

Press release: A20 near Dover returns to national speed limit

Drivers using the A20 to Kent are benefitting from faster journeys this morning (Tuesday 18 July) after the national speed limit was reinstated overnight.

The work is part of an upgrade to a project known as Dover TAP, which helps relieve congestion in Dover town centre by managing peaks of traffic arriving at the port, and meets a commitment made by Highways England to restore the national speed limit ahead of the summer getaway.

A 40mph speed restriction, which has been in place since 2015, was removed at 8pm on Monday evening, and the A20 approaching the port of Dover is now operating at the national speed limit. The temporary 40mph limit will now only be used when the traffic lights that control traffic on approach to the port are in use.

Highways England Regional Director Simon Jones said:

I am delighted that we've met this key commitment to restore the national speed limit on the A20 in time for the busy summer holiday season. Removing the 40mph limit will speed up journeys for the many thousands of people who'll be using Dover to get away on their holidays this summer, as well as people living and working in Dover.

The update comes two weeks after Highways England unveiled the 27 new electronic signs being installed along the road. Work on these permanent electronic signs continues until later this summer, with a lane closure on the coast bound carriageway and additional restrictions as needed. The interim mechanical signs – most commonly used for roadworks – have enabled the national speed limit to be restored in the meantime.

Traffic lights have been in place at the end of the A20 dual carriageway near Dover since April 2015 as part of a trial to help manage traffic arriving at the port during peak periods, with a 40mph speed limit on the approaches to the traffic lights in place for safety. The trial was successful in reducing congestion in Dover town centre and also had a positive effect on air quality in the town.

The traffic lights have been used on more than 200 different occasions to keep traffic flowing through Dover town centre.

Now the arrangement has been made permanent and the new electronic signs, which have now been installed, have enabled the national speed limit to be restored along the road when the traffic lights are not being used.

Barbara Buczek, Port of Dover Director of Corporate Development and Operational Businesses, said:

The return of the national speed limit on the A20 will enhance journeys to, through and around Dover for residents, holiday makers and the nation's trade.

Alongside Highways England, the Port and its partners are always looking for new and innovative ways to improve the effectiveness and fluidity of traffic movements at Dover's nationally-critical European Gateway.

In total, 27 electronic signs are being installed, with 10 miles of ducting and more than seven miles of cabling to support the new signs. In addition, three weather stations will be added as well as four fog signs to enhance the real-time information provided to drivers.

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.