6 junction 2 to junction 4: smart motorway

Improving the busy 13.6 mile (22km) stretch of the M6 between junction 2 at Coventry and junction 4 near Coleshill by upgrading it to an 'all lane running' smart motorway.

Region: West Midlands
Start date: Winter 2017/spring 2018
Cost: £155 million to £234 million
Status: PLANNED
Type: Major Scheme
End date: March 2020

Programme: Smart Motorways
Progress report

In summer 2017, we completed a range of early environmental work in preparation for the main construction work, which is set to begin in March 2018. We are now in discussions with local authorities so we can take into account their views as we plan our work.

We are also currently installing our works compound at junction 4.

What next?

We will soon begin installing our second compound at junction 2 of the M6. We will also be commencing the installation of temporary CCTV cameras throughout the length of the scheme.

We are holding 4 public information exhibitions across December 2017 and January 2018 where you’ll be able to find out more about our plans and ask any questions.

You can also find out more on our exhibition page.

Public Information Exhibitions

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday 15 December</td>
<td>2pm to 7pm</td>
<td>Maxstoke Village Hall, Church Lane, Maxstoke, B46 2QN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 16 December</td>
<td>10am to 4pm</td>
<td>Maxstoke Village Hall, Church Lane, Maxstoke, B46 2QN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 12 January</td>
<td>11am to 7pm</td>
<td>Novotel Coventry M6/J3, Wilsons Lane, Coventry, CV6 6HL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 13 January</td>
<td>10am to 4pm</td>
<td>Novotel Coventry M6/J3, Wilsons Lane, Coventry, CV6 6HL</td>
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Timeline

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>Design work</td>
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<td>July 2016</td>
<td>Exhibition events</td>
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<td>Winter 2017</td>
<td>Start of works</td>
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<td>March 2020</td>
<td>End of works</td>
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Why we need this scheme

The M6 at junctions 2 to 4 currently suffers frequent delays due to the volume of traffic. This scheme will provide greater traffic capacity and more reliable journey times by improving the flow of traffic.

The scheme in detail

This project involves:

- converting the hard shoulder to create a permanent fourth lane between junctions 2 and 3a
- converting the climbing lane eastbound between junction 3a and 3 to a permanent traffic lane and retaining the hard shoulder
- between junctions 4 and 3a the motorway will have 3 lanes and a hard shoulder; this is designed to tie in with the existing M6 junction 5 to 8 smart motorway
- installing new electronic information signs, signals and CCTV cameras - these will be used to vary speed limits and manage traffic flow and incidents
- installing 9 emergency refuge areas to use in place of the hard shoulder
- improving the central reserve and adding a reinforced barrier to improve safety
- adding new noise barriers in built up areas

In addition to the main smart motorway scheme we have been commissioned by HS2 to improve junction 4. This will include increasing the number of lanes to aid the flow of traffic for the proposed Birmingham Interchange Station. This work is scheduled to begin in Autumn 2017.
Aims
This scheme aims to:
- reduced congestion by smoothing the flow of traffic to improve journey times and make them more reliable
- facilitate economic growth within the region, by providing much needed capacity on the motorway
- maximise motorway capacity while maintaining safety on motorways, which already are among the safest roads in the world

Environmental impact
We have undertaken an environmental assessment that covers topics including noise and vibration, air quality, ecology and visual impacts. The results will be presented in an Environmental Study Report and we will describe the measures we will take to minimise impact and enhance the environment. We have carried out surveys for protected species and identified badger setts and great crested newts adjacent to the motorway. Mitigation work will be undertaken within Natural England licenses. We will need to do some vegetation removal to allow us to build new structures such as gantries and emergency refuge areas. We will retain existing screening planting where possible and propose additional planting to minimise views of the motorway and associated equipment. We will replace the existing noise barrier and install new barriers to minimise noise effects. See the Environmental Study Report, Volume 1. Appendices are available on request by emailing the project team.