

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 9 April 2018

Portfolio:	Planning and Development
Subject:	Response to Highways England Consultation: M27 Junction 4 to 11 Smart Motorway Scheme
Report of:	Director of Planning and Regulation
Corporate Priority:	Maintain & Extend Prosperity

Purpose:

To inform the Executive of the response to the Highways England consultation on the proposed regulations to introduce variable mandatory speed limits to the planned M27 Smart Motorway scheme between junctions 4 and 11.

Executive summary:

Highways England wrote to the Council on 12 March 2018, advising that it has launched a consultation seeking views on the proposed regulations to introduce variable mandatory speed limits to the planned M27 Smart Motorway scheme between junctions 4 and 11. Officers have prepared a suggested response to this consultation which is detailed in this report.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Executive approves the response to the Highways England consultation, as detailed in the Briefing Paper to this report.

Reason:

To respond to the consultation by Highways England on the introduction of variable mandatory speed limits on the M27 Smart Motorway.

Cost of proposals:

Existing resource budgets cover officers time to respond to this Highways England consultation.

Appendices: Appendix A: Consultation Letter from Highways England dated 12 March 2018.

Background papers: None

Reference papers: None

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	9 April 2018
Subject:	Response to Highways England Consultation: M27 Junction 4 to 11 Smart Motorway Scheme
Briefing by:	Director of Planning and Regulation
Portfolio:	Planning and Development

INTRODUCTION

1. Highways England are progressing plans for a Smart Motorway scheme on the M27 between junctions 4 and 11, where the hard shoulder will be turned into a permanent all lane running scheme, converting it to a dual four lane Smart Motorway. This will enable proactive management of the M27 carriageway, including the link roads from/to the M3 at junction 4 (the junction with the M27) to junction 11 (Fareham) including the eastbound and westbound slip roads.
2. As part of this project, Highways England are seeking to introduce variable mandatory speed limits along the length of the Smart Motorway. These speed regulations will also connect to the proposed variable mandatory speed limit to be introduced on the northbound and southbound carriageways of the M3 between junctions 9 and 14. The purpose of this is to help manage traffic speeds and reduce congestion, while enabling the safe operation of the Motorway.
3. On 12 March 2018 Highways England wrote to the Council, attached as Appendix A to this report, advising that it has launched a consultation to seek views on the proposed regulations to introduce variable mandatory speed limits to the planned M27 Smart Motorway scheme between junctions 4 and 11.
4. The Council has been invited to respond to this consultation which opens on 12 March 2018 and closes on 10 April 2018.
5. The consultation questions and the proposed response from the Council are shown below:

Q1. Do you consider that the proposal to introduce variable mandatory speed limits on the M27 between junction 4 and 11 will lead to an improvement in travelling conditions on this section of motorway (please tick yes or no in the boxes provided?)	Yes	✓
	No	

Fareham Borough Council welcomes the proposal for variable mandatory speed limits on this section of the M27.

The M27 forms one of the key corridors for transport in the Solent Region connecting Portsmouth, Fareham and Southampton and provides links to the M3 Motorway and routes to London.

As an area with a growing housing and enterprise market, it is imperative that the road network safely and efficiently accommodates the growing levels of road traffic from both new housing developments including Welborne to the north of junction 10, and business growth areas such as the Enterprise Zone at Daedalus.

Increasing volumes of road traffic in this geographic region has led to congestion resulting in:

- lengthy queues at key junctions such as Junctions 9 and 11 into Fareham;
- safety concerns as vehicles are forced to wait on live running lanes to exit the motorway; and
- apprehension towards housing and employment growth due to poor journey time reliability on the network.

The introduction of the variable mandatory speed limits will enable the regulation of traffic and the ability to manage the flows of vehicles before these points of congestion and sooth the flow of traffic. This ultimately will lead to much needed improvements in journey time reliability, enabling and encouraging further housing and employment growth in the region.

In the event of a road traffic accident or other occurrence that restricts or closes the M27, the resulting impact from re-routing vehicles onto the A27 and other arterial roads around Fareham is of significant concern. Events like this cause the local road network to come to a standstill as many of the roads are already at capacity and cannot sustain the volumes of traffic re-routing from the M27.

It is hoped that mandatory variable speed limits in conjunction with the increased capacity will have the result of reducing the likelihood of these incidents occurring by maintaining a steady flow of vehicles along the length of the M27 governed by these restrictions.

Q2. Are there any aspects of the proposal to introduce variable mandatory speed limits on the M27 between junctions 4 and 11 which give you concerns?	Yes	✓
	No	

Whilst Fareham Borough Council welcomes the introduction of the restrictions, there remain concerns about the termination points of the variable mandatory speed limits.

This is especially relevant in relation to the section of the M27 just after J11,

where eastbound traffic en-route to Portsmouth and beyond, merges from four lanes to three. At the merge, hard braking occurs from affected vehicles that are forced to allow the overtaking vehicle to join the slower traffic. This scenario is particularly pertinent in the evening peak, and often results in slow-moving traffic and safety concerns due to lane changing to avoid the overtaking vehicles.

Fareham Borough Council would not wish to see a constant speed limit reduction eastbound leading up to J11 as a result of this, and is hopeful that by managing traffic speeds through variable mandatory speed limits, thereby smoothing traffic flows, the above concerns will be mitigated.

Air Quality is also of a concern of the Council, of particular note is the section of the M27 traversing the Borough where national modelling depicts exceedances of the national limits on NO₂ along the route.

Vehicle speed has a significant bearing on emissions of air pollutants, i.e. reducing speeds in the main reduces emissions, and improving traffic flow reduces congestion related pollution; whilst at very low speeds during periods of congestion vehicle emissions increase. The introduction of the variable mandatory speed limits will aid reduction in congestion levels, improve journey time reliability, and contribute to a free-flowing route, thereby improving air quality in the vicinity of the motorway.

Looking at the construction phase, there should be limited impact on the local environment through air or noise pollution, as there does not appear to be a need for large scale construction works. Any impact in this regard would be temporary, possibly including increased particulate matter concentrations and dust soiling; however, significant changes to noise levels seem unlikely.

Fareham Borough Council had been directed by Government to reduce the levels of NO₂ within the shortest time possible and achieve compliance by December 2020 on the A27 between Delme Roundabout and Station Roundabout, and on the A32 between Quay Street Roundabout and Newgate Lane. The Council is working with partners and JAQU to achieve this goal.

The Council is also aware that the expected completion/operational date for the Smart Motorway scheme between junctions 4 and 11 of the M27 is in 2020/2021. This timeframe coincides with the current work to achieve air quality compliance and the Council is concerned about the impact of the Smart Motorway Scheme on the monitoring area for the compliance directive, with particular regard to any extension to the Smart Motorway project delivery timeline.

Fareham Borough Council therefore requests that allowances are considered in the reporting of air quality compliance monitoring data should slippage in the Smart Motorway scheme occur.

The Council is also concerned that the potential volume of vehicles utilising the A27 for the duration of works on the M27, may also prejudice compliance within the directed timescales. The Council requests that any major works that require the diversion of traffic onto the local network, be undertaken at night to minimise the impact on the local network in terms of both air quality impact and congestion. Following the scheme coming into use, the Council anticipates benefits to local air quality and the wider noise environment. As regards to air quality, this is likely to

be restricted to nearby receptors, but reductions in noise should improve much further afield. However, the Council would encourage Highways England to explore further opportunities for reducing noise pollution, e.g. noise barriers, as abatement measures particularly on stretches of the motorway in close proximity to housing development where both exist on the same horizontal plane.

Fareham Borough Council would encourage the undertaking of pre/post air and noise quality monitoring to demonstrate the accrued improvements in air and noise quality as a result of the implementation of Smart Motorway technologies on the M27.

Q3. Are there any additional comments you would like to make about the proposal to introduce variable mandatory speed limits on the M27 junction 4 to 11?	Yes	✓
	No	

Fareham Borough Council supports the introduction of the variable mandatory speed limits, and would request that the points below are taken into consideration whilst developing the final designs for the Smart motorway scheme.

Highways England will be aware of the development proposals within Fareham for Welborne, and the proposed upgrade of Junction 10 to an all-moves junction to support the development.

Whilst the designs for an all-moves Junction 10 are being progressed, it is requested that consideration is given to construction and implementation of the Smart Motorway scheme from west to east.

Additionally, in order to ensure fully integrated and complementary final designs for both the Smart Motorway Scheme and Junction 10 schemes are achieved, Fareham Borough Council also requests that Highways England scheme designers engage at the earliest opportunity with:

- Buckland Development Ltd as planning applicant for Welborne; and
- Hampshire County Council, the Local Highway Authority.

6. Subject to Executive consideration and approval, the Council's response to the consultation as outlined above, will be submitted via the online survey as requested by Highways England.
7. Following the consultation, a summary report will be made available on the Highways England website. The summary report will provide an analysis of responses received and the Highways England response.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Claire Burnett. (Ext 4330)