

Document 24

'Frequently asked Questions'
relating to the siting of cameras at
the Holes Bay site.

FAQ's – A350 Holes Bay, Poole

1. WHAT ARE SPEED ON GREEN CAMERAS?

Speed on Green safety cameras are positioned at traffic light junctions. As well as monitoring and enforcing non compliance with a red signal, they will also record speeding offences when vehicles travel in excess of the speed limit passing through the traffic lights. Speed on Green Cameras are road enforcement tools approved by the Home Office for use (for camera specification please contact the Home Office). Speed on Green Cameras detect vehicles travelling above the speed thresholds (as set by Chief Constables), they do not detect other Traffic Offences.

2. WHY ARE SPEED ON GREEN CAMERAS BEING USED AT HOLE'S BAY?

Speed on Green safety cameras were introduced as one of the measures used in Dorset to prevent serious and fatal collisions in the county. They help to ensure that drivers abide with the legal speed limit and drive at appropriate speeds for busy traffic light junctions.

During the test period for the Speed on Green safety camera the number of vehicles activating the camera was recorded (not average speed but number of activations at speed above a set threshold).

Once the safety camera had been heavily publicised as "going live" the same range of data was recorded.

As the test was a specific measurable period (rather than our live camera statistics) I can inform you of the following examples:

At the speed of 39 mph the average number of vehicles activating the camera during the testing period was 40.83. On going live, over the same period as the testing period, the average number of vehicles exceeding the limit at 39 mph dropped to 3.5.

At the speed of 40 mph the average number of vehicles activating the camera during the testing period was 36.83. On going live, over the same period as the testing period, the average number of vehicles exceeding the limit at 40 mph dropped to 19.75.

At the speed of 41 mph the average number of vehicles activating the camera during the testing period was 25.00. On going live, over the same period as the testing period, the average number of vehicles exceeding the limit at 41 mph dropped to 17.50.

Similar comparisons were carried out on all levels of speeds that activated the safety camera during the test and upon going live - comparing the speed before and after going live shows that there was a reduction of vehicles exceeding limits across all the speed ranges of an average of 55.89%

From 1 April 2007 the funding for Safety Camera Partnerships changed from hypothecation to grant funding via the Local Transport Plan (LTP), cameras are now not limited to only being placed at sites AFTER collision has taken place, but additionally can be placed where there are clear safety issues created by drivers exceeding limits and where there are obvious community concerns – allowing placement of cameras to be more PROACTIVE NOT REACTIVE to prevent collision injuries and maintain public safety.

It should be noted that numerous community complaints and speed concerns had been received by members of the public concerning Hole's Bay prior to the installation of the cameras. The majority of these complaints are by email so it is not possible to identify the address of the sender other than from the text stating that they have travelled along A350 Hole's Bay and witnessed vehicles travelling at excessive speeds or driving inconsiderately.

3. WHAT IS THE SPEED LIMIT AT HOLE'S BAY?

The section of Holes Bay Road, constructed from the north of the Sterte Road junction, had a National Speed Limit applied to it from when it was opened in May 1998.

The section of Holes Bay Road between the Sterte Road junction and Hunger Hill Roundabout was completed in October 1994. As this road was built roughly on the original line of Sterte Road (and this stretch was renamed as Holes Bay Road) it automatically took on restricted road status (i.e. 30mph) at this stage.

The 30mph terminal point was then moved 200m north of the Sterte Road junction in June 1999 (where it currently stands), but the remaining section of Holes Bay Road stayed at National Speed Limit until it was reduced to 50mph in December 2002.

The speed limit on the 30mph section of Holes Bay Road was reviewed and confirmed as being correct and appropriate in accordance with the speed limit review guidance in January 2008.

Contrary to recent publications by anti-camera websites and individuals the speed limit set is approved by partners at Poole council. It should be noted that the authorisation of the speed limits and the placement of speed limit signs are the responsibility of the Highway's Agency. The placements of the signs are routinely checked by the DSCP operators when camera films are changed. Thus when camera operators visited the site to change films at 12.51pm on Thursday 18 March 2010 and it was noted that the speed limit signs had been removed; no offences were prosecuted at that site until all signage was replaced.

4. WHEN DID ENFORCEMENT START AT HOLE'S BAY?

Media releases stated that enforcement at Hole's Bay would start on 1 July 2009, however, the decision was made by partners not to commence the

prosecution process immediately. The view was taken to see whether the "deterrent" of the camera going live and a full PR campaign would have any positive effect on driver behaviour – to the disappointment of the partners those drivers that considered they could, continue to break the law and drive at speed, thus the camera went "live" with processing offences on 22 November 2009.

The DSCP in relation to Hole's Bay, and indeed as are all partners, are committed to a mixed attack on speeding by use of Education, Engineering and Enforcement. In the issue of Hole's Bay the camera was reviewed as a last resort to drive down speeds. It is worth noting that before the speed on green camera was in place it was still an offence to drive in a 30 mph zone in excess of 30 mph.

5. IS THE SPEED LIMIT AT HOLE'S BAY CORRECT?

The DSCP do not set speed limits but carry out speed enforcement by use of type approved equipment (Fixed, Mobile, Red Light and Speed on Green).

Where speed limits have already been approved by our partners and there is either a collision history or community concern speed complaints have been received (as at Hole's Bay) we are duty bound to take into account the whole perspective not just one opinion – as stated above whether a camera is in place or not, a speed limit, so long as it is properly signed is the law, not an option.

6. AT WHAT SPEED WILL I BE PROSECUTED AT HOLE'S BAY?

All cameras, including the speed on green camera will activate in line with guidance issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) who advise to prosecute for speeds in excess of the signed limit + 10% + 2. If a vehicle passes a camera whilst exceeding the threshold (sometimes called trigger speeds) for speed cameras, it will activate.

It should be noted that thresholds apply to each speed limit area equally and recent publications from offenders stating they have been prosecuted for speeds of 33 or 34 mph at Hole's Bay, Poole are incorrect (minimum speed before a camera would activate in a 30 mph zone would be in excess of $30 + 10\% + 2 = 35$).

Offenders exceeding the threshold at Hole's Bay, Poole may be offered an education option of attendance at a Driver Awareness Scheme (DAS) course, a Fixed Penalty (£60 fine plus 3 points) or a court hearing. It is an offender's right to elect a court hearing if they feel there are mitigating circumstances but it should be noted the DSCP would not process cases to court unless the evidence was robust (signage in place, camera type approved, etc). Confirmation has just been received that the first court case heard in relation to Hole's Bay resulted in a fine, points & costs awarded against the offender. You are always advised to seek independent legal advice.

7. WILL I BE CAUGHT TRAVELLING BOTH NORTH & SOUTH AT HOLES BAY IF I'M SPEEDING?

As stated at paragraph 4 above, the going "live" of any camera is publicised and on occasion it may continue to monitor offences to ascertain the "deterrent" factor before prosecutions take place. Currently at Hole's Bay the south bound camera is prosecuting traffic exceeding the threshold heading into Poole whilst the north bound camera is monitoring the speed of vehicles exiting Poole. Cameras can be switched from "prosecuting" to "monitoring" and "acting as a deterrent" dependent on traffic volumes compared to the number of drivers committing offences.

8. IS HOLE'S BAY A "GREED ON GREEN" CAMERA?

No, this camera is now only a red light enforcement camera. Contrary to recent publications, if a fine is paid by an offender for exceeding the speed threshold at Hole's Bay or any other camera site the money goes to the Treasury Consolidated Fund, the fine paid does not and never has gone to the DSCP or the relevant council.

Statistics on Notices of Intended Prosecution (NIPs) issued at Hole's Bay (SOUTH BOUND CAMERA) from beginning the prosecution process on 22 November 2009 to 31 March 2010 show 7,373 drivers exceeded the threshold out of an estimated 2.6 Million vehicle movements through the site (130 days of enforcement with 20,000 vehicle movements per day) – this equates to 0.28% of driver committing offences or more importantly 99.72% of drivers obeying the speed limits. It is also of interest to note that out of all those drivers that exceeded the threshold at Hole's Bay from the beginning of the prosecution process (7,373), less than 400 have lodged any sort of complaint about being prosecuted for breaking the law (at the most this would equate to 5%). Thus this could be expressed as 5% of 0.28% breaking the law out of the 2.6 million vehicle movements or 0.015% of those travelling along Hole's Bay have complained, most complaining that they were caught breaking the law.