



Designated Funds Congestion Programme

M42 Junction 3 Improvement Scheme

Response to Statutory Instrument Consultation

**The introduction of 50mph speed limit on the exit
slips**

May 2022

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Executive Summary

This report covers the responses received by National Highways to the consultation exercise which was carried out regarding the implementation of a permanent, mandatory speed limit of 50mph for the M42 junction 3 exit slip roads.

Overall, the responses were focused on the impact of the speed limit on users in terms of health and safety at the junction.

National Highways has provided responses to these questions, and these are covered in the document below.

The decision from the consultation is to implement the speed limit, and there were no significant issues with this raised by stakeholders.

1. Introduction

1.1. Document structure

Section 1 provides background information about the M42 junction 3 improvement scheme.

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 National Highways' 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 a permanent mandatory 50mph speed limit on the M42 junction 3 exit slip roads. The consultation, which was undertaken between 7 March 2022 and 4 April 2022, provided an opportunity for stakeholders, such as road user groups and other interested parties, to comment on the proposals. National Highways has considered the comments raised by consultees and this document summarises its response to those comments.

1.3. Background to the consultation

General information on the M42 junction 3 Improvement motorway scheme

The M42 junction 3 improvement scheme, which was completed in December 2019, had the aim of reducing congestion throughout the junction and on its approaches.

The work predominantly involved the provision of a free-flowing left turn slip on the Southbound exit from M42 junction 3. This slip lane experienced queueing traffic during peak periods that extend down into lane 1 of the M42 southbound. A review of the traffic data for the slip lane indicated that 60% of all traffic turns left onto the A435 travelling towards Redditch. It was found that the removal of these vehicles from the traffic signal calculations via the free-flowing slip lane helped to prevent the queues onto the mainline of the M42.

As part of the junction investigations, several other minor issues were identified around the roundabout island and approach roads, which were resolved as part of the major scheme. One such issue was the narrow lanes on the northbound off slip road which reduced the capacity of these lanes to hold vehicles. We worked to widen the lanes slightly within the curtilage of National Highways land boundary and the geological constraints. It was also identified that the visibility to the signal heads was inadequate. The horizontal alignment of the arrangement only permitted a forward visibility to the offside signal head from the offside lane of approximately 75 metres.

As we replaced all the age expired traffic signal equipment on the junction, we also made amendments to the nearside and offside primary signal poles to improve the

forward visibility to the traffic signals and the stop line on the northbound exit slip road. We relocated the stop line and associated primary signal heads further back along the slip and undertook additional vegetation clearance. This has increased forward visibility to the stop line and signal heads.

Other improvements made included the realignment of and widening of the roundabout gyratory to provide three running lanes within some sections which has increased the junction capacity in conjunction with the amendments on the junctions' approach roads. The southbound A435 entry to the roundabout has also been widened to three lanes, whilst the northbound A435 approach has been realigned slightly. The roundabout junction with Foreshaw Heath Lane has been significantly changed to dissuade drivers from thinking that this exit is the M42 junction 3 northbound entry slip, and lighting and traffic signage throughout the area has been upgraded.

Benefits of the M42 junction 3 Improvement scheme

- Reduced congestion around the grade separated roundabout junction and improved the capacity of the junction.
- Reduced queuing on the M42 J3 southbound exit slip and queuing onto the M42 southbound mainline Motorway.
- Reduced rear-end shunt type road traffic collisions and injuries occurring due to the presence of queuing traffic on the southbound exit slip.
- Improved forward visibility to the grade separated roundabout junction and traffic signals on the northbound exit slip.
- Reduced queuing on the A435 southbound approach to the roundabout by providing three lanes instead of two lanes at the junction approach.
- Replaced the life expired traffic signal equipment and lighting equipment, reducing maintenance problems and failures, and reducing energy consumption due to the installation of LED lanterns.
- Helps to control the speed of vehicles exiting the M42 in a northbound direction and reduce the speed of vehicles as they approach the traffic signals and stop line.
- Provided sensible continuation of the Local Highway Authority proposed speed reduction scheme, throughout the roundabout grade separated junction.
- Helps to control the speed of vehicles exiting the M42 in a southbound direction and reduce the speed of vehicles as they negotiate the free flow left slip.
- Helps to control the speed of vehicles both entering and exiting the roundabout junction, as well as within the roundabout gyratory, helping to make safer the presence of informal pedestrian crossing points.

- Stabilisation of the earthworks embankment to the nearside (southern side) of the M42 J3 southbound exit slip, which protects the carriageway asset from future land slip and deterioration.

1.4. Legislative changes for the implementation of 50mph mandatory speed limits

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 mandatory speed limits for the M42 J3 exit slips.

Drivers will be restricted by the proposed Regulations from driving on the M42 J3 exit slips at a speed exceeding that displayed on the speed limit signs, 50mph. Where no such speed is displayed, the national speed limit applies.

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.

Drivers of vehicles that pass a speed limit sign indicating that a speed limit other than the national speed limit applies, should obey that sign until the vehicle passes another sign indicating either that a new speed limit or the national speed limit applies.

The proposed Regulations when made will apply in relation to the M42 J3 exit slip roads. The roads governed will be set out in the Regulations.

The proposed Regulations will not apply nationally – they will apply only to those parts of the motorway as specified in the Regulations (namely, the southbound and northbound exit slips of the M42 Junction 3 motorway).

The consultation is solely about the use of the 50mph mandatory speed limits that are proposed for the M42 J3 exit slips. The key features of the motorway scheme are described in section 1.3.

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 a permanent mandatory 50mph speed limit on the M42 junction 3 exit slips.

2.2. How the consultation was carried out

The Statutory Instrument Consultation Document for the Scheme was sent to the 94 consultees listed in Appendix C of the consultation document.

The consultation was also open to public participation through the National Highways consultation hub at: <https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/m42-junction-3-slip-roads-speed-limit-consultation/>

We encouraged representative organisations, businesses and the general public to register their views. The 4 week consultation period commenced 7 March 2022 and ended on 4 April 2022.

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

Jessica Kenny
Programme Delivery Manager
National Highways
The Cube, Wharfside Street,
Birmingham, B1 1RN

Email: M42J3consultation@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:

Hannah Edwards
Senior Stakeholder Manager
National Highways
2 Colmore Square
Birmingham
B4 6BN

Or by email: hannah.edwards@highwaysengland.co.uk

3. Responses to the consultation and National Highways' response

3.1. Summary of responses

We received a total of five responses to the consultation.

Four responses were received via Citizen Space. Of the four responses received via Citizen Space, all four were from members of the public, one was anonymous. We received one further email from local government, the questionnaire was not completed in this instance.

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: Do you consider that the proposal to introduce a 50mph mandatory speed limit on the M42 junction 3 exit slips will lead to an improvement in travelling conditions on this section of motorway?

Please choose one option from the list below that best describes you/your company or organisation: - Respondent type	Do you consider that the proposal to introduce a 50mph mandatory speed limit on the M42 junction 3 exit slips will lead to an improvement in travelling conditions on this section of motorway? - Q1	Do you consider that the proposal to introduce a 50mph mandatory speed limit on the M42 junction 3 exit slips will lead to an improvement in travelling conditions on this section of motorway? - Q1 comments
Member of the public	Yes	
Member of the public	Yes	For both safety and environmental (noise) reasons
Member of the public	No	It is too high a speed limit
Member of the public	Yes	

National Highways Response

Of the four responses received, three felt that the speed limit would lead to an improvement in travelling conditions at the junction, while one felt the proposed 50mph was too high.

Key themes identified:

- Positive safety and environmental (noise) impact
- Speed limit still too high

National Highways' response to this feedback

Why implement a permanent 50mph speed limit at this time and not a lower speed limit?

Traditionally motorway slip roads do not have reduced speed limits applied to them. Motorways and slip roads are generally subject to the national speed limit, this being 70 mph on motorways.

In this instance a 'free flowing' left slip road onto the south bound A435 has been introduced. Due to this it was felt advisable to reduce approach speeds to maintain safety on the approach to the slip road.

This is a 20mph speed reduction as motorists leave the main line and would be in line with the current speed limit applicable on the A435 and the circulatory carriageway around the grade separated roundabout.

Any greater reduction was considered too severe for vehicles currently travelling at 70mph plus.

3.3. Question 2: Are there any aspects of the proposal to introduce 50mph mandatory speed limit on the M42 junction 3 exit slips which gives you concerns?

Are there any aspects of the proposal to introduce 50mph mandatory speed limit on the M42 junction 3 exit slips which gives you concerns? - Q2	Are there any aspects of the proposal to introduce 50mph mandatory speed limit on the M42 junction 3 exit slips which gives you concerns? - Q2 comments
Yes	
No	
Yes	50mph is too fast for a slip road of this nature onto a very busy island
No	

National Highways Response

Of the four responses received, two felt concern over the proposals with one response reasoning the proposed 50mph was too high and the other not providing any further commentary on why they held this view.

Key themes identified:

- Speed limit still too high

National Highways' response to this feedback

Why implement a permanent 50mph speed limit at this time and not a lower speed limit?

This is a 20mph speed reduction as motorists leave the main line and would be in line with the current speed limit applicable on the A435 and the circulatory carriageway around the grade separated roundabout.

Any greater reduction was considered too severe for vehicles currently traveling at 70mph plus.

3.4. Question 3: Are there any additional comments you would like to make about the proposal to introduce 50mph mandatory speed limits on the M42 junction 3 exit slips?

Are there any additional comments you would like to make about the proposal to introduce 50mph mandatory speed limits on the M42 junction 3 exit slips? - Q3	Are there any additional comments you would like to make about the proposal to introduce 50mph mandatory speed limits on the M42 junction 3 exit slips? - Please provide any comments below:
Yes	
No	
No	
No	

National Highways Response

Of the four responses received, one implied they would like to provide further commentary but did not.

4. Summary and recommendations

4.1. Summary

There has been a reasonable level of response to this statutory instrument consultation. Concerns raised during the consultation have been considered and responded to within this report.

4.2. Recommendations

Considering all the responses received for this consultation, it is recommended that the legislation required to introduce the 50mph permanent mandatory speed limit on the M42 junction 3 off slips is approved.