

A current stretch of smart motorway on the M25

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All lane running inquiry: RAC reacts to Transport Committee report

Following the publication this morning of the [Transport Committee's report into all lane running on smart motorways](#) - where the hard shoulder is converted into a permanent live lane for traffic - RAC chief engineer David Bizley said:

“Whilst supporting smart motorways as a cost effective and relatively rapid way of increasing motorway capacity, the RAC has repeatedly expressed concerns about the latest design which turns the hard shoulder on motorways into a permanent running lane. These concerns are widely shared by other industry groups, as well as by our members and others who regularly use motorways.

“We therefore welcome the Select Committee report and are pleased that this influential group of MPs has concluded that the decision to adopt ‘all lane running’ on all future smart motorways may be premature. The safety of motorists must come first and therefore new designs need to be trialled for sufficiently long to demonstrate their safety before they are introduced more widely. This was precisely the approach adopted by the Highways Agency (now Highways England) when a smart motorway with a dynamic hard shoulder was first introduced on the M42.

“The message to Government and to Highways England is clear – we should apply the principles that have proven to be safe on smart motorways such as the M42 until such time as the evidence exists to show all lane running is as safe as conventional motorways with a hard shoulder, and as smart motorways with a dynamic hard shoulder which only open to traffic as a running lane when the extra capacity is needed.

“It is encouraging that the Government and Highways England have been listening and are reviewing the design and frequency of emergency refuge areas, and we acknowledge their commitment to improving education and communication to users about how to use smart motorways safely.

“Motorways are our safest roads but, because of the speeds at which vehicles travel on them, the consequences of an accident can be severe in terms of loss of life and serious injury. We need the extra capacity that smart motorways will deliver but we must not put the safety of our motorways at risk by allowing insufficient time to prove the safety of new designs.”

Note: the RAC gave evidence to the Transport Committee as part of its inquiry into all lane running

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About the RAC

The RAC, an iconic UK brand, provides complete peace of mind to nearly 14 million UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. As well as its premium nationwide breakdown assistance service – with an expert branded patrol workforce attending more than two million breakdowns every year – it offers a wide range of market-leading products across insurance, legal services, vehicle inspections and service, maintenance and repair. Included in this is the first-of-its-kind nationwide Mobile Mechanics service which brings the garage to homes and workplaces.

At the forefront of new solutions for business fleets and consumers, the RAC’s breakdown service is electric-ready with mobile EV charging technology and can be called on using [myRAC](#) – the all-in-one route planner, fuel finder and breakdown reporting app.

Visit the [RAC website](#).

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