

# Press release: 800 tonne M6 bridge to bite the dust in major 24-hour operation

The bridge, north of Stafford, which is almost 250ft in length, will be dismantled and the entire 150-tonne centre section lifted clear and taken away in one piece on a 90ft long specialist transporter to a nearby compound.

Other sections of the Creswell Home Farm bridge will be taken away later. In total, the bridge contains enough concrete to fill 40 tipper trucks. The old bridge will be recycled and used in the construction of the upgraded motorway.

While work takes place the M6, between Stafford (junction 14) and Stoke-on-Trent (junction 15), will be closed in both directions for up to 24 hours over the weekend of 22 and 23 September.

Highways England smart motorways project sponsor, Peter Smith, explained:

This is part of our plan to ultimately improve journeys in this area by adding extra capacity and technology to the motorway.

The bridge is no longer in use and is too narrow for the upgraded motorway which will have an extra lane in each direction. Demolishing it is a big and complex job and to do it safely we need to use both carriageways of the motorway, which means it will be closed for up to 24 hours.

We're doing all we can to minimise disruption though and that is why we are arranging to take the centre section away in one piece, rather than breaking it up which would take more time.

I'd like to thank motorists, businesses and residents in advance for their patience. I'd also urge anyone wanting to use the M6 in that area on 22 and 23 September to plan an alternative route to avoid congestion between Stoke and Stafford. Please also allow extra travel time and fuel for your journey.

The motorway is due to close at 8pm on the evening of Saturday 22 September 2018 and reopen on Sunday 23 September 2018 as soon as work allows.

Traffic will be diverted off the M6 between junctions 14 and 15 and will use the A34 Stone Road as the diversion route. This route has been agreed with local authority partners and will be kept clear of other works during the demolition. Drivers are warned to expect delays and urged to avoid the area if possible, allowing lots of extra time for essential journeys.

To reduce M6 traffic on the day, signs will alert motorists to the closure as far away as Dover and Carlisle. Motorists and hauliers travelling between the North West and the Midlands and South of England will be urged to avoid the area by using the M62 and M1.

Work is under way with emergency services and social care providers to ensure they maintain their services along the route.

Creswell Home Farm bridge, just north of junction 14, was built in 1961. Removing it will provide extra space to increase the capacity of the northbound entry and southbound exit slip roads and make them safer, as well as remove an unnecessary maintenance liability.

The demolition does not involve the use of explosives. Some noise from excavators, reversing beepers and concrete crushing will be heard around the bridge while the work takes place.

This is the first of two bridges to be removed. A further 24-hour closure will take place next year to remove the Burton Bank footbridge.

This bridge is too low for the required safety clearance when the hard shoulder becomes a new running lane. Its replacement will be entirely within Highways England land and the current public right of way across the motorway will be maintained.

Highways England is increasing capacity on a 17-mile stretch of the M6 between junctions 13 and 15 by turning the hard shoulder into an extra traffic lane and installing up-to-date technology that will help keep traffic flowing more smoothly. This creates a smart motorway.

This will lead to more reliable journeys on a currently heavily congested route and boost regional growth.

The upgrade will also give drivers better information to help with their journeys, while maintaining high levels of safety.

Work began earlier this year, with bridge strengthening works to prepare for the main scheme. The central reservation barrier is currently being upgraded to a safer, concrete design near junction 15. The work is being limited to a 6-mile stretch only of narrow lanes through to the autumn.

As the central reservation barrier works move south, work will follow behind using contraflow which will speed up the works on the motorway verges and more than halve the number of motorway closures normally required for these works.

The upgrade work also includes:

- Increasing capacity by one third by converting the hard shoulder to a new running lane.
- Installing 20 emergency areas to provide an area of relative safety following a breakdown.
- Hardening the central reserve and installing a reinforced barrier to improve safety.

- Installing approximately 2km of new noise barriers.
- New lighting introduced at junction 15.

The project is due to be completed by March 2022.

More information is available on the [scheme page](#).

## **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.