

Press release: Final phase of £192 million A556 dual carriageway work unveiled

Drivers will shortly be able to use the new £192 million A556 Knutsford to Bowdon dual carriageway in Cheshire, with the final phase of work starting next month.

Highways England, which is building the new link road between junction 19 of the M6 at Knutsford and junction 7 of the M56 at Bowdon, today detailed the final phase of road works for the project – paving the way for the new road to open in March , providing a faster and more reliable link between the 2 motorways.

View looking north from new A50 bridge – with finishing landscaping and carriageway works underway

Full weekend closures – of the existing A556, junction 19 of the M6 and junctions 7 and 8 of the M56 – are needed and are scheduled to start in mid-February. The closures will allow the old road to be sealed off from through traffic and the motorway junctions to be tied into the new dual carriageway.

Highways England project manager Paul Hampson said:

We are on course to open the new dual carriageway by the end of March, if not sooner. As well as starting work next month to connect the new dual carriageway to the M6 and M56 link roads, we'll be using the weekend closures to do some preparation along the existing A556 which will become a B road with much-improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

We're working hard with partners and stakeholders like the emergency services and Manchester Airport to plan for these weekend closures and to make sure they'll be well-publicised once the full details are confirmed.

View from new A50 bridge looking south

Drivers are being advised the schedule for the final phase of work is dependent on the weather. The schedule currently involves:

- a full weekend closure of the existing A556 and associated M6 and M56 junctions between 9pm on Friday 17 February and 5am on Monday 20 February
- a full weekend closure of the existing A556 and associated M6 and M56 junctions from 9pm on Friday 3 March to 5am on Monday 6 March – with the new road opening to drivers that morning for the first time

- a final full weekend closure of the old A556 and new A556 between 9pm on Friday 10 March and 5am on Monday 13 March to finalise work to seal off the old road

Highways England is working with partners and stakeholders such as Manchester Airport, major football clubs and the police to plan for and publicise the road works so drivers can plan journeys affected by the weekend closures. More information and advice will be released nearer the time of the closures.

Alternative view looking north up the new A556

Construction of the new A556 link road, between the M56 and the M6, started in November 2014 and is part of a £15 billion government investment in motorways and major A roads by 2021 which is being delivered by Highways England as part of the Northern Powerhouse initiative.

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.