

Press release: Homes England Appoints Specialists to Three National Frameworks

Specialists appointed to three new frameworks which will enable procurement of up to £30m of professional technical services to support housing delivery.

Press release: Giant crash barrier lorries rolled out

The 16-tonne mobile barriers are among the latest innovations demonstrating Highways England's commitment to investing in new technology to improve safety and minimise disruption caused by roadworks and incidents.

In collaboration with Kier, the mobile barriers have been brought over from the USA and launched in the West Midlands, protecting people at work sites and cutting delays by reducing the number of cones needed.

If struck from the side, the barriers absorb the impact from a moving vehicle while a lorry-mounted crash cushion gives further protection at the rear. The mobile barriers act as a physical protection for both road workers and motorists.

As well as improving safety, the roadworks themselves take less time to complete as fewer cones and signs have to be put out.

Meanwhile, another innovation that has been put to use in the West Midlands are four new Solar CCTV Systems (SICS).

Designed and built for Highways England, the mobile CCTV systems can be easily deployed to locations to provide surveillance and feed back information about traffic flows to the control room.

Action can then be taken, such as traffic officers deployed or speed limits lowered, to create smoother journeys.

One of the systems is in use at junction 6 of the M42, near to Birmingham Airport, where people were previously frustrated by congestion and delays. Organisations can now access the information from this camera and plan their journeys and business accordingly.

The cameras offer visibility at sites where a permanent camera is not

necessary, such as during roadworks.

Highways England is investing £150 million in innovation to ensure it remains at the forefront of making England's motorways and major A roads dependable, durable and safe.

Martin Bolt, who is heading up the innovation projects for Highways England, said

The mobile barriers, which are being used for the first time in Europe, are an innovative way of looking at how we can increase protection for road workers.

And they're helping customers too, because the faster we can get the work safely done the better people's journeys will be.

Together with our partners we have are demonstrating that we can make great improvements both to people's journeys and communities and the environment around our network.

Dave Wright, executive director for Kier Highways, commented:

As a company we're committed to working with our partners to ensure we continuously develop technology that improves safety on the road for both road workers and users. We're hugely passionate about this, and our improvements team is constantly looking at ways to innovate and pioneer new products that go towards this aim.

Our main priority is to make sure everyone gets home safely at the end of the day and we look forward to expanding mobile barrier across our other UK contracts.

As part of a commitment to innovation, Highways England has been running two competitions to encourage the UK's most creative minds to come up with fresh ideas to revolutionise roads and driving.

It has set aside £20 million and invited ground-breaking entries which will help develop digital roads – connected vehicles and infrastructure, design and construction that reduces cost and improves safety, better and more predictable journey times – and to improve air quality. The closure date for entries was Wednesday 8 May 2019.

Meanwhile last week Highways England announced that self-driving trucks which could help speed up roadworks are being tested for the first time in England.

The dump trucks, which move huge amounts of earth, provide the potential to work around the clock, so could help reduce the length of time roadworks are on the ground. And by being autonomous they reduce the risk of road workers being involved in incidents on site.

Highways England has committed £150,000 from its innovation designated fund into the dump truck trial on the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: Giant crash barrier lorries rolled out](#)

Two giant 70ft-long crash barrier lorries originally designed for military use to protect against roadside bombs are now keeping road workers and motorists safe.

[Press release: Highways England pours £4 million into canal restoration scheme](#)

In the late 1960s the construction of a motorway and a roundabout in Gloucestershire meant the Stroudwater Navigation Canal was effectively split in two.

Since 1972, volunteers from the Cotswold Canals Trust have been working to restore derelict sections of the canal route.

And now Highways England, the company responsible for managing and maintaining England's major A roads and motorways, is contributing funding towards the restoration of the final 'missing mile'.

Sean Walsh, route manager for Highways England, said:

We are delighted to support this project which will restore the

missing mile to the nation's inland waterway network.

When the work is finished there will not only be a restored canal, but also a great walking and cycling route, and environmental improvements, all of which will attract more visitors to the area, and so help the local economy.

Our designated funds programme was developed so that we can invest in improvement projects like this, which go beyond traditional road building and maintenance and have a positive impact on people and communities, as well as protecting cultural heritage and leaving a positive legacy for future generations.

Jim White, Chair of Cotswold Canals Trust, welcomed the Highways England funding. He said:

The Highways England award is extremely welcome and will significantly progress the overall project by bringing forward several of the major engineering tasks in the programme.

The project, led by the Cotswolds Canals Trust and involving Stroud District Council, will restore the waterway, locks, bridges and wetlands west of Stonehouse in Gloucestershire that were lost when the M5 and a roundabout linking the A38 and A419 were built more than 50 years ago.

The work will restore historic features near to junction 13 of the M5 including new bridges and a new lock and improve more than 30 hectares of wildlife habitats.

The project is also part of the Cotswold Canals Trust's bigger project, which aims to restore the Cotswold canals as a navigable route from the River Severn to the River Thames.

This was awarded a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant last year to prepare surveys, detailed designs, costings and plans.

The Highways England funding comes from one of the company's ring fenced pots of money worth £675 million, which enable it to provide environmental, social and economic benefits to the people, communities and businesses who live and work alongside its road network.

There are designated funds to support the environment, air quality, growth and housing, innovation, and cycling, safety and integration, with £225 million dedicated to environmental improvements.

Earlier this year, Highways England awarded £27 million towards a wide range of initiatives including a variety of new cycle paths, habitat and heritage projects in Cornwall.

The funding will help walkers and cyclists travel safely by creating a

network linking Truro with St Agnes, Perranporth and Newquay.

It will also help restore internationally rare heathland habitat and Bronze Age barrows, reduce flooding and water quality issues, and restore the Grade II registered Chyverton Park.

For more information visit [Highways England Designated Funds](#).

You can also visit our specific [A30 Designated Funds](#) page.

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[Press release: Highways England pours £4 million into canal restoration scheme](#)

A mile-long stretch of canal that disappeared more than half a century ago is a step closer to being restored, thanks to £4 million of funding from Highways England.