

Press release: Highways England repairs project on Oldbury Viaduct enters next phase

Repair teams on the M5 Oldbury Viaduct scheme are gearing up for the next phase of the mammoth scheme with traffic set to switch to the northbound carriageway next month.

Concrete repairs and waterproofing on the southbound carriageway are now nearing completion along a two-mile section of the viaduct.

From Monday 3 September, the entire operation, between junctions 1 and 2, transfers from the south to the northbound carriageway.

For work to begin on the northbound carriageway, traffic will move over onto the completed southbound carriageway. The switching process will last around a week and to minimise disruption will take place gradually overnight to ensure traffic flows during the day.

Highways England Head of Service Delivery, Andrew Butterfield, said:

We're fast approaching completion of work on the southbound carriageway.

I appreciate it's not been straightforward getting here. We were only able to fully assess the condition of the southbound carriageway once the work had started and found around 6,000 individual repairs were needed, which is 4,500 more than anticipated. To add to the challenges, we had one of the harshest winters, followed by warmest summers in years.

As a result, work on this section has taken longer than expected, but we're committing every resource available to get this work done as safely and quickly as possible. "We understand the level of disruption this project involves, and we'd like to thank motorists, businesses and residents for their patience.

At more than £100 million, M5 Oldbury is believed to be the largest concrete repair project, by value, ever carried out in Britain. At the same time, it is also thought to be the largest scaffolding project in Europe, with over 400 hundred miles of scaffolding erected, enough scaffold boards to cover seven football pitches and enough scaffold staircases to reach the top of Ben Nevis and Snowdon.

Much of the work takes place underneath the viaduct and so the workforce, averaging around 500 people, cannot always be seen by the travelling public.

To keep the motorway open during the work, a contraflow system is currently in place with traffic using the carriageway with two lanes operating in each direction, along with a 30mph speed limit.

Slip roads at junctions 1 and 2 will remain open once the switch takes place to ease effects on the local network. When the main concrete repairs are completed, the M5 will return to three narrow lanes in each direction so that work, including central reservation upgrades, can take place. For more information about the work at Oldbury viaduct visit <https://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/oldburyviaduct>.

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.