

# [Press release: Drivers advised to plan journeys ahead of Bridgwater Carnival event](#)

The annual Bridgwater Guy Fawkes Carnival is the largest illuminated carnival in Europe, attracting up to 120,000 spectators, and traffic levels are expected to increase between junctions 23 and 24 throughout late afternoon and evening.

Drivers are also advised that access into Bridgwater from junction 24 will be closed from 6pm on the night.

Gareth Price, Highways England emergency planning officer for the South West, said:

The carnival is a popular event in the south west and can lead to increased traffic volumes between junctions 24 and 23 of the M5, particularly between 5pm and 7pm and from 9pm onwards.

We advise all road users to allow extra time for their journeys, listen out for radio updates and to check our traffic and travel information channels.

Highways England provides live traffic information [via its website](#).

Travel information is also available by phone from the Highways England Customer Contact Centre on 0300 123 5000 and updates will be provided via Twitter.

Carnival goers can also find further information on the [Bridgewater Carnival website](#).

## **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.

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# News story: First of a Kind competition: transform tomorrow's train journeys

The First of a Kind (FOAK) competition invites bids from companies to fund existing innovations that may be in use outside the rail industry but which could benefit rail passengers. This could, for example, be to create more space in carriages or provide improved assistance to passengers with a diverse range of needs.

The competition, run by Innovate UK, is part of the [Department for Transport's \(DfT\)](#) wider Accelerating Innovation in Rail (AIR) scheme. This is aimed at introducing cutting-edge ways of improving the whole passenger experience on rail, such as helping rail services to run efficiently and on time.

AIR develops ideas from concept, whereas the FOAK scheme aims to fund ideas already working in the real world that could be successfully transferred to the rail industry. As they already exist, under the scheme passengers will be able to use them in trials and give feedback.

The first challenge in the FOAK competition is rolling stock. Organisations are invited to bid for funding for technology not previously used on trains and examine how they can be integrated. Later funding will focus on other aspects of the railway network.

## **Passengers at the heart**

Rail Minister Paul Maynard said:

As well as encouraging innovative ideas from concept, we want to help develop existing ideas that can be transferred successfully to the rail industry for the benefit of passengers.

The aim of government, train operators and infrastructure managers is to put passengers at the heart of everything we do. If we can help fund development of these inventive and ground-breaking ideas then this will help support the biggest modernisation programme in rail since the Victorian era.

Ian Meikle, Innovate UK's Director – Infrastructure Systems, said:

We want to unlock the talent of UK companies to demonstrate tomorrow's trains today. This first of a kind competition will result in tangible, realistic prototypes that have the potential to

meet the challenges of passenger journeys.

Gordon Wakeford, Chair of the Rail Supply Group, commented:

The rail supply sector is continually seeking to improve the passenger experience by developing new and better products and solutions. This competition will provide a stimulus for the many innovative companies in our sector to develop new and ground-breaking ways to enhance rail journeys.

I am confident that the rail industry will rise to this challenge with commitment and creativity.

## **Competition information**

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### **[Press release: PM meeting with First Minister of Wales: 30 October 2017](#)**

The Prime Minister met with the First Minister of Wales Carwyn Jones in Downing Street today.

As well as discussing domestic issues, they spoke about Brexit and the Prime Minister explained how the UK Government's priority was delivering a successful EU exit that works for the whole of the UK.

On the important engagement with Wales and the other devolved administrations, they spoke about constructive dialogue at the recent Joint Ministerial Committee and the progress made on working together to establish principles on common frameworks.

They also discussed the EU Withdrawal Bill and the Prime Minister made clear that we are working to ensure that as powers are repatriated from Brussels back to Britain, the right powers are passed to the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in a way that works for all parts of the UK.

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## [News story: Open Call for Innovation paused for low-TRL Defence proposals this financial year](#)

Since its launch, the Defence and Security Accelerator has assessed nearly 700 proposals from almost 400 organisations and has successfully awarded its defence portion of the 'Open Call' budget for this year. Subsequently the Open Call for Innovation has been paused for new Defence-related proposals.

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## [Press release: £27 million flood scheme opens in Blackpool](#)

A £27 million scheme to reduce flood risk to 4,800 properties in Blackpool was officially opened today (30 October) by Blackpool Council Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Councillor Fred Jackson and the Chair of the Environment Agency Emma Howard Boyd.

The new defence at Anchorsholme safeguards Blackpool's iconic seafront tramway, which is enjoyed by the thousands of visitors each year who flock to the quintessential British seaside resort. It also helps protect vital infrastructure and a major pumping station.

A kilometre of concrete sea wall has been replaced, maintaining access to the beach, and a new promenade attracts residents and visitors with views over the Irish Sea. The promenade also links the seafront to the nearby Anchorsholme Park, which is being redeveloped. The new defences will help protect Blackpool's tourism and recreational income for the next 100 years.

The scheme forms part of the Fylde Peninsula Coastal Programme, a partnership between the Environment Agency and Wyre, Blackpool and Fylde councils to reduce flood risk to people and develop historic and natural environments. Anchorsholme together with the Rossall project, which is due to be completed next year, form one of the largest coastal defence projects in the country.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

Blackpool's iconic beachfront is visited by thousands of families each year. This new coastal defence, delivered in partnership with local councils, will better protect the town's popular tourist attractions as well as nearly 5,000 homes and businesses.

It's great news and demonstrates how our work benefits people and the environment.

Blackpool Council Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Councillor Fred Jackson, said:

I am delighted that this vital sea defence scheme has been officially opened. We now have a sea wall that will provide much stronger flood protection for years to come.

We also have a wonderful new promenade for all to enjoy which makes access from the seafront to the park and town so much easier.

The project has been both an incredible challenge and an incredible achievement for all the organisations involved.

I am also extremely grateful to the neighbours and the local community for being so patient during the construction work. However, I trust that they are delighted with the final result and the additional regeneration work that is being undertaken.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Anchorsholme's new sea wall was made possible thanks not only to £20 million of government funding, but also the huge support of local government and other partners.

The result is brilliant news for the community – regenerating the area and providing better protection for almost 5,000 homes and Blackpool's iconic tram network ahead of winter.

The Blackpool Council scheme has been funded by the Environment Agency through government grant aid and delivered by contractors Balfour Beatty.