

Review of the Road Safety Authority, 2024.

Background and Terms of Reference

Background

The Department of Transport (“the Department”) is responsible for transport policy and overseeing the transport sector in Ireland. One of the agencies under the remit of the Department is the Road Safety Authority (RSA). The RSA is a statutory organisation created by the Road Safety Authority Act 2006.

The mission of the RSA is to save lives and prevent injuries by reducing the number and severity of collisions on the road. The RSA is responsible for the preparation and implementation of the Government’s *Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030*. The RSA’s functions are set out in Section 4 of the Road Safety Authority Act 2006, the Road Safety Authority (Conferral of Functions) Order 2006 (S.I. No. 477 of 2006), the Road Safety Authority (Commercial Vehicle Roadworthiness) Act 2012, and certain provisions of the Road Traffic Acts.

The non-executive board of the RSA is appointed by the Minister of Transport, as prescribed by the Road Safety Authority Act 2006. Section 14 of the Act states that the Board of the RSA shall consist of a chairperson and not less than six and not more than eleven ordinary members. Working to Save Lives is the stated target adopted by the current Board of the RSA.

The RSA is a non-commercial public body which has reduced its dependence on Exchequer funding since 2009, currently receiving negligible direct Exchequer subvention. The RSA’s revenue comes primarily from fees generated from the provision of services – driver licensing and testing, and passenger and commercial vehicle roadworthiness testing services. Presently, the only Exchequer funding it receives is for residual pension commitments and, since 2021, and in line with its EU obligations, for establishing an Automotive Market Surveillance Authority (AMSA). However, COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis have strained the self-financing model.

Terms of Reference for Review

The review will examine the following areas, with a view to making recommendations, where appropriate, on:

1. Management and Oversight Structures

- a. Considering the Authority’s functions and evolving policy priorities, is the current or proposed senior executive management structure appropriate to delivering on the needs of the organisation?
- b. To what extent is the RSA Board effective in directing and overseeing the Authority? Is there sufficient governance expertise to meet the diverse functions and obligations of the RSA as set out in the Road Safety Act 2006, such as commercial operations through the delivery of services and the coordination and development of the Government’s road safety strategy.
- c. Are there elements of the Department’s oversight of the Authority that could be enhanced?

Note: It should be noted that the focus is intended to be on the structures and roles in place in the Authority, not the individuals who hold any such roles presently.

2. Funding Model

- a. To consider the advantages and disadvantages of the self-funding model.
- b. To assess the sustainability of the current largely self-funding model in meeting the RSA's existing and future service delivery obligations and road safety mandate, versus a direct Exchequer funding model or some combination of the two.
- c. Drawing on national and international evidence, to consider and make recommendations around a transparent and evidence-informed mechanism for the setting of service fees.
- d. To provide detailed analysis and corresponding recommendations relating to any required restructuring of funding (and fees) within a 3-, 5- and 10-year outlook, considering future service delivery options.

3. Strategy and Rationalisation/Consolidation

- a. As an organisation and based on international best practice, are the Authority's vision and strategic goals optimal for delivering on road safety policy objectives and the Government's Road Safety Strategy?
- b. Are there any significant gaps or impediments to RSA operations and strategy arising from its obligations under current road safety and vehicle worthiness testing legislation?
- c. As part of its core mission, does the Authority have sufficient focus on the services it delivers as key enablers of road safety?
- d. Are there non-core functions currently undertaken by the RSA that would be better delivered by another agency? Conversely, are there road safety related services or functions delivered elsewhere across Government that would be more efficiently or effectively undertaken by the Authority?

4. Customer Services and Contract Management

- a. While the issues differ from service to service, are there any common causes or barriers to complying with achieving agreed service delivery levels across services (National Car Test (NCT), Driver Testing, National Driver Licence Service (NDLS), Commercial Vehicle Roadworthiness Testing (CVRT))? Are existing service delivery agreements across the various services transparent and robust enough?
- b. In the context of the RSA's outsourced services, does the Authority have sufficient expertise, or access to expertise, in managing contractor relationships? This will include consideration in the areas of procurement, drawing up of contracts, cost indexation and contract monitoring and enforcement.
- c. Where are the opportunities for improved customer services and how does the existing service delivery model compare with other jurisdictions?

5. Estate Management

- a. Review the strategy for long-term leasing, investment planning for estate ownership, rationale, and robustness of same. This will include consideration of the opportunities arising from the RSA's office and test centre "footprint" for the delivery of services, both those of the Authority and other driver or vehicle services performed by other state organisations.
- b. Review of the Authority's strategy for short-term leasing for cost effectiveness and value for money.