



Department
for Transport

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Lilian Greenwood MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: lilian.greenwood_mp@dft.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

Ruth Cadbury MP
Chair, Transport Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

13 March 2025

Dear Ruth,

Publication of the ORR's Third Annual Assessment of safety performance on the strategic road network and National Highways' Smart Motorways Stocktake Fourth Year Progress Report

Following the Committee's comprehensive inquiry and report on the rollout and safety of smart motorways in 2021, DfT commissioned an independent evaluation of smart motorways technology and the effectiveness of stocktake actions by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). ORR has now concluded its third annual review which once again includes an update on this work alongside wider work on safety on the strategic road network. ORR's ***Third Annual Assessment of safety performance on the strategic road network*** is available online at www.orr.gov.uk/monitoring-and-regulation/roads-monitoring/annual-assessment-safety-performance-strategic-road-network.

Following ORR's previous assessments, National Highways has taken action to improve the performance of Stopped Vehicle Detection (SVD) technology and committed to investing £105m to improve technology performance. ORR's Third Annual Assessment finds that, at a national level, stopped vehicle detection technology is continuing to meet its performance requirements. Due to extensive roadworks to build additional emergency areas it has not been possible to conclusively assess the effectiveness of National Highways' work to increase the availability of assets, however ORR find that National Highways is on track to deliver the majority of its plan to improve the reliability of other safety systems by the end of March 2025.

The report notes that National Highways has now delivered all measures set out in the stocktake action plan. The company's evaluation of its smart motorway education campaigns has also demonstrated a contribution towards an improvement in road users' understanding and awareness of smart motorways. However, it is still too early to evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken to date in reducing the number and duration of live lane stops, with the ORR noting that at least three years of stable data are required.

National Highways has also published its *Smart Motorways Stocktake Fourth Year Progress Report*. This report contains National Highways' latest analysis of the safety data, which continues to show that overall, smart motorways are the safest roads on the Strategic Road Network in terms of fatalities or serious injuries. This report is available on National Highways' website at www.nationalhighways.co.uk/our-work/smart-motorways-evidence-stocktake/.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lilian', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

LILIAN GREENWOOD MP

MINISTER FOR THE FUTURE OF ROADS