

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.

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.

Press release: CMA clears Just Eat / Hungryhouse merger

A group of independent panel members [has found](#) that the merger of Just Eat plc (Just Eat) and Hungryhouse Holdings Limited (Hungryhouse) does not raise competition concerns.

Just Eat and Hungryhouse are web-based food ordering platforms in the UK. They give restaurants the opportunity to reach a wider pool of people, as well as offer consumers the convenience of choosing from a large range of takeaway providers in one place.

As first indicated in the [provisional findings](#), the group found that Hungryhouse presently provides limited competition to Just Eat because it is much smaller in size and offers too few unique restaurants. This makes it increasingly difficult for Hungryhouse to attract and retain consumers.

Furthermore, it found that the industry is evolving rapidly following the entry of platforms such as Deliveroo, UberEATS and Amazon, which also manage or facilitate delivery services on behalf of restaurants. These companies generally present a greater competitive challenge to Just Eat than Hungryhouse, and this is likely to grow as they expand.

In reaching its final conclusion, the group also took account of the fact that some customers may order directly from takeaway restaurants, either by telephone, through their websites or by walking in.

All information relating to this merger inquiry can be found on the [case page](#).

Notes for editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law.
2. The CMA began its initial investigation into the merger in March 2017. The CMA [referred the case for in-depth investigation](#) on 19 May 2017 and published its [provisional findings](#) on 12 October 2017.
3. Certain of the CMA's functions in phase 2 merger inquiries are performed by independent inquiry groups chosen from the CMA's panel members. The appointed inquiry group are the decision-makers on phase 2 inquiries. The members of the inquiry group are: [Professor Martin Cave](#) (Inquiry

Chair), [Katherine Holmes](#), [John Krumins](#) and [Jayne Scott](#). The CMA's panel members come from a variety of backgrounds, including economics, law, accountancy and/or business; the membership of an inquiry group usually reflects a mix of expertise and experience.

4. For more information on the CMA see our [homepage](#) or follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and like our [Facebook](#) page. Sign up to our [email alerts](#) to receive updates on merger cases.
5. Media enquiries should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6337.

[News story: Government announces landmark campaign to inspire next generation of engineers](#)

The government has announced that it will work with hundreds of industry partners to make 2018 the Year of Engineering – and today (16 November 2017) pledged to work with them to offer a million direct and inspiring experiences of engineering to young people throughout the year.

Teaming up with a diverse range of partners – covering everything from technology, healthcare and food production to energy, culture and transport – the campaign aims to galvanise industry, MPs, parents and teachers in a national push to inspire the next generation of engineers.

Activities will include large-scale outreach programmes, such as a £1 million investment from Shell in the interactive Tomorrow's Engineers Energy Quest programme for thousands of schoolchildren, a children's book on engineering from publisher Usborne, and behind the scenes tours for families. The campaign will also highlight the role that individuals can play – from parents helping children with their maths homework or enrolling them in a coding club, to engineers from all backgrounds sharing their experience and advice in schools or via social media.

[Year of Engineering partner animation](#)

The commitment comes as the UK faces an estimated shortfall of 20,000 engineering graduates a year, with half of companies in the sector saying the shortage is having a significant impact on productivity and growth. By bringing young people from all backgrounds face to face with engineering experiences and role models, the campaign aims to showcase the creativity and innovation of engineering careers and widen the pool of young people who

consider the profession, diversifying a workforce that is 91% male and 94% white.

Partners including Siemens, the Science Museum Group, Ocado, Usborne, BAE Systems and Crossrail have already pledged their support. Teaming up with these and hundreds of other partners, the government will deliver a year of UK-wide school visits, exhibitions and open doors events – all aimed at encouraging young people and their parents to take a closer look at engineering.

Secretary of State for Transport Chris Grayling said:

Engineering is one of the most productive sectors in our economy, but a lack of young people entering the profession is damaging growth. With major investment being made in infrastructure and new technologies that aim to improve the way we travel, work and live, it's crucial to the nation's success that more people join the profession.

This Year of Engineering is our commitment to transforming perceptions of engineering among young people, their parents and their teachers. We need people from all backgrounds to see the creativity, opportunity and value of engineering careers.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clarke said:

Engineering makes a significant contribution to our economy and this government is determined to strengthen it further. To ensure we have a high-skilled economy that is fit for the future, our industrial strategy is committed to helping people and businesses by boosting engineering and ensuring everyone has the skills needed to thrive in a modern economy.

Education Minister Anne Milton said:

As Minister for Skills, I want to see young people from all backgrounds have the opportunity to pursue rewarding careers and jobs in engineering whether they choose an academic or technical route. Through the Year of Engineering, we will work with businesses to inspire the next generation of world-class engineers.

For our country to thrive and prosper with the highly-skilled individuals that businesses need we must work with employers to tackle the skills gap. The Year of Engineering will help to address the shortages of engineers that have long held us back as an economy.

[An introduction to the Year of Engineering](#)

The Year of Engineering launches in January 2018. To find out more, visit the [Year of Engineering partner website](#) or follow the campaign on [Twitter](#). Follow the hashtag #inspireanengineer to discover how parents, teachers, engineers and organisations can inspire the next generation of budding engineers.

[**Press release: FCO expresses concern at deteriorating situation in Yemen**](#)

Call for all parties to engage in peace process to ensure humanitarian access in Yemen.

FCO Spokesperson statement:

We are deeply concerned by the risk of a serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Yemen. We call on all parties to ensure immediate access for commercial and humanitarian supplies to avert the threat of starvation and disease faced by millions of civilians. We call for the immediate resumption of UN flights and the reopening of Hodeidah port. The UK is the second largest donor to the UN's Yemen Appeal, and UKaid has already provided food to almost 2m people and clean water to over 1m more. We must continue to offer this lifesaving assistance and that is why we call on all parties ensure that humanitarian workers are able to enter and exit the country and access all affected areas.

We share the concern of Saudi Arabia about the security threat posed by ballistic missiles, such as the one of 4 November. We understand the need to take action to stem the flow of sophisticated weaponry into Yemen, including the importance of effective monitoring and controls. Efforts to implement the arms embargo called for by UN Security Council Resolution 2216 must be increased by all states while ensuring that vital commercial and humanitarian supplies are able to reach vulnerable Yemeni people.

We believe that a comprehensive political solution is the only way to end the conflict and bring real stability to Yemen. We call on all parties to engage with the peace process.