The Rt Hon. Sir Mike Penning MP
APPG for Roadside Recovery and Rescue

By E-Mail: contact@csrrr.org

20th March 2019

Dear Sir Mike,

APPG for Roadside Rescue and Recovery

Thank you for your e-mail of 4th March 2019 regarding the formation of the APPG for Roadside Rescue and Recovery.

As a way of introduction AVRO was founded in 1977 by a group of independent vehicle recovery operators whose aim was to raise standards within the roadside recovery industry. Today AVRO operates throughout the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland through 14 regions. AVRO has in excess of 200 members which results in representation of more than 5000 roadside recovery vehicles throughout the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. AVRO is the largest and oldest trade association within the roadside recovery industry.

AVRO is led by its elected President and Vice Presidents who in turn are supported by its National Council and by its team at the AVRO Head Office. Membership of AVRO is based on continued high professional standards which are laid down with terms and conditions of membership and must be maintained throughout in order to retain membership.

Members of the AVRO National Council are all independent roadside recovery operators who are elected by their AVRO region. The AVRO National Council meets once per month to discuss and attend to the matters of the day, each member giving their time voluntarily to the benefit of AVRO and our industry.

AVRO has consistently spearheaded standards and has been instrumental in the introduction of new standards. AVRO has been heavily involved and remains so in the introduction and continued development of the industry standard, PAS43. AVRO is a participating member of the SURVIVE Group who leads the development of PAS43 so are at the forefront of continued development of standards within the industry.

In relation to the information you have requested, I have listed below our submission:

1)   **Have casualties, 'near misses' and wider safety concerns affected the businesses and groups you represent? If so, how?**

AVRO has collected data from its members through membership surveys surrounding 'near misses' and wider safety concerns and will be happy to share this information with you. In addition to this it is evident that both roadside recovery operators and those working within the industry have clear and consistent concerns with safety at the roadside, in particular Smart Motorways. In relation to such safety issues the industry is now seeing this as having a detrimental effect on recruitment due to the grave concerns surrounding safety within the industry.

2)   **What is the scale of safety incidents and near misses within the industry?**

As above, AVRO would be happy to share with you the information we hold as a result of our membership surveys.

3) **What safety measures, if any, would you recommend to address safety concerns and why?**

AVRO would suggest additional support, improvement and recognition of already established industry guidance and standards, such as The Survive Group (www.survivegroup.org), PAS 43 http://www.survivegroup.org/pages/whats-new/press-releases/pas-43-2018, The Institute of Vehicle Recovery (www.theivrgroup.com) and others. A broad approach should be taken to educate roadside recovery operators on the above and look to improve on the safety and guidance offered within these standards. In addition to this consideration should be given to PAS 43 becoming a compulsory standard throughout the roadside recovery industry.

4) **What effect, if any, has the Government's roll out of All Lane Running 'Smart' motorways had on the safety on the groups you represent?**

From the information available to us we are not aware of an increase in actual incidents, however it cannot be denied that there is grave danger present to roadside recovery operators, and wider road users, within Smart Motorway environments. As it currently stands, roadside recovery operators are faced with working in live lanes of a motorway environment with the simple protection of a RED X, nothing more. Without appearing critical to road users, it is clear from present day events that up and down the UK road network that there are continue infringements of road safety in the form of road users not following road signage and instructions which lead to an evidential conclusion that a simple RED X is no way sufficient protection for any road user or road worker.

5) **What measures could be taken to address any safety concerns with All Lane Running motorways?**

Firstly, we would strongly recommend that mandatory crash cushions units (ISU) are deployed to **ALL** incidents involving a stationary vehicle within a live lane running motorway environment, both at the expense of the Highways authority and remaining at the scene until complete removal of the casualty vehicle and the roadside recovery operator.

Secondly, we would strongly advocate for more public awareness and training for roadside recovery operators and wider road users and works and further to this, a significant improvement in integration and communication with relevant Highway authorities and roadside recovery operators and wider road users and works.

Finally, AVRO would strongly call for an immediate ban on all lane running until such time substantial safety improvements can be made to the operation of all lane running motorways, which ultimately could result in the re-instatement of permanent hard shoulder lane.

AVRO is committed to working to improve safety and standards with our industry for not only our members and wider roadside recovery operators, but for all road users and myself and my team will be happy to assist you in any form we can.

I would very much welcome the opportunity for AVRO to present to you and the APPG our views and information we hold on the subjects you have raised and seek information on. If the team and I can be of any further assistance to you and your colleagues, please do not hesitate to contact me directly steve@avrouk.com) or my colleague Sara on 01788 572850 (sara@avrouk.com)

Yours Sincerely

Stephen Smith
AVRO President