

M3 SMART Motorway Junctions 2-4a

Report on Public Consultation – Amendment
of permanent 50mph speed limit and variable
speed limit zones

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1. Purpose and Structure of the Consultation Report	3
1.2. Scheme History	3
1.3. Consultation Proposals	4
2. APPROACH TO CONSULTATION	5
2.1. Introduction	5
2.2. Consultation Strategy	5
2.3. Who Was Consulted	6
2.4. Consultation Material	6
2.5. Consultation Brochure	6
2.6. Scheme Layout Plans	7
3. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK	8
3.1. Overview	8
4. HIGHWAYS ENGLAND RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION FEEDBACK	10
4.1. General	10
5. CONCLUSIONS	12
5.1. General	12
5.2. Impact	12

Executive summary

General

This statutory consultation gave interested parties an opportunity to comment on the amendment (by regulations under section 17(2) and (3) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984) of the coverage of the both the fixed 50mph speed limit and the variable speed limit on the M3 J2 to J4A westbound carriageway.

A minor change in the reference point used to define the link road from the anti-clockwise carriageway of the M25 at junction 12 to the westbound carriageway of the M3 is also to be made. It should be noted that this change in reference point does not affect the application or extent of existing speed limits.

Scheme Proposals

It is proposed to permanently amend the current 50mph zone to provide sufficient weaving length for heavy goods vehicles travelling on the M3 westbound carriageway (towards Southampton) and traffic from the M25 Thorpe Interchange merging onto the M3 westbound carriageway, to safely navigate to the nearside lanes in advance of the variable speed limit.

It is proposed that the fixed 50mph speed limit zone be extended by 1.05 km (0.65 miles), with the fixed 50mph speed limit zone terminating 0.5 km (0.31 miles) west of Bridge Lane Overbridge. In conjunction the variable speed limit will commence 0.2 km (0.12 miles) closer to junction 2. This is to ensure that the variable speed limit commences from the point the fixed 50mph speed limit zone ends.

A minor change will also be made to the reference point defining the start of the M25 anti-clockwise link road to the M3 westbound carriageway, currently defined as “1.38 km south of Muckhatch Lane Overbridge” to be defined as “2.57 km south of the New Wickham Lane Overbridge”. This however does not affect the application or extent of existing speed limits. This change is proposed because the current reference point is an overbridge that is no longer in use as a road.

Statutory Consultation

The consultation lasted for a period of 2 weeks commencing on 4 December 2017. The consultation closed on 18 December 2017.

This consultation was solely regarding the following proposals:

- Extend the fixed 50mph zone by 1.05 km further west to junction 2 on the M3 westbound carriageway;

- Relocate the commencement of the variable speed limit, 0.2 km closer to junction 2 on the M3 westbound carriageway;
- Change the reference point for the start of the 50mph speed limit on the slip road from the anti-clockwise carriageway of the M25 at junction 12 to the westbound carriageway of the M3.

Overall Consultation Results and Conclusions

The consultation took place during December 2017 with the list of consultees given in Appendix A including emergency services, interested parties such as motoring organisations and local councils and open to the general public. Consultation documents were available to view on the Highways England website.

Only one response was received from a statutory consultee, from the Alliance of British Drivers. This was a letter opposing the extension of the fixed speed limit aspect of the proposal, although the Alliance stated that they were unable to obtain the views of each individual member due to the time constraint. The objection was on the basis that they oppose further speed restrictions anywhere on the network.

Twelve objections and one letter of support were received from members of the public. In summary, objectors were mainly concerned with the extension of the fixed speed limit questioning the necessity of having the speed restriction in the first place. Other concerns raised were about the perceived increase in traffic and journey times due to the proposed extension. Some consultees have also suggested extending the variable speed limit in that section instead of applying a fixed speed limit. No objections were received regarding the proposed extension of the variable speed limit or the change in reference point.

Highways England concludes that there is nothing contained in any of the objections received that should prevent the extension of the fixed 50mph speed limit. All those who responded to the consultation have been notified of this decision.

The impact on business, charities, voluntary bodies and the public sector is that the extension of the variable speed limit and fixed speed limit will benefit motorists. The extension of the fixed speed limit will provide all motorists, but HGV drivers in particular, with sufficient time to navigate into the appropriate lane thus maintaining the high level of safety at this busy interchange while having a negligible impact on their overall journey time

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose and Structure of the Consultation Report

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed account of the consultation undertaken by Highways England on the scheme to-date and summarise the feedback received.
- 1.1.2 This Consultation Report is structured as follows:
- **Section 1** provides an introduction to the scheme and a brief background to its development. This section also provides an outline of the scheme proposals.
 - **Section 2** sets out the consultation strategy and defines the boundary of the consultation area.
 - **Section 3** details the consultation undertaken and presents an analysis of the consultation responses.
 - **Section 4** details the Highways England responses to the key issues raised by consultees.
 - **Section 5** summarises the final outcomes.

1.2. Scheme History

- 1.2.1 The M3 between junctions 2 and 4a is part of the primary strategic route linking London to the South West of England. Most of these links on the M3 between junctions 2 and 4a carried traffic in excess of the traffic levels for which the road was designed. This resulted in congestion and delays to drivers. Highways England developed proposals and implemented smart motorway – all lanes running operating with mandatory variable speed limits between junctions 2 and 4a. The completed smart motorway scheme has:
- Increased motorway capacity and reduced congestion;
 - Smoothed traffic flows;
 - Provided more reliable journey times;
 - Increased and improved the quality of information for the driver;
 - Provided a means of enforcement by way of fixed speed cameras;
- 1.2.2 As with other smart motorway schemes it is anticipated that when the analysis of this scheme is complete it will be shown to have at least maintained, if not also improved, the current safety standards
- 1.2.3 Notwithstanding the above improvements and benefits to traffic conditions generally a particular problem remains for traffic merging from the M25 to the westbound M3 at junction 2 and this is especially problematic for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). A fixed speed limit of 50mph was introduced to ensure HGVs travelling from the westbound M3 motorway (towards Southampton) are able to safely navigate to the nearside lanes prior to the commencement of the variable speed limit. However, the extension of the fixed speed limit is necessary as its

length has to be realigned with a new layout at junction 2 to provide sufficient time for HGVs and other vehicles to get in lane at this busy interchange and so maintain the high level of safety.

1.3. Consultation Proposals



Figure 1.1: Junction Location Plan

- 1.3.1 As a result of the M3 westbound carriageway and M25 clockwise and anticlockwise links onto the westbound M3 mainline all merging at the same location following junction 2, a fixed speed limit of 50mph was implemented. This ensures heavy good vehicles, travelling from the westbound M3 motorway (towards Southampton), are able to safely navigate to the nearside lanes in advance to the variable speed limit section of the network.
- 1.3.2 The consultation outlined the proposals to amend the current M3 and M25 Thorpe Interchange instrument. It is proposed that the permanent 50mph speed restriction on the westbound carriageway of the M3, to be extended by 1.05km further west of junction 2 on the M3 motorway. Moreover extend the variable speed limit on the westbound carriageway of the M3 to commence 0.2km closer to junction 2. This ensures that the variable speed limit starts from the point the fixed 50mph zone ends. The very short national speed limit section is unnecessary and can lead to confusion for the travelling public. Removing it will provide a seamless transition from the fixed speed limit to the variable speed limit section.

2. APPROACH TO CONSULTATION

2.1. Introduction

- 2.1.1 This section sets out Highways England's overall approach to its consultation activity.
- 2.1.2 The aims of statutory public consultation are to raise awareness and understanding of the need and rationale for the proposed changes.
- 2.1.3 This was achieved by:
- Presenting a suitable level of information, cascading facts and ensuring that they are not misinformed about the scheme.
 - Setting out the background to the scheme as a whole, covering information such as the need for the speed restriction.
- 2.1.4 As far as practicable, Highways England has based the consultation approach on the current guidance associated with the Planning Act 2008. This includes:
- Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), 'Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-application process.' January 2013.
 - The Planning Inspectorate Advice Note Two: 'Working together on nationally significant infrastructure projects (Version 2)'. April 2013.
 - The Planning Inspectorate Advice Note Eleven: 'Working with public bodies in the infrastructure planning process.' (Version 3). April 2012.
 - The Planning Inspectorate Advice Note Fourteen: 'Compiling the consultation report (Version 2)'. April 2012
- 2.1.5 The consultation period was from 4 December 2017 to 18 December 2017.

2.2. Consultation Strategy

- 2.2.1 Highways England's consultation strategy identified different methods for promoting the consultation form among different stakeholder groups including travelling public using the strategic road network and local communities:
- The Highways England website and announcements using social media were used to promote the consultation among the wider public and consultees;
 - Letters were sent to all the Section 42 prescribed consultees (outlined in paragraph 2.3.3).

2.3. Who Was Consulted

2.3.1 The consultation strategy was based on a two stage process:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Consultation with identified key stakeholders, including relevant local authorities and the local community within a defined consultation area, a list of those consulted are given in Appendix A.
- **Formal Consultation:** Formal consultation with the list of consultees given in Appendix A including: relevant prescribed statutory consultees, including technical and regulatory organisations, relevant statutory undertakers, local authorities, and those with an interest in the proposed speed limit changes.

2.3.2 For ease of reference this report will use the same stands of consultee's classification as outlined in the Planning Act 2008.

2.3.3 The strands of consultees are:

- **Section 42** which includes:
 - **Prescribed Consultees:** this refers to statutory bodies as prescribed in Regulation 3 of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009, including for example the relevant Health Board, Fire and Rescue Authorities, Environment Agency, Natural England, etc. The full list of the prescribed bodies consulted with can be found in Appendix A.
 - **Local Authorities:** Whose land the proposed scheme falls within, as well as their neighbouring authorities. The full list of the local authorities consulted is included in Appendix A.
- **Section 47** relates to the local community, local residents and individuals or organisations that are likely to be affected by the proposed improvements such as local businesses and users of the road.

2.4. Consultation Material

2.4.1 The consultation material consisted of a consultation brochure and scheme layout plans. Consultation documents were also available to view on the Highways England website. Further detail on each of the consultation material is provided below.

2.5. Consultation Brochure

2.5.1 The consultation brochure is contained in Highways England website <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/m3-junctions-2-to-4a-and-m25-junction-12-amendment/> . This sets out:

- The background of the Project;
- The purpose and aims of the consultation;

- Details of the improvement area;
- The Consultation response form; and
- Contact details for the scheme

2.5.2 Respondents were able to return the consultation response form online via email or by post. A telephone number and email address was provided to enable any queries about the consultation to be answered.

2.6. Scheme Layout Plans

2.6.1 The extent of the fixed 50mph speed limit zone drawing is contained within the consultation brochure in Appendix A. The scheme layout plans were in the format of engineering drawings and were available online on the Highways England website along with the brochure.

3. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

3.1. Overview

- 3.1.1 A total of 13 responses were received as a result of the consultation. These comprised 3 completed consultation response forms and 10 letters or emails. These were primarily from **Section 47** consultees from the local or wider communities.
- 3.1.2 Only one response was received from a Statutory **Section 42** Consultee, from the Alliance of British Drivers. This was a letter opposing the proposal. It should be noted that the alliance were unable to obtain the views of each individual member due to the consultation time constraints. The objection was due to the opposition of further speed restrictions on the network.
- 3.1.3 The one positive response agreed that the fixed speed limit would help HGVs safely change lanes. Potential concerns included the disruption and benefits of the fixed speed limit. Tables 3.1 outline the range of issues raised by respondents. The table shows the total count of all references to a particular issue.

No	Issue	Count	%
1	Traffic will move too slow and increase congestion	8	38%
2	Decreases road safety	3	14%
3	Fixed speed limit length too long	3	14%
4	Should be variable speed limit not fixed	7	34%
	Total	21	100%

Table 3.1: Overall Issues Categorisation

- 3.1.4 The majority of concerns raised in the consultation form were focused around new fixed speed limit being too slow:

“You are bringing the nation to its knees and a snail-pace crawl instead of trying to speed traffic up. The speed limits on UK motorways are already artificially low at 70 mph maximum. The 50mph limit on the M3 is a joke - sometimes the traffic is so heavily congested that it would be a miracle to achieve 50mph, and at other times there is so little traffic that 50mph is frustratingly slow, causes boredom and possibly some people even fall asleep due to the lack of concentration required to maintain 50mph in a modern car on an almost empty motorway.”

- 3.1.5 Another major concern was in regards to the member of the public believe this stretch of the M3 should have variable speed limit instead of fixed limits, to take into consideration the quiet times of the day:

“You appear to concentrate on busy times and ignore quiet times. When traffic is light, the requirement not to excised 50mph is oppressive and unnecessary. It would add 22 seconds to the journey going at 50mph rather than 70mph for that length. It is unreasonable and frustrating to be forced by law to drive much slower than is safe and normal. It is objectionable to

make drivers travel at a needlessly low speed, and it will often - for example from 2100 -0600 daily - be obvious it is safe to exceed 50mph.”

4. HIGHWAYS ENGLAND RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

4.1. General

- 4.1.1 As described in section 3, a number of matters have been raised during the consultation period. Table 4.1 shows Highways England's responses to the key issues identified. Where consultees have contacted Highways England either by letter or email to the M3 project email address, or through Highways England's Information Line.

Matters relating to the overall scheme		
No	Issue	Highways England Response
1	Reduced speed will cause the traffic to move too slow and therefore increase congestion	<p>Highways England does not expect the proposed to affect journey times at all as it is an extension of existing speed restrictions. The recently implemented smart motorway upgrade on the M3 has increased the motorway capacity and reduced congestion providing smooth traffic flows and more reliable journey times. We are only proposing a very short extension of a 1.05km (0.65 miles) for a current permanent 50mph fixed speed limit and a 200m extension of the variable speed limit.</p> <p>The reason for this proposal is to ensure that Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) that are arriving into the SMART Motorway via the M3 westbound, have sufficient weaving length to safely navigate onto the inside lane. Meaning that traffic flow within this section of the network will improve, as it would allow faster vehicles to overtake the HGVs.</p> <p>Taking all of this into account the travelling public will not be disadvantaged from the proposed changes and will not notice any difference throughout their journey.</p>
2	Safety	<p>Safety of all road users and road workers is paramount to Highways England and this is supported through our design processes. A number of evaluation reports and safety audits will be undertaken up to 5 years from June 2017 which will assess and review the M3 smart motorway. This will include the new speed limit arrangements at junction 2, operation and performance highlighting any areas for improvement.</p> <p>The proposal will ensure HGVs have sufficient weaving distance to manoeuvre into the inside lane prior to the commencement of the variable speed limit. Thereby: allowing faster vehicles to overtake the slower HGVs, reducing potential vehicle conflicts and improving the flow of the network.</p>
3	Fixed speed limit length too long	Refer to response for 1

Matters relating to the overall scheme		
No	Issue	Highways England Response
4	Should use variable speed limits and not fixed speed limits to allow traffic to flow more efficiently	<p>Vehicles travelling westbound on the M3 following junction 1 will merge onto a single lane on approach to the junction 2 merge with the M25 clockwise and anticlockwise links. The westbound M3 traffic will merge onto the outside lane.</p> <p>As this route is a strategic HGV route, the HGVs will therefore find themselves on the outside lane on approach to the variable speed limit section of the network.</p> <p>Therefore in order for the HGVs to safely navigate onto the inside lane prior to the commencement of the variable speed limit, an extension of the existing fixed 50mph speed limit have been proposed, to reduce the risk of vehicle conflicts occurring due to unequal speeds of merging traffic.</p> <p>Furthermore using technology to vary the speed limit when a HGV vehicle has been detected on the westbound M3 approach to the junction 2 merge has been deemed as ineffective, as the point where a HGV would be detected i.e. 750m from the merge, is estimated to be insufficient to allow time for the merging traffic from the M25 clockwise and anticlockwise links to reduce their speed to the new 50 mph limit.</p> <p>Therefore, the fixed speed limit of 50mph is deemed the most suitable option.</p>

Table 4.1: Consultation responses

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. General

- 5.1.1 The consultation form results show that the scheme has a high level of opposition with regards to the fixed speed limit proposal. With 38% concerned that the fixed 50mph speed limit will slow traffic and increase congestion, and a further 34% preferring the existing fixed speed limit be changed to a variable speed limit to accommodate for when traffic is light.
- 5.1.2 Highways England concludes that there is nothing contained in any of the objections received that should prevent the extension of the fixed 50mph speed limit. All those who responded to the consultation have been notified of this decision.
- 5.1.3 The permanent speed restriction will be signed in compliance with the current regulations and guidelines making the new speed restriction clear to the travelling public and that it is enforced. Speed enforcement of the 50mph zone is monitored by Surrey Safety Camera Partnership using permanently placed average speed cameras

5.2. Impact

- 5.2.1 The impact on business, charities, voluntary bodies and the public sector is that the extension of the variable speed limit and fixed speed limit will benefit motorists. The extension of the fixed speed limit will provide all motorists, but HGV drivers in particular, with sufficient time to navigate into the appropriate lane thus maintaining the high level of safety at this busy interchange while having a negligible impact on their overall journey time.

Appendix A - List of statutory consultees

Government bodies	
Chief Executive DVSA Berkeley House Croydon Street Bristol BS5 0DA	MOD DE&S Secretariat Ministry of Defence Maple 0a, #2043 MOD Abbey Wood Bristol BS34 8JH
Chief Executive Local Government Association Local Government House Smith Square London SW1P 3HZ	Chairman The Crown Estate 6 Bell's Brae Edinburgh EH4 3BJ
Core responders / legal	
National Police Chiefs Council 1st Floor 10 Victoria St London SW1H 0NN	The Association of Ambulance Chief Executives 32 Southwark Bridge Road London SE1 9EU
Chief Constable British Transport Police Force HQ 25 Camden Road London NW1 9LN	Executive Director Magistrates' Association 28 Fitzroy Square London W1P 6DD
The President Chief Fire Officers Association 9-11 Pebble Close Amington Tamworth Staffordshire B77 4RD	The Chairman Police Federation 15/17 Langley Road Surbiton KT6 6LP
Chief Constable Ministry of Defence Police 5th Floor, Zone A Main Building Whitehall London SW1A 2HB	Chief Constable Ministry of Defence Police 5th Floor, Zone A Main Building Whitehall London SW1A 2HB
The President Police Superintendents Association of England and Wales 67a Reading Road Pangbourne Berkshire RG8 7JD	Regimental Secretary RHQ RMP Defence Police College Policing and Guarding Postal Point 38 Southwick Park Fareham Hants PO17 6EJ

Justices Clerk Society Port of Liverpool Building Pier Head Liverpool L3 1BY	Ambulance Services Association Friars House 157-168 Blackfriars London SE1 8EU
Association of Police Officers (ACPO) PO Box 481 Fareham Hampshire PO14 9FS	Hampshire Police Police Headquarters West Hill Romsey Road Winchester Hampshire SO22 5DB
Surrey Police Roads Policing Unit, Operational Support Division Bretlands Road Chertsey KT16 9QN	South East Coast Ambulance Service The Horseshoe Bolters Lane Banstead SM7 2AS
Surrey Fire and Rescue Service 70 Wray Park Rd Croydon Rd Reigate RH2 0EJ	
Environmental organisations	
Chief Executive Environment Agency South East Regional Office Kings Meadow House Kings Meadow Road Reading RG1 8DQ	Chief Executive Natural England 1 East Parade Sheffield S1 2ET
Road user / safety organisations	
The Chairman AIRSO 68 The Boulevard Worthing BN13 1LA	The Chairman Alliance of British Drivers P O Box 248 MANCHESTER M41 4BW
The Chairman Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) Clutha House 10 Storey's Gate London SW1P 3AY	The Chairman British Motorcycle Federation 3 Oswin Road Brailsford Industrial Estate Braunstone Leicester LE3 1HR
The Chair Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee 2/17 Great Minster House 33 Horseferry Road London SW1P 4DR	Chief Executive Health and Safety Executive Rose Court 2 Southwark Bridge London SE1 9HS

<p>Chief Executive Freight Transport Association Hermes House St John's Road Tunbridge Wells Kent TN4 9UZ</p>	<p>The Chairman Institute of Road Safety Officers IRSO Head Office 12 Haddon Close Wellingborough Northamptonshire NN8 5ZB</p>
<p>The Chairman Institute of Advanced Motorists IAM House 510 Chiswick High Road London W4 5RG</p>	<p>The Chair Motorcycle Industry Trainers Association 1 Rye Hill Office Park Birmingham Road Allesley Coventry CV5 9AB</p>
<p>The Chairman Motorcycle Action Group Central Office P.O. Box 750 Warwick CV34 9FU</p>	<p>Chief Executive National Express Ltd 51 Bordesley Green Bordesley Birmingham B9 4BZ</p>
<p>The Chairman PACTS Office F18 The Media Centre 7 Northumberland Street Huddersfield HD1 1RL</p>	<p>The Chairman RAC Foundation 89-91 Pall Mall London SW1Y 5HS</p>
<p>The Chief Executive Road Haulage Association Roadway House Bretton Way Bretton Peterborough PE3 8DD</p>	<p>The Chairman Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents RoSPA House 28 Calthorpe Road Edgbaston Birmingham B15 1RP</p>
<p>The Chief Executive Campaign For Better Transport 16 Waterside 44-48 Wharf Road London N1 7UX</p>	<p>The Chief Executive Disabled Motoring UK National Headquarters Ashwellthorpe Norwich NR16 1EX</p>
<p>Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) Clutha House 10 Storey's Gate London SW1 3AY</p>	

Vehicle recovery operators

Operations Manager RAC Motoring Services RAC House Brockhurst Crescent Walsall WS5 4QZ	Road Operations Director The Automobile Association Ltd Norfolk House Priestly Road Basingstoke Hampshire RG24 9NY
Chief Executive Association of Vehicle Recovery Operators AVRO House 1 Bath Street Rugby CV21 3JF	Managing Director Britannia Rescue Freepost RSJA-XLCX-BLCE Folly Hall Mills St Thomas Road Huddersfield HD1 3LT
Network Operations Manger Green Flag Green Flag House Cote Lane Pudsey Leeds LS3 5GF	Chief Executive Institute of Vehicle Recovery Operators Top Floor Bignell House Horton Road West Drayton Middlesex UB7 8EJ
The Director National Tyre Distributors Association 8 Temple Square Aylesbury Buckinghamshire HP20 2QH	The President Road Rescue Recovery Association Hubberts Bridge Rd Kirton Holme Boston Lincolnshire PE20 1TW
Chief Executive VOSA Berkeley House Croydon Street Bristol BS5 0DA	

Business organisations

The Chairman Business West Leigh Court Abbots Leigh Bristol BS8 3RA	The Chairman Association of British Insurers 51 Gresham Street London EC2V 7HQ
--	--

<p>Chief Executive British Insurance Brokers' Association 8th Floor John Stow House 18 Bevis Marks London EC3A 7JB</p>	<p>The President Institute of Civil Engineers One Great George Street Westminster London SW1P 3AA</p>
<p>Chief Executive The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation 119 Britannia Walk London N1 7JE</p>	<p>Chief Executive The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport Earlstrees Court Earlstrees Road Corby Northants NN17 4AX</p>
<p>Chief Executive Motor Insurers' Bureau Linford Wood House 6-12 Capital Drive Linford Wood Milton Keynes MK14 6XT</p>	<p>South West Director CBI South West Innovation Centre University of Exeter Rennes Drive EX4 4RN</p>
Local government	
<p>Hampshire County Council The Castle Winchester Hampshire SO23 8UJ</p>	<p>Runnymede Borough Council Runnymede Civic Centre Station Road Addlestone Surrey KT15 2AH</p>
<p>Rushmoor Borough Council Council Offices Knowle Green Staines-upon-Thames TW18 1XB</p>	<p>Surrey Heath Borough Council Surrey Heath House Knoll Road Camberley Surrey GU15 3HD</p>

If you need help accessing this or any other Highways England information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.

