



URBAN TRANSPORT GROUP

Consultation response

**Office of Rail and Road (ORR) July 2016
about Monitoring Highways England's
network investment**

November 2016

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. UTG represents the City regions, bringing together Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, London, North East, Sheffield City Region, West Midlands and West Yorkshire. In addition Bristol and the West of England, Nottingham City Council and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport are associate members.
- 1.2. ORR are consulting on the following;
 - Do you understand and agree with the scope of our role with respect to monitoring Highways England's network investment, as set out in this consultation?
 - Does our proposed approach for monitoring Highways England's network investment fulfil our role in a way which meets your requirements as a stakeholder?
 - Are there aspects of our monitoring of Highways England's network investment that you think require more or less emphasis?
- 1.3. Highways England's investment portfolio comprises four capital investment programmes:
 - A programme of major improvement schemes, of more than £7bn
 - A maintenance and renewals programme, of approximately £3.7bn
 - A £675m programme of ring fenced investment funds; and
 - Investment associated with strategic studies

2. General Comments

Customer focus

- 2.1. UTG agrees that ORR monitoring should be proportionate and provide sufficient scrutiny to safe guard the interests of road users and the public as well as those of funders. The monitoring as set out in the consultation document is based very much around asset management and project management, and although we acknowledge the reference to Transport Focus representing road user views within the RIS development stage, the document makes little reference to the benefits for, or impact on customers. We feel that the effectiveness of the processes which identify the benefits to end users from the Highways England investment programmes should be monitored. Similarly the strategies to mitigate any negative impact on end users during construction should be monitored, e.g. the application of a consistent approach to incorporating the view of road users at each stage within the major scheme lifecycle, and whether the evaluation programme for each includes a research plan proportionate to the level of investment / spend, benchmarked against evaluation best practice. These aspects should be drawn out more explicitly in the ORR Monitoring regime.

Role of Stakeholders

- 2.2. The SRN is an integral part of a wider road and transport network. In particular, Local Authorities roads feed the SRN and equally handle the route to final destination for customers. They also perform a vital role in supporting intra-City Region movement. We would wish to see a more explicit reference in ORR monitoring regimes to the role of the Local Highway and Traffic Authorities. Also that ORR monitoring assesses how effectively



Highways England are working with Local Authority stakeholders. By way of example, Summary diagrams 2.1 and 2.2 relating to RIS and to Major Schemes sets out Highways England, ORR and DfT roles but is silent on the role of Local Highway and Traffic Authorities. We would wish to see greater transparency on how the ORR Monitoring regime draws in appropriate input from Local Authorities and organisations such as UTG.

Collaboration between Highways England, Local Authorities and Combined Authorities

- 2.3. UTG wish to see more consistent and formalised collaboration between Highways England, Local Authorities and Combined Authorities and would suggest that progress and effectiveness in this regard is specifically referenced and included in the ORR monitoring regime. In particular UTG is aware that Detailed Local Operating Agreements that were put in place by Highways Agency with Local Authorities are now well out of date and largely ineffective. ORR Monitoring of Highways England should scrutinise how this is being addressed and progressed through new Partnership Plans in order to ensure better integration with Local Authorities and better mutual understanding between road authorities. ORR could also consider the benefits of the model operating in Greater Manchester with a Memorandum of Understanding between Highways England and TfGM.

Cross-programme objectives

- 2.4. It is not clear how ORR Monitoring will deal with cross-programme issues such as Air Quality or cross-programme outcomes such as journey time reliability.

3. Response to Specific Questions

- 3.1. The following responses relate to the 3 specific questions raised in the ORR consultation. UTG agrees with ORR that the ORR monitoring should mainly focus on testing Highways England's own assurance processes rather than carrying out parallel, additional audits and assurance activity. As such we are not suggesting that all of the issues identified below are addressed directly by ORR but rather that the ORR monitoring provides assurance that Highways England have processes in place and that those processes are evidenced as effective.

Question One - Do you understand and agree with the scope of our role with respect to monitoring Highways England's network investment, as set out in this consultation?

Response

- 3.2. The consultation document sets out clearly how ORR will monitor Highways England's programmes and projects from an expenditure and schedule perspective and is robust in terms of project delivery.
- 3.3. However, we would question whether the monitoring programme, as set out, considers sufficiently the following;



Strategic investment

- 3.4. Monitoring should assess how the planned Highways England network investment and its delivery sit, in local and strategic terms, within the wider road and transport networks e.g. are the mechanisms and relationships in place for regular and meaningful dialogue with Local Highway Authorities, and with Combined Authorities, about priorities and strategic investment decisions?

Works Co-ordination

- 3.5. Are there mechanisms in place and are they operating effectively to identify and mitigate, in a timely manner, any future conflicts between strategic works on SRN and those on the local roadwork. Similarly are there mechanisms in place to identify and co-ordinate with other major infrastructure work that have a significant impact upon customers and the transport network e.g. rail infrastructure upgrades, major development.

Customer impact

- 3.6. The consultation document makes little reference to the customer. Are processes and plans in place to mitigate against the impact of maintenance and construction works on customers? Are these consistently applied and is there a monitoring process in place to evidence the impacts? Will ORR monitor how well Highways England and their supply chain contractors are notifying and alerting users and how well they are working with local authorities to mitigate the impact of their investment and associated works on local traffic e.g. through identification of alternative routes and through use of agreed TDM techniques? How will the amalgamation of multiple works on the transport network affect customers and is sufficient resource set aside to help to mitigate the impacts? Is the contact with local authorities being undertaken in a timely manner to ensure, for example, that the public can be advised of works (and alternative routes/modes) well in advance of works commencing?

Demand growth

- 3.7. How is the additional demand, generated by the investment programmes, dealt with at the interface with the local road network? Will ORR monitor how well Highways England have modelled and worked with local and combined authorities to ensure that the demands of new investment can be accommodated on local roads e.g. for each Smart motorway investment is there a programme of interventions and investment on local roads both during the works programme and on completion? Are travel demand management techniques funded and employed to mitigate disruption during construction? Through its monitoring of the pre-construction phases of SRN schemes, ORR should seek to identify how well planning/development of these schemes takes into account the mitigation of local network impacts, especially in the context of programme and funding requirements.
- 3.8. We would wish to see ORR monitoring of Highways England take a strong position on ensuring that Highways England's investment and works programme is fully integrated and co-ordinated with local road network investment and maintenance programmes.
- 3.9. We would wish to see greater emphasis in the ORR monitoring on assessing and supporting the customer's whole journey experience particularly at a City Region level where the SRN is integral to the transport network.



Question Two - Does our proposed approach for monitoring Highways England's network investment fulfil our role in a way which meets your requirements as a stakeholder?

Response

- 3.10. UTG agrees that the ORR monitoring should mainly focus on testing Highways England's own assurance processes rather than carrying out parallel, additional audits and assurance activity. As stakeholders, the priority areas for seeking assurance are as follows;

Integration

- 3.11. Have Highways England fully integrated their programmes, and any subsequent changes, into the wider activity that affects road users e.g. local authority works and other major infrastructure? Are the mechanisms that are in place for this integration, effective and proven?

Collaboration

- 3.12. Are Highways England and their supply chain, collaborating effectively with stakeholders?

Road users

- 3.13. Have the views of all road users been fully understood, with the needs and expectations of different user groups considered in relation to priority for investment and perceived value for money against each scheme? Are the different needs and expectations of different types of road user's understood and are SMART performance measures in place?

Environmental impact

- 3.14. Does Highways England perform well in terms of their investment in environmental improvements particularly in relation to Air Quality? Is this addressed consistently across their whole portfolio?

Parallel Initiatives

- 3.15. Have Highways England fully considered value for money initiatives which do not invest directly in their network but which may positively affect the way their network performs?

Incident management

- 3.16. Are response protocols in place and are mutual aid arrangements documented and understood?

Event management

- 3.17. Are command, control, co-ordination and communication arrangements in place around major events, are they exercised and understood? Are procedures in place to ensure that any lessons learnt during major events or incidents are properly recognised and applied during similar events in the future?



Outcomes

- 3.18. Have performance measures and programme outcomes been set and communicated to stakeholders?

Question Three - Are there aspects of our monitoring of Highways England's network investment that you think require more or less emphasis?

Response

- 3.19. UTG would like to see more emphasis in the following areas;

Customer experience

- 3.20. A focus on assessing the whole journey experience of road users, whilst being able to isolate experience ratings on key parts of the network with the ability to test the strength of ratings by customer segments. To establish how roads authorities work together to continually improve that experience and how they ensure clarity on issue resolution.

Innovation

- 3.21. How well Highways England is embracing innovation and challenging the status quo.

Demand management

- 3.22. How well Highways England is utilising demand management techniques to help tackle network performance. Travel Demand Management should be considered as an integral part of all major works programmes both as mitigation of temporary impacts during works and in the long term performance of the network.

Diversion routing

- 3.23. How well are diversion routes managed and understood both for planned and emergency diversion? Are diversion routes appropriate for the quantum and type of traffic likely to use them and is appropriate monitoring of these routes in place to inform post-event consideration of impacts and lessons learnt? UTG understands that there is a national review of diversion routes, ORR should seek to oversee the application / delivery of any recommended changes emerging from the review.