

Highways England report on All Lane Running motorways

Since becoming Secretary of State for Transport, I have shared the concerns of many regarding All Lane Running (ALR) motorways. Any question about safety on our road network must be taken with the upmost seriousness.

Therefore, one of my first actions as Secretary of State was to commission a stocktake to set out recommendations to raise the bar on safety. While the evidence has suggested that ALR motorways are in most ways as safe as, or safer than, conventional ones, I am determined to go further and ensure that they are the safest roads in Britain.

To this end, in March 2020, I announced a package of 18 measures, costing £500million, including the faster rollout of a radar-based stopped vehicle detection (SVD) across the ALR motorway network.

Earlier this year, I asked for a one-year on report from Highways England detailing its progress in delivering the 18-point action plan and identifying actions that can be delivered ahead of schedule. I asked for this by 12 March 2021.

Highways England has now provided my department with that anniversary report, and work is rapidly being completed to assess it, including stocktake actions, and to establish next steps. The report will be published by summer, once I am assured that the proposals are sufficiently robust.

The publication of this report will not, however, mark the end of the process, and I am determined to ensure all possible actions to make ALR motorways safer still are explored. I have therefore ordered my officials to continue to work with Highways England on developing possible future options, working closely with road safety groups and Parliamentarians, as well as the Transport Select Committee which currently has an active inquiry into this issue. I am interested to receive their final report.

The latest safety evidence drawn from data and analysis of the 2019 STATS19 official statistics has been produced by Highways England and will be contained within its report. There has been considerable public and media interest in understanding motorway accident and fatality data and I have commissioned the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to independently review the data to provide further analytical assurance and ensure that the conclusions arrived at are robust. The ORR is the independent statutory monitor of Highways England and its management of the strategic road network.

Within this role, the ORR already scrutinises Highways England's delivery of the smart motorway stocktake actions, and its performance against its road safety KPIs. However, I believe there may be scope to go further. In addition to asking ORR to undertake an independent review of the available safety evidence on ALR motorways, my officials will explore what further independent

scrutiny may be appropriate.

Ensuring our roads are safe for those who use them is my top priority.