

M6 junction 19 improvements scheme

Response to Statutory Instrument Consultation

The introduction of 40mph permanent speed limits

July 2021

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Executive Summary

The M6 junction 19 improvement scheme began construction in March 2020 and is due to complete in August 2021. The overall aim of the scheme is to alleviate anticipated congestion and safety issues at M6 junction 19 which will be compounded following the completion of regionally-significant developments, specifically around Manchester Airport. As traffic using the roundabout increases, longer queues are expected to form on the M6 northbound exit slip road approach to the junction. These queues would extend back onto the M6 carriageway with associated impacts on safety and network operation.

The scheme involves the construction of a new bridge across the centre of junction 19, providing two new dedicated link roads, one from the M6 northbound to the A556 northbound and the other from the M6 southbound to the A556 southbound. The scheme will provide improved links and capacity which will decrease journey times using the junction, reduce congestion on the roundabout and subsequently improve safety by removing queuing traffic from the M6 carriageway. The scheme will also improve access for pedestrians and cyclists by widening the existing footway around the junction and providing a shared use pathway.

The new design is unable to achieve the ideal standards for horizontal curves, vertical curves and stopping sight distance, so for safety reasons a reduction in the speed limit to 40mph is required on the slip roads connecting to the new link roads. A non-standard design has been approved by Cheshire East Council and Highways England to cover the horizontal and vertical curves and stopping sight distance. The M6 junction 19 northbound and southbound exit slip roads are currently subject to variable mandatory speed limits (VMSL). The current speed limits would make it unsafe for drivers using the new link roads and the roundabout carriageway at the improved junction. The 40mph speed limit will help mitigate the effects of the nonstandard alignment. The proposed 40mph speed limit would cover the last 88-89 metres of each exit slip road, where traffic slows to join the roundabout or link roads. Highways England is proposing permanent 40mph speed limits by way of regulations made by statutory instrument.

We held a consultation on the introduction of 40mph permanent speed limits between 12 May and 9 June 2021. Eight responses were received during this consultation exercise, all via the Citizen Space website.

This report provides a full account of our approach to the consultation and the responses received. It will demonstrate how we have taken feedback from the consultation into account.

Following the consultation, and after considering the responses received, Highways England recommends proceeding with making the necessary legislative changes by way of regulations to allow the implementation of the 40mph permanent speed limits on a section of the M6 junction 19 northbound and southbound exit slip roads.

1. Introduction

1.1. Document structure

Section 1 provides background information about the M6 junction 19 scheme and the proposed changes to legislation.

Section 2 details how the consultation on the proposed changes was carried out.

Section 3 provides a summary of the responses to the consultation that were received, as well as Highways England's responses to the issues raised.

Section 4 summarises the outcome of the consultation and makes recommendations for next steps.

1.2. Purpose of this report

This document is intended to provide a summary of the responses received to the consultation on the introduction of 40mph permanent speed limits on a section of the M6 junction 19 northbound and southbound exit slip roads. The consultation, which was undertaken between 12 May 2021 and 9 June 2021, provided an opportunity for stakeholders, such as road user groups and other interested parties, to comment on the proposals. Highways England has considered the comments raised by consultees and this document summarises its response to those comments.

1.3. Background to the consultation

The M6 junction 19 improvement scheme began construction in March 2020 and is due to complete in August 2021. The overall aim of the scheme is to alleviate anticipated congestion and safety issues at M6 junction 19 which will be compounded following the completion of regionally-significant developments, specifically around Manchester Airport. As traffic using the roundabout increases, longer queues are expected to form on the M6 northbound exit slip road approach to the junction. These queues would extend back onto the M6 carriageway with associated impacts on safety and network operation.

The scheme involves the construction of a new bridge across the centre of junction 19, providing two new dedicated link roads, one from the M6 northbound to the A556 northbound and the other from the M6 southbound to the A556 southbound. The scheme will provide improved links and capacity which will decrease journey times using the junction, reduce congestion on the roundabout and subsequently improve safety by removing queuing traffic from the M6 carriageway. The scheme will also improve access for pedestrians and cyclists by widening the existing footway around the junction and providing a shared use pathway.

The new design is unable to achieve the ideal standards for horizontal curves, vertical curves and stopping sight distance, so for safety reasons a reduction in the speed limit to 40mph is required on the slip roads connecting to the new link roads.

A non-standard design has been approved by Cheshire East Council and Highways England to cover the horizontal and vertical curves and stopping sight distance.

The M6 junction 19 northbound and southbound exit slip roads are currently subject to variable mandatory speed limits (VMSL). The current speed limits would make it unsafe for drivers using the new link roads and the roundabout carriageway at the improved junction. The 40mph speed limit will help mitigate the effects of the nonstandard alignment. Highways England is proposing permanent 40mph speed limits by way of regulations made by statutory instrument.

1.4. Legislative changes

Regulations have been proposed to be made under section 17(2) and (3) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ('the 1984 Act') for the implementation of 40mph speed limits on a section of the M6 junction 19 northbound and southbound exit slip roads as part of the M6 junction 19 improvement scheme.

The relevant legislative power in the 1984 Act permits the making of Regulations that regulate the manner in which, and the conditions subject to which, motorways may be used by traffic authorised to use such motorways.

The 40mph maximum speed limit would apply to approximately the final third of each of the exit slip roads on the approach to the Tabley Interchange at junction 19. The 40mph speed limits would be clearly displayed by signs on both sides of the carriageway indicating where the speed limits start and end.

The proposed Regulations when made will apply in relation to the sections of the M6 junction 19 northbound and southbound exit slip roads specified in the Regulation. This consultation is solely about the introduction of the 40mph speed limits on these sections of road.

2. Conducting the consultation

2.1. What the consultation was about

The consultation provided the opportunity for interested parties to comment on the proposal to introduce a statutory instrument to implement 40mph permanent speed limits on a section of the M6 junction 19 northbound and southbound exit slip roads.

2.2. How the consultation was carried out

The Statutory Instrument Consultation Document for the Scheme was sent to the consultees listed in Appendix A of the consultation document.

The consultation was also open to public participation through the Highways England consultation hub at: [Citizenspace](#).

We encouraged representative organisations, businesses and the general public to register their views. The four-week consultation period commenced on 12 May 2021 and closed on 9 June 2021.

In addition to the online survey, respondents were also able to send their responses via email or post to the Highways England project manager as follows:

Khalid El-Rayes

Project Manager

M6 junction 19 site office

Old Hall Lane

Knutsford, WA16 0PW

M6Junction19Improvement@highwaysengland.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:

Kathryn Moore

Highways England

Lateral

8 City Walk

Leeds

LS11 9AT

Email: Kathryn.Moore@highwaysengland.co.uk

3. Responses to the consultation and Highways England's response

3.1. Summary of responses

Eight responses were received in total. This table shows the breakdown of responses received from different respondent groups:

Respondent group	Number of responses received
Member of the public	5
Large company	1
Small to medium enterprise (up to 50 employees)	1
Police	1
Total:	8

The questionnaire asked respondents to answer three questions with space provided for comments on each. The questions and an analysis of the responses are provided below.

3.2. Question 1: Improvements to safety/travelling conditions

Q1. Do you consider that the proposed permanent 40mph mandatory speed limits on a section of the M6 junction 19 northbound and southbound exit slip roads will lead to an improvement in safety and/or travelling conditions on this section of motorway?

There were eight responses to this question:

Option	Total
Yes	6
No	2
Not answered	0

Three respondents added comments in this section: two stated the proposed 40mph speed limit was appropriate; one raised a concern about the difficulty of enforcing a 40mph speed limit at this location due to access constraints.

Highways England Response

The 40mph speed limit will be enforceable by the police. The Highways England project team is working with the police to manage how this will be carried out in practice.

3.3. Question 2: Concerns about the introduction of variable mandatory speed limits

Q2. Are there any aspects of the proposed permanent 40mph mandatory speed limits which give you concerns?

There were eight responses to this question:

Option	Total
Yes	5
No	3
Not answered	0

Five respondents added comments in this section. Three felt that reducing the speed limit from 70mph to 40mph is too severe and that drivers would be unlikely to comply in practice; 50mph was suggested as an alternative. One suggested advanced warning signs should be used at the start of the slip roads so drivers are prepared for the 40mph limit. One suggested the slip roads should be camera monitored.

Highways England Response

Due to the constraint of constructing the extra lane capacity through M6 junction 19 (northbound and southbound), the geometry and “sight stopping distance” of the new link roads require the implementation of a mandatory 40 mph speed limit for reasons of safety. A higher speed limit would make it unsafe for drivers using the new link roads and the circulatory carriageway at the improved junction.

A drop in speed limit from 70mph to 40mph is not uncommon and is currently in place on a number of other slip roads on the network. It should be noted that the junction roundabout and the new link roads will also have speed limits of 40mph.

3.4. Question 3: Any other comments

Q3. Are there any additional comments you would like to make about the proposed permanent 40mph mandatory speed limits?

There were seven responses to this question:

Option	Total
Yes	3
No	4
Not answered	1

Four respondents added comments in this section. Comments indicated understanding of and support for the proposals as an integral part of the junction improvement. One questioned whether the requirement to reduce the speed limit was an indication of a flawed scheme design.

Highways England Response

Due to the constraint of constructing the extra lane capacity through M6 junction 19 northbound and southbound, the geometry and “sight stopping distance” of the new link roads require the implementation of a mandatory 40 mph speed limit for reasons of safety. Departures from standard have been approved by Cheshire East Council and Highways England to cover the nonstandard horizontal curves, vertical curves and stopping sight distance. This is a nonstandard design rather than a flawed design.

4. Summary and recommendations

4.1. Summary

A consultation on the introduction of 40mph permanent speed limits on a section of the M6 junction 19 northbound and southbound exit slip roads was held between 12 May and 9 June 2021. The consultation was publicised on Highways England's consultation hub, Citizen Space, and on the Highways England website project page <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/our-work/north-west/m6-junction-19/>

A total of eight responses were received during this consultation exercise. All of these were received via Citizen Space website. 75% of respondents consider the proposed 40mph speed limits will lead to an improvement in safety and/or travelling conditions. 62.5% of respondents have concerns about the 40mph speed limits, and comments suggest most of these concerns are about whether drivers will comply with a 40mph limit at this location and whether a 50mph speed limit, additional signage and speed cameras should be considered. A small number of concerns were raised but these have been suitably considered and answered in this report.

4.2. Recommendations

Following the consultation, and after considering the responses received, Highways England recommends proceeding with making the necessary legislative changes by way of regulations to allow the implementation of the 40mph permanent speed limits on a section of the M6 junction 19 northbound and southbound exit slip roads.

5. Appendices

Appendix A – List of consultees

Government / Local Government bodies	
Esther McVey, MP for Tatton	John Dwyer, Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner
Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive, Cheshire East Council	Tabley Parish Council

Emergency services	
Cheshire Constabulary	North West Fire Service
Greater Manchester Police	Greater Manchester Fire Service
National Police Air Service	North West Ambulance Service
Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service	

Environmental advisory bodies	
Natural England 4th Floor, Foss House Kings Pool 1-2 Peasholme Green York YO1 7PX	Historic England 4th Floor Cannon Bridge House 25 Dowgate Hill London EC4R 2YA
Environment Agency Horizon House Deanery Road Bristol BS1 5AH	Campaign to Protect Rural England 5-11 Lavington Street London SE1 0NZ

Road and transport organisations

DVSA Berkeley House Croydon Street Bristol BS5 0DA	Chairman RAC Foundation 89-91 Pall Mall London SW1Y 5HS
The AA Fanum House Basing View Basingstoke Hampshire RG21 4EA	The RAC RAC House Brockhurst Crescent Walsall WS5 4AW
The Institute of Vehicle Recovery Unit 11, Brook Business Centre Cowley Mill Road Uxbridge UB8 2FX	Green Flag The Wharf Neville Street Leeds LS1 4AZ
Road Haulage Association Roadway House Bretton Way Bretton Peterborough PE3 8DD	Freight Transport Association Hermes House St John's Road Tunbridge Wells Kent TN4 9UZ
The Alliance of British Drivers PO Box 1043 Stockton-on-Tees TS19 1XG	British Motorcyclists Federation 3 Oswin Road Brailsford Industrial Estate Braunstone Leicester LE3 1HR

Business organisations

Manchester Airport Group	Cheshire East Chamber of Commerce
Knutsford Motorway Services	Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
Lymm Motorway Services	