The problem is that if this is left solely to the operators, local communities will be affected and not everyone will be pleased with the outcome.

ANNA WALKER
Chair, Office of Rail Regulation

This is a crucial period for the rail industry - yet it's an industry of great challenge. Sir Roy McIchny's Rail Value for Money Study has brought into sharp focus the value of money challenges facing the rail industry, and makes proposals that the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) wholly endorse and believes everyone in the rail industry needs to accept.

Yet, a number of issues are right at the forefront of the sector's thinking - one of the bigger challenges is how to ensure that rail safety is not compromised. Britain has one of the safest rail services anywhere in Europe - but we are not complacent and must always be on our toes.

One of the key issues the ORR has been able to look closely at as part of the Rail Value Study is the rail industry's approach to safety. Safety is a fundamental issue to all those who travel and work on the railways and the railway and its drivers need to be responsible for any circumstance.

Technology innovations are also important to help make railways both more efficient and safer. For example, the innovative ways in which points on the line are now replaced. ORR has been working with the industry to make sure that efficiency and safety are in line.

ORR is already stepping up to these challenges and believes that improvements in efficiency, safety and for passenger journeys are important. ORR believes that by acting now this is possible.