

Press release: First phase of Manchester's smart motorway opening this autumn

The £208 million Highways England scheme will provide more technology to help keep traffic flowing more smoothly and more capacity, meaning journeys will be more reliable.

The first sections to complete will be along a 5 mile stretch of the M62 near Rochdale and on a 2 mile stretch of the M60 near the Trafford Centre.

A similar smart motorway scheme on a stretch of the M62 in West Yorkshire, which was completed in 2013, has resulted in commuters saving around 30 minutes each week.

Jon Stokes, Senior Project Manager at Highways England, said:

We will be able to begin a phased opening of the new smart motorway scheme this autumn – benefiting the 180,000 drivers who use the route every day.

When the smart motorway is complete, drivers will be able to travel in an extra lane on the M62 and variable speed limits will keep traffic moving at a steady speed – tackling the stop/start conditions and tailbacks caused by sudden braking.

Nearly 600 people are currently working to complete the project and we will open each section along the route as soon as possible.

The scheme is Highways England's most complex smart motorway project, affecting the second busiest motorway in the country and covering 13 junctions – an average of one junction every 1.4 miles.

The full scheme stretches between junction 8 of the M60 near Sale and junction 20 of the M62 near Rochdale.

The phased opening over the next few months will see the removal of the temporary narrow lanes on the M62 starting in October, and between junctions 8 and 10 on the M60 later in the autumn.

The new technology will then be tested to ensure the 100 traffic sensors which have been installed along the 17-mile route are working effectively, before the new electronic variable speed limit signs are switched on from junctions 8 to 10 on the M60 and junctions 18 to 20 on the M62 by the end of the year.

The extra lanes on the M62 are also due to open in time for the Christmas

getaway – increasing capacity on the stretch of motorway between Greater Manchester and Yorkshire by a third.

To keep disruption as minimal as possible during the construction, Highways England has worked hard to keep all of the lanes open in each direction during the day. This has meant major construction work could only be carried out overnight, affecting the overall duration of the project.

Other issues such as needing to relocate unrecorded utility pipes and carrying out additional maintenance work has meant that part of the scheme will need to continue into 2018.

The temporary narrow lanes are due to be removed between junctions 15 and 18 on the M60 in early 2018, and from the final section of roadworks – on a 5 mile stretch of the M60 between junctions 10 and 15 – in spring 2018. The new variable speed limit signs are due to be switched on between junctions 10 and 18 by summer 2018.

When the smart motorway is complete, traffic sensors will automatically monitor vehicle numbers and adjust the speed limit accordingly. A total of 50 CCTV cameras will also provide 100% coverage of the route, and allow Highways England's traffic officers and the emergency services to respond quickly to incidents.

For more information, [go to the scheme website.](#)

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.