

Our ref: FOI [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Highways England
Bridge House
Walnut Tree Close
Guildford
GU1 4LZ

25 April 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 25 March requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act about the Average Speed Cameras on the M3 between junction 1 and junction 3 and also the signage in the area of the Average Speed Cameras.

I have responded to your questions in the same sequence as your original format for ease of reference. The original questions are highlighted in black text and our answers are highlighted in red.

1. Why are there still Average Speed Cameras on the M3 between junctions 1 and junctions 3 after all the road works have been completed.

There are different layouts of motorway on this part of the network.

The cameras between junctions 2 and 4A are a permanent part of the Smart Motorway section on the M3. Please see the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-drive-on-a-smart-motorway>

This explains the need for variable speed limits and explains how they are enforced.

Next due to the M3 being reduced to one lane as it travels under the M25, HGVs are then presented with being in lane 4 when the slips from the M25 merge with the M3. To allow vehicles to safely traverse across to lane 1 there is a 50mph section, which the Average Speed Cameras also enforce.

2. Why is the signage poor in the area of Average Speed Camera, for example you will get off the M25 (Anti-Clockwise) and the overhead signs say 40, then you get fixed 50 signs on the left side of the road.

In relation to the varying speed signs, this is firstly due to the motorway changing from a Controlled Motorway on the M25 (with mandatory variable speed limits), to the fixed 50mph for a short section on the southbound M3, to the Smart Motorway to junction 4A of the M3 (going back to mandatory variable speed limits).

Also there are different types of signage. The overhead gantries with 40mph are advisory, denoted by flashing amber lights and no red circle. The 50mph signs are mandatory, denoted by the red outer circle. The M3 southbound after the end of the average speed camera area is a Smart Motorway, with a 70mph but with mandatory variable speed limits on the gantry.

3. Further down the road you have the digital text sign board which will then say 'END' which implied back to the regular motorway rules and thus 70mph.

The 'END' aspect is the end of an advisory speed limit, whereas the 'National Speed Restriction' roundel is the end of a mandatory speed restriction.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote reference number CRS 761309 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely
