



## Transport Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

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Mr John Larkinson  
Chief Executive  
Office of Rail and Road  
25 Cabot Square  
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Dear John,

We are grateful to the Office of Rail and Road for submitting written evidence to our inquiry on the rollout and safety of smart motorways. My colleagues and I on the Committee would like to request some further information, which will help us gain a better understanding of the ORR's role with regards to roads in general, as well as smart motorways specifically, and how this differs from the role you have on rail.

### **Health and safety functions**

As you explained in your submission, your role on roads is very different to the one you have on rail, where, in addition to your economic role, you also have health and safety responsibilities covering the entire mainline network in Britain. There have been frequent changes to the design of smart motorways since their inception, along with changes to the operational procedures applied to these roads. To help us gain a better understanding of your role it would be helpful if you could explain what, if any, role the ORR would have if similar design and operational changes were proposed for rail. It would be helpful if you could provide an example how you might intervene in practice as well as the specific powers you might use.

### **Monitoring the performance of Highways England**

You mentioned that while you have no equivalent health and safety powers on roads, you do monitor Highway England's commitment to improving road safety for users and workers. This includes monitoring Highways England against a "key performance indicator which focusses on the reduction of people killed or seriously injured, with a trajectory aimed at zero fatalities by 2040." We would be grateful if you could clarify how this monitoring role applies to the safety of smart motorways as well as what if any steps you have taken to a) raise and b) respond to safety concerns relating to these roads as part of your monitoring role.

We would be grateful if you could reply to the information we have requested by w/c 14 June. Thank you once again for your help with our inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Huw Merriman MP  
Chair of the Transport Committee