

## CECA Consultation Response

Civil Engineering Contractors Association  
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Richard Coates  
Head of Highways Monitor Development  
Office of Rail and Road  
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One Kemble Street  
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Dear Mr Coates

### [Re: Monitoring Highways England](#)


The Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the above named consultation.

CECA provides the voice for those companies large and small who create, improve and maintain the UK's vital transport and utility networks. Our membership of more than 300 companies together delivers an estimated 70-80 per cent of all infrastructure construction work carried out nationwide. Our industry supports the employment of around 200,000 people with annual activity worth up to £25 billion.

Last year we welcomed the completion of the roads reform process with the conversion of the Highways Agency into Highways England, creating for the first time a long-term strategy for the English strategic road network. This long term certainty allows for investment in skills, equipment and innovation, reducing delivery costs and making savings for the taxpayer. It is imperative that this commitment to roads capital investment is maintained, ensuring capacity and capability. Any action to re-profile the programme would significantly impact on industry's confidence to invest in efficiency and future delivery.

As we look forward to working with the ORR in its new role, we trust that you find our comments helpful and that they will be taken into consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Alasdair Reisner  
Chief Executive  
Civil Engineering Contractors Association

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

Yes, CECA understands the criteria of the ORR's new function and the how it plans to monitor Highways England.

While we appreciate that a certain amount of detail is still being developed, CECA is keen to understand how the new monitoring body will engage with the construction industry.

To this end, we can offer colleagues from the ORR the opportunity to meet our member companies to understand the role they play in delivering efficiencies as they maintain and improve the Strategic Road Network. CECA is happy to assist the ORR in whatever way we can as you undertake your new monitoring role.

In our view, the ORR's monitoring role should focus on encouraging continual improvement. We are keen to see on-going improving performance of the industry and the Strategic Road Network.

Specifically, we seek further detail on the timeframe for the development of the ORR's approach to audit and appropriate processes that produce behaviours that will deliver the results required by ORR.

We are also interested in understanding how ORR will apply "enforcement actions". Our members want to work with the ORR and the newly established company to help produce appropriate behaviours that ensure Highways England achieves its objectives. However, there is some concern that the enforcement of penalties can be counter-productive and be to the detriment of the road user. Therefore developing metrics to measure satisfaction is crucial.

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

Yes, CECA fully supports the ORR's strategic objective for its highways monitoring role. We consider that this monitoring needs to be kept at a strategic level. In our view, it would be counter-productive to be too detailed.

Like ORR, we are keen to help Highways England and its suppliers (our members) improve. Consequently we are keen to ensure all our aims are aligned.

Delivering its performance specification and investment plan is an ambitious, yet achievable challenge for the new company. We therefore support Highway's England's drive to improve its performance. Additionally, our members as suppliers can help meet its efficiency objectives and other critical performance specification targets for safety and the environment etc.

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

We are pleased to see that the ORR plans to engage with industry via representative forums. We also suggest that you engage with CECA's own Roads Forum to support and ensure the high performance of the Strategic Road Network.

The CECA Roads Forum draws together representatives from those companies, large, medium and small who have an interest in delivering construction activities for Highways England.

Our group meets four times a year in London and can enable the ORR to best engage with a representative voice of the Highways England supply chain.

**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 think that the ORR should monitor Highways England against the strategic outcomes and enablers set out in their Delivery Plan. CECA notes that there are detailed measures set out in Highways England's Operational Metrics Manual. In our view, the sub-metrics that are measured and recorded daily on the network clearly need to be selected to be appropriate, proportionate, practical, and supporting the output/outcome required. For instance in monitoring the smooth flow of traffic, there is need to ensure that schemes which are intended to reduce disruption provide a benefit to the wider network. We think that it is also important that value and efficiency benefits take account of asset life-cycle costs.

**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?**

CECA believes that the stages of the monitoring framework are workable. However, the challenge will be compiling the data to support the headline metrics as indicated above - selected to be appropriate, proportionate, practical, and supporting the output/outcome required. It would also be worth ensuring delivery of the requirements of the last Spending Review.

As mentioned above with regard to the effect of individual road schemes, we believe that the ORR must measure the effect on the local road network and the wider Strategic Road Network.

Furthermore, there would be benefit in ORR measuring the way that Highways England delivers renewals and major projects (Network Delivery and Development and Major Projects) and support cross learning where appropriate.

Finally, we also feel that the reporting criteria should measure the efficiency of the Road Investment Strategy itself.

**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?**

CECA welcomes continued openness to publishing information from ORR and Highways England.