

Press release: New Operation Stack options set out

Measures that will help improve the road network's resilience when there are interruptions to services across the English Channel are being set out by Highways England today (Wednesday 15 November).

The steps include a fresh look at options for holding large numbers of lorries at a site near the M20, and an interim solution that would hold freight traffic on the M20 while keeping the motorway open in both directions for other vehicles.

They follow the Government's announcement today that it has withdrawn its July 2016 decision to approve plans for a lorry area at Stanford West.

Highways England project director John Kerner said:

The disruption that people in Kent suffered in summer 2015 underlines the need for long term improvements to how traffic is managed when cross-channel services are interrupted.

Improvements at the port, and changes we have made to traffic management on the A20 near Dover, have delivered real improvements and have also helped prevent Operation Stack from being implemented. Along with our partners we are better prepared than ever, but a better plan for dealing with more widespread disruption is still needed.

Now that the Government has withdrawn the decision to build a lorry area at Stanford West, we have been asked by the Transport Secretary to immediately develop both an interim and a permanent solution to reduce the local traffic impacts if there is cross-channel disruption.

Highways England is committed to delivering the Government's aim of finding a solution that makes Operation Stack less disruptive for people and businesses in Kent, and the improvements we are taking forward will help to do just that.

Highways England have developed a number of options that, while continuing to hold HGVs on the M20, would allow non-port traffic to continue to travel in both directions reducing the levels of traffic disruption seen in Operation Stack. This could, for example, be through holding HGVs in the centre of the motorway rather than on the coastbound carriageway. Different technologies ranging from steel barriers to movable barrier systems could be deployed to deliver these solutions.

A decision on the interim option being taken forward will be made in early

2018, with delivery complete by March 2019.

The Transport Secretary has also tasked Highways England with starting the process to develop a permanent alternative to Operation Stack, incorporating a lorry park, through the normal planning process, including a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

Highways England is currently reviewing the scope, scale and location of potential solutions. The work will take into account changes since the original concept of the lorry park was promoted, in particular the UK's exit from the European Union but also the need for 'business as usual' lorry parking in Kent. Specific investment decisions on both the longer-term and interim solutions will be subject to normal considerations of affordability and value for money. Highways England intends to consult on the options in early 2018 with a view to submitting a planning application in 2019.

The measures announced today build on significant progress that has been made in recent years.

Since the unprecedented deployment of Operation Stack in summer 2015, Highways England has installed new traffic lights and lane control at the end of the A20 dual carriageway on approach to Dover. The arrangements, known as Dover TAP, have helped to prevent Operation Stack being called on at least six occasions. Improvements to holding capacity made in the Port of Dover and at Eurotunnel's Folkestone terminal have also had a positive effect.

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.

[Notice: Yorkshire Water Services Ltd and the Environment Agency: Notice of proposed adaptive management trial](#)

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
 - which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
 - when you need to comment by
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National Statistics: Pesticide usage survey: orchard crops in the United Kingdom, 2016

Report on pesticide usage during the 2015 to 2016 growing season on orchard crops, including:

- dessert apples (Cox and others)
 - culinary apples (Bramley & others)
 - cider apples & perry pears
 - pears
 - plums
 - cherries
 - other orchard crops including nuts
-

News story: Christmas and New Year closures for courts and tribunals 2017

Crown Courts, County Courts and the Royal Courts of Justice will close over the Christmas period on:

- Monday 25 December 2017
- Tuesday 26 December 2017
- Wednesday 27 December 2017
- Monday 1 January 2018

Offices in Scotland will be closed on:

- Monday 25 December 2017
- Tuesday 26 December 2017
- Monday 1 January 2018
- Tuesday 2 January 2018

Some emergency courts may operate over the holiday. Please check before

travelling. See [court and tribunal finder](#) for details.

(Photo of the Royal Courts of Justice by William Warby on [Flickr](#). Used under [Creative Commons](#).)

[Press release: £1.5bn A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon upgrade marks its first year of construction](#)

21 miles of the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon are being upgraded to three lanes in each direction including a brand new 17-mile bypass south of Huntingdon, with four lanes in each direction between Bar Hill and Girton. The project will add additional capacity, boost the local and national economy and cut up to 20 minutes off journeys.

The 2,200 strong construction team is keeping to the project's challenging timetable, with the improvements on track to open to traffic by the end of 2020.

More than a quarter of the project's main construction work has been successfully completed: a total of 3 million hours have been worked, and 2.5 million cubic metres of soil (equivalent to 1,000 Olympic swimming pools) have been moved into position to create foundations for the road and junctions.

34 bridges and structures are being built as part of the scheme including the new 750-metre long River Great Ouse viaduct. One is already open to traffic, and on the others nearly 750 major components have been built. David Bray, A14 project director at Highways England, says:

"This is a huge amount of progress, and we are well on the way to transforming journeys on this vital link between East Anglia and the Midlands, connecting businesses, communities and families.

"The improvements we are delivering between Cambridge and Huntingdon are vital for the local area and for the country's economy. We set out to deliver world leading infrastructure improvements a year ago and this is exactly what we have been doing so far.

"We've been using innovative ways of working to speed up construction such as making our own concrete building parts on-site and using temporary bridges to move construction materials across site without having to use the main roads.

"And we've done all this while looking after the environment alongside the project – we plan to have a positive impact by the time we finish – and

giving local people opportunities to find out more, get involved or get funding for relevant projects.”

The project’s ecology team has already created three of the 18 wildlife habitats which will be built as part of the scheme, covering a total of 271 hectares of new habitat by the time the scheme is completed.

The A14 Community Fund has allocated more than £110,000 to 16 local projects over the past year. Examples include a project to help people who have been out of work for a while to gain skills to get them closer to employment by growing plant plugs and looking after the natural environment locally. Another project seeks to encourage people to create poems and other pieces of creative writing about the A14 as a road within the local community. More than 2,000 people are estimated to benefit from the community fund projects so far.

Some 22 apprentices and 44 graduates have been recruited into the project team and 19 students have done work experience with the team too. The project’s skills team has also attended 80 local career events and visited 30 schools to promote science, technology, engineering and maths and talked to young people about careers in civil engineering.

The archaeology team is also making good progress, with 200 archaeologists working across the scheme currently. More than 25 settlements have been uncovered so far, including Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and Medieval villages. All excavation work will be completed by summer 2018 and people will be able to find out more over the coming months.

And the mobile visitor centre has visited 32 towns or events and welcomed over 2,400 visitors to keep people updated about the scheme and opportunities.

David continues:

“It’s exciting to see the pace of progress on such a big project”

“Every day there is something new to see: new bridge columns, the layout for a new part of the road, a new balancing pond near a future junction – it’s all happening on a giant scale and there will be even more to see over the coming months.”

Plans for next year’s construction schedule include: work starting on the Bar Hill junction and the widening of the Cambridge northern bypass between Histon and Milton; opening the Grafham Road bridge over the A1, the first of the new Girton interchange bridges and the new A1 between Alconbury and Brampton to traffic; and continuing the construction of the bridges for the Swavesey junction, the River Great Ouse viaduct and the bridge over the east coast railway. The completion timings of all these activities are still indicative at this stage and dependent on weather and other factors.

David adds:

“I’d like to take this opportunity to thank all the roads users and local

residents who use or live near the A14 for their patience so far”

“We’re doing our very best to keep disruption to a minimum, which is no small feat when building 21 miles of new road – some of it around a very busy existing road – in record time!”

John Bridge OBE, chief executive of the Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce, comments:

“The biggest barrier to growth and economic success [in Cambridgeshire], is well on the road to being dealt with. The business community is really delighted to see progress at last on the A14 and in particular, the very positive way that the scheme is being developed. Whilst there are some short term challenges which can be expected in a construction scheme of this size, the significant long term benefits will far outweigh any short term inconvenience.”

Overview

- Over a quarter of the way through the project
- Construction compounds and haul roads have been built
- Work to build the new bridges, including the 750m River Great Ouse viaduct, is well underway
- The first side road bridge opened in September 2017, ahead of programme. The bridge (near Wood Green Animal Shelter in Godmanchester) will eventually carry the A1198 over the new A14 bypass
- Excavations on the project’s borrow pits, which provide some of the 10million m³ of material needed to build the road, are ongoing
- The A14 mobile visitor centre has visited 32 towns or events and welcomed over 2400 visitors to keep people updated about the scheme and opportunities
- More than 6 miles of haul roads have been created, removing the need for large lorries to use the road network, and are being used daily by 100 dump trucks
- Nearly 8 miles of narrow lanes have been installed on the A14 and A1, avoiding the need for lane closures during the day and keeping road capacity as it was previously.

Construction

- More than 2,500,000m³ of soil have been moved, a quarter of the total amount needed for the project
- 3,000,000 hours have been worked on the project since the start of construction
- 35,000m³ of concrete has been poured to make bridge parts and road foundations
- Just over 6 miles (10km) of haul road has been built
- 400 pieces of heavy plant, including 100 dump trucks, are used on-site every day
- 1 bridge has been completed and opened to traffic, 570 bridge piles have been installed, 104 bridge piers constructed and 74 bridge beams placed
- Almost 26 of the 70 miles (112km) of utility services (such as gas,

water, broadband) have been diverted away from the route of the new A14

Skills/employment

- The skills team has attended 80 local career events and visited approximately 30 schools to promote science, technology, engineering and maths and talk to young people about careers in civil engineering
- 19 young people have been welcomed in work experience programmes on the project. Further work experience opportunities are planned for Easter and summer 2018
- 22 apprentices and 44 graduates have been recruited
- 17 summer interns have been hosted on the project
- Six people have completed the A14 community fund funded Groundwork programme which aims to get people closer to work

Ecology and environment

- 3 of the 18 wildlife habitats to be built as part of the scheme have been created
- 5 barn owl boxes have been installed, with another 14 to install. All of the 5 boxes installed were used for nesting this year, and 3 of the birds successfully reared chicks
- In the last quarter, 3.2 million litres of water have been saved every month thanks to the efforts the project team is making to work sustainably across the project
- The miles needed to transport concrete have been reduced by having on-site concrete batching plants to make bridge or foundation parts, with the materials produced being used in the foundations and bridges across the scheme
- The project's electricity comes from 100% renewable energy. This means the estimated 5,312,772 kWh of electricity required annually across all three compounds will be generated and provided by renewable sources, e.g. wind and solar
- 6 solar powered lighting towers are being used across the project. This is expected to save more than £23,000 and 97.5 tonnes of CO2 emissions

Legacy

- More than £110,000 out of the £400,000 fund has been allocated to 16 local projects under the A14 Community Fund, with more rounds to come between now and when the project completes. More than 2,000 people are estimated to benefit at some point from the approved projects
- So far, 3 pre-employment projects have been funded to support local unemployed people to access jobs on the scheme
- A heritage strategy has been funded to encourage leisure activities and tourism around the A14 corridor
- The project team is working with Cambridgeshire County Council to deliver additional pedestrian, cycle and equestrian routes around the scheme

Archaeology

- More than 200 archaeologists are working on the scheme
- More than 25 settlements have been uncovered so far, including: Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and Medieval villages
- All excavation areas will be completed by summer 2018

You can see a new fly-through simulation of the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme on the [Highways England YouTube Channel](#).

For the latest information about the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme, including job and training opportunities, [visit the scheme website](#), follow @A14C2H on Twitter and like our [Facebook page](#).

For more information about the A14 Community Fund and to apply, [visit the Cambridge Community Foundation website](#).

To book the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon mobile visitor centre to attend a public event for free, call 0800 270 0114 or email A14CambridgeHuntingdon@highwaysengland.co.uk.

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