Welcome

Smart motorway
M6 junctions 13 to 15
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. 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 13 to 15 smart motorway scheme you can contact us at: M6.j13-15@highwaysengland.co.uk
We are improving the busy 17 miles (28km) stretch of the M6 between Junction 13 at Stafford and Junction 15 near Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent by upgrading it to an ‘all lane running’ (ALR) smart motorway.

Construction is scheduled to begin in March 2018 and the smart motorway is expected to be open to traffic by March 2022.

The project involves:

- Converting the hard shoulder to create a permanent fourth lane between junctions 13 and 15.
- New electronic information signs and signals and CCTV cameras on gantries. These will show variable mandatory speed limits and manage traffic flow and incidents.
- 20 Emergency Areas (EAs).
- The hardening of the central reserve and installation of a reinforced concrete barrier to improve safety.
- Replacement of Burton Bank footbridge.
- Demolition of Creswell Home Farm overbridge.
- Installing approximately 2km of new noise barriers.
- New lighting and improvements to the slip roads at Junction 15.
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.

*Note: The image illustrates various components of the smart motorway technology, including message signs, traffic monitoring radar detector, concrete barriers, emergency areas, new gantries, new signals, new CCTV cameras, lower noise surfacing, under carriageway ducts, and technology ducting.*
Better journeys

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.

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

The approach also supports economic growth. The M6 junctions 13 to 15 scheme is an important element of Highways England’s continuing plan to improve England’s motorway network.
Emergency areas

- Emergency Areas provide an area of relative safety following a breakdown.
- There will be 20 visible new Emergency Areas within the M6 junctions 13 to 15 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 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 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.
- The control centre monitors 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 as these major improvements are rolled out on our motorways.

1. Incident detection
2. Emergency service on scene
3. Incident protection and clearing
4. Incident cleared and smart motorway re-opened
Red \(\times\) 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 \(\times\) 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 \(\times\) 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.

We have carried out an environmental assessment that covers topics including noise and vibration, air quality, ecology and visual impacts.

The key issues considered include:

- Air quality, noise and visual impacts in relation to nearby housing.
- The sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) at Doxey and Tillington Marshes and King’s and Hargreaves Woods.
- Surveys for protected species: we have identified bats, badger setts and great crested newts next to the motorway.
- The setting of conservation areas and heritage assets such as Trentham Park.
- Public Rights of Way.
It is anticipated that during construction traffic management will be in place including narrow lanes, temporary safety barriers, contraflow and speed restrictions to protect our road workers and the travelling public.

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 13 and 15 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.

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 March 2018 and we expect to open the smart motorway by March 2022.