

Press release: Project 'setts' up new home for badgers near M6

For badgers living in undergrowth near the M6 in Coventry it was a case of location, location, location when we started work on a major motorway upgrade.

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The species is protected by law, and the project team needed to ensure the animals could be relocated to new accommodation so that work could start on the vital upgrade, which will improve journeys for the 120,000 drivers who use this busy route every day.

So specialist teams set about designing and building a new badger sett from scratch. The result was a new home spanning 10 metres and comprising four nesting chambers and connecting pipes. The new sett is dug into the ground to replicate, as far as possible, typical excavations associated with badgers.

Smart motorway project sponsor Peter Smith said:

It's really important that as we work to improve people's journeys, we also protect the environment. We knew from our extensive surveys that we had a family of badgers living next to the motorway and, as a protected species, we needed to relocate the animals with as little distress as possible.

As with any scheme, we worked closely with specialist consultants to build the animals a new habitat that would replicate their former surroundings. We do everything we can to ensure the local environment is protected throughout the programme of works. The badgers have settled in well to their new home and we're pleased to be able to play a part in protecting wildlife near the major road network of England.

The Road Investment Strategy (RIS) states that by 2020 Highways England must reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity, and by 2040 it must deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

The RIS also includes a ring-fenced environment fund of some £300 million to

cover the period of 2015 to 2020, which includes funds for biodiversity projects.

Elsewhere, a new otter fence has been installed on the A64 in Yorkshire to prevent the animals crossing the road which could result in incidents and delays.

We've also joined forces with Stover Country Park and Devon County Council to deliver a giant reedbed filter system which will help to keep water clean at Stover Lake and provide valuable habitat for wildlife. The sustainable scheme, also supported by Natural England, is designed to capture and filter water run-off from the A38, nearby industrial sites and farmland before it enters the lake.

Work on the M6 motorway upgrade is set to be completed by March 2020.

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.

[News story: T Level Funding Consultation Launched](#)

Colleges, schools and post-16 providers are being encouraged to have their say on how new T Levels will be funded

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Colleges, schools and post-16 providers are being encouraged to have their say on how new T Levels – a once in a generation opportunity to put technical education on a par with our world class A Levels – are funded through a [three month consultation launched today](#), Tuesday 27th November.

T Levels will be the technical equivalent of A Levels combining classroom theory, practical learning and an industry placement. The first T Level courses in education & childcare, construction and digital will be taught in over 50 further education and post-16 providers from September 2020. A further 22 courses will be rolled-out from 2021 onwards covering sectors such as finance & accounting, engineering & manufacturing, and creative & design.

T Levels are being developed with the industries who will benefit from the skills these qualification will provide. We are working with more than 200 businesses, including Fujitsu, Skanska, and GlaxoSmithKline, to help design the course content to make sure young people taking T Levels are equipped with the knowledge and skills that employers value.

T Levels will be backed by an additional half a billion pounds of investment every year when the new qualifications are fully rolled out. The consultation sets out how the Government intends to distribute the increased funding, including:

- Recognition that T Levels will be larger, more stretching programmes and will therefore attract more funding than existing study programmes.
- Proposals for different rates of funding for different T Levels to reflect variations in size.
- Confirmation that additional funding will be provided to support T Level students who have not yet met the minimum English and Maths requirement so they can continue to gain these vital skills.
- Details of how funding will be allocated to help providers set up the industry placements which will be a key element of the new T Level programmes
- Providing extra funding for T Level students who are aged 18 to ensure that they can have the hours that are needed for larger fixed T Level programmes

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton said:

Our A Level qualifications are recognised as some of the best in the world, it is now time to deliver the same for technical education. T Levels are central to that.

These courses have been designed with leading employers so we know that they will not just meet the needs of industry but ensure students are learning the skills and getting the experience needed to land a great job in a skilled profession, go onto a higher level apprenticeship or maybe university.

Now is the opportunity for the further education providers who will be on the ground delivering these courses to have their say. I want them to help us shape this system. Their view is critical so that we make sure T Levels give young people the technical skills they need and our economy the workforce it needs

The Government also recently announced an extra [£38 million to support the](#)

[first T Level providers to invest in high quality equipment and facilities](#). As well as this, the Government is investing £20 million to support the further education sector to prepare for new T Levels. This includes the [£5 million Taking Teaching Further programme](#), which aims to attract more industry professionals to work in the sector, and the [£8 million T Level Professional Development offer](#) to help teachers and staff prepare for the roll-out of the new qualifications.

Speech: Margot James' speech at the Government Innovation Conference

The role of Data in creating opportunities for AI in the UK