

Eames, Angus

Subject: FW: Signed Earley SoCG
Attachments: 20151008093615609.pdf

From: Maddy Bristow [<mailto:deputy@earley-tc.gov.uk>]
Sent: 08 October 2015 09:52
To: Chris Tooth
Cc: Andrew T Bradley; Bill G Luck; John C N Russell
Subject: FW: Statement of Common Ground

Hi Chris,

The signed SoCG is now attached - with the one area moved to 'not agreed' as previously mentioned.

If you need any other information, please let me know.

Kind Regards

Maddy

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M4 JUNCTIONS 3 TO 12 SMART MOTORWAY

**The M4 Motorway (Junctions 3 to 12)(Smart Motorway)
Development Consent Order 201[]**

Planning Inspectorate Scheme Reference: TR010019

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

between

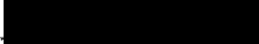
(1) HIGHWAYS ENGLAND


and

(2) EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared and agreed by (1) Highways England Company Limited and (2) Earley Town Council.

Signed  _____

Signed  _____

on behalf of Highways England

on behalf of Earley Town Council

Date: 8 October 2015.

Date: 08-10-15

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1 Introduction

Purpose of Statement of Common Ground

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground ("SoCG") has been prepared in respect of an application ("Application") made by the Highways Agency (which has now become the "Highways England Company Limited", known as "Highways England") to the Secretary of State for Transport ("Secretary of State") for a Development Consent Order ("DCO") under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 ("PA 2008").
- 1.2 The draft DCO is referred to as The M4 Motorway (Junctions 3 to 12) (Smart Motorway) Development Consent Order 201[*] (the "Order"). The Order would grant powers to improve the M4 motorway ("M4") to a smart motorway between junction 3 (Hayes) in west London and junction 12 (Theale), which is near Reading (the "Scheme").
- 1.3 Guidance on the purpose and possible content of SoCGs is given in paragraphs 58 - 65 of the Department for Communities and Local Government's "Planning Act 2008: Guidance for the examination of applications for development consent" (March 2015).
- 1.4 Paragraph 58 confirms the basic function of SoCGs:

"A statement of common ground is a written statement prepared jointly by the applicant and another party or parties, setting out any matters on which they agree. As well as identifying matters which are not in real dispute, it is also useful if a statement identifies those areas where agreement has not been reached. The statement should include references to show where those matters are dealt with in the written representations or other documentary evidence."

Parties to this Statement of Common Ground

- 1.5 This SoCG has been prepared by (1) Highways England as the Applicant and (2) Earley Town Council.
- 1.6 The Application was made by the Highways Agency. On 1 April 2015, the Highways Agency became a government-owned Strategic Highways Company, limited by shares, with the Secretary of State as sole shareholder. Highways England is the new company. It is established as the highway authority in England for the strategic road network and has the necessary powers and duties to operate, manage, maintain and enhance the network. Regulatory powers remain with the Secretary of State. The

legislation establishing Highways England made provision for all legal rights and obligations of the Highways Agency, including in respect of the Application, to be conferred upon or assumed by Highways England.

- 1.7 Earley Town Council is a town and civil parish located within the administrative area of Wokingham borough Council. The Council is a Prescribed Consultee for the purposes of statutory consultation on the scheme under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.

Summary of the Scheme

- 1.8 The M4 is the main strategic route between London and the west of England, and on to South Wales. Major towns and cities along the M4 include London, Reading, Swindon, Bristol, Newport, Cardiff and Swansea.
- 1.9 The M4 between junctions 3 and 12 carries over 130,000 vehicles per day, and more in places. At peak times, traffic flows on many links are close to or exceed the total flow that the link is designed to handle. This causes heavy congestion on the M4, which can lead to unpredictable journey times.
- 1.10 The Scheme will help to relieve congestion by permanently converting the hard shoulder of the M4 to a running lane and using technology to vary speed limits and manage traffic. Signs and signals will be used to inform drivers of conditions on the highway network, when and where variable speed limits are in place, and when lanes are closed.
- 1.11 The Scheme is some 51 km (32 miles) in length and will have a number of principal elements:
- 1.11.1 conversion of the hard shoulder to a permanent running lane and, where no hard shoulder is in place at present, the construction of a new lane. This will mainly take place between junction 4b and junction 8/9;
 - 1.11.2 replacement of overbridge structures where portals are too narrow to accommodate the improved motorway;
 - 1.11.3 extension of underbridges and other structures such as culverts and subways to accommodate the improved motorway;

1.11.4 changes to junctions and slip roads needed to accommodate traffic joining and leaving the improved motorway, and to allow use of the hard shoulder as a running lane, as well as allowing "through junction running" ("TJR");

1.11.5 provision of new gantries and signs to allow the motorway to function as a smart motorway with a variable speed limit, and to provide messages to road users; and

1.11.6 other infrastructure needed for the improved motorway, such as Emergency Refuge Areas ("ERAs"), enhanced communication systems, closed circuit television ("CCTV") and electrical supplies, as well as works to accommodate statutory undertakers' apparatus and other parties who may be affected by the Scheme.

1.12 The works are more particularly described in Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Draft DCO (Application Document Reference 3.1).

1.13 The Application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 30 March 2015, and the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, accepted the Application on 27 April 2015.

Structure of this Statement of Common Ground

1.14 This SoCG has been prepared for the purposes of the Examination to be held by the Secretary of State in accordance with PA 2008. In this SoCG, Highways England has provided a summary of its assessment for each issue addressed, as recorded in the Application documentation and subsequent reports.

1.15 Throughout this SoCG the phrase "It is agreed....." is used as a precursor to any point of agreement that has been specifically stated to be agreed between (1) the Applicant and (2) Earley Town Council. The phrase "It is not agreed...." is used as a precursor to any point that (1) the Applicant and (2) Earley Town Council wish to state as clearly not yet agreed. Points that are "not agreed" will be the subject of ongoing discussion wherever possible to resolve, or refine, the extent of disagreement between the parties.

1.16 This SoCG considers the items raised by Earley Town Council in a meeting held with Highways England on 3 July 2015 to discuss the Application (in the absence of a relevant representation). The SoCG has also been drafted having regard to the list of principal issues set out at Annex B of the Examining Authority's Rule 6 letter dated 7

August 2015. However, only the principal issues of concern to Earley Town Council are addressed in this SoCG. Any of the principal issues identified which are not specifically referenced in this SoCG are to be taken to be agreed between the parties.

1.17 This SoCG considers the following items:

- 1.17.1 Impact on noise;
- 1.17.2 Scheme design and operation;
- 1.17.3 Construction;
- 1.17.4 Impacts on drainage;
- 1.17.5 Impact on landscape;
- 1.17.6 Impact on air quality; and
- 1.17.7 Impact on trunk roads.

1.18 This SoCG considers data and assesses it in respect of the above topics and the methodologies set out in:

- 1.18.1 The Environmental Statement ("ES") (Application Document Reference 6.1);
- 1.18.2 The Outline Environmental Management Plan (Appendix 4.2 of the ES) (Application Document Reference 6.3);
- 1.18.3 The Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Appendix 4.2A of the ES) (Application Document Reference 6.3);
- 1.18.4 Engineering and Design Report (Application Document Reference 7.3);
- 1.18.5 Engineering and Design Report, Annex A2, Vegetation Clearance (Application Document Reference 7.4);
- 1.18.6 Engineering and Design Report, Annex A1, Environmental Masterplan (Application Document Reference 7.4); and
- 1.18.7 Drainage Strategy Report (Application Document Reference 7.5).

1.19 Where items in the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1) and/or the accompanying technical reports are agreed, this is stated with the relevant document

reference. Where items of data are new or represent an agreed variation presented in a technical report or other document, then a list of those documents is provided in Appendix 1 to this SoCG.

- 1.20 The assessments include a combination of desk based studies, site investigations and technical assessment work. The ES (Application Document Reference 6.1) sets out mitigation and remedial measures where appropriate, concluding with a summary of the residual effects following mitigation. [The mitigation referred to in the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1) has been refined and enhanced during the course of the Examination as set out in this SoCG and Highways England's submissions to the Examining Authority.]

2 Overview of Previous Engagement

2.1 A summary of key meetings, workshops and consultation undertaken between (1) Highways England and (2) Earley Town Council can be found in the following tables:

Table 2.1.1: Pre-application Engagement

Date	Form of Contact	Summary
7 June 2014	Email from Earley Town Council to Highways Agency	Seeking the provision of sound barriers/sound absorbing features to protect nearby houses from road noise; noise deadening asphalt; improvements to the capacity of the M4 and feeder roads and the removal of restrictions on main roads in Reading
10 June 2014	Email response from Highways Agency to email received from Earley Town Council on 7 June 2014	Confirmation that a noise assessment is being undertaken which will include proposals for mitigation; further information available for consultation in Autumn 2014; clarifying that works on the local highway network is outside the scope of Highways Agency.
10 September 2014	Scoping Opinion Response	No objection. Requested use of "quiet tarmac" and new noise barriers to be designed to avoid noise deflecting resulting in increased noise intrusion
10 November 2014	Planning Act 2008 Section 42: Notice of statutory Pre-application consultation period	Notification of the formal pre-application consultation between 10 November and 21 December 2014 about the Scheme in accordance with Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008. Delivery of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report and Non-Technical

Date	Form of Contact	Summary
		Summary
8 December 2014	Planning Act 2008 Section 42 Consultation Response	Concerns raised regarding impact on local highway network during construction, low noise surfacing and barriers. Welcomed the introduction of variable speed limits
9 December 2014	Email response from Highways Agency to Planning Act 2008 Section 42 Consultation Response	Stating that all comments received during the consultation will be recorded and carefully considered by the project team and taken into account in developing the Scheme proposals. A consultation report will accompany the DCO application and may include copies of representations

Table 2.1.2: Post-application Engagement

Date	Form of Contact	Summary
22 May 2015	Email request from Highways England for Statement of Common Ground ("SoCG") meeting dates	Requested availability for a number of potential meeting dates in June 2015 to discuss the draft SoCG
28 May 2015	Section 56 notice of acceptance of an application for a Development Consent Order	Copy of the Section 56 letter sent to the relevant local planning authorities for information
5 June 2015	Repeat email request from Highways England for SoCG meeting dates (originally requested 22 May 2015)	Requested availability for a number of potential meeting dates in June and July 2015 to discuss the draft SoCG
11 June 2015	Email from Earley Town Council in response to request from Highways England for SoCG	Requested meeting on 3 July 2015 at Earley Town Council offices

Date	Form of Contact	Summary
	meeting dates	
12 June 2015	Email response from Highways England confirming SoCG meeting on 3 July 2015	Final arrangements to be arranged in the upcoming week along with a draft agenda
23 June 2015	Email from Highways England with draft agenda for SoCG meeting	Request for agenda to be forwarded to all attendees from Earley Town Council
23 June 2015	Email from Earley Town Council containing revised agenda due to change in Town Council representative	Revised SoCG meeting agenda
3 July 2015	SoCG meeting between Highways England and Earley Town Council	Discussion on noise impacts; design and impact on construction traffic and impact on trunk roads
27 July 2015	Email from Highways England containing minutes of SoCG meeting held on 3 July 2015	<p>Minutes of meeting and hyperlinks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways England Scheme website • Planning Inspectorate's Scheme website • Ecology and Nature Conservation ES Appendix 9.1 • Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan • Engineering and Design Report • Environmental Masterplan Drawings • Noise Contour Maps • Noise and Vibration ES Chapter and maps for existing and proposed noise barriers

Date	Form of Contact	Summary
27 August 2015	Email from Earley Town Council to Highways England	Requesting a time frame for receipt of the draft SoCG, if the local authority referred to is Earley Town Council and asking what the role the Town Council has in the process thereafter
28 August 2015	Email response from Highways England to email dated 28 August 2015	Confirmed that the SoCG was in the process of being drafted, that the local authority referred to is Earley Town Council, and set out the authority's involvement in the SoCG process. Links to The Planning Inspectorate's 'Rule 6' letter which sets out their requirements and timescales. Information on local authorities' invitation by the Planning Inspectorate to prepare and submit Local Impact Statements and links also provided
28 August 2015	Further email discussion between Earley Town Council and Highways England regarding the preparation and content of SoCGs	Highways England explained how many SoCGs were being prepared (18) and the purpose of each. It was further explained that Earley Town Council's SoCG would only cover issues relating to Earley Town Council. Highways England were thanked for the helpful and detailed replies

2.2 It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key meetings, workshops and consultation undertaken between (1) Highways England and (2) Earley Town Council in relation to the issues addressed in this SoCG.

3 Matters Agreed

3.1 Impact on Noise

3.2 Earley Town Council was initially concerned that the Scheme might have significant adverse impacts in relation to noise within its area. Highways England has sought to address these concerns throughout the consultation period (as detailed in the tables in Section 2 of this SoCG) and it is now agreed that the Scheme will not produce any significant adverse impacts in relation to noise within the Earley area for the following reasons.

3.3 The noise mitigation strategy for the Scheme comprises the retention of existing noise barriers (or replacement like-for-like if in poor condition), a number of additional noise barriers, and the provision of a low-noise surfacing across all lanes along the complete Scheme as set out in paragraph 12.2.49 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1). That means for the Earley Town Council area between junctions 11 and 10, the existing noise barriers will be retained, two additional noise barriers are proposed to the eastbound and westbound carriageways over the Mill Lane Underbridge, and the M4 will be surfaced with low-noise surfacing. The noise model predicts negligible or minor¹ decreases in noise levels in the area in the Opening Year (2022) as a consequence of the proposed mitigation compared to the Do Minimum (without Scheme).

3.4 The existing and additional noise barriers are shown on Drawing 12.2, Sheets 3, 4 and 5 (Application Document Reference 6.2), and are detailed in Appendix 12.1 and Appendix 12.2 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.3). The calculated changes in noise levels for the Do Something and Do Minimum in the Opening Year (2022) in the Earley Town Council area are shown in Drawing 12.4, Sheets 3, 4, and 5 in the ES (Application Document Reference 6.2).

3.5 It is agreed that, where it is necessary to remove barriers during construction, residents would be advised in advance and where practicable temporary barriers would be provided. The Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Appendix 4.2A of the ES) (Application Document Reference 6.3) paragraph 12.3.1 includes the commitment to prepare "*details and locations of all site hoardings, screens or bunds that will ... provide acoustic screening during construction*". The

¹ The terms 'negligible' and 'minor' are defined in Tables 12.7 and 12.8 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1)

contractor will be required to adopt, develop in consultation with the local authorities (including Earley Town Council), and implement the Construction Environmental Management Plan as explained in the paragraphs 2.2.4 to 2.2.8 of the Outline Environmental Management Plan (Appendix 4.2 of the ES) (Application Document Reference 6.3) and as required under Schedule 2, Clause 8 of the Draft DCO (Application Document Reference 3.1).

~~3.6 Scheme Design and Operation~~

~~3.7 Earley Town Council initially sought additional information or clarification in relation to design and operation of the Scheme and Highways England pointed out that much information was already provided and, through consultation, has highlighted this information to Earley Town Council. It is now agreed that adequate information on the Scheme design is provided in Chapter 4 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1), the Scheme Plan Drawings 4.1 (Application Document Reference 6.2), and Section 6 of the Engineering and Design Report (Application Document Reference 7.3). The proposed works between junctions 11 and 10 south of Earley are described in Section 4.4 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1) and illustrated on the Scheme Plan Drawings Sheets 10 to 19 (Application Document Reference 6.2).~~

~~3.8 It is also agreed that further adequate information on how the Scheme will operate is provided in Section 4.13 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1) and in Chapter 9 of the Engineering and Design Report (Application Document Reference 7.3).~~

~~3.9 For the above reasons Earley Town Council is no longer seeking clarification on the design and operation of the Scheme.~~

3.10 Construction

3.11 Earley Town Council initially sought additional information or clarification in relation to the construction of the Scheme and Highways England pointed out that much information was already provided in the application, in particular in Section 4 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1), the Engineering and Design Report (Application Document Reference 7.3) and the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Application Document Reference 6.3). Highway England has, through consultation, highlighted this information to Earley Town Council. It is now agreed that adequate information has been provided including the following:

- 3.12 An indicative construction programme is presented in Appendix 4.1 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.3). This programme will be developed by the contractor during detailed design in consultation with the engineering design team.
- 3.13 The Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Appendix 4.2A of the ES) (Application Document Reference 6.3) sets out the procedures for managing construction-related impacts. The contractor will adopt the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, develop it in consultation with the local authorities (including Earley Town Council), and implement the Plan throughout the construction period. The Plan covers a wide range of issues including working hours, construction traffic, activities at construction compounds and topic specific mitigation measures. Implementation of the Construction Environmental Management Plan is secured pursuant to Schedule 2, Clause 8 of the Draft DCO (Application Document Reference 3.1).
- 3.14 Highways England will provide a 24 hour information line, with provision for information to be cascaded in the event of over-running works, as explained in paragraph 4.3.1 of the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Application Document Reference 6.3).
- 3.15 For the above reasons Earley Town Council is no longer seeking clarification on construction matters.
- 3.16 Impacts on Drainage
- 3.17 Earley Town Council initially sought additional information or clarification in relation to the impacts on drainage of the Scheme and Highways England pointed out that much information was already provided and, through consultation, has highlighted this information. It is now agreed that adequate information has been provided including the following:
- 3.18 The general proposals for the drainage design are described in paragraphs 4.2.4 (b), 4.2.5 (c) and 15.2.4 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1), paragraphs 6.3.32 to 6.3.29 of the Engineering and Design Report (Application Document Reference 7.3), and in the Drainage Strategy Report (Application Document Reference 7.5). The drainage strategy is to provide attenuation within the drainage system, so that the maximum discharge rates are not increased, as described in paragraph 6.3.38 of the Engineering and Design Report (Application Document Reference 7.3). Balancing ponds will not be provided as part of the Scheme as these

are not considered necessary, given that the increase in impermeable area is small and restricted to the new Emergency Refuge Areas (“ERAs”) and the additional drainage will be temporarily stored within the drainage system prior to discharge to the receiving waters, as described in paragraph 15.2.4 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1).

3.19 For this reason Earley Town Council is no longer seeking clarification on the impacts of the Scheme on drainage.

3.20 Impact on Landscape

3.21 Earley Town Council initially sought additional information or clarification in relation to the impacts on landscape of the Scheme and Highways England pointed out that much information was already provided and, through consultation, has highlighted this information. It is now agreed that adequate information has been provided including the following:

3.22 The Scheme will require some clearance of vegetation within the highway boundary, which is shown in the Engineering and Design Report, Annex A-2, Vegetation Clearance Plans (Application Document Reference 7.4). Sheets 6 to 9 show that short sections of vegetation will be removed, mostly to accommodate new ERAs or gantries. These will be replanted as illustrated in the Engineering and Design Report, Annex A-1, Environmental Masterplan Sheets 6 to 9 (Application Document Reference 7.4). The detailed planting schemes will be developed during detailed design and implemented in accordance with the landscaping scheme, which is secured under Schedule 2, Clause 9 of the Draft DCO (Application Document Reference 3.1)

3.23 The impact of the Scheme on views between junctions 11 and 10 is summarised in Section 8.6 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1) and illustrated on the Visual Effects Drawing 8.2 Sheets 3 to 5 (Application Document Reference 6.2). The Zone of Visual Influence shows that views are restricted to areas close to the motorway, so Earley would be unaffected by the Scheme, with residential properties near the motorway experiencing a neutral to slight adverse impact on Scheme opening (2022).

3.24 For these reasons Earley Town Council is no longer seeking clarification on the impacts of the Scheme on landscape.

3.25 Impact on Air Quality

3.26 Earley Town Council initially sought additional information or clarification in relation to the impacts on air quality of the Scheme and Highways England pointed out that much information was already provided and, through consultation, has highlighted this information. It is now agreed that adequate information has been provided, including a detailed air quality assessment which is reported in Chapter 6 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1) and illustrated in Drawings 6.3 to 6.4 (including insets) (Application Document Reference 6.2).

3.27 The air quality assessment concludes that overall there will be no significant effects of the Scheme on air quality, as summarised in Table 6.23 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1). Within Earley Town Council's jurisdiction, the air quality modelling indicates that there will be an imperceptible to small increase in NO₂ concentrations with the Scheme in place, but all receptors are predicted to be below the annual average objective value, therefore experiencing a negligible change in air quality. It is anticipated that exceedances of the 1-hour average objective are unlikely on this link between junctions 11 and 10 as annual average concentrations at all sensitive receptors are less than 60 µg/m³. This is described in paragraph 6.6.12 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1) and illustrated on Drawings 6.4 and 6.4b (Application Document Reference 6.2). It is agreed that the air quality modelling results indicate that air quality is unlikely to be adversely affected by the Scheme in the Earley area.

3.28 Impact on Trunk Roads

3.29 Earley Town Council initially sought additional information or clarification in relation to the impacts on trunk roads of the Scheme and Highways England pointed out that much information was already provided and, through consultation, has highlighted this information. It is now agreed that adequate information has been provided including the following:

3.30 A large number of major projects are taking place in the motorway corridor and Earley Town Council is concerned about the cumulative impacts on the local community and the road network. The cumulative effects of committed developments have been assessed in Chapter 16 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1), the location of committed developments within 1km of the Scheme is shown in Drawing 16.1 Sheets 3 to 5 (Application Document Reference 6.2), and a list of developments included in the assessment is provided in Appendices 16.1 and 16.2 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.3). Paragraph 16.5.5 of the ES (Application

Document Reference 6.1) concludes that slight adverse cumulative effects are anticipated during the construction of the Scheme in relation to Materials and Effects on All Travellers, as set out at Table 16.4 of the ES (Application Document Reference 6.1). However, overall it is predicted that the construction and operation of the Scheme will not lead to overall significant cumulative effects for any of the topic chapters.

- 3.31 One of the schemes mentioned by Earley Town Council is the new Eastern Relief Road ("ERR") over the M4 and to the east of Shinfield to provide access to the proposed University of Reading Science and Innovation Park. The scheme is under construction and due to open in June 2016. The impact of the ERR on future traffic flows was not included in the traffic modelling, although the University campus plans and the technology park were included in the forecast development traffic. Highways England does not believe that the ERR will have a significant impact on the traffic forecasts for the M4 itself, although it will affect local movements in the vicinity of junction 11. Highways England advised Earley Town Council that they are liaising with Reading University about this bridge.
- 3.32 Highways England is not required to take into account the impact of a third runway at Heathrow Airport, which is still subject to uncertainty. Should a third runway go ahead, the promoters of the airport expansion would be required to assess the cumulative impact of the third runway on the M4 Motorway (Junctions 3 to 12) (Smart Motorway) scheme and any other major developments as part of their own DCO application for planning permission.
- 3.33 It is now agreed that the Scheme will not produce significant negative impacts upon the trunk roads within the Earley area.
- 3.34 DCO Requirements
- 3.35 Earley Town Council has reviewed the draft requirements in Schedule 2 to the draft DCO and agrees that they are appropriate to secure the mitigation and other matters to be addressed in that Schedule.

4 Matters Not Agreed

4.1 ~~There are no matters that are not agreed.~~

Earley Town Council is not in a position to agree Section 3.6 'Scheme Design and Operation'. Members of Earley Town Council are concerned that the information in the Environmental Statement did not necessarily relate to the M4 and there were concerns that the risk assessments/safety information were not based on the same circumstances, e.g. in the case of the M42, use of the hard should as a driving lane was closely controlled, which, it was understood, would not be the case on the M4.