

## October 2018 news bulletin

Welcome to our latest monthly information bulletin keeping you informed of the works taking place between junction 3 and junction 12 of the M4 as we upgrade to a smart motorway.

Traffic management (TM) and narrow lanes have now been extended between junctions 8/9 and 10 and have started between junctions 10 and 11. Central reservation works are progressing well while our new compound and office near junction 10 is under construction and scheduled to open in the new year.

There will be a noticeable increase in works over the winter as we use this opportunity to install new TM, prepare the worksites, and put in supporting infrastructure. We are also planning for the next phase of works beginning in 2019.



*Works and traffic management underway on the M4*

## What's happening on the M4 project during October?

### M4 overnight closures during the project

Full carriageway closures on the motorway will be taking place overnight throughout the project, with several currently planned during October. Clearly signed diversion routes will be in place for each closure. There are also slip road closures booked regularly throughout the project.



The key aim remains to keep three lanes open during the peak travel times. The best way to view the various closures is through the Traffic England website at: [www.trafficengland.com](http://www.trafficengland.com). Please check before you travel.

*NB: In the event of poor weather conditions or other issues out of our control, planned works may be postponed at short notice. If works complete ahead of schedule the motorway may reopen early. Signage will be in place to update road users of changes.*

### Vegetation clearance work continues

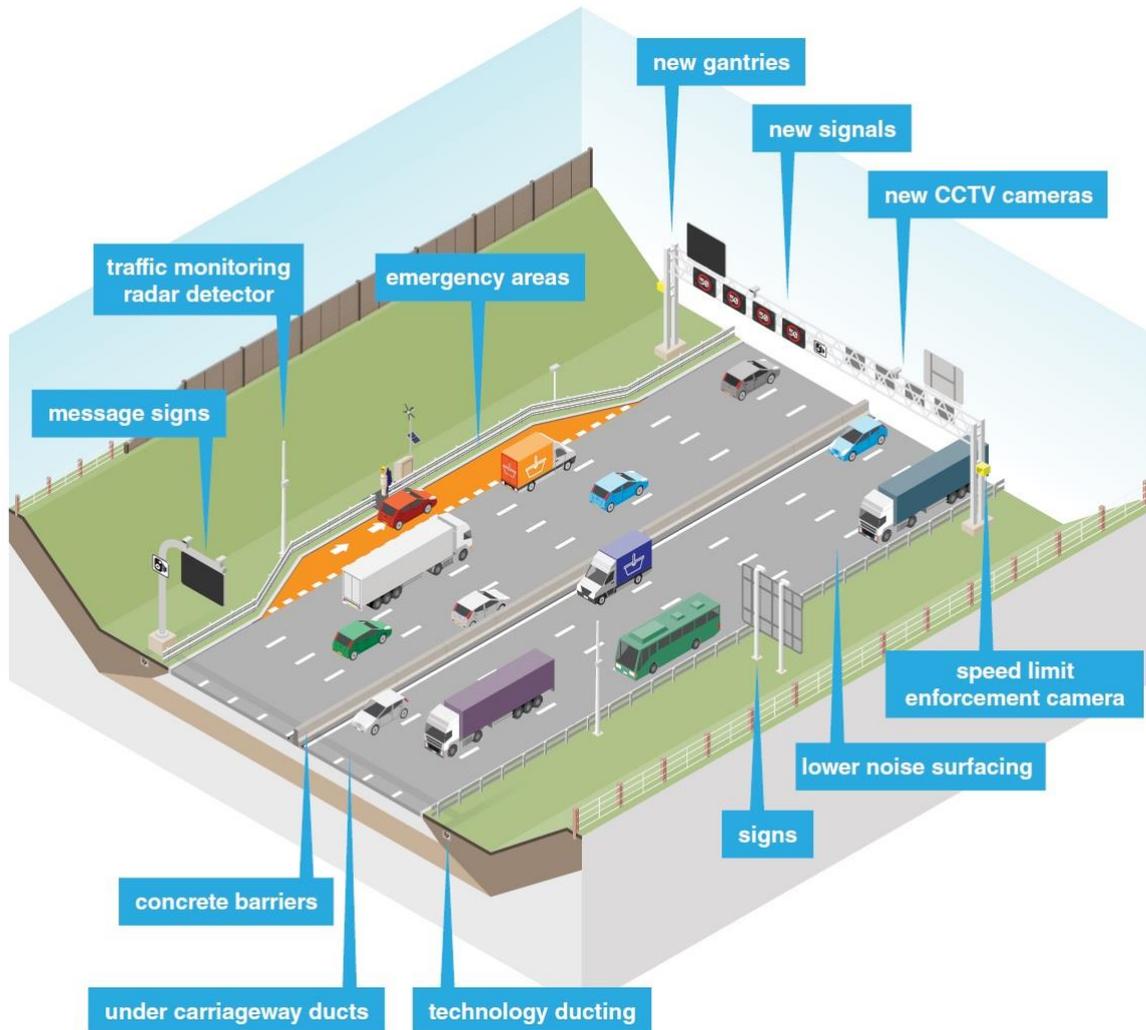
The removal of trees and plants along the motorway is an unavoidable part of the project and we do understand local concerns about this. The difficulty we have is that to deliver the project we effectively need to rebuild and/or re-profile the embankments in some areas and install new technology and structures in others. This unfortunately cannot be done if a significant amount of vegetation is retained.

In terms of local wildlife, ecological surveys were undertaken across the scheme in 2016, 2017 and 2018 in order to inform the requirements of the Development Consent Order for the project. Prior to clearance each area must be fully inspected by a licensed ecologist who will then grant permission to proceed or ask for more surveys.

It is also important to note that noise mitigation is rarely provided by the amount of vegetation in place alongside motorways. The project will be installing new or upgraded environmental noise barriers and/or visual screening fences in several locations, followed by replanting in many areas once the embankment works are complete.

# What is a smart motorway and what makes it smart?

We have had a lot of questions from our customers about the project and understandably the overall concept of a smart motorway is of interest to people that have not yet had an opportunity to use one. In short, smart motorways are a technology driven approach to the use of our motorways, increasing capacity and relieving congestion while maintaining safety. The technology that supports this is shown in the plan below.



## Variable mandatory speed limits

- Speed limits will be set to smooth traffic flows.
- The limits will be clearly displayed on overhead gantries and roadside signs.
- Signs will be used to inform drivers of conditions on the network and when variable speed limits are in place.

## All lane running

- The hard shoulder will be permanently converted into a traffic lane.
- Drivers should obey all signs, including speed limits and lane closure instructions and should not stop on the motorway except in an emergency.

## Emergency areas

- There will be highly visible emergency areas.
- There will be an emergency telephone in each of the emergency areas.
- This will connect you to Highways England's Regional Control Centres and will pinpoint your location.

## Find out more

You can find out more about the plans by visiting our website at: [www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m4j3to12](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m4j3to12) or following the South East regional twitter feed [@highwaysSEAST](https://twitter.com/highwaysSEAST)

You can also email us at: [M4J3to12smartmotorways@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:M4J3to12smartmotorways@highwaysengland.co.uk), call on 0300 123 5000 or write to: M4 J3-12 Smart Motorway, Highways England, 2 Colmore Square, Birmingham B4 6BN.