

HATED MEASURE: Motorists found restriction on dual carriageway unpopular



Dover MP Charlie Elphicke (inset) has hailed the news as a 'huge victory'

Relief for drivers as 40mph on A20 speed limit axed

By Lauren MacDougall
lauren.macdougall@kentlive.news

THE hated 40mph speed limit on the A20 between Dover and Folkestone has finally been axed, said Highways England on Tuesday.

The government body originally pledged to install a variable speed limit on the busy A-road by March 2017, but it emerged in January the plan had been delayed until June.

Drivers have been forced to persist with sluggish speeds since the limit was introduced more than two years ago in April 2015.

But now Highways England has confirmed that the permanent 40mph limit was removed at 8pm on Monday night.

Highways England regional director Simon Jones said: "I am delighted that we have met this key commitment to restore the national speed limit on the

A20 in time for the busy summer holiday season.

"Removing the 40mph limit will speed up journeys for the many thousands of people who'll be using Dover to get away on their holidays this summer, as well as people living and working in Dover."

Battled

Dover and Deal MP Charlie Elphicke has battled relentlessly to return the Folkestone to Dover dual carriageway to 70mph – with the 40mph limit only enforced on the rare occasions Dover TAP (Traffic Assessment Project) is in place.

Mr Elphicke said: "This is a huge victory for the people of Dover and Deal. We have battled relentlessly to scrap the hated 40mph limit on the A20.

"Highways England should have got this work finished much sooner. But at long last

the speed limit is being lifted. This will be a huge relief to drivers across Dover and Deal.

"I would like to say thank you to every single resident who has written to me and Highways England to help our campaign."

The introduction of a variable speed limit will see new signs on the coast bound carriageway, which switch from the national speed limit to 40mph during TAP to help cut congestion. This will allow motorists to drive at the national speed limit, apart from at exceptionally busy times when TAP is active, reducing the speed limit to 40mph to help reduce queuing traffic.

The announcement comes two weeks after Highways England unveiled the 27 new electronic signs being installed along the road.

Work on these permanent electronic signs continues until

later this summer, with a lane closure on the coast bound carriageway and additional restrictions as needed.

The interim mechanical signs – most commonly used for roadworks – have enabled the national speed limit to be restored in the meantime.

Enhance

Barbara Buczek, Port of Dover director of corporate development and operational businesses, said: "The return of the national speed limit on the A20 will enhance journeys to, through and around Dover for residents, holidaymakers and the nation's trade.

"Alongside Highways England, the port and its partners are always looking for new and innovative ways to improve the effectiveness and fluidity of traffic movements at Dover's nationally critical European Gateway."

Putting the brakes on Channel traffic

Why was a 40mph speed limit imposed in the first place?

The speed limit, alongside Dover TAP, was brought in to tackle gridlock leading up to the Port of Dover and was permanent, meaning motorists had to drive at 40mph, even when there was little to no traffic.

A hefty number of drivers were caught out by the speed limit – 180 speeding offences were committed in the first seven days of the scheme, according to Kent Police.

Why can't I drive at the national speed limit all the time?

You can except when Dover TAP is imposed. At that point the speed limit will change to 40mph.

Bear in mind, Dover TAP was used 200 times in 2016.

Why not get rid of Dover TAP?

Cllr Nigel Collor, Dover District Council's cabinet member for access, said: "We still need to have Dover TAP for when there are problems, especially with the volume of traffic using the Port of Dover increasing."

What about Aycliffe?

The scrapping of the 40mph limit comes after a public meeting in Aycliffe addressing traffic problems on the estate.

Dozens of residents turned out at Aycliffe Church Centre to grill highways chiefs.

They raised the issue of lorries parked up by the Western Heights roundabout causing noise and air pollution.

They said they want the traffic lights moved back down the A20, away from their estate.

Mr Elphicke urged Highways England's area managing director Simon Jones to look again at whether this can be done.

He said: "With the 40mph limit going – this should help tackle the problem of lorries using Capel, Elms Vale and the Alkham Valley Road as rat-runs. Yet we must remain vigilant."

Has your double glazing steamed up?

We can SAVE your windows!

SAVE energy, time & money

Cloudy2Clear is a leading local glass replacement company, established for over 10 years. By saving your window we can...
SAVE energy, SAVE time, SAVE money.

Replace the pane, not the frame

The good news is you don't need to go through the expensive process of replacing the whole frame. You can just replace the glass.
Our quotes on average take no longer than 20 minutes.

Your local trusted expert

All glazing backed by our

**25
YEAR
GUARANTEE**



Local, friendly
engineer



We are a
Which?
Trusted Trader

cloudy2 CLEAR
WINDOWS
REPLACING YOUR FAILED DOUBLE GLAZING

Priority freephone
0800 61 21 118
www.cloudy2clear.com

SAVE energy -SAVE time -SAVE money

