



**RESPONSE TO ORR CONSULTATION PAPER  
“MONITORING HIGHWAYS ENGLAND”**

**18<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

## **Introduction**

This is the response of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to the Office of Rail and Road's consultation paper, "Monitoring Highways England". RoSPA thanks the ORR for the opportunity to comment on the proposals. Our response has been produced following consultation with RoSPA's National Road Safety Committee.

The government has announced its intention to upgrade the strategic motorway and main 'A' roads network within England, with over £15 billion being invested from 2015-16 to 2020-21. In order to accommodate this development the structure of the roads sector is being changed to support the delivery of the investment programme and to drive value for money. This has involved changing the Highways Agency into a government owned company called Highways England, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

Two new monitoring roles have also been created. The Office of Rail and Road (ORR), which was formerly the Office of Rail Regulator, assumes responsibility for monitoring the performance and efficiency of Highways England. Passenger Focus changes to become Transport Focus and takes on responsibility for protecting and promoting the interest of road users.

As part of this transformation process ORR are consulting its stakeholders and RoSPA is delighted to provide the following responses to the 6 questions asked.

### **Q1. Are you clear what our role will involve? Are there aspects of our role which you would like more clarity about?**

#### **RoSPA Response**

RoSPA's understanding is that initially ORR will:

- Develop clear baselines for enhanced schemes
- Develop Highways England's management reporting systems
- Develop Highways England's asset management capabilities
- Develop an agreed approach to financial performance management.

In order to fulfil these aims, ORR has four main roles which are:

- Monitor how well HE is delivering against performance Specification, Investment Plan and aspects of its licence
- If problems with delivery, potentially levy a fine
- Advise the Secretary of State for Transport on the development of the next Road Investment Strategy (RIS) and how to deliver efficiencies
- Advise the Secretary of State on any other relevant issues as requested.

RoSPA are clear on the ORR's role and is happy with the clarity provided within the consultation document.

**Q2. Do you agree with our strategic objectives for our highways monitoring role?**

**RoSPA Response**

We understand that the ORR's principle strategic objective for its highway monitoring role is to 'secure improved performance and value for money from the strategic road network'. This will be achieved through improved performance, including efficiency, safety and sustainability, from the strategic road network, for the benefit of road users and the public, through proportionate, risk based monitoring, increased transparency, enforcement and robust advice on future performance requirements'.

RoSPA agree with the first Strategic Business Plan and how this will drive forward the modernisation of the core motorway and strategic road network to provide more capacity and better connections.

RoSPA believe that throughout the modernisation process (and beyond) safety should not be compromised. Highways England state that they will maintain the safety of the network and it is vital that the ORR's monitoring regime ensures that this is complied with and that it is robustly recorded, analysed and published.

We agree with the principle of monitoring that focuses on outcomes and outputs rather than inputs as this is a more effective way of holding Highways England to account.

**Q3. Are there specific ways you would like us to engage with you beyond the industry forums already referred to in this document?**

**RoSPA Response**

It is pleasing to note that the ORR has recognised the importance of stakeholder engagement and that this will form an integral part of the monitoring regime. The ORR has identified the following industry forums which you will engage with:

- The Strategic Road Reform Expert Group
- The Stakeholder Advisory Board
- World Class Highways Supply Chain
- Principals Group, Asset Support Group

RoSPA has almost 100 years road safety experience but we are not represented by one of the above. It is, therefore, vital that the ORR puts in place mechanisms where RoSPA, and other stakeholders, are updated, informed and consulted. RoSPA would like to be kept informed through email and an annual monitoring review meeting.

**Q4. Have we identified the key areas that require monitoring? Are there particular areas of Highways England's performance and efficiency which you consider require specific focus or an alternative monitoring approach?**

**RoSPA Response**

RoSPA believe that the ORR has clearly identifiable Performance Indicators which they will monitor, as shown on Table 3.2.

We are pleased that the first on the list is 'making the network safer' and are happy with the data which the ORR will collect to monitor this: the number of people killed or seriously injured on the Strategic Road Network.

RoSPA agrees that the target of at least a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the Strategic Road Network by the end of 2020, against the 2005-09 average baseline, is realistic. However, we would urge the ORR and Highways England to strive for a Vision Zero culture where no one is killed on the SRN, as was first discussed in the early stages of consultation.

We suggest that the ORR annually disaggregates the national KSI data to a regional level as this will help to identify area performance and any worrying trends. We believe that this will drive performance as it is possible for national targets to be met, whilst a particular geographical area underperforms and fails to improve its safety record.

RoSPA, whilst applauding the desire to help cyclists, walkers and other vulnerable users on the network through the installation of new and upgraded crossings, believe that this is monitoring an output rather than an outcome. We would like to see a specific target for reducing cyclist deaths and serious injuries.

**Q5. We have set out our initial plans for reporting on Highways England's performance and efficiency. Is there further information or analysis that you think we should produce?**

**RoSPA Response**

The six stage monitoring process which the ORR is proposing to use is robust and should enable it to analyse Highways England's performance. However, it is important that information is conveyed to stakeholders and the general public in a format that is readily understandable by the layperson so that they are aware of past performance and future actions that are planned where performance fails to meet the KPIs.

**Q6. Is there specific information relating to Highways England which is not currently in the public domain which you think should be prioritised for publication?**

**RoSPA Response**

RoSPA applaud ORR's desire for more transparency, but we have no specific suggestions to make at this stage.

RoSPA thanks ORR for the opportunity to comment on their first consultation document. We have no objection to our response being reproduced or attributed.

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