

SMART MOTORWAYS

NOT SO SMART
WITHOUT SVD

SO, I closed off my last editorial by encouraging you the independent recovery operator to join PROF, making reference to the past few months of Professional Recovery magazines and how PROF is fighting for the future of this industry. Well apart from securing a meeting with Sadiq Khan London Mayor, or his Deputy Rajesh Agrawal to discuss ULEZ exemptions, PROF has been constantly campaigning for a safer road infrastructure, in particular safer motorways and forcing a review into 'Smart Motorways'.

If you remember back in May 2016, big industry news, the recovery industry independent operator network had representation within the House of Commons. Our late friend Dave Gregory and Richard Goddard was selected to give oral evidence on behalf of ERRI and the recovery industry, on 'All Lane Running Motorways', and if I say myself what a great job they did. This was defiantly the catalyst of a much longer journey that has most certainly highlighted the dangers of cost cutting from the M42 'Smart Motorways' scheme with the later scheme rollouts.

So why is the subject of

'Smart Motorways' so prominent today? Most certainly a main contributor is the headline news when stranded motorists get needlessly killed waiting to be rescued after breaking down in a 'Live Lane'. But in reality, it is the continuous lobbying to the most influential people, government ministers, civil servants and alike, lobbying by PROF, that is what has put Smart Motorways at the forefront of people's minds and has started to make the difference.

Lobbying

The past 10 months, that is since the official launch of PROF we have seen the formation of the APPG for Roadside Rescue and Recovery and also the campaign for safer roadside rescue and recovery (CSRRR). Call for written evidence on the safety of smart motorways, the then follow-on oral evidence session held within the House of Commons chaired by Sir Mike Penning, all of that does not include the separate lobbying for the use of red warning lights and to be treated fairly where clean air zones are being introduced.

Then last October Highways England (HE) Chief Executive - Jim O'Sullivan, HE Executive Director of Strategy and Planning - Elliot

Smart Motorways, good or bad? It's headline news in the national press and a hot topic for discussion as **Derek Firminger** finds out..



Shaw, Chief Highways Engineer - Mike Wilson, were all called back to the House of Commons to answer questions and give evidence on their corrective actions following the 2016 Transport Select Committee session. As I've previously reported that didn't go very well, at least for Highways England it didn't, however I do think it had the positive affect our lobbying process set out to achieve. To highlight the deficiencies within smart motorways and to force a rethink and full review, the term being used by HE is 'Asset - Stocktake'. The findings of the report we will report on soon.

I don't need to go on, all of this has focused the spotlight on the inherent dangers of 'Smart Motorways' and the dangers your staff are faced with every day. It's all the more encouraging our message has reach the household names within journalism, BBC1 Panorama documentary, 'Britain's Killer Motorways?' and Radio 2 Jeromy

Vine today show and the newspapers with headlines in the Sunday Telegraph, 'The transport agency is already facing a criminal investigation after the widow of a motorist killed on a smart motorway made formal allegations of corporate manslaughter'.

Shock audience

We all know that these documentary's and radio chat shows are designed to shock its audience, the Jeremy Vine Today show aired at midday and BBC1 Panorama at 20:30, both on the 27 January with both programmes featured a call recording of a stranded motorist on the M6 at Knutsford. The caller stated he was in the inside lane heading North, with his family of five in the car, no sooner the breakdown call handler said 'Five people in the car - don't worry sir' then the caller said 'Oh Shit' as we heard a truck plough straight into the back of him. Luckily on this occasion no one was

