

Charlton Road, Charlton Village, Average Speed Camera Scheme Briefing Note December 2018

Which stretch of road will the average speed cameras be implemented on?



The picture above gives an idea of how the new installation will look at the northern end of the village.

There is an existing “Gatso” brand wet film spot speed camera positioned on the eastern side of Charlton Road opposite the junction with Queen Mary Road (to the north of the village centre) that provides enforcement in the southbound direction. The deterrent effect of the fixed camera has been supplemented by a vehicle activated sign positioned at the southern end of the village opposite house number 153, to face northbound traffic. The sign illuminates to remind drivers of the speed limit if they are approaching too fast. The aim of the combination of camera and vehicle activated sign was to encourage compliance with the speed limit along the whole route.

The “Gatso” camera will be replaced with an average speed camera system that will encourage lower speeds throughout the whole length in both directions (rather than just in the immediate vicinity of the old “Gatso” camera in the southbound direction). The average speed cameras will be positioned on the entry and exit to the link that will record the entry and exit times for each vehicle from which the average speed can be calculated. The cameras will be yellow so as to be visible and will be mounted on steel columns. Additional infrared lighting units will be installed on adjacent lamp columns to assist with image quality at night time. “Average Speed Check” signing will be provided to warn drivers of the presence of enforcement. The existing “Gatso” camera and vehicle activated sign will be removed when the average speed cameras are installed.

When will the cameras “go live”?

It is intended that the cameras will be installed in the first quarter of 2019, and then will “go live” shortly afterwards.

Why are we upgrading safety camera sites?

The existing “Gatso” brand safety camera was very effective in reducing road casualties, but the technology is becoming obsolete. The old “Gatso” cameras used traditional “wet” camera film which has to be changed regularly and then developed for offence images to be viewed. The supplier has advised that the technology is now so old that they can no longer guarantee that spare parts will still be available. Replacement of the existing “Gatso” cameras will maintain the reduction in casualties that has been achieved at sites that had previously suffered a history of collisions. New improved camera technology such as average speed cameras also provide the opportunity to enhance the enforcement deterrent, and achieve even greater compliance with the speed limit over a longer length of road, leading to an even greater reduction in casualties.

How do average speed cameras work?



Average speed cameras work by reading vehicle number plates at the start and end point of a stretch of road and then calculating the average speed from the time taken to travel the distance between the cameras. Because of the need to place cameras at entry and exit points the use of average speed cameras have more frequently been used on major roads where the number of entry and exit points is small.

Within Great Britain national policy is to provide visible enforcement to act as a deterrent. Therefore average speed cameras are always painted bright yellow, are positioned to be visible, and the enforcement zones are always well signed with “Average speed check” warning signing.

How effective are they?

The most comprehensive research into the effectiveness of average speed cameras was published by the RAC Foundation in September 2016¹. There were a total of 51 sites commissioned and installed between 2000 and 2015, with 12 of those installed in 2015 alone. For this research 25 permanent average speed camera sites were analysed in detail covering 294 km of road. The main finding was thus:

“On average, the permanent Average Speed Camera sites analysed saw reductions in injury collisions, especially those of a higher severity. Fatal and serious collisions fell, by 25-46% while personal injury collisions fell, by 9-22%”.

Average speed cameras are more effective than spot speed cameras because they encourage greater compliance with the speed limit over a longer stretch of road, in both directions, rather than just in the vicinity of a spot speed camera. Anecdotally they are reported as being preferred by motorists too, as they are considered fairer. This is because there is less likelihood of being issued with a penalty due to a momentary lapse, and it is not possible to slow down and then speed back up again as can be the case with a spot speed camera.

Average speed cameras also improve journey time reliability by reducing traffic collisions that can cause disruption to the network. They also help to smooth traffic flow and reduce the amount of pollution resulting from frequent deceleration and acceleration.

¹ Owen, Ursachi and Allsop (2016) Effectiveness of Average Speed Cameras in Great Britain, RAC Foundation, Retrieved 23 January 2017 from http://www.racfoundation.org/assets/rac_foundation/content/downloadables/Average_speed_camera_effectiveness_Owen_Ursachi_Allsop_September_2016.pdf

Will the upgrade result in more penalties being issued?

No, not necessarily. The overall number of penalties being issued is limited by the capacity of the administration office to process offences. The aim is not to issue more penalties, instead the aim is to deter motorists from speeding and jumping red lights at locations that had previously suffered a history of collisions. If however drivers ignore the warnings of enforcement and continue to commit offences, then they risk the possibility of being issued with a penalty.

Who is paying for the upgrade?

The cost of the replacement is being funded via the police using money specifically for upgrading safety cameras. The ongoing operating costs of safety camera enforcement is now fully self-funding at no cost to the police or county council. This is because all costs are recovered from part of the fee charged to offenders for attending diversionary courses (such as speed awareness courses) instead of paying the usual £100 fine and 3 penalty points. Part of this money is also reinvested in improving road safety through the Drive SMART Partnership.

Who is responsible for safety (speed and red light) cameras in Surrey?

Surrey police are responsible for the provision of enforcement, for processing speed and red light offences and offering diversionary courses such as speed awareness courses in place of the usual £100 fine and 3 penalty points. Surrey County Council install and maintain the road side camera infrastructure and associated signing and lining on county council roads, and monitor the speed and casualty reduction success at camera sites.

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