Welcome

Smart motorway M6 junctions 2 to 4 public information exhibition
Smart motorways

Smart motorways are a technology driven approach to the use of our motorways, increasing capacity and relieving congestion while maintaining safety. Smart motorways help make journey times more reliable.

Technology is installed to monitor and manage traffic flow and the hard shoulder is used for traffic, either permanently or at peak times.

As well as the additional capacity from the extra lane, the technology manages traffic using variable speed limits to smooth traffic, reducing frustrating stop-start flow and improving journey reliability.

It is also used to support the response to incidents, using the signs and signals to close any lane in advance of the incident scene.

Drivers are enjoying the benefits of smart motorways across the country without safety being adversely affected – our motorways continue to be some of the safest in the world.

If you would like to know more about the M6 junctions 2 to 4 smart motorway scheme you can contact us at:

m6.j2-4@highwaysengland.co.uk
We are improving the busy 20km stretch of the M6 between Junction 2 at Coventry and Junction 4 near Coleshill by upgrading it to an ‘all lane running’ (ALR) smart motorway. Construction is scheduled to begin in early 2017 and the smart motorway is expected to be open to traffic by the end of 2018.

The project involves:

- Converting the hard shoulder to create a permanent fourth lane between junctions 2 and 3a.
- Between junctions 4 and 3a the motorway will have three lanes and a hard shoulder. This is designed to tie in with the existing M6 junctions 4 to 8 smart motorway.
- Converting the climbing lane eastbound between junctions 3a and 3 to a permanent traffic lane and retaining the hard shoulder.
- New electronic information signs and signals and CCTV cameras on gantries. These will show variable mandatory speed limits and manage traffic flow and incidents.
- Nine emergency refuge areas (ERAs).
- The hardening of the central reserve and installation of a reinforced concrete barrier to improve safety.
- New noise barriers in built up areas.
- Improvements to Junction 4 – increasing the number of lanes.

Emergency refuge areas
There will be nine emergency refuge areas positioned approximately where shown on this map.

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Smart technology

A smart motorway has technology installed to monitor and manage traffic flow. It is important that you understand the signs and comply.

When lanes are closed, signs display a red X showing which lanes cannot be used.

- Signs in the verge or above the carriageway advise you of the speed limit, any lane closures and provide information on road conditions such as severe weather.
- CCTV and sensors detect and monitor congestion and incidents, so we can set appropriate speed limits and manage incidents effectively.
- Speed limits vary and are applied at times of congestion, to prevent stop - start conditions. If no speed limit is shown the national speed limit applies.

- Lower noise surfacing
- Signage
- Emergency refuge areas
- Traffic monitoring
- Radar detector
- New gantries
- New signals
- New CCTV cameras
- Concrete barriers
- Under carriageway ducts
- Technology ducting

Highways England – Creative M160074
Smart motorways are an effective way to provide more capacity on our busiest motorways while maintaining safety and at a third of the cost of widening schemes, meaning better value for the tax payer.

All lane running, which involves permanent conversion of the hard shoulder as a live lane for traffic to use, provides an opportunity to modernise and improve far more of our motorways than under previous approaches.

Better journeys

Our M25 one year after reports show that all lane running smart motorways are meeting our expectations; improved journey time reliability, reductions in collisions and casualty rates while being used by more vehicles.

The approach also supports economic growth. The M6 junctions 2 to 4 scheme is an important element of Highways England’s plan to create a “smart spine” connecting London and the North West.
Emergency refuge areas

- Emergency refuge areas provide an area of relative safety following a breakdown.
- There will be nine new emergency refuge areas within the M6 junctions 2 to 4 smart motorway scheme. Motorway service areas and hard shoulders where available can also be used.
- If you are driving at 60mph you will reach a place you can stop in an emergency every 75 seconds on average.
- There is an emergency telephone in each emergency refuge area. This connects you to Highways England's Regional Control Centres and pinpoints your location.

Remember to use the emergency telephone as this automatically pinpoints your location.
Incident management

- Incidents such as accidents and breakdowns are managed by our control centre staff.
- If the accident or breakdown means vehicles are unable to get off the carriageway or reach an emergency refuge area, we can use technology to close any lane on the motorway.
- Control centre staff set signs to inform other road users about what is happening and manage traffic so that the people involved in the incidents are protected and an access route is cleared for emergency vehicles.
- They then continue to monitor traffic conditions throughout each incident and reopen lanes as soon as it is safe to do so.
- We are working closely with the emergency services to develop best practice as these major improvements are rolled out on our motorways.
Red X signs are used for safety reasons to close lanes:

- To protect road users who may have broken down or been involved in an incident.
- To provide access and protection for the emergency services, our traffic officers and our road workers.

If you see a Red X symbol on a gantry sign over or at the side of the motorway it means that the lane is closed for one or more of these reasons.

Driving in a lane with a Red X symbol is illegal and dangerous and drivers must not use it.
Highways England is committed to delivering better environmental outcomes. In remaining within current motorway boundaries, smart motorways have the built-in advantage of minimising scheme environmental footprints. In addition, we carry out thorough environmental assessments to identify and assess potential environmental impacts and recommend mitigation that can be included in the scheme to minimise them.

- The scheme has undertaken an environmental assessment that covers topics including noise and vibration, air quality, ecology and visual impacts.
- The results will be presented in the Environmental Study Report. This will also describe the measures to mitigate adverse effects and enhance the environment.

**The key issues considered include:**

- Surveys for protected species: badger setts and great crested newts have been identified adjacent to the motorway. Mitigation work will be undertaken within Natural England licences.
- Existing screening planting will be retained where possible and additional planting is proposed to minimise views of the motorway and associated equipment.
- The existing noise barrier will be replaced and locations for additional barriers are currently being investigated.
Junction 4 of the M6 needs to be improved to accommodate the traffic that will use the junction for the proposed HS2 station, Birmingham Interchange.

To save time and money and make the most of design and construction efficiencies, HS2 and Highways England are working together to make the necessary changes to Junction 4.

Improvements to Junction 4

- **Widening to three lanes.** Requires relocation of motorway signage on eastbound entry slip.
- **Widening of entry to three lanes.**
- **Environmental mitigation planting to the realigned verge area.**
- **Site compound.**
- **Investigation of new highways drainage balancing pond.**
- **Construction of new highways drainage ditch running parallel with eastbound entry slip.**
- **Widening to three lanes across M6 east bridge including upgrade of parapets.**
- **Realignment of existing dedicated left turn and widening of roundabout entry to three lanes.**
- **Improvements to signalisation of the roundabout.**
- **Widening to three lanes across M6 west bridge.**

**Wide to four lanes, requires widening of Poole Island west bridge deck.**

Highways England – Creative M160074
During construction, roadworks will be needed. It is anticipated that narrow lanes traffic management and speed restrictions will be put in place to protect our road workers.

There will be temporary closures of the carriageways at night on some occasions. In these instances clearly signed diversions will be put in place.

If you live near the motorway, your view of the M6 between junctions 2 and 4 may change during construction as we will need to remove some vegetation to build new gantries. We will be replanting where we can to help to screen views of motorway equipment.

Existing noise barriers will be taken down in sections during the construction and will be replaced.

The work will involve installation of gantries and monitoring equipment, new drainage systems, safety barriers, construction of emergency refuge areas and carriageway resurfacing.

The construction of the scheme will be governed by the Construction, Design and Management Regulations and we will ensure that our workers are briefed prior to construction commencing.

Further details will be provided on the project web pages as they become available both before and during construction.

Construction is due to start in early 2017 and we expect to open the smart motorway before the end of 2018.