

John Larkinson
Chief Executive



Nick Harris
Chief Executive, National Highways
By Email

21 July 2023

Dear Nick,

Performance of stopped vehicle detection systems on smart motorways

Thank you for your letter of 28 June 2023 that set out National Highways' progress on its programme to improve the effectiveness and operation of stopped vehicle detection (SVD) on all lane running (ALR) motorways.

In December 2022 our annual assessment of safety performance on the strategic road network highlighted that SVD performance was falling short of the performance requirements that National Highways had set itself. In particular, to achieve detection rates of at least 80%, false detection rates of 15% or less and average detection times of under 20 seconds. Since then, ORR has closely monitored the work National Highways has been undertaking to achieve these standards by the end of June 2023.

It is positive that the latest data you shared with ORR show that these requirements have been met on the three pilot sites. I also welcome news that the roll-out of the upgraded software to other ALR sites completed on 14 June 2023. We recognise that caution is required when interpreting the results. The latest data are from just three sites, and the company has made some improvements to the methodology used to calculate SVD performance that affect comparisons with the previous results we reported in December 2022.

We intend to continue scrutinising progress against this commitment as data from more ALR sites becomes available. We will also work with you on how these data are presented, including the impact of the methodological improvements. This will enable us to conclude whether the performance levels have been achieved for the network as a whole. If we are not satisfied that performance targets are being met, we will take action to require further rapid improvements from National Highways.



We will also continue to monitor National Highways' progress towards its commitment of improving the performance of wider operational technology on smart motorways by the end of this road period. It is important that National Highways builds on the progress made so far and maintains its focus on optimising and enhancing the technology to drive further performance improvements.

Work should also continue to identify other technologies that can be used alongside the existing SVD solution to deliver the best possible outcomes for road users. We will report on progress with this in our annual report on safety later this year.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your team for your constructive engagement and openness with ORR throughout this process.

Yours sincerely

John Larkinson