

Press release: £7 million flood resilience boost for A66 Cumbrian tourist route

In a boost for commercial drivers, tourists, commuters and other local drivers, Highways England has delivered a series of major engineering improvements, including raising carriageways, near and alongside the lake to improve severe weather resilience. In Highways England project manager Peter Gee said:

This is a significant investment in the county's road network and will provide even greater resilience during severe weather incidents – keeping local people and the economy on the move.

Working to deliver these improvements at five different sites has been a major engineering and project planning challenge – not least in raising the height of the carriageway by almost 1.5 metres in places. We'd like to thank drivers and other local people for their patience over the last 11 months with temporary traffic lights and overnight carriageway closures. We hope they'll appreciate the benefits through many winters to come.

Although the A66 generally copes well with prolonged rainfall it was affected by flooding from the lake during the storms of November 2009 and again in December 2015 and Highways England has been determined to reduce the risk of future disruption.

In all, five sections of the route, a mix of dual carriageway and single carriageway sections, have improved since the project started last September.

The phases included:

- £1.5 million spent on raising the eastbound and westbound carriageways by 70 centimetres at Embleton where it runs alongside Dubwath Beck. This work was completed in February
- a further £600,000 realigning and raising the westbound carriageway alongside the lake near Smithy Cottage which was also completed in February
- £2 million and £1.7 million projects to raise the carriageway alongside the lake's 2 Osprey-watching sites alongside the lake near Thornthwaite which were completed with the removal of temporary traffic lights on Friday
- £1.1 million stabilisation work along the rock face along the westbound carriageway to prevent severe weather land slippage which was completed in April

New drainage culverts under the road show how high the carriageway has been

raised

Traffic management for the final phase was removed last week but temporary traffic lights were placed near Thornthwaite on Tuesday (15 August) for some safety-related finishing work.

During the project, Highways England also delivered extra resurfacing – along other sections of the route – to save closing the road again, cleared 40 tonnes of storm debris from a large culvert underneath the road, improved pedestrian crossing facilities at Dubwath crossroads, and built a new bus shelter complete with bat roosts. An improved and enlarged layby at Blackstock also opened this week.

The work has included installing new and improved facilities such as this layby

Raising the carriageway alone – over a total length of 1.6 km – plus resurfacing a total of 3.2 km of the road, has involved using 31,000 tonnes of surfacing material. The work has also involved installing:

- almost 2 km of new safety barriers
- 1 km of new kerbs and drainage
- 250 metres of gabion wall
- 6 new flood relief culverts and 800 metres of filter drain
- 1600 large soil nails to improve embankment stability
- 2,550 square metres of rock netting

The completion of the work around Bassenthwaite Lake follows the delivery of a similar, £1 million project in March along the A590 at Lindal-in-Furness.

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

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