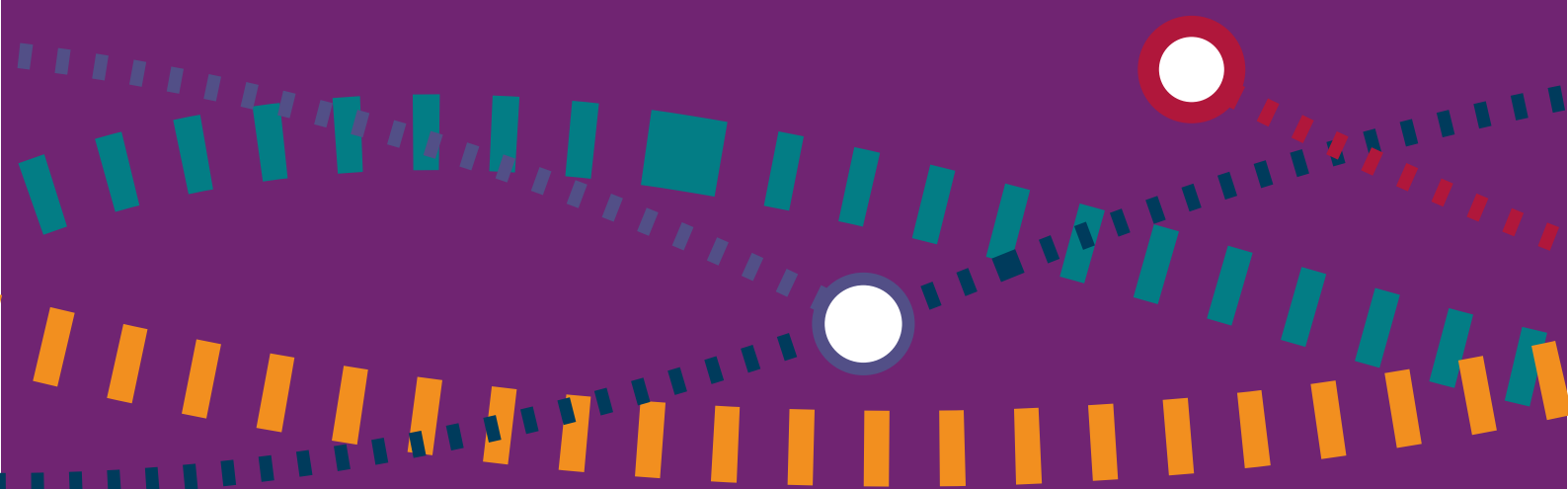




Business plan summary 2020-21



ORR business plan summary 2020-21



The role of the rail and road industries remains crucial for the UK economy during the current pandemic and through the recovery from it. Our work to provide independent oversight and assurance is, in turn, as important as ever. Most of our usual work has continued, although some of this has been flexed to enable us to support the industry in the most effective way possible.

We have focussed on responding quickly to industry requests for new guidance on health and safety issues and working with specific parts of the industry, and with government, on the financial impacts. Wherever possible, we have reduced burdens on industry by stopping or delaying non-essential regulatory or monitoring work.

Meanwhile, our essential day job continues, for example on health and safety enforcement, authorising new trains into use and responding to passenger concerns on information and assistance.

Over the coming months we expect this pattern: some new work, some changes to existing work, but broadly continuing with our plans. However because the detail of some of our work may change, we have produced a less detailed plan than usual.

We will continue to respond pragmatically to the challenges we are presented with and our business plan will evolve accordingly. We may update it later in the year.

John Larkinson
Chief Executive, Office of Rail and Road



Health and Safety

Track worker safety remains a very important area of work for us this year. Following two fatalities last year and, tragically, a further death in April this year, we will continue to focus on ensuring that the health and safety of track workers remains a priority. This will include actively monitoring that all the recommendations for preventive and protective measures set out in the formal enforcement notices we issued to Network Rail in 2019, are implemented by 2022.

The suite of recommendations from the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) in response to the incident on London Trams at Croydon in 2016 is now nearing completion. ORR will also support, monitor and review the Light Rail Safety and Standards Board, established over the past twelve months, to enable it to deliver its objectives.

One particular issue ORR will be watching closely over the coming year is the risk to passengers arising at the platform-train interface (PTI). This remains the greatest cause of harm to passengers on the mainline railway and the second on London Underground. We will maintain pressure on the Train Operating Companies (TOCs) to improve how they manage this risk. We will also keep up the pressure on areas like Signals Passed at Danger (SPAD) management, including implementing the SPAD strategy as revised by the Rail Safety and Standards Board, and on issues around the introduction of new rolling stock, such as managing associated operational software and hardware issues.

Trespass (on track and in freight yards) and suicide continue to present significant challenges and, therefore, remain a priority for ORR. Our core strategy is to apply pressure on Network Rail and the TOCs to work together to support each other in their activities to prevent such incidents.

We will monitor and support London Underground's efforts to return to a strong safety record in the face of a number of challenges and financial constraints and following the death of a contractor's employee at Waterloo station. We will focus, in particular, on LUL's assets such as track, civil engineering and electrical installations.

When it comes to supporting railway workers, we are focussing on their health and wellbeing, including mental health. Our well-received report on occupational health and wellbeing, '[Closing the Gap](#)', sets out a clear roadmap for improvements. It is now for the industry to deliver and we will be monitoring progress.

Health and Safety continued

ORR is itself proactive in addressing mental health, for example through the 'Million Hour Challenge' project, where employees can volunteer hours to the Samaritans, with benefits to their own mental health.

Our core work of inspections, investigations and statutory work will continue, but the impact of Covid-19 has meant that we have brought forward detailed planning and document reviews, while delaying interviews and site inspections. Investigations can generally be done remotely, although these may take more time. Our other work is almost entirely based away from the field.

New work arising from Covid-19 has also included consideration of the implications for health and safety management of the DFT-franchised train operators being put on a new contractual basis; and assurance over the reinstatement of assets after a prolonged shut down (including in the heritage sector).

We have already developed and published key advice for industry on managing the implications of Covid-19 and will continue to do so as the situation develops and the need arises. This can be accessed at <https://orr.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice>



Better Rail Customer Service

Based on research conducted in 2019, we have asked the industry to develop a clear plan designed to deliver tangible and enduring improvements in passenger information, and to develop a Customer Information Measure (CIM), designed to help the industry assess and drive continuous improvement in customer information. We have been working closely with Network Rail, train operators and the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) and we expect to receive the industry Passenger Information Improvement Plan in early summer.

We are working to approve all train companies' Accessible Travel Policies (ATPs) against the requirements of our new ATP guidance, and will establish monitoring arrangements to assess how the new requirements are operating in practice. As a result of the current reduction in train services and the difficulty in carrying out 'mystery shopper' research at this time, we have postponed our research into the information available to passengers requiring assistance from station help points. However, we are continuing to monitor information provision regarding the use of trains that have been temporarily exempted from the requirements of rail vehicle accessibility regulations. We will keep under review whether it will be appropriate to undertake any additional research in this area.

Covid-19 has impacted on train and station operators' ability to consistently meet some of their consumer-related obligations. We have separately written to operators, setting out our approach to compliance at this time. Where they are facing specific challenges, we will seek their plans to address them. We will be pragmatic and reasonable in our response, while ensuring that the interest of passengers is uppermost.



Better Highways

We will finalise the elements of RIS2 that we are responsible for and continue future policy work. This includes understanding the medium-term implications of the pandemic and what impact this is likely to have on delivery of priorities.

We have transitioned into the next road period and continue to hold Highways England to account. The way in which we do this will be refined, given the need to reduce distraction on the industry in the immediate response phase to the pandemic.



Analysis and policy



Even before the outbreak of Covid-19, the rail industry was changing. It will continue to do so through this pandemic and beyond, as it adjusts itself to the new environment in which it must operate. We are responding with a programme of work to evolve our approach to regulation to reflect those changes and prepare for the next funding review. For example, we are considering how we can best respond as a regulator to the decarbonisation agenda and how we should adapt the way we work so we can better support the Government's vision for a more joined-up railway. This is a priority for ORR during the coming year.

We are also working on production of guidance required for the proposed exit of the UK from the European Union on 31 December 2020. Other projects include work on safety and contributions to the economic regulation of the Channel Tunnel.

Access and licensing casework continues, including agreeing an appropriate timetable for applications with Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies, in light of the current circumstances.

In addition, we will undertake as much of our routine monitoring and reporting as possible, with some changes in timing and scope.



Value for Money From The Railway

During the first quarter of this year we have refined our approach to holding Network Rail to account. To provide independent scrutiny for passengers, the freight sector and funders, we agreed that ORR would take a pragmatic approach to our monitoring and oversight role of Network Rail.

Within this framework we will continue to monitor and escalate issues as they arise, making full use of our toolkit to achieve the best outcomes for users and funders – focussed on train performance, asset sustainability and efficient delivery.

Development work on rail reform, commissioned by the Department for Transport to look at the future structure of the rail industry, continues.

The market study into the UK signalling market, which we launched in January, needed to be closed in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the signalling market remains a key focus for ORR, and re-opening the study when the railway returns to a 'steady-state' will be a high priority. Monitoring of open access services has been put on hold. Other case work continues.



Running ORR

Almost all ORR staff have been working remotely since the outbreak of Covid-19 in March. While this has been working well, a key priority will be preparing our offices for a safe return to some office working in due course.

In the coming year we want to continue to modernise the way we do things and have further initiatives in train, including a new integrated finance and HR system, which will go live in the summer. We are also developing a new IT strategy to make sure that we continue to develop our digital capability and better leverage technology to support our work and evolve in line with our stakeholders and the industry.

Our staff remain our biggest asset, so we will continue with organisational change activity to ensure colleagues have the skills and tools to do their role and to ensure we continue to recruit and retain highly capable staff. This will include work on diversity and inclusion, a refreshed pay and reward strategy and ongoing development initiatives.

We have three discrete income streams relating to our three main lines of business: railway health and safety regulation, railway economic regulation and the monitoring of the strategic road network. There is no potential for cross-subsidy between these three funding streams.

On the rail side, we receive income from the rail industry to fund our core work, with health and safety regulation and economic regulation accounting for 50% and 43% of our annual income respectively. Our monitoring of the strategic road network is funded in the form of a direct grant from the Department for Transport and provides around 7% of the budget. In money terms, this means we will be raising £34.1m in statutory charges to spend on the railways during FY 2020-21 and our roads budget from the Department for Transport will be £2.5m.

Service Standards For 2020-21

Much of ORR's 'business as usual' involves providing services to those in the industry or others with a need for our work. As an organisation that is largely funded, directly or indirectly, by the public, it is essential that we publish service standards as part of our commitment to transparency. These are our standards below.

Provision	Standard
Issue new or revised train driver licences	100% of applications processed within one month of receipt of all necessary documentation
ROGS safety certificates and authorisations (Railway and Other Guided Transport Systems Regulations 2006)	100% determined within four months of receiving completed application
Report to the Rail Accident Investigations Branch (RAIB) on the progress of its recommendations	100% response to RAIB recommendations within 1 year of associated RAIB reported being published
Efficient processing of technical authorisations	100% of responses within 28 days of receiving complete submission
Access and licensing casework	100% decided within two months of receipt of all relevant information
Freedom of Information requests	90% of requests for information responded to within 20 working days of receipt
General enquiries and complaints including adjustment to account for cases investigated	95% of enquiries and complaints responded to within 20 working days of receipt
Prompt payment of suppliers' invoices to ORR	80% paid within 10 days of valid invoice
	100% paid within 30 days of valid invoice
Publication of quarterly statistical releases	100% published within 4 months after quarter end



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