



## **M23 Junction 7**

### **Northbound off-slip road leading to the A23**

#### **Response to Statutory Instrument Consultation Proposed 50mph permanent speed limit**

**September 2024**

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# Executive summary

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National Highways recently consulted on a proposed reduction of the existing speed limit of 70mph to 50mph on the M23 northbound off-slip road at junction 7 leading onto the A23. The consultation took place between 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 and 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024. This document provides a summary of the responses received to the consultation and sets out National Highways' replies to these.

To enable the speed limit change, Regulations would be made under sections 17(2) and (3) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ('the 1984 Act'). The 1984 Act permits the making of Regulations (by way of a Statutory Instrument) that regulate the manner in which, and the conditions subject to which, motorways may be used by traffic authorised to use such motorways. The statutory instrument would introduce a 50mph speed limit on the northbound off-slip road of the M23 as it joins the A23.

The introduction of a permanent 50mph speed limit on the M23 off-slip road would mean that vehicles exiting the M23 would approach the A23 at a reduced speed. The 50mph speed limit would be a permanent speed limit and would be clearly displayed on signs, which would also indicate where the speed limit starts and where it ends.

Seven responses were received during the consultation period. Four of these were received via email and three were received through National Highways' Citizen Space consultation website. Three of the seven responses received contained additional comments.

This report provides a full account of National Highways' approach to the consultation and the responses received.

Following the consultation, and after considering the responses received, National Highways recommends that the Secretary of State makes the necessary regulations to enable the existing speed limit of 70mph to be permanently reduced to 50mph on the M23 northbound off-slip road at junction 7 leading onto the A23.

Separate plans are in place for the speed limit on the A23 approach to Hooley village to be reduced to 40mph and the speed limit through Hooley village to be reduced to 30mph. These changes would be made using permanent traffic regulation orders and are outside the scope of this consultation. The anticipated impact of this 'step-down' of speed limits is that there will be a reduction in road traffic collisions in Hooley village.

# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1. Document structure

Section 1 of this report sets out the background to the consultation and outlines the changes to legislation which would be required to implement the proposals.

Section 2 sets out how National Highways conducted the consultation, whilst section 3 outlines the responses to the consultation and National Highways' comments on these responses.

Section 4 contains a summary and makes recommendations for the next steps.

## 1.2. Purpose of this report

This report provides a summary of the responses received to National Highways' consultation on the reduction of the existing speed limit of 70mph to 50mph on the M23 northbound off-slip road at junction 7 leading onto the A23. The consultation, which took place between 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 and 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024, provided an opportunity for stakeholders, such as road user groups and other interested parties, to comment on the proposals.

## 1.3. Background to the consultation

The M23 motorway serves part of West Sussex and Surrey and provides a North-South connection in this region. It runs from Crawley to the M25 near London. The M23 northbound carriageway joins the A23 just south of Hooley village in Surrey. The A23 runs through Hooley village.

During the past five years the number of collisions occurring in Hooley village has been far higher than the national average for the type of road. Vehicles travelling above the speed limit are considered to be a significant contributing factor to these collisions. Both the police and the Hooley Residents Association have concerns that the speed limits affecting Hooley village are too high. The current speed limit on the A23 approaching the village is 50mph. The speed limit through the village is 40mph. Proposals are in place for the speed limit on the A23 approach to Hooley to be reduced to 40mph and for the speed limit through Hooley village to be reduced to 30mph. These changes are outside the scope of this consultation and would be implemented separately, using permanent traffic regulation orders.

To safely implement the lower speed limit through Hooley village, a gradual drop down of speed limits on the approach to the village is required. This consultation solely concerned National Highways' proposal to reduce the speed limit on the northbound M23 off-slip road at junction 7 leading to the A23. The current speed limit on this slip road is 70mph (the national motorway speed limit) and we are proposing to permanently reduce this to 50mph. This gradual 'step-down' of speed limits is considered relatively safer than a sudden drop in speed limits and is more likely to result in compliance through the village of Hooley.

## **1.4. Legislative changes**

To enable the speed limit change, Regulations would be made under sections 17(2) and (3) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ('the 1984 Act'). The 1984 Act permits the making of Regulations (by way of a Statutory Instrument) that regulate the manner in which, and the conditions subject to which, motorways may be used by traffic authorised to use such motorways.

The statutory instrument would introduce a 50mph speed limit on the northbound off-slip road of the M23 as it joins the A23. The point where the 50mph speed limit begins and ends would be clearly indicated to drivers using appropriate signs. The specific section of road affected would be set out in the Regulations.

An impact assessment has been prepared for the proposed statutory instrument and no significant impact on the cost to business or the voluntary sector is foreseen. An Explanatory Memorandum would be published alongside the Regulations at [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk).

## 2. Conducting the consultation

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### 2.1 What the consultation was about

The consultation provided the opportunity for interested parties to comment on National Highways' proposal to reduce the speed limit from 70mph to 50mph on the northbound M23 off-slip road at junction 7 leading to the A23.

### 2.2 How the consultation was carried out

Details of the consultation were sent to 30 consultees including MPs, the emergency services, local councils, local businesses and other affected stakeholders.

The consultation was also open to public participation through the National Highways M23 Junction 7 website: [M23 Junction 7 Statutory Instrument Consultation - Slip Road Speed Limit - National Highways – Citizen Space](#).

We encouraged representative organisations, businesses and the general public to register their views. The 9 week consultation period commenced on 3 May 2024 and ended on 8 July 2024.

In addition to the online survey, people were also able to send their responses by email or by post to the National Highways project manager as follows:

Project Manager  
M23 J7 Speed Limit Review  
National Highways Limited  
Bridge House  
1 Walnut Tree Close  
Guildford  
Surrey GU1 4LZ

Email: [slr-m23j7-a23@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:slr-m23j7-a23@nationalhighways.co.uk)

### 2.3 Government consultation principles

The consultation was carried out in accordance with the Government's Consultation Principles, which are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>. If you have reason to believe this consultation did not comply with these Consultation Principles, please write to our consultation co-ordinator at the address below, setting out the areas where you believe this consultation did not meet the principles:

Project Manager  
M23 J7 Speed Limit Review  
National Highways Limited  
Bridge House  
1 Walnut Tree Close  
Guildford  
Surrey GU1 4LZ

Email: [slr-m23j7-a23@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:slr-m23j7-a23@nationalhighways.co.uk)

# 3. Responses to the consultation and National Highways' comments

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## 3.1 Summary of responses and National Highways' comments

There were seven responses to the consultation. Four responses were received by email and three were received through National Highways' Citizen Space consultation website.

Respondent Group	Number of Responses Received
Member of the Public	1
Local Government	1
Statutory Consultees	3
Individuals working for a private company	2

Of the seven responses received, three contained comments. These comments are summarised below, along with National Highways' response to each comment.

### 1: Comment from a member of the public working for a private company

*The section of road which appears to be prone to collisions is at the pedestrian crossing once the road becomes a single carriageway. This section of road currently has a 40mph limit. How does reducing the limit to 50mph half a mile earlier help?*

*If you want to ensure that the existing speed limits are adhered to then just put-up speed enforcement cameras at each speed limit change point, maybe with additional signage warning of reduced speed ahead. This is far more likely to get people to drive slower than applying an existing speed limit earlier.*

### National Highways' Response

The proposed 50mph speed limit on the off-slip road would allow a gradual reduction of speed as vehicles approach Hooley village, where a 30mph speed limit is proposed. The pedestrian crossing would fall within the 30mph speed limit zone if the proposals go ahead. A gradual 'step-down' of speed limits is considered relatively safer than a sudden drop in speed limits. It is also more likely to result in compliance through the village of Hooley. Surrey and Sussex Police are in favour of the gradual speed reduction, commenting that there may also be congestion and environmental benefits achieved by the gentler smoothing out of traffic speeds and avoiding harsh speed differentials.

Signs would warn road users of the new speed limit. There would also be a village gateway sign and road markings to help make road users aware that they are approaching Hooley village. The proposals reflect recommendations from Surrey and Sussex Police.

Whilst speed enforcement cameras would help to enforce the speed limit, the proposal for these would need to come from the Surrey Safety Camera Partnership. This body has its own criteria to fulfil when selecting camera enforcement sites. National Highways is not an enforcement organisation, enforcement sits with the Surrey and Sussex Police.

## 2. Comment from a Local Authority

*We agree with reducing the speed limit but suggest that the threshold for the speed limit terminal signs be amended or start further to the north.*

### National Highways' Response

The threshold for the speed limit terminal signs is in line with advice received from Surrey and Sussex Police. They advised that the terminal point should be where the number of lanes drops from three to two. This location was carefully chosen, based on factors including the change in the environment at this point. The proposals accord with best practice.

## 3. Comment from a member of the public

*There have been some serious collisions on this stretch of road in recent times and the proposed speed of 50mph will help to save lives.*

### National Highways' Response

We agree with your view.



## 4. Summary and recommendations

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### 4.1 Summary

National Highways recently consulted on a proposed reduction of the existing speed limit of 70mph to 50mph on the M23 northbound off-slip road at junction 7 leading onto the A23. The consultation took place between 3 May 2024 and 8 July 2024. The consultation was publicised on National Highways' Citizen Space consultation website: [M23 Junction 7 Statutory Instrument Consultation - Slip Road Speed Limit - National Highways – Citizen Space](#). Details of the consultation were also sent to key stakeholders.

Seven responses were received during the consultation period and three contained comments, which have been addressed by National Highways in this report.

### 4.2 Recommendations

National Highways has considered all responses received to the consultation and is grateful to respondents for their contributions. The government has decided to take forward the proposals contained in the consultation document. The new statutory instrument which will implement the proposals set out in the consultation document will come into force in early 2025.