

Highways England Noise Mitigation Policy

Our noise mitigation policy is underpinned by the approach set out in Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' [Noise Action Plan for Major Roads](#). This identifies Noise Important Areas (NIAs).

Government has given Highways England an Environment and Wellbeing [Designated Fund](#) to enhance the environment. We are using this fund to provide noise mitigation in NIAs, but there are more NIAs than we have funds to mitigate. This policy sets out how we are prioritising which NIAs will receive mitigation from Designated Funds, through [Roads Period 2 \(RP2\) \(2020-2025\)](#).

If a location is not in an NIA, we have the ability to declare new NIAs, or extend NIAs to include additional properties. We will only do this if noise levels are similar to noise levels in other NIAs.

For those NIAs not prioritised, or locations that do not fall into NIAs, Designated Funds will not be made available for noise mitigation. However, noise mitigation may be provided through our scheduled maintenance activity (particularly resurfacing) or [Improvement Projects](#) as an additional benefit.

Mitigation of Noise Important Areas using Designated Funds

Mitigation can be provided through:

- noise barriers: building a fence, wall or soil mound to block the path of noise from the road to houses
- noise insulation: providing improved glazing and/or ventilation systems to individual properties exposed to high levels of noise. Glazing upgrades are provided to sensitive rooms (bedrooms and living rooms) exposed to high noise levels (normally those facing the road)
- resurfacing: replacing older noisier surface materials with a newer, quieter surface

Prioritisation of Noise Important Areas

Resurfacing

NIAs that would get noise benefit from resurfacing have been identified. Designated Funds for resurfacing these NIAs may be provided, if the scheme meets the following criteria:

- The area is not scheduled, or likely to be scheduled, for resurfacing before April 2025
- Provides at least 1dB of benefit to at least 100 properties within the NIA(s)
- Will provide value for money over the time period prior to the date when scheduled resurfacing would otherwise have taken place.
- No noise mitigation has been provided since 2015

Our local asset managers may apply for funding for resurfacing schemes that meet the above criteria. Each scheme application is considered on its own merits by the Investment Decision Committee.

Barriers

NIAs that would receive a noise benefit from the provision of barriers have been identified. Designated Funds for barrier schemes in these NIAs may be provided, if the scheme meets the following criteria:

- the scheme protects all properties within the NIA, where practical. Barriers may be impractical because of their impact on safety, engineering constraints, or requirements to maintain access to properties
- the scheme provides value for money
- no noise mitigation (other than through maintenance resurfacing) has been provided since 2015

Our local asset managers may apply for funding for resurfacing schemes that meet the above criteria. Each scheme application is considered on its own merits by the Investment Decision Committee.

Insulation

Where NIAs are not suitable for noise barriers, then homes in those NIAs have been identified as potentially suitable for noise insulation. Designated Funds for insulation may be provided to houses where:

- They are within NIAs mitigated using barriers since 2015, but are not protected by the barriers; or
- They were identified as eligible for insulation under the RP1 insulation scheme, but have not yet had insulation installed; or
- They are included within the RP2 insulation scheme.

Insulation under the RP2 scheme will be provided on a whole NIA basis. Each NIA will be prioritised based on the highest levels of deprivation within the NIA, as determined by the Office of National Statistics [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (Deprivation Index) 2019, the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England, where:

- our network is the main source of noise
- no noise mitigation (other than through maintenance resurfacing) has been provided since 2015
- the construction of the buildings does not make it impractical to install insulation
- no Major Schemes are proposed that have the potential to reduce traffic levels within the NIA, for example, through a bypass scheme; and

NIAs meeting the above criteria will be prioritised with those NIAs containing the highest deprivation index given the highest priority. NIAs will be included within the RP2 scheme in priority order, with a budget allocated to each NIA based on the numbers of houses each NIA contains. NIAs will be added to the scheme until all of the Designated Funds for insulation are allocated.

The insulation scheme provides noise insulation to eligible habitable rooms, on eligible facades, where construction type of the building allows. Eligible facades are defined as facades where daytime noise levels are above 67.5 dB $L_{Aeq}(07:00-2300)$ or night time noise levels are above 57.5 dB $L_{Aeq}(23:00-0700)$. Eligible habitable rooms are habitable rooms with noise levels above 30 dB $L_{Aeq}(23:00-0700)$ for bedrooms and 35 dB $L_{Aeq}(07:00-2300)$ for other types of habitable rooms.

Value for money of noise mitigation schemes

The value for money of noise mitigation schemes is determined in two ways:

1. A comparison of the costs and benefits using the method set out in the HM Treasury '[Green Book](#)'
2. The cost of mitigation per household, in the context of ensuring that across the noise mitigation programme, our noise KPI will be met using available Designated Funds