assets. Non-linear assets have also been assessed as having 55% of assets with superficial defects.

Earthworks

The geotechnical earthworks across the route are considered to be in good condition, with the total length of earthworks that require further investigation amounting to less than 1%.

New assets have an operational ‘life’, during which, under normal conditions and maintenance, the risk of failure is expected to be low. Beyond this period, the risk of asset failure is expected to increase, although for many types of asset the risk of failure remains low and we do not routinely replace assets solely because they are older than their expected operational life. We use a combination of more regular maintenance and inspection, along with a risk-based approach to ensure that assets remain safe while achieving value for money from our maintenance and renewal activities.

Future developments

We have taken steps to transform our approach to maintenance by establishing an asset management programme that develops and implements the Asset Management Framework for Highways England.

The framework aligns strategic objectives with regional asset management plans and lifecycle asset management plans. It also includes the analysis required to plan the investment and expenditure on the strategic road network during the next road period, developing the business case options for capital renewals. It will provide a clear articulation of the total value that will be delivered by investment in RIS2, including the costs and benefits of delivering the capital renewals programme.

Operations

We are establishing a nationally consistent approach to the management of our operational capability through our Operational Excellence change programme. This will deepen our understanding of how our interventions impact on the performance of the network and on the journeys of our customers. We are using the latest analytical software to process traffic data and gain insight into:

- how our operational services can improve safety and provide security to road users
- how the attendance of a traffic officer has an impact on incident durations
- how information provided by Highways England can benefit road users who plan their journeys beforehand and then while on their journeys

By better understanding our current operational performance, we can create a baseline from which we can identify opportunities for improvement.

4. Current investment plans and growth potential

Investment in the strategic road network can make areas more attractive for inward investment, unlock new sites for employment and housing and facilitate regeneration.

From servicing the UK's logistics needs, linking our manufacturing heartlands and connecting to our international gateways, supporting services-driven activity in high-growth towns and cities, to meeting the needs of our visitor economy, the SRN is critically important to servicing the UK economy.

Economic context

Highways England has been working with a wide range of stakeholders to develop a strategic economic growth plan, which we are calling *The Road to Growth*. This plan explores the economic role of the strategic road network, and aims to explain how we will further increase our contribution to the UK economy. As part of the evidence base for *The Road to Growth*, over 400 economic hotspots – or economic opportunity areas (EOAs) – around the SRN have been identified in consultation with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The figures in this chapter highlight the EOAs which most closely align and are supported by the route.

To inform the development of *The Road to Growth* and assess the relationship between the SRN and economic growth, a suite of evidence reports were completed. These reports were published alongside The Road to Growth discussion paper and were subject to public consultation from November 2016 to January 2017. Alongside the engagement we have undertaken with all LEPs across England, the following evidence reports have ensured we have a more comprehensive economic evidence base and a better understanding of future challenges and opportunities:

- economic growth and the SRN – an evidence review of the relationship between transport investment and economic growth
- commercial development – an assessment of the relationship between the main property sectors and the SRN
- international gateways – a review of principal international gateways (ports and airports) and their contribution to the economy
- socio-economic analysis and future forecasts – mapping of socio-economic data (population, deprivation and employment) and sectoral forecasts up to 2030. This included identification of the likely growth forecasts for all sectors with a particular focus on those sectors heavily dependent on the SRN

The Road to Growth sets out our evidence findings to date and the steps we will take to enhance our enabling role in supporting economic growth.

Innovation

In April 2016, we published our Innovation, Technology and Research Strategy which set out how Highways England will use pioneering behaviours to help support our strategic objectives and create value for customers and stakeholders.

The £150 million Innovation Designated Fund was established to support innovative capital projects and to support developing the use of emerging technologies, new materials and ways of working.

Investment plans

The following figures show the location of Highways England major improvement projects which have previously been announced to help tackle some of the issues on the network. The Highways England website and delivery plan updates should be consulted for the latest information.

The figures also show strategic studies which have been progressed during RIS1, innovation projects and economic opportunity areas.

South West Peninsula - Route Strategy: Map 1 of 4

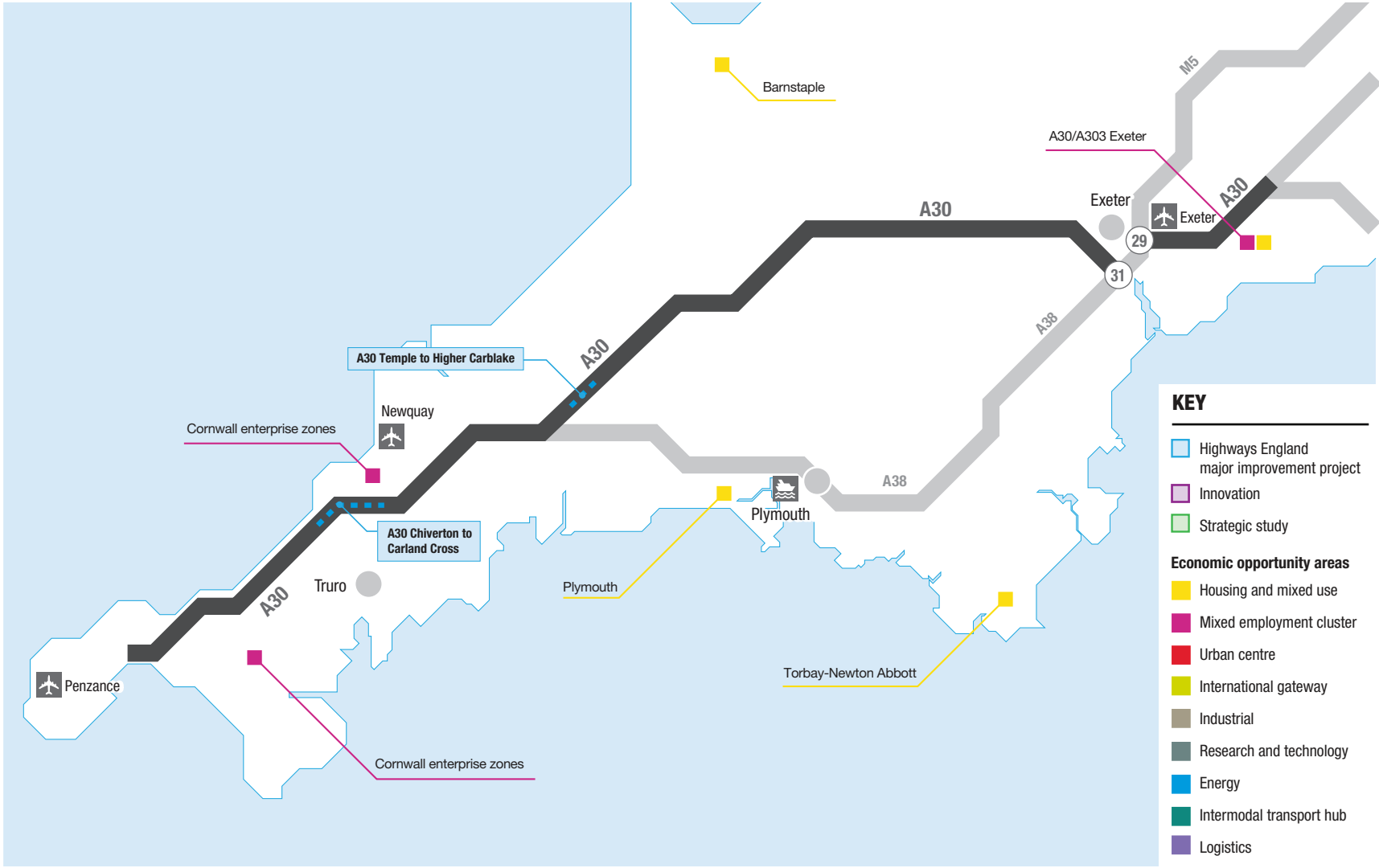


Figure 4.1 - Investment plans and economic opportunity areas

South West Peninsula - Route Strategy: Map 2 of 4

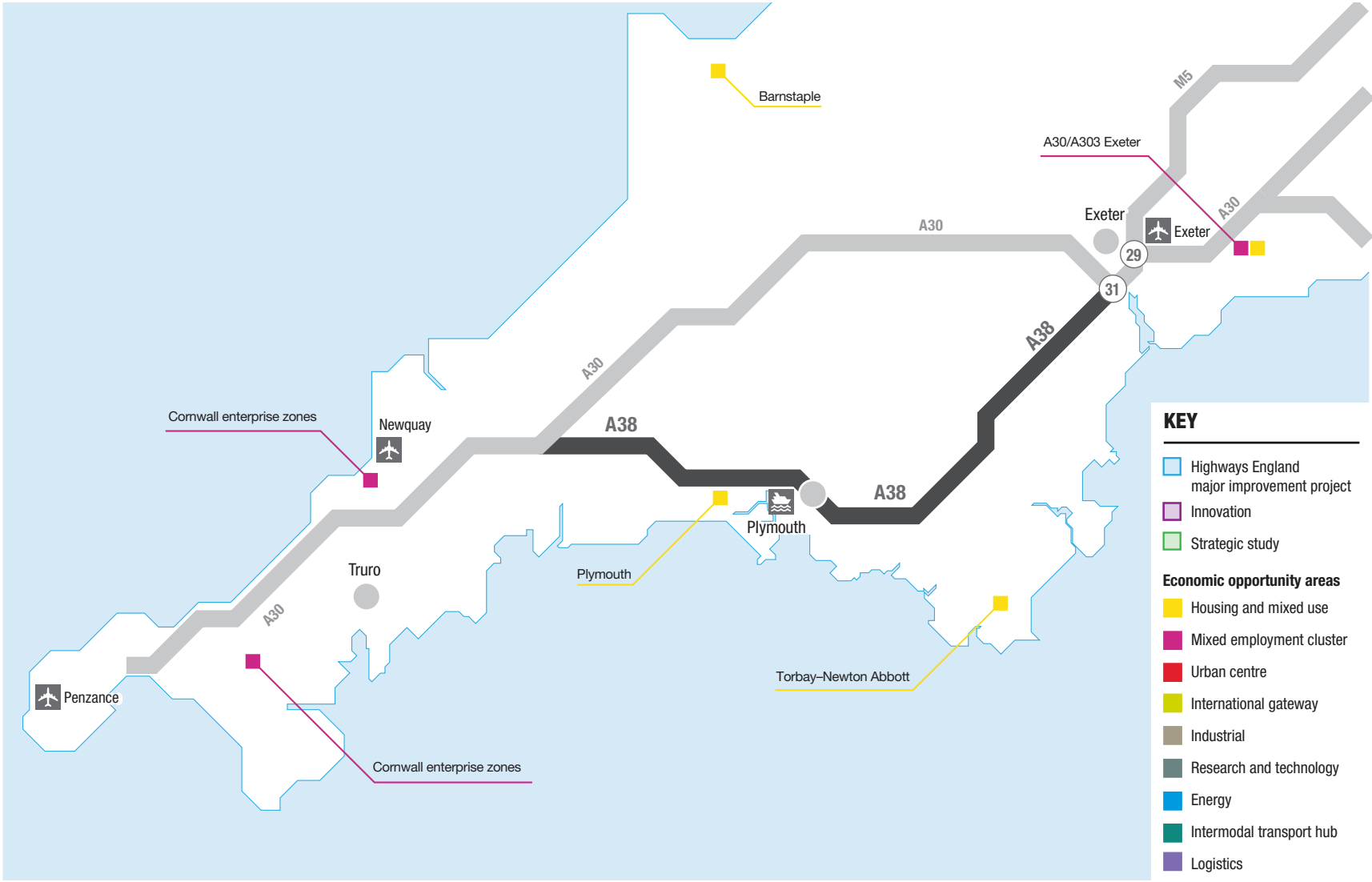


Figure 4.2 - Investment plans and economic opportunity areas

South West Peninsula - Route Strategy: Map 3 of 4

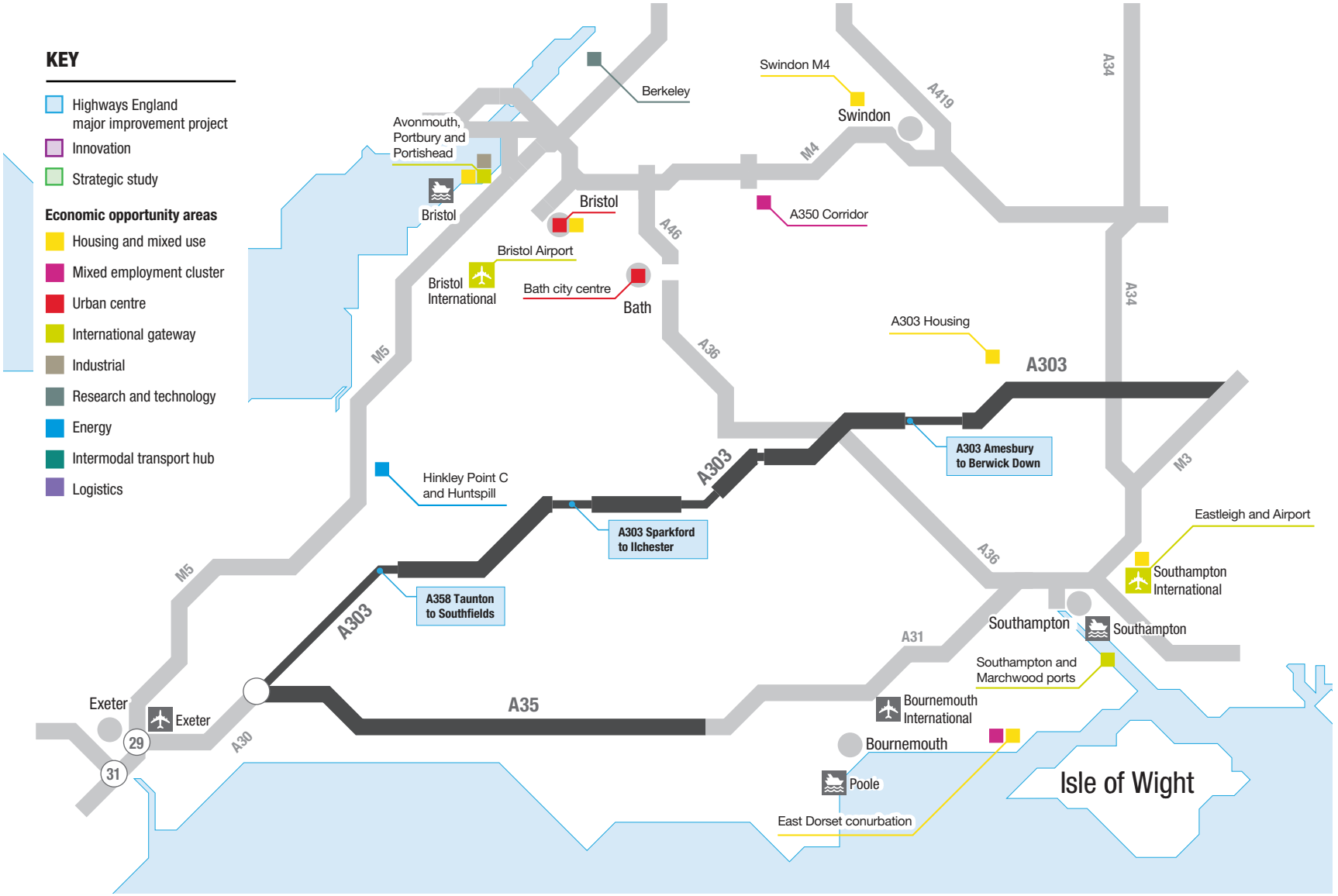


Figure 4.3 - Investment plans and economic opportunity areas

South West Peninsula - Route Strategy: Map 4 of 4

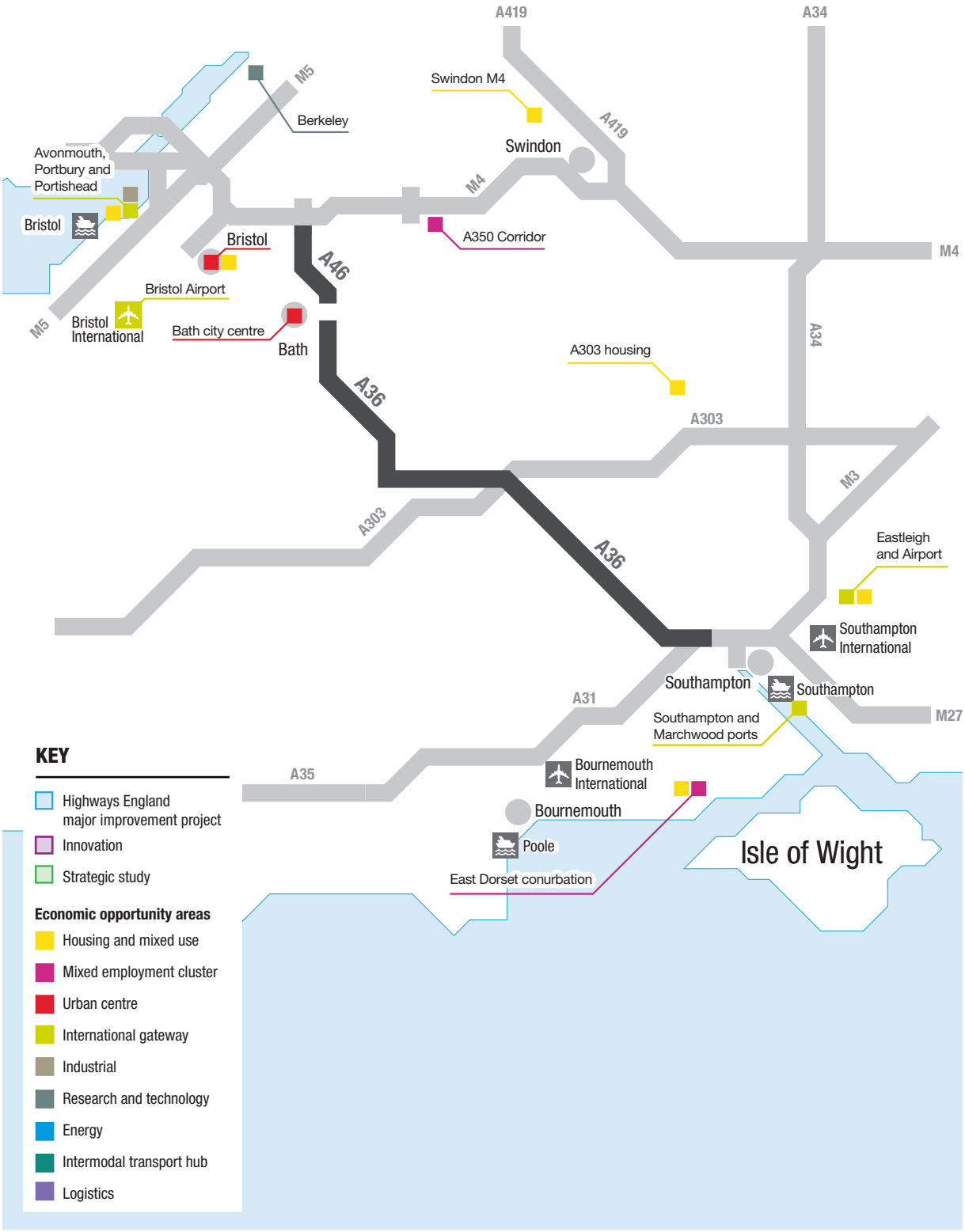


Figure 4.4 - Investment plans and economic opportunity areas

5. Future challenges and opportunities

Route Strategies have identified study areas on the strategic road network which require further investigation of the issues raised by stakeholders and identified through Highways England intelligence. These study areas will now be assessed further as part of our development for RIS2.

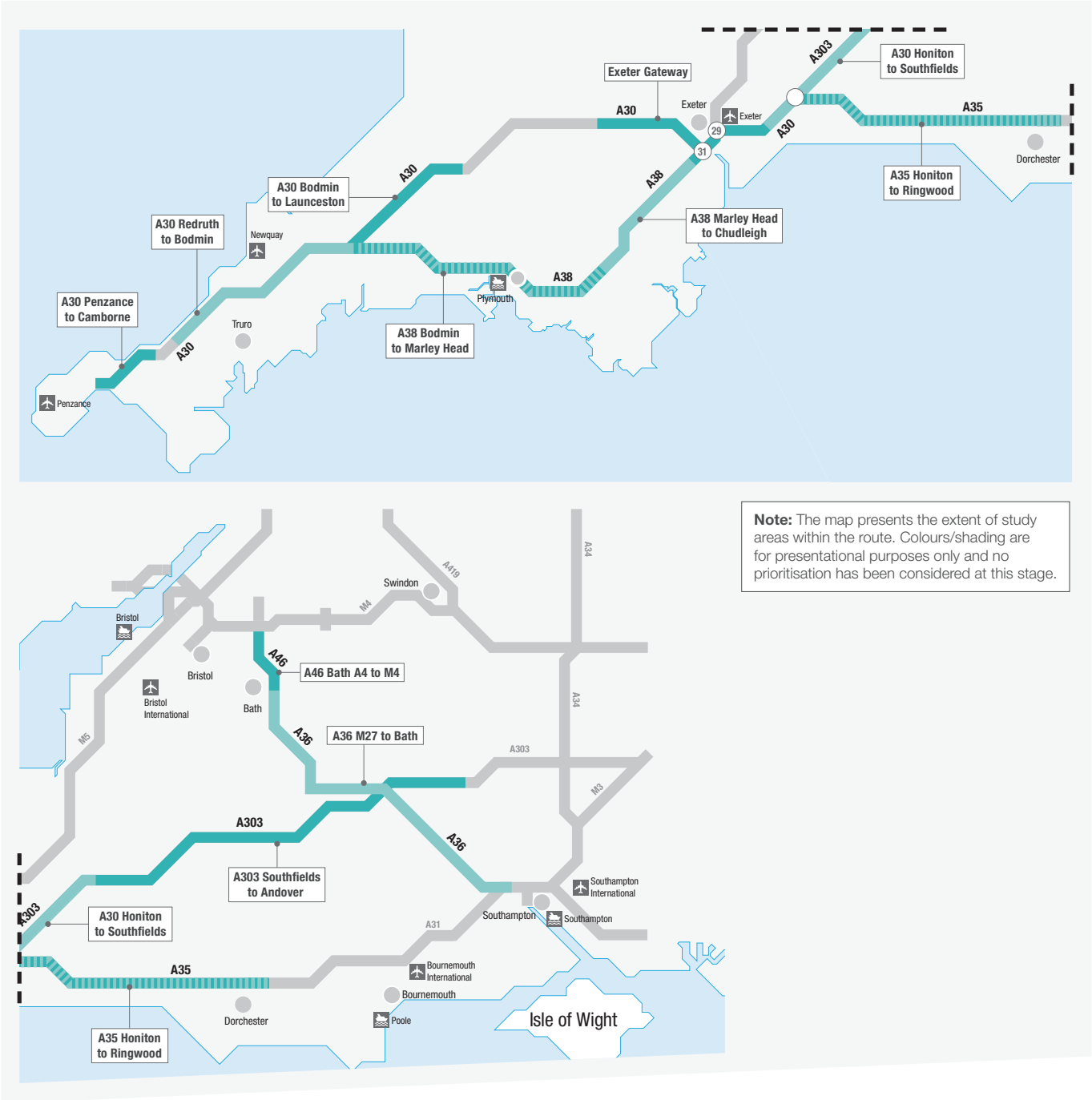
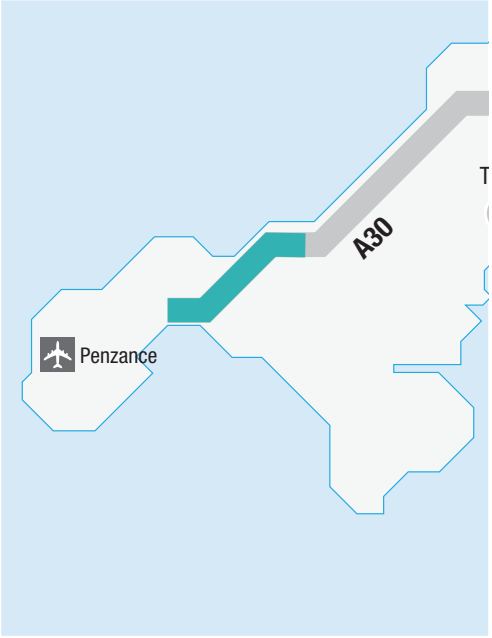


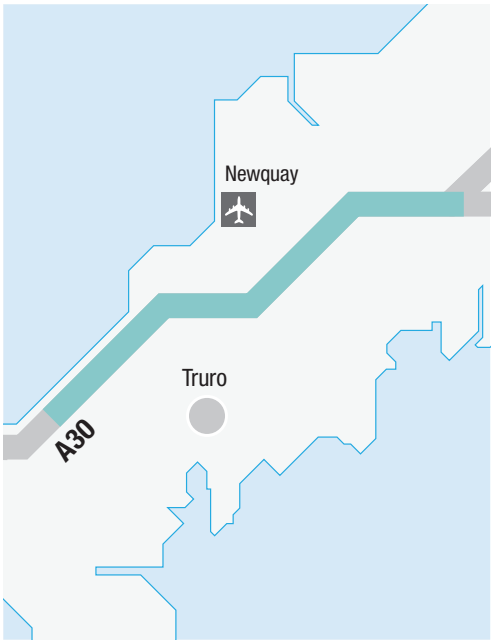
Figure 5.1 - Map of all study areas

A30 Penzance to Camborne



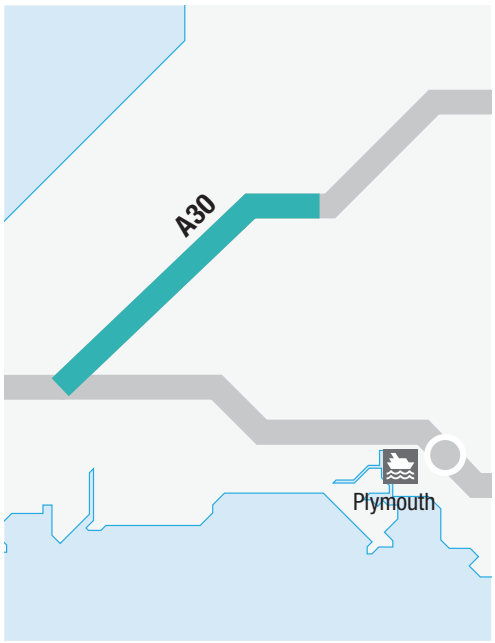
- The proposed St Erth transport hub will include new improvements such as signals, footways, and so on. There is an opportunity to encourage use of trains over vehicles.
- Local pressures from development planned in Hayle will lead to increased traffic between the St Erth and Loggans Moor roundabout.
- Retail development at the West Cornwall Retail Park is likely to increase pressure on this stretch of the route.
- There may also be future environmental constraints due to sections around St Erth which could be prone to flooding due to forecast increase in sea levels.
- A possible new junction on the A30 at the existing Tolroy overbridge would have an impact on the SRN.
- There is limited customer information along the route.

A30 Redruth to Bodmin



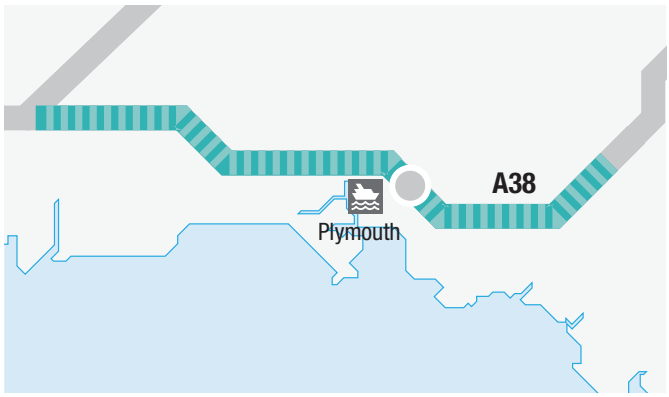
- The planned and proposed future growth at Camborne–Pool–Redruth, Truro, St Austell and Bodmin may stall if the existing infrastructure is unable to accommodate the increased demand.
- Congestion and delay along this section of the A30 would increase, particularly during summer holiday periods and may have an impact on the Cornish tourist industry.
- Safety issues at Mitchell, Blue Anchor, and Lanivet will continue, with further incidents likely to occur. Increased traffic levels may cause incident hotspots to occur on additional sections of the network.
- There are AQMAs close to the route, with Noise Important Areas identified along the A30. These issues will be exacerbated by increased traffic along the route.
- The forecast changes in weather patterns could lead to more frequent and severe flooding issues at Marazanvose, Indian Queens, Carland Cross and Belowda.
- There are poor links to Bodmin Parkway railway station between the A38 and A30 at Carminow junction. There is an opportunity to provide improved connections to Bodmin which is a designated cycling town.
- There is limited customer information along the route.

A30 Bodmin to Launceston



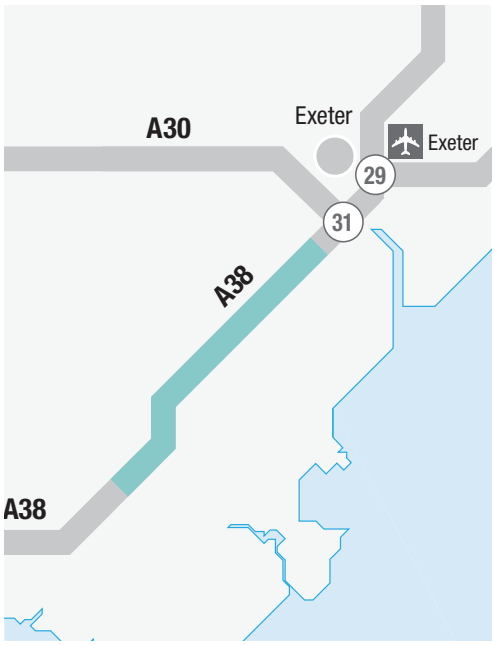
- The Temple to Higher Carblake improvement scheme will rectify issues along this section of the route. The scheme will make the A30 dual carriageway between Bodmin and Launceston, with the majority of junctions grade separated.
- There remain safety issues at Plusha and other junctions which are at grade with central reserve gaps.
- There are also issues with the accessibility and integration of the network at Launceston for pedestrians.
- At-grade livestock crossings on the A30 present a safety risk and leads to delays.
- The altitude of the network at this location makes it more prone to weather-related problems. The forecast changes in weather patterns could lead to more frequent and severe flooding issues.
- The new Temple Tor junction provides a grade-separated crossing of the A30 and this may lead to increased cycle demand in this area, especially towards Colliford Lake.
- There is limited customer information along the route.

A38 Bodmin to Marley Head



- The planned growth at Plymouth and Bodmin could be constrained by highway capacity.
- Certain junctions within Plymouth already experience congestion and delay and this will be exacerbated by traffic growth from planned developments. The southern half of the Deep Lane junction is already at capacity, and will constrain development within Plymouth.
- The effects will be felt more prominently during summer holiday periods which may have an impact on the Devon and Cornwall tourist industry. Impacts will also be felt at peak times in Plymouth which have a high level of commuting into the city.
- There are sections of the route and junctions that already suffer from safety issues, such as the Lean Quarry and Menheniot junctions, as well as on the Glynn Valley section due to poor alignment.
- An increase in maintenance issues may occur due to higher traffic flows and more network flooding incidents.

A38 Marley Head to Chudleigh

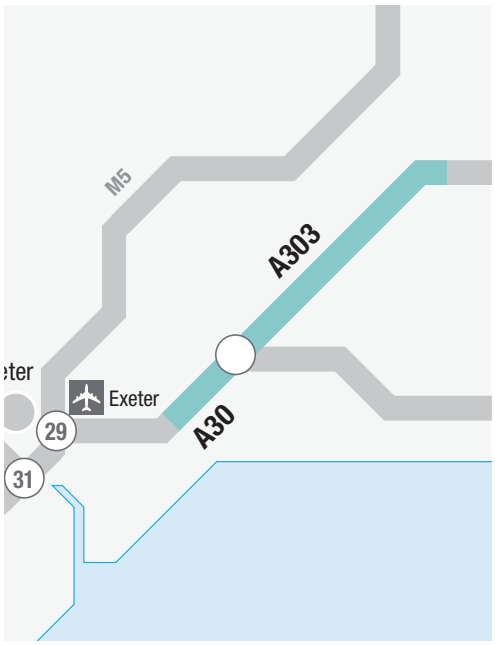


- Areas of high forecast growth in Plymouth and Devon (Newton Abbot and Teignbridge) may be constrained by the highway network capacity.
- Congestion and delay along this section of the A38 are expected to increase. The effects will be felt more during summer holiday periods which may have an impact on the Devon and Cornwall tourist industry.
- Due to the flooding and weather issues in the past few years, especially in 2014 when the train line at Dawlish was temporarily lost, the A38 is relied on as an alternative to the train for regional and strategic journeys in this area.
- Noise Important Areas have been identified along the route. Issues at these locations will be exacerbated by increased traffic along the route.

Exeter Gateway

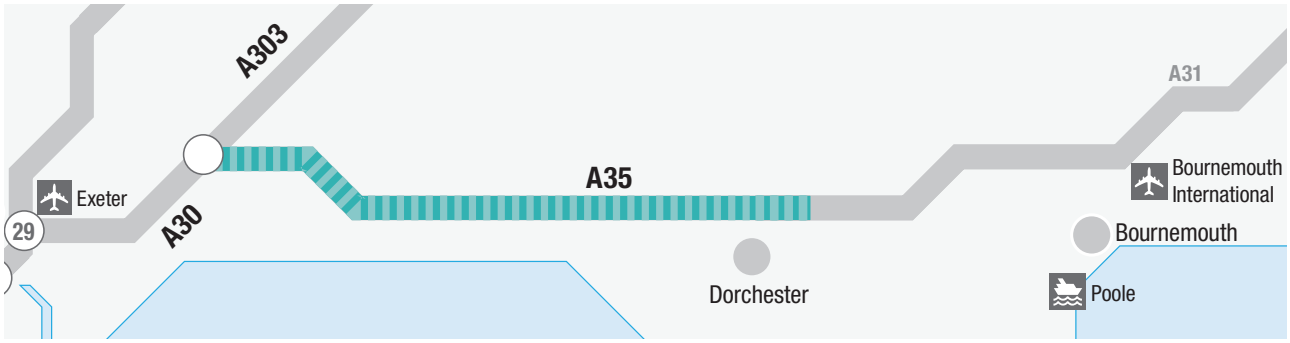
- Exeter and its surrounding area are forecast to see large amounts of growth, especially to the east of Exeter along the A30, and this could be constrained by highway network capacity.
- There are safety concerns along the A30 to the east and west of the M5: issues will be exacerbated by increased traffic.
- There is a lack of safe and convenient cycle facilities and crossing points on the A30 corridor.
- There are AQMAs at Exeter and Honiton, and Noise Important Areas have been identified along the route. Issues at these locations will be exacerbated by increased traffic along the route.

A30 Honiton to Southfields



- The transition from high-capacity, high-standard road sections to lower capacity, lower standard sections can cause extensive delays to users of the A30/A303.
- Blackdown Hills is a highly sensitive environment and there are geological stability issues, poor road alignment and sharp bends.
- A high proportion of HGVs and slow-moving vehicles use the route.

A35 Honiton to Ringwood

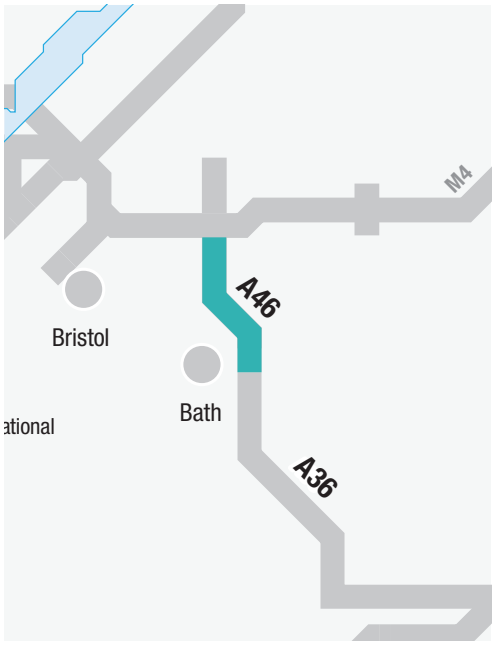


- Planned growth in the Bournemouth, Honiton and Weymouth areas may lead to constraints because of the existing infrastructure's inability to cope with increased demand.
- Lack of north–south connectivity to the M4/M5 may affect on growth.
- Congestion and delay along this section of the A35 is expected to increase, in particular on the areas of single carriageway. The effects will be felt more prominently during summer holiday periods which may impact on the tourist industry.
- Safety issues identified along the route are expected to increase with more traffic.
- There are AQMAs at Chideock, and Noise Important Areas have been identified along the route. Issues at these locations will be exacerbated by increased traffic along the route.
- Severance issues through villages along the A35 will be exacerbated by increased traffic.

A303 Southfields to Andover

- The A303 has cultural heritage and noise concerns as the route passes within 500 metres of Stonehenge World Heritage Site.
- Residential dwellings and commercial developments lie close to the A303, particularly in built-up areas such as Ilminster, Sparkford, Winterbourne Stoke, Amesbury and Andover.
- In addition to their proximity to the junctions, which is likely to contribute to existing issues, future traffic demands will add additional constraints to the SRN.
- The A303 is constrained by single carriageways.
- There are incident clusters between Mere and the A350, and from Ilminster to Ilchester.

A46 Bath A4 to M4



- Planned growth in and around Bath could be constrained by the existing infrastructure.
- The single carriageway section of the A46 suffers from congestion and this is expected to increase.
- The Cold Ashton junction already suffers from congestion and delays in peak periods. This is likely to get worse as traffic demand increases.
- There are incident clusters at Limpley Stoke and Branch Road.
- There are concerns about severance and noise at Pennsylvania, and also about public rights of way at Cotswold Way across the A46.
- Increased congestion may cause traffic to reroute onto narrow local roads.

A36 M27 to Bath

- The existing infrastructure will not be able to cope with the increased demand from planned and proposed development, especially in and around Bath and Salisbury.
- The A36 through Salisbury currently acts as a bottleneck on this section of the SRN. This will become more pronounced in future.
- Higher traffic flows will increase existing severance through villages along the A36 such as Limpley Stoke and Claverton.
- The links between the key east-west routes in the South West are poor, particularly between the M4 and the south coast, and this hinders economic growth.
- There is suppressed demand between the M4 and the ports of Poole and Portland, the south-east Dorset conurbation, and the Swindon and Wiltshire's A350 growth area. Access to the World Heritage sites of Bath and the Jurassic Coast is impeded.
- Direct routes to the ports from the M4 are used by hauliers instead of more suitable but longer routes. This affects the quality of life for many residents of the towns and villages they pass through.

blue drive

6. Next steps

Our findings from this and other Route Strategies, as well as other research, will inform our first Strategic Road Network Initial Report which is to be published later this year. This will form the basis of a public consultation, which in turn will feed into decision-making on the next Road Investment Strategy (RIS2).

We are looking ahead to the next RIS and how we can support the Secretary of State in ensuring that value for money investments are made in the road network. The process for developing RIS2 is set out in our licence, and is in 3 phases: research, decision and mobilisation.

We are currently in the first phase – **research phase** – where we are gathering wide-ranging evidence on the state of the network and how we can ensure that improvements have maximum impact. The series of Route Strategies, of which this is one, is an important part of this phase alongside the outcomes of strategic studies which looked at particularly complicated problems on parts of the network and how to tackle them. Another key source of evidence is the Strategic Economic Growth Plan (*The Road to Growth*), which examines where and how the SRN can help support economic growth. This will emphasise that sectors dependent on the road network employ 7.4 million people, that we are already doing a great deal to support growth and that we want to do even more.

Now that this series of Route Strategies is published, we will continue our engagement with stakeholders, including other transport providers and authorities, on how best to address problems and maximise opportunities. For example, in working towards seamless end-to-end journeys for our customers, we will be focussing on how the strategic road network links with local roads and other modes of transport.

Findings from the research phase will feed into Highways England's Strategic Road Network Initial Report, expected to be published later this year, which will outline Highways England's ambitions for the network across 2020–2025 and beyond. The Initial Report will be the subject of public consultation.

In the **decision phase**, the consultation feedback will assist the Department for Transport in developing RIS2. In turn we will develop a Strategic Business Plan (SBP) setting out how we will deliver RIS2 as a business. Both the RIS and SBP will be reviewed by the regulator of roads, the Office of Rail and Road, to ensure that we have made the most efficient decisions. The final documents are to be published in 2019.

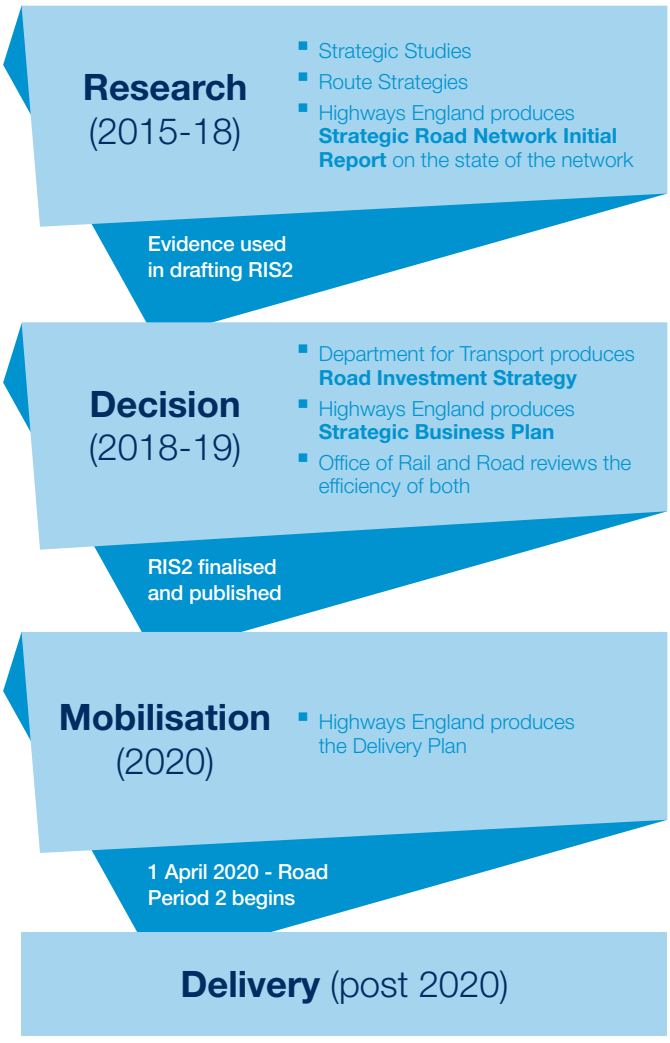


Figure 6.1 - RIS2 high-level process

In the final **mobilisation phase**, we will set out a Delivery Plan with a detailed programme of investment to be carried out in 2020 to 2025 on the basis of the commitments in RIS2.

Continued investment in modernisation, maintenance and operation will further improve the road network on top of the measures and schemes currently being undertaken, and will allow us to further support users of the strategic road network and the UK's economy. The rigorous process of developing RIS2 should ensure that the best use is made of taxpayers' money and that investments have the maximum impact.

The views and perspectives of different stakeholders, including motorists, are important to us. Stakeholders may also wish to contact one of the partner organisations. For example, stakeholders can keep up to date with Transport Focus' work, by signing up to their monthly electronic newsletter *Road User Voice*. Alternatively, stakeholders may prefer to make their views known through one of the many organisations involved in RIS2. They include the AA, RAC, RAC Foundation, Road Haulage Association, Freight Transport Association, Campaign for Better Transport, Confederation of British Industry and many others.

We will provide information about the process and emerging findings at events for representative organisations in spring 2017. At the same time, we are developing the dialogue with emerging STBs, local government, LEPs, business groups and environmental organisations. We want to align our analysis, and eventually our decision-making, with that of other organisations, so that we can maximise the benefit of investment, for example focusing on improving the interconnectivity between different modes and between the strategic and local road networks. This should lead to a richer discussion during public consultation on the Strategic Road Network Initial Report.

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