

Press release: 100 miles of extra lanes coming to North West motorways

Four new smart motorway schemes, worth around £500 million, are due to start construction work within the next 18 months.

Contractors for Highways England will begin work on the first one later this summer – on a 9 mile stretch of the M62 which links the M6 near Warrington to the M60 near Eccles.

Drivers have already been able to use over 10 miles of extra lanes on the M62 near Rochdale since December last year, and a stretch of smart motorway has also been completed on the M60 near the Trafford Centre.

The final temporary narrow lanes were removed earlier this week on the Manchester smart motorway scheme, and more than 200 electronic signs are due to be switched on later this month on a 9 mile stretch of the M60 between Trafford Park and the M62/M66 interchange at Simister Island.

Mike Bull, Highways England's smart motorways programme manager for the North, said:

Smart motorways have been proven to be effective at tackling congestion, with the smart motorway on the M62 in West Yorkshire saving commuters an average of 30 minutes each week.

We'll be starting work on four new smart motorways in the North West over the next 18 months and will do everything we can to keep disruption to a minimum, including only closing parts of the motorway overnight when traffic levels are much lower.

The North West's new smart motorway routes will provide over 100 miles of extra lanes benefiting the hundreds of thousands of drivers who use our motorways every day for commuting, business and leisure.

Drivers can find out more about the work being carried out to complete the Manchester smart motorway upgrade in a new video:

[Manchester smart motorway nears completion](#)

Smart motorways use the latest technology to monitor traffic levels so that variable speed limits can be automatically set on overhead electronic signs to keep traffic moving at a steady speed.

The hard shoulders on each new smart motorway route will be converted into permanent extra lanes and new emergency areas will be created for drivers to use if they break down.

New CCTV cameras will also provide 100% coverage of the routes and Highways England will be able to display red Xs on overhead signs to close any lane, allowing its traffic officers and the emergency services to get through.

Construction work will begin on a 3-mile stretch of the M62 near junction 12 this summer. Temporary narrow lanes will be introduced to allow contractors to work at the side of the motorway, and a 50mph speed limit will be needed for the safety of drivers and workers.

The roadworks will be gradually extended to junction 10 by the autumn and the smart motorway scheme is due to be completed by spring 2020.

Variable speed limits will also be introduced between junctions 10 and 18 on the M60 later this summer when the remaining section of the North West's first smart motorway goes live. The speed limit will remain at 50mph until then while the new technology is being fine-tuned.

Overnight resurfacing work will continue into the autumn on parts of the M60 once the smart motorway is operational. This work will take place at night so that the route can remain fully open with no impact on drivers during the day.

Other schemes taking place in the North West include a 20-mile-stretch of smart motorway on the M6 in Cheshire where construction work is due to be completed by spring 2019, providing 40 miles of extra lanes for drivers.

Work will start in spring 2019 on a 4-mile smart motorway on the M56 near Manchester Airport, and on a 10-mile stretch of smart motorway on the part of the M6 which links the M62 near Warrington to the M58 near Skelmersdale.

Finally, a new 19-mile smart motorway will be created over the Pennines on the M62 between Rochdale and Brighouse. The route will link up with other schemes on the M62 to create almost 60 miles of smart motorway between the North West and Yorkshire, with construction work due to start in autumn 2019.

Find out more details about [driving on a smart motorway](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.