



Consumer Expert Panel

8 October 2025 Microsoft Teams Meeting Notes

Name	Organisation
Anne Heal	Chair, Non-Executive Director, ORR
Sarah Chambers	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Kate Denham	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Ralitsa Hiteva	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Claudio Pollack	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Marie Pye	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Lewis Shand-Smith	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Andrew Williams	Consumer Expert Panel Member
Robin Hewings	Transport Focus
Jacqui Russell	ORR
Paddy Johnson (Item 1)	ORR
Haydn Gill (Item 2)	ORR
Grahame Horgan & Ben Watkins (Item 3)	ORR
Claire Clark	ORR Secretariat

Item	Speaker	Time
Welcome	Anne Heal	09:00
Update on work of Consumer Team	Jacqui Russell	09:05

Item	Speaker	Time
1. Artificial intelligence and its impact on consumers	Paddy Johnson	09:15
2. National Highways draft customer and delay action plan	Haydn Gill	09:55
3. Car parking at railway stations – competition horizon scanning	Grahame Horgan & Ben Watkins	10:35
4. Horizon scanning	Anne Heal	11:15
Closing remarks and AOB	Anne Heal	11:25

Chair's Welcome

1. Anne Heal welcomed the Panel and noted that

Consumer Team Update

2. **Jacqui Russell** provided an update on several key consumer projects. These included the current consultation on the [review of the Code of Practice on retail information for rail tickets and services](#), the outcome of the consultation on the [Accessible Travel Policy \(ATP\) Guidance redress requirements](#), and the forthcoming publication on assistance benchmarking.
3. Jacqui also confirmed the Department for Transport's plan to publish the Rail Reform Bill later this year, which ORR has been engaging with.

Item 1: Artificial intelligence (AI) and its impact on consumers

4. **Paddy Johnson** introduced a paper which provided a brief overview of ORR's strategic approach to AI, and the new focus on how AI might impact on consumers engaging with rail and roads. The Panel were asked for their views on possible impacts and what the implications might be, and they highlighted both opportunities and risks.
5. Some saw AI as presenting a strong opportunity for industry to improve the rail passenger experience through for example better information, adaptive communication during disruption, and real-time journey management (e.g. predicting delays, guiding multimodal travel, automating compensation). With respect to roads, it was noted that smart navigation tools are already the norm.
6. Bias was identified by some as a risk, where machine learning models may reinforce existing inequities if the data is not trained to reflect the diversity of consumers. It was

suggested that regulatory oversight may be needed to ensure that machine learning approaches do not produce outcomes that unintentionally exclude or disadvantage certain groups of consumers.

7. Additional risks for those who are digitally excluded were also noted if access to AI benefits was dependent, for example, on owning a smartphone with data.
8. The need for good quality data and information to underpin AI tools was identified, and so a potential need for a regulatory role in setting minimum data standards and collection requirements.
9. It was also noted that ORR could help to challenge the rail industry to stimulate progress in the use of AI, particularly prioritising customer experience and innovation. Ideas included structured collaboration, competitions, or cross-sector events.
10. Paddy thanked the Panel for their thoughts and advice.

Item 2: National Highways draft customer and delay action plan

11. **Haydn Gill** introduced a paper which sought views on the draft action plan, in particular any suggestions for changes or information which was missing. ORR will be providing advice to DfT on how they should respond to the draft.
12. It was suggested that the action plan could benefit from a better understanding of the needs, experiences, or pain points of road users, and provide evidence of understanding the underlying drivers of user satisfaction.
13. It was also suggested that the plan could reference the diverse needs of drivers or road users, and key accessibility issues, for example toilet facilities, mobility access and EV charging, to provide assurance and boost confidence amongst road users.
14. Similarly, there was a view that the key performance indicators could be better developed to capture the key aspects of the road user experience, for example the management of roadworks and journey disruption.
15. It was suggested that ORR could help shape expectations early in the drafting of the action plan and advise on quality and direction to ensure a more effective plan is delivered which will drive better outcomes for road users.
16. Haydn thanked the Panel for their review and suggestions for the action plan.

Item 3: Car parking at railway stations – competition horizon scan

17. **Grahame Horgan** introduced the paper and explained that ORR is in the process of developing priorities for its future competition work programme. The Panel were asked for their views on whether they thought ORR is best placed to assess station car parking provision as part of their competition work.
18. A wide range of views were offered by panel members.
19. It was suggested that station car parking behaves like a series of local markets, where sites have specific market drivers such as land value and local demand. Therefore, a single national market study may not be an appropriate approach to take. At the same time, it was recognised that there may be fairness and access concerns, but these equity impacts may be more suited to being explored through other policy levers within ORR.
20. In contrast, a view was shared that entry for competing parking providers is difficult for example due to long leases, planning decisions and long-term asset ownership. This can create misalignment between ticketing, enforcement and operational timings which can be challenging for users, making it a viable option for a market study. And that viewing the station car parking market in isolation is problematic because parking is a critical part of the much wider strategy to encourage travellers out of their cars and on to the railway.
21. There was a strong consensus that there are issues around station car parking that need looking at but that this was not clearly a competition issue. There were no suggestions of any competition remedies that would obviously alleviate the issues.
22. It was suggested that ORR consider a collaborative approach with other regulators to combine skills and resources, and think about targeted, more local studies where impacts such as access, equity, consumer complaints, market anomalies, are strong enough to justify a deeper inquiry. It was agreed that to inform a decision on how to proceed it would be useful as to gather up to date data on car parking arrangements and prices across the network.
23. Grahame and Ben thanked the panel for their insight and advice.

Item 4: Horizon scanning

24. Anne Heal invited the Panel to share their views on anything they think might be of relevance and interest and could be an item to discuss at future meetings.
25. The following views were shared:

- Resilience and future proofing. The importance of understanding how shifting demographics and attitudes – particularly younger people’s apparent lower willingness to pay for rail travel, may influence the future demand for rail.
- Market change and consumer behaviour. The need to consider how evolving travel markets, such as the increasing affordability of electric car use compared with rising rail fares, could affect rail’s long-term competitiveness.

AOB

26. Next meeting is 14 January 2026.

27. Anne thanked attendees and brought the meeting to a close.