

Terms of reference ORR Road Expert Panel

ORR Road Expert Panel Terms of Reference

January 2022



Introduction

1. The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) independently monitors National Highways' management of the strategic road network – the motorways and main A-roads in England.

2. ORR's role is to monitor National Highways' performance and efficiency against the outcomes set out in the road investment strategy (RIS). We report on National Highways' delivery, providing transparency to funders, road users, and wider stakeholders. ORR has powers to enforce National Highways' compliance with the RIS and its licence.

3. The Memorandum of Understanding between ORR as Highways Monitor and the Department for Transport (DfT) states that ORR's Board, advised by its Roads (i.e., Highways) Committee, is responsible for the appointment of an expert panel of external specialists. The panel is intended to provide wider context on the assessment of performance and efficiency, drawing on relevant experience from the road sector or other best practice. This is known as the Road Expert Panel.

4. The panel complements existing expert panels within ORR, such as ORR's Consumer Expert Panel, and relationships with organisations such as Transport Focus.

Purpose

5. The role of the panel is to provide advice and support to ORR's work as Highways Monitor. The panel is advisory and is intended to assist us by contributing expert insight on highways sector interests and issues, by sharing best practice and knowledge from a range of relevant sectors. It should support us to deliver better outcomes for road users and wider stakeholders through our monitoring functions.

6. The panel's work programme will be arranged so that known topics can be presented to the panel at the appropriate time, whilst remaining flexible to respond to ORR's business needs as they develop. The topics discussed at the panel can range from informing our business planning to providing an expert forum in which to test and inform ORR-led research studies.

7. ORR's Road Expert Panel will:

- have a wide range of experience and expertise to help us understand the issues affecting the roads sector, particularly the strategic road network; good regulatory practice; the use of technology, including AI, autonomous

vehicles and digital roads and issues related to climate change, the environment and biodiversity;

- help ORR to ensure its policies and decisions benefit from a sound understanding of the highways sector and the wider community in which it sits and are effective in delivering positive change;
- be advisory, helping us to deliver better outcomes for road users and the wider community by providing context to our assessment of performance and efficiency and advising us on users' and service providers' interests or issues; and
- complement existing relationships with organisations representing highways infrastructure and road users.

Membership

8. Panel members will be appointed in their own right and reimbursed on a 'fees for service' basis.

9. Members will be appointed until 31 December 2024. Reappointments are made at ORR's discretion. Members should give reasonable notice if they wish to withdraw from the panel. ORR may appoint or remove members at any time if determined this would assist in achieving the aims of the panel. ORR anticipates that the membership of the panel may change over time to include additional perspectives or respond to changing business needs.

Meetings

10. The panel will normally meet a maximum of four times a year. Additional meetings could be called to discuss specific issues and it is expected that a special ad hoc meeting will take place every March to test emerging key messages for the annual assessment.

11. Meetings will normally be held at our head office in London (Canary Wharf) and will be chaired by ORR's Deputy Director for Highways, or a nominated alternate. On occasion meetings may be held at different locations. Where meeting in person is not possible, meetings will be held virtually over MS Teams. ORR will produce agendas and meeting notes for each meeting, with the latter published on our website. ORR will aim to issue an agenda and papers two weeks in advance of panel meetings, though this may be varied if circumstances require.

Individual or sub-group contributions

13. From time to time ORR may wish to draw upon the expertise of individual members of the panel, or small sub-groups, to supply think pieces, critical reviews of existing ORR positions or remedies or other bespoke work. Any such work will be discussed and agreed with the individual member(s).

14. ORR will encourage the panel to support or develop think pieces or discussion papers on issues of interest or relevance to the Highways Monitor, in collaboration with ORR staff or others on a *pro bono* basis. These will be aimed at informing

debate within and outside the highways sector but will not reflect or bind ORR policy.

Duration of the panel

15. Our panel will initially be established until 31 December 2024. A decision to extend or close the panel beyond that date will be made by ORR nearer the time. ORR may choose to disband the panel earlier if determined it is not achieving its intended purpose.

Conflicts of interest

16. The business or other interests of panel members may from time to time conflict with the role of the ORR or independence of the panel. Members are required to be aware of conflicts of interest and notify ORR in advance of a panel meeting where this may arise. ORR may then vary agendas or exclude a panel member from specific items as appropriate.

Review of Terms of Reference

17. ORR may review and revise these terms of reference from time to time and will consult the panel on changes to these terms. ORR's decision on revision to terms is final.