



## **Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation response to the ORR consultation - Monitoring Highways England**

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CIHT is a membership organisation representing over 13,000 people who work in the highways and transportation sector. CIHT members plan, design, build, operate and maintain best-in-class transport systems and infrastructure, whilst respecting the imperatives of improving safety, ensuring economic competitiveness and minimising environmental impact.

CIHT welcomes the opportunity to comment on the role of the ORR.

### **Question 1: Are you clear what our role will involve? Are there aspects of our role which you would like more clarity about?**

CIHT welcomed the creation of Highways England as part of the Department for Transport's (DfT) approach in providing certainty and continuity of investment for the strategic road network, given the importance of the issue to our membership and the wider public.

The need for a Highways Monitor to secure improved performance and value for money under the new arrangements is a vital one and CIHT welcomes the increasing clarity of the role provided in both in the consultation document and in separate engagement with the Office for Rail and Road (ORR).

As the consultation acknowledges, the way in which the role develops will change over time as Highways England transforms. CIHT understands that full clarity of the ORR's role can only develop over the same period.

CIHT welcomes the engagement philosophy outlined in the consultation and the clear recognition of the need for structured engagement between ORR, Highways England, Transport Focus and DfT. Further clarity on the relationship between these organisations will be important if the overall aims of the changes to the management of the strategic network is to be achieved.

### **Question 2: Do you agree with our strategic objective for our highways monitoring role?**

CIHT agrees that the objective captures an appropriate scope for ORR's role.

CIHT welcomes the inclusion of the wider public as well as road users as the ultimate beneficiaries of ORR's role in securing improved performance. This addition is important in capturing the wide impacts of the performance of the strategic road network on a broad range of interests, all of which have different needs.

CIHT identified this wider impact in its original response to DfT's consultation and is pleased to see it covered by your strategic objective. As outlined below this range of different needs will need to be taken into account as the monitoring regime develops.

CIHT welcomes the key focus on improving performance through a proportionate, risk based approach.



**Question 3: Are there specific ways you would like us to engage with you beyond the industry forums already referred to in this document?**

CIHT welcome the constructive engagement set out in the consultation and would be keen to engage both as an individual organisation, representing our membership and as part of a wider group of stakeholders as identified in the document.

CIHT is in a unique position of containing consultants, contractors, academics, service providers, local authority / public sector in its membership. This puts us in a strong position to be able to host appropriate groups of our members, individual and corporate, and other stakeholders if ORR would find that helpful as its engagement strategy develops. CIHT assisted DfT in a similar way during the development of their approach to the creation of Highways England which was helpful in highlighting issues not already considered.

CIHT welcomes the proposal to develop a benchmarking approach and supports the scope outlined for this. Bodies such as the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG), the Highways Terms Maintenance Association (HTMA) and the World Road Association (WRA) will be useful bodies to engage with to help support this approach.

**Question 4: 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?**

CIHT recognise that it is important for the monitor to demonstrate the improved performance and value for money arising from the creation of Highways England from an early stage. This will enable a strong case to be made for continued investment in future Road Investment Strategies creating certainty and continuity alongside a range of other benefits. The focus of the key areas outlined in the consultation is therefore appropriate for the early stages.

There are a number of areas that CIHT believe should be considered and developed for a more specific focus and consideration of a monitoring approach that enables Highways England to deliver benefits to the wider public.

These areas are;

- Cooperation with a wide degree of stakeholders including local authorities in order to deliver long-term economic growth and wider aims
- Developing and delivering innovation in the way services are delivered and acting as an exemplar for the sector in terms of procurement practices that encourage innovation
- Providing leadership across the sector in terms of safety, skills, diversity, development of standards and guidance and disseminating good practice

All of these areas are to some degree covered by the Highways England delivery plan but there would be benefits in ensuring they are monitored to ensure focus on them. A number of them are proposed to be monitored by responding to stakeholders concerns by ORR but this would seem to be adding an additional level of engagement that should rightly be carried out by Highways England.

**Question 5: 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?**



Whilst the monitor's role is specific to the strategic highway network CIHT believes that performance improvements may be negated unless the effects on the remainder of the highway network are fully understood by DfT and other highway authorities. Consideration of how best to develop and provide that information should therefore be considered to influence how Highways England and Local authorities serve highway users who do not recognise the difference between the strategic and local networks. CIHT would be pleased to support the development of that approach.

**Question 6: Is there specific information relating to Highways England which is not currently in the public domain which you think should be prioritised for publication?**

The degree of change required by the creation of Highways England, both to the organisation and its supply chain is significant and the new company has a pivotal role in demonstrating leadership by publishing information on how it is addressing this change, particularly in respect of skills and diversity issues and embedding these across the sector. Again CIHT would be pleased to support the development of that approach.

CIHT welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation and would be pleased to expand on any of the points we have made. We recognise the steps that Highways England have already taken in many of the areas we have mentioned in this report and are pleased to support them in the positive steps they are taking.