



## **Our Responses to the 6 main questions ORR are asking us to concentrate on;**

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

Yes we are clear about what the ORR's role will involve. However we do feel there are a few aspects of the role where more clarity is required. One area being the link between the ORR and the Transport Focus watchdog role, it feels like considerable duplication of effort could ensue if both bodies do not have absolute clarity of their roles and the interrelationship of their work and outcomes. Another area is related to the ORR's benchmarking of Highways England, some detail is provided as to the potential organisations that Highways England will be benchmarked against, but not the specific measures, our concern is that they need to include a wide spread of measures, not just financial, but also operational, considering aspects from the road users, local communities as well as the operators.

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

Yes we agree with the strategic objective, but are concerned about the 'value for money' statement and the competing and complimentary areas of targeted high performance. Value for money is often taken as cheaper cost (which then conflicts with some of the targeted high performance areas), not added value for the same cost, whilst appreciating that efficiency gains also need to be achieved.

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

The ORR engagement and consultation proposals are wide and nearly all encompassing, and we really welcome that. We are a major global wide ranging consultancy and Highways England is one of our main UK clients, as such we seek regular engagement and performance feedback in both directions which is fundamental to us all improving performance and being aligned to the same objectives. We are an active member of the ACE Roads Special Interest Group which has regular meetings with Highways England and an important body for you to consult with. In addition we would suggest that the other important bodies that should be consulted are ICE, CIHT, HTMA and CECA.

**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?**

We feel that the key areas have been identified and as requested, we would like to suggest particular areas of Highways England's performance and efficiency that require specific focus. These are;

- Real consideration of the whole life cost (WLC) of the strategic network and compare to high performing DBFO contracts, where WLC is of fundamental importance.
- Procurement processes in the round, but specific areas could include; over complicated and sophisticated contracts and performance metrics. Focus moved significantly onto new approaches being sought and ways of working but at the expense of confidence in proven delivery.
- Collaboration is the current theme, are the anticipated benefits coming to fruition.
- Local Authority collaboration and meaningful engagement benefitting the entire network, road users and communities is critical
- Internal governance within Highways England, getting the balance right for where the energy of staff is focused, too much internal is at the expense of external outcomes of delivery and operation.
- Regional performance through the six newly created Regional Programme Boards.

**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?**

We see the ORR's initial plans for reporting on performance and efficiency is well considered but data hungry. As such maximum use of currently available data must be made and where necessary improvements on the data gathered needs building into how Highways England will do business and not in addition to their business operation. We are aware that significant data historically has been gathered both internally and from suppliers in the past, but we have had minimal visibility of the collective outputs and the value it has added to inform Highways England's business going forward. We fully support the focus being on outcomes and outputs, but would caution against this being a tick box exercise, but one where a level of discretion can be used if outputs differs from the anticipated but still add significant value, as businesses we all need a degree of flexibility and the agility to react to ever changing circumstances.

**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?**

We would like to see details of the new Regional Programme Delivery Board operational structure and terms of reference, together with the performance metrics that will be used to measure the individual regional performances. We would also like to see robust plans and priorities for the anticipated network improvements. Detailed and deliverable programmes of the planned works should be made available to enable the ORR and the Highways England supply chain to have clear visibility, thus enabling industry to plan adequately and thus deliver best value for the tax payer.