



ORR Road Expert Panel meeting

5 May 2020, 1300 to 1615

Skype Meeting

Agenda

1300 to 1310	Welcome and declarations of interest
1310 to 1320	Update from the highways team
1320 to 1410	Topic 1 – ORR’s end of Road Period assessment
1410 to 1415	Break
1415 to 1505	Topic 2 – Environmental performance
1505 to 1510	Break
1510 to 1600	Topic 3 – Future evolution of ORR’s role
1600 to 1615	AOB

Welcome and declarations of interest

Feras Alshaker welcomed the panel to the Skype meeting and explained best practise for Skype meetings.

Declarations of interests reported throughout the meeting include:

Darran Meseem – No longer chairman of the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership, but remains on the board.

Sue Percy – Involved in the 2017 Campaign for better transport publication, is on the Highways Sector Council and is CEO of CIHT who produced a report on Road Safety.

Sue Sharland – Is trustee of the Road Safety Foundation

Phill Wheat – Is a member of the Local efficiency benchmarking network.

Update from the highways team

Feras started with a brief update on the outputs from the ORR Highways team, including the benchmarking report <https://www.orr.gov.uk/sites/default/files/om/benchmarking-highways-england-2019-progress-report.pdf>, the consultation on our new escalation policy 'Holding Highways England to Account'. A Review on our escalation processes and workstreams. Lastly, how COVID-19 has affected the work of the ORR Highways Team and Highways England.

ORRs end of Road Period assessment

A member of the Highways team gave the panel the current Key messages in the upcoming Annual Assessment of Highways England's performance. Asking for input on the tone of the key messages, that they are covering the right areas, the language is accessible and for any other topics they would expect to see in the assessment.

There was discussion around using more factual and direct language when referring to what Highways England has achieved and to add a more challenging tone and phrasing over exceeding targets tightened. The language around KPIs felt quick operational and dry to some panel members, with language quite wordy at points.

The panel advised to possibly add a comment on the environmental achievements and any regional/community insights in the Road Period, and how this is developing in RIS2

along with other KPIs. The economic impact of the Road period could also be mentioned.

Environmental Performance

A member of the Highways team then introduced the panel to the specification for monitoring Highways England's environmental performance. Asking the panel for discussion on: Other areas ORR could focus on, what we should be looking for in Highways England's approach, who we should be engaging with and how best to use resources within ORR.

The panel discussed potential for innovation within Highways England, which in some cases can improve outcomes with less cost input. Some panel members felt the environmental targets could be far higher, and international comparisons could be used to encourage Highways England to stretch. Also, the link between increasing user satisfaction encouraging driving over other modes of transport. There was also an issue mentioned where SRN performance affects a local councils air quality management zone, through queueing traffic, Sue Percy mentioned that the Highways Sector Council could be a conduit for solving this issue.

In terms of what to look for, there are quite a few performance indicators in RIS2, there may be a need to review for RIS3 to focus exactly what Highways England should be working on, whilst other panel members suggested introducing further KPIs on User Carbon and Car sharing, particulates to name a few. An environmental scorecard could be introduced.

Certain national environmental stakeholders which could be of interest, including the UKRI. ORR discussing with local biodiversity groups, or nature partnerships and how they interact with Highways England could be useful. The panel suggested ORR could direct work and coordinate where possible, rather than take on work.

Future evolution of ORR's role

A member of the Highways team gave the panel a short background to ORR's current role, and asked the panel to help ORR consider how its role might evolve in the future, and how ORR can best add value.

Discussion was held on ORR's unique placement as an independent regulator with regards to safety, including smart motorways. ORR could monitor the future handover of DBFOs to Highways England. Collaborative working with other organisations, such as

the Department for Transport was mentioned, alongside regional collaboration with the introduction of the Major Road Network. Future innovation on the Strategic Road Network could also warrant ORRs increasing involvement in digital roads.