



# The Alliance of British Drivers

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John Martin  
M25 Junctions 23-27 Consultation  
Highways Agency

Via Email: [M25J23toJ27MM@highways.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:M25J23toJ27MM@highways.gsi.gov.uk)

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## Response to the Consultation on Proposals for a Managed Motorway for M25 Junctions 23 to 27

Dear Mr Martin,

I am responding on behalf of The Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) to the above consultation.

This response is in line with the policies outlined on the ABD website and individuals who join the ABD are assumed generally to support these policies.

The ABD does NOT support the introduction of variable mandatory speed limits and has considerable concerns about hard shoulder running.

### **Variable Speed Limits**

You claim in the consultation document that a managed motorway scheme will increase capacity, reduce congestion, smooth traffic flows and provide more reliable journey times. But in your proposals for the M25 junction 10-16 scheme, it was stated elsewhere on the M25 where such a scheme had been implemented there was "no increase in the peak 1-hour throughput" and there were "off peak increased journey times"!

Experience of variable speed limits on other sections of the M25 have shown that downgraded limits are often applied for lengthy time periods completely divorced from the incident that instigated the downgrading in the first place.

## **Variable Speed Limits in Action**

Despite all the 'spin' you put on computer controlled traffic flows adjusting the speed limits, it always seems to never to be in sync with what is actually happening on the road.

A good example is the new M20 VSL around the Maidstone area, where speed limits seem to be set at random. Experience of the existing M25 VSLs is the changing of the speed limits in quick succession between the gantries. This haphazard approach does nothing to boost driver's confidence in VSL systems.

Speed limits are downgraded for no visible reason and start a long way before any hazards. Gantry signs frequently give us no practical information but act as a distraction.

It would seem VSL is just another extension of out of date misinformation which can be traced back to the beginning of the matrix signs. VSL will lead to more pressure on drivers, often for no justifiable reason. The consequence is that it will just do the opposite to your stated aim of making journeys less stressful.

All this additional signage will confuse and/or distract drivers from concentrating on the road, especially in foggy, wet conditions or high traffic volumes: this is of serious concern.

Good drivers like to keep some distance around them whenever possible and can adjust their speed to find these 'gaps', but once the speed limit is downgraded, boxing you in with other normally slower moving traffic (HGVs), this creates additional stress and danger, particularly when joining or leaving the motorway.

## **Hard Shoulder Running**

The hard shoulder is there for good safety reasons, and is a well recognised safety feature of most European motorways. Loosing this safe haven is something to which we most strongly object. If you have a sudden problem with your vehicle, or there has been an accident, you have the reassurance that you can immediately pull over in safety.

Using the hard shoulder for short distance temporary emergency running while other lanes are blocked is a legitimate use. So might occasional short term and distance use as a means of alleviating severe congestion. But not full time use.

We provide this submission in the hope that it will be taken into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Roger Lawson  
London Co-Ordinator

## **About The Alliance of British Drivers (ABD)**

The Alliance of British Drivers was formed from a merger between the Association of British Drivers and the Drivers Alliance. The ABD is the leading independent organisation which represents the interests of private motorists in the United Kingdom. We campaign to protect the rights of individual road users and believe that road transport is a beneficial and essential element in the UK transport infrastructure. We oppose excessive taxation of motorists and are against tolls and road usage charging. We also campaign for more enlightened road safety policies. The Alliance is a "not for profit" voluntary organisation which is financially supported primarily by its individual members. More information on the ABD is available from our web site at [www.freedomfordrivers.org](http://www.freedomfordrivers.org)