

[Press release: Planned roadworks in Central Southern England: weekly summary for Monday 20 March to Sunday 26 March 2017](#)

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of 17 March 2017 but could be subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances. All our improvement work is carried out with the aim of causing as little disruption as possible.

M3 junctions 2 (M25) to 4a Farnborough, Hampshire: smart motorway improvement

Work to reduce congestion and improve journey times continues this week between junctions 2 and 4a with narrow lanes and a 50mph speed limit in place on both carriageways, with a free recovery service operating 24 hours a day.

The northbound carriageway between junctions 3 and 2 including junction 3 entry slip and clockwise and anti-clockwise link roads from the M3 junction 2 northbound to M25 junction 12 will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am on Monday 20 March for four nights and between 8pm and 7am on Friday 24 March 2017. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via A322 to A30 to M25 junction 13 to M25 junction 12.

The southbound carriageway between junctions 4 and 5 including junctions 4 and 4a entry slips and 4a and 5 exit slips will be closed overnight and no entry or exit to Fleet Services southbound, between 8pm and 5.30am on Monday 20 March for four nights and between 8pm and 7am on Friday 24 March 2017. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via M3 junction 4 to A331 to A30 to A287 to M3 junction 5.

The southbound carriageway between junction 2 and 3 including M25 clockwise and anti-clockwise link roads to M3 southbound and junction 3 exit slip will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am on Wednesday 22 March for two nights and between 8pm and 7am on Friday 24 March 2017.

A clearly signed diversion will be in place via:

- M3 southbound junction 2 to M25 junction 13 via A30 to A322 to M3 junction 3
- M25 clockwise junction 13 via A30 to A322 to M3 junction 3
- M25 anti clockwise junction 13 via A30 to A322 to M3 junction 3

The M3 junction 4a northbound exit slip will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am, on Monday 20 March for four nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place: Continue on M3 to junction 4 via the A30 to M3 junction 4a

southbound.

The northbound carriageway between junctions 4a and 4 including junction 4a entry slips and junction 4a and 4 exit slips will also be closed overnight, between 8pm and 7am on Saturday 25 March 2017. A clearly signed diversion will be in place: M3 junction 4a to A327 to A30 to A331 to M3 junction 4.

The scheme is due to be completed in June 2017. For further information [visit the scheme website](#)

M3 junction 6 (Black Dam Junction) Basingstoke, Hampshire: road markings improvements

Work to improve journeys by laying additional road markings at the Black Dam junction and improving footpaths along the A30 London Road starts this week. The link in the centre of the junction for traffic from the A30 heading to Ringway East will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 20 March for 5 nights. Traffic will be diverted around the junction.

During the closures, motorway permitted vehicles will be diverted into/out from Basingstoke via M3 junction 7, A30 Winchester Road, Ringway East, Ringway South and A3010 Churchill Way.

Motorway permitted vehicles for villages along the A30 will be diverted via M3 junction 5 and London Road. Non-motorway permitted vehicles travelling on the A30 London Road will be diverted via Old Basing (Park Lane, Crown Lane, Swing Swang Lane and Faraday Road).

M3 junction 8 Popham, Hampshire: bridge strengthening

Work to maintain journeys by replacing bridge bearings and supports continues this week. Narrow lanes and a 50mph speed restriction are in place on the link from the M3 southbound to the A303 westbound 24/7 until May.

The M3 southbound carriageway from junction 7 to junction 9 will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Tuesday 21 March for 2 nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A30, A303 and A34. The M3 northbound carriageway from junction 9 to junction 8 will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, on Friday 24 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A34 and A303.

M3 junctions 8 Popham to 9 Winchester, Hampshire: safety barrier repairs

Work to improve safety by carrying out repairs to the barrier along the M3 continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the southbound carriageway near Winchester Service Area overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 20 March for 4 weeks (Monday to Friday only).

M3 junction 12 Chandlers Ford, Hampshire: street lighting

Work to maintain safety by carrying out street lighting maintenance at the junction continues this week. The southbound exit and entry slip roads will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Tuesday 21 March for 10 nights (Monday to Friday only). Clearly signed diversions will be in place via the adjacent junctions.

M3 junctions 13 to 14 Eastleigh, Hampshire: signage

Work to improve journeys by maintaining the road signs along the M3 continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the southbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Tuesday 21 March (Monday to Friday only).

M4 junctions 5 Slough to 6 Windsor, Berkshire: surveys and resurfacing

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing a slip road at junction 6 and carrying out surveys in preparation for the M4 smart motorway improvements continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the east and westbound carriageways overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Friday 28 April.

In addition, the eastbound entry slip road at junction 6 will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 20 March for 5 nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via junction 7.

M4 junctions 7 to 8/9 Maidenhead, Berkshire: street lighting

Work to maintain safety by carrying out street lighting maintenance along the M4 starts this week. Lane closures will be in place on the east and westbound carriageways overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Monday 20 March for 12 nights (Monday to Friday only).

M4 junction 10 Wokingham, Berkshire: bridge reconstruction

Work to improve journeys by refurbishing the bridge that carries the link roads over the M4 continues this week. Narrow lanes and a 40mph speed limit are in place on the slip roads and a 50mph speed limit is in place on the M4 carriageway until November 2017.

M4 junctions 10 Wokingham to 11 Reading, Berkshire:

safety barrier

Work to improve safety by carrying out repairs to the barrier along the M4 near Shinfield continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the eastbound carriageway overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Friday 31 March (Monday to Friday only).

M4 junctions 12 Theale to 13 Chieveley, West Berkshire: bridge refurbishment and signage

Work to improve journeys by refurbishing the bridges that carry the M4 over Dark Lane and Ashampstead Road continues this week. Narrow lanes and a 50mph speed limit will be in place on the east and westbound carriageways until August.

In addition, work to keep road users informed by updating the electronic signage along the M4 continues this week. The eastbound carriageway will be fully closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 20 March for 2 nights and on Friday 24 March.

The westbound carriageway will be fully closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Wednesday 22 March for 2 nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A4.

A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A4.

M4 junctions 13 Chieveley to 14 Hungerford, West Berkshire: signage, drainage and bridge maintenance

Work to improve journeys by maintaining the road signs along the M4 starts this week. Lane closures will be in place on the westbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Tuesday 21 March for 8 nights (Monday to Friday only).

Work to improve journeys by maintaining the drainage along the M4 near Welford starts this week. Lane closures will be in place on the eastbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Friday 24 March for 11 nights (Monday to Friday only).

Work to replace the joints and waterproofing material to the bridge which carries the B4000 Ermin Street/Baydon Road over the M4 starts this week. Temporary traffic lights will be in place on the B4000 during day-time hours, from Monday 20 March for 6 weeks (Monday to Friday only).

In addition, the B4000 between The Long Yard/B4000 junction and the Five Bells Pub at Wickham will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 20 March for 6 weeks (Monday to Friday only). A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A338, Hungerford, A4 and B4000.

M27 junctions 1 Cadnam to 2 Ower, Hampshire: road markings

Work to improve safety by renewing the road markings along the M27 continues week. A lane closure will be in place on the eastbound carriageway and exit slip road at junction 2 overnight, between 9pm and 6am, on Wednesday 22 March.

M27 junction 3 Southampton, Hampshire: road markings

Work to improve safety by renewing the road markings along the M27 continues week. The eastbound exit and entry slip roads at junction 3 will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, on Thursday 23 March. Clearly signed diversions will be in place via the next suitable junction.

M27 junction 4 Southampton, Hampshire: road markings

Work to improve safety by renewing the road markings along the M27 continues week. Lane closures will be in place on the eastbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, on Friday 24 March.

M27 junction 5 Eastleigh, Hampshire: bridge joint

Work to maintain journeys by undertaking repairs to the joint which carries the M27 over Wide Lane takes place this week. Lanes 1 and 2 and the westbound exit slip road at junction 5 will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5.30am, on Tuesday 21 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via junction 3 and returned.

M27 junctions 8 Bursledon to 9 Whiteley, Hampshire: resurfacing

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing the M27 continues this week. The eastbound carriageway will be closed from junctions 8 to 9 overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 20 March for 3 nights, then again from Monday 27 March for 5 nights. The westbound carriageway from junctions 9 to 8 will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Thursday 23 March for 2 nights.

A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A27 for standard vehicles (e.g. motorcycles, cars), with HGVs being diverted via Botley, Curbridge and Swanwick due to a low bridge along the A27.

M27 junction 10 Wickham to 11 Fareham, Hampshire:

road markings

Work to improve safety by renewing the road markings along the M27 continues week. Lane closures will be in place on the eastbound carriageway and the eastbound entry slip roads at junctions 10 and 11 overnight, between 9pm and 6am, on Saturday 25 March.

M271 Southampton, Hampshire: road markings

Work to maintain road user safety by renewing the road markings along the M271 continues place this week. The southbound links between the A3057 Romsey Road roundabout and the M27, between the M27 and Lordshill Roundabout and the southbound entry slip road at junction 1 will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, on Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A3057 Romsey Road and Brownhill Way.

M275 Portsmouth, Hampshire: resurfacing

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing a section of the M275 northbound carriageway starts this week. The M275 northbound carriageway will be closed from the Rudmore Roundabout to the M27 overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Wednesday 22 March for 3 nights.

A clearly signed diversion will be in place from the Rudmore Roundabout, north on the A3 Northern Parade to the Portsbridge Roundabout. Traffic for the A27 eastbound can then join the carriageway via the eastbound entry slip road; traffic for the M27 westbound will then be diverted along the A27 Western Road to join the M27 at junction 12.

Further works will then take place from 3 April.

A3(M) junctions 1 to 2 Horndean, Hampshire: signage

Work to improve journeys by maintaining the road signs along the A3(M) takes place this week. Lane closures will be in place on the southbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Monday 20 March for 2 nights.

A3(M) junctions 3 Waterlooville to 4 Bedhampton, Hampshire: drainage

Work to improve journeys by maintaining the drainage along the A3(M) takes place this week. Lane closures will be in place on the north and southbound carriageways overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Wednesday 22 March for 3 nights.

A3(M) junctions 5 to 4 Bedhampton, Hampshire:

signage

Work to improve journeys by maintaining the road signs along the A3(M) takes place this week. The northbound entry slip road at junction 5, lane 1 of the northbound carriageway and the northbound exit slip road at junction 4 will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Thursday 23 March for 3 nights (Monday to Friday only). Clearly signed diversions will be in place via adjacent junctions.

A3 Petersfield to A3(M) Cowplain, Hampshire: road markings

Work to improve safety by renewing the road markings along the A3 takes place this week. The southbound carriageway from the A272 Petersfield junction to the A3(M) junction 1 will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Tuesday 21 March. Clearly signed diversions will be in place via the A272, A32, M27 and A3M for motorway permitted vehicles and via the A272, A32 and A3 for non-motorway vehicles.

A3 Longmoor, Hampshire to Hogs Back (A31), Surrey: road markings

Work to improve safety by renewing the road markings along the A3 continues this week. The A3 northbound carriageway from the Longmoor junction to the A31 Hogs Back will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Thursday 23 March for 2 nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A325 and A31.

A3 Compton to Shackleford, Surrey: resurfacing

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing a section of the A3 southbound carriageway starts this week. The A3 southbound carriageway from the A31 Hog's Back to the Milford interchange will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Wednesday 22 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A31 and A325.

A31 Ringwood to Picket Post, Hampshire: resurfacing

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing a section of the A31 eastbound carriageway from Poulner Hill to Picket Post continues this week. The A31 eastbound carriageway will be fully closed from the A338 Ringwood Interchange to Stoney Cross overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Wednesday 22 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A338, Salisbury and the A36.

A34 Tufton Warren to Sutton Scotney, Hampshire:

drainage

Work to maintain safety by carrying out drainage maintenance continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the southbound carriageway and the southbound entry slip road at Bullington Cross will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Wednesday 22 March for 7 nights (Monday to Friday).

A34 Tufton Warren (Whitchurch), Hampshire: gap closure

Work to improve safety by closing the crossing gap in the central reserve of the A34 at Tufton Warren/Firgo Farm starts this week. Narrow lanes will be in place 24/7 on the north and southbound carriageways until Thursday 13 April. In addition lane 2 of the north and southbound carriageways will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Thursday 13 April (Monday to Friday only).

A34 Tothill, Hampshire to Donnington (Newbury), West Berkshire: road markings and resurfacing

Work to improve safety by resurfacing the slip roads at the A4 Speen junction and renewing the road markings along the A34 continues this week. The A34 northbound carriageway will be closed from the B4640 at Tothill to the A339 Donnington Link at Newbury overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 20 March for 2 nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via Newbury.

A34 Speen to Chieveley, West Berkshire: road markings

Work to improve safety by renewing the road markings along the A34 continues this week. The A34 northbound carriageway will be closed from the A4 Speen junction to Chieveley overnight, between 10pm and 6am, on Friday 24 March. Clearly signed diversions will be in place suitable for motorway permitted vehicles (via the M4 junction 14 and the A4) and non-motorway vehicles (via Hermitage and Newbury).

A34 Didcot, Oxfordshire: resurfacing

Work to improve road users journeys by resurfacing a section of the A34 southbound carriageway finishes this week. Lane 1 of the southbound carriageway and the southbound exit slip road at the A4185 Milton Interchange will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, on Monday 20 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the Chilton junction.

A34 Didcot to Abingdon, Oxfordshire: drainage

Work to maintain safety by carrying out drainage maintenance along the A34

continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the northbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, on Monday 20 March. Lane closures will then be in place on the southbound carriageway overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Tuesday 21 March for 4 nights.

A34 Peartree to Kidlington (Oxford), Oxfordshire: resurfacing

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing a section of the A34 northbound carriageway continues this week. The A34 northbound carriageway will be closed from the A44 Peartree interchange to Kidlington overnight, between 10pm to 6am, until Friday 7 April (Monday to Friday only). Clearly signed diversions will be in place via the A44, A40 M40 for motorway permitted vehicles and via the A44, A4095 and A41 for non-motorway vehicles.

A303 Thruxton, Hampshire to Shipton Bellinger, Wiltshire: drainage

Work to maintain safety by carrying out drainage maintenance continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the west and eastbound carriageways overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Friday 24 March.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

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[Press release: Planned roadworks in Kent and Sussex: weekly summary for Monday 20 March to Sunday 26 March 2017](#)

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A2 Darenth to Bean, Kent: carriageway resurfacing

Work to improve journeys take place this week on the A2. There will be a full closure between the Darenth A282 junction and the Bean B255 junction on Sunday 26 March overnight between 10pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the M25 Junction 1a, A206 and B255.

A2 Gravesend, Kent: carriageway resurfacing

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the A2 between Hall Road junction and the B255 Bean junction. There will be lane closures in place on the westbound carriageway between Pepperhill & Bean on Monday 20 March for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. There will also be a westbound entry slip closure from the A2260 at Ebbsfleet. Traffic will be diverted via the next junction of the A2. Works are scheduled to be complete by the end of March 2017.

A2 Canterbury, Kent: carriageway resurfacing

Work to improve journeys takes place this week on the A2. There will be a full eastbound carriageway closure between Upper Harbledown and Patricxbourne on Wednesday 22 March overnight between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A2050.

A2 Upper Harbledown, Kent: carriageway resurfacing

Works to improve journeys take place this week on the A2. There will be a full closure on the eastbound carriageway between Brenley and A28 Wincheap on Thursday 23 March overnight between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A299 and A256.

A2 Dover, Kent: carriageway works

Works to improve safety take place this week on the A2 Jubilee Way. There will be a full closure southbound from 12pm on Saturday 25 March until 12pm on Sunday 26 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A256.

A20 Dover, Kent: street lighting works

Works to improve journeys take place this week on the A20 between York Street and Limekiln roundabout. There will be lane 2 closures in both directions on Monday 20 March for 5 days between 7am & 6pm. Works are scheduled to be complete by the end of March.

A21 Tonbridge to Pembury, Kent: major improvement

Work to improve journeys on the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury continues this week. A 40mph speed limit remains in place 24/7 between the Vauxhall interchange and the A228.

A full closure will be in place overnight between 8pm and 6am on Thursday 23

March on the southbound carriageway between Quarry Hill and Pembury interchange and on the northbound carriageway between Pembury interchange and Vauxhall interchange. In addition Longfield Road will be closed in both directions between Longfield roundabout and Knights Park roundabout. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A26, A2014, A26 and the A228.

Two way traffic lights will be in place on the A21 overnight between 8pm and 6am from Monday 20 March for three nights and overnight on Friday 24 March.

Tonbridge Road will remain closed after Pembury Hospital up to and including Longfield Road roundabout until Spring 2017. A clearly signed diversion route will be in place via the A228 and the A21.

The scheme is due to be completed in Summer 2017. For further information, [visit the scheme website.](#)

A27 Portslade, Brighton: tunnel inspections

Work to improve journeys by undertaking routine tunnel inspections take place this week. The Southwick tunnel will be closed in both directions overnight on Friday 24 March for two nights between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A270 and A293.

M20 junctions 3 – 5, Kent: smart motorway surveys

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the M20 between junctions 3 & 5. There will be various lane closures in both directions on Monday 20 March for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. Surveys are scheduled to be complete in April 2017.

M20 junctions 4 – 6, Kent: resurfacing

Work to improve journeys begin this week on the M20 between junctions 5 & 6. There will be a full closure of the westbound carriageway between junctions 6 & 5 on Monday 20 March for 7 nights between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A229 and the A228. Works are expected to be complete by the end of May 2017.

M23 Junctions 8 – 10a, South Nutfield to Crawley: smart motorway surveys

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the M23 between junctions 8 & 10a. There will be various lane closures in both directions overnight on Monday 20 March for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. Surveys are scheduled to be complete in April 2017.

A23 West Sussex: vegetation clearance

Work to improve journeys take place this week on the A23 between Pease Pottage and Patcham. There will be various slip road closures in both directions on Monday 20 March for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. Traffic will be diverted via the next junction. Works are scheduled to be completed by the end of April.

A249 Sheppey, Kent: installation of cameras

Work to improve safety take place this week on the A249. There will be lane closures in both directions between Cowstead corner and the Grovehurst junction on Monday 20 March for 2 days between 9am and 4pm. Works are scheduled to be complete by the end of March.

A249 Sheppey, Kent: carriageway works

Work to improve safety take place this week on the A249 by renewing white lining and road studs. There will be a full southbound closure on Wednesday 22 March overnight between 8pm and 6am. There will be a clearly signed diversion via Sheppey Way. There will be a full northbound closure on Thursday 23 March overnight between 8pm and 6am. There will be a clearly signed diversion via Sheppey Way.

A2070 Park Farm, Kent: carriageway improvements

Work to improve safety take place this week on the A2070 between Ashford Road, and Bad Munsteriefel Road. There will be a full closure in both directions on Monday 20 March for 3 nights between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via Hamstreet Road/Ashford Road, and the A2041. Works are expected to be complete by the end of March 2017.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

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[Press release: Safety scheme to](#)

replace M32 central reservation barrier in Bristol

An 11-week programme of work starts on Monday 20 March to replace the sub-standard corrugated central reservation barrier with a concrete steel barrier, making journeys safer for thousands of motorists who use the route on a daily basis.

The work to deliver the scheme will be carried out overnight, in phases, with different sections of the M32 closed at different times.

Highways England asset delivery manager Julian Strong said:

The current barrier has reached the end of its serviceable life, having been in situ since the viaduct was built in the 1970s.

We are now taking steps to replace it with a durable concrete barrier which will improve safety for all users of the M32 and require less overall maintenance moving forward.

During the work we ask drivers to plan their journeys and to allow extra time.

Much of the work will be undertaken from the southbound carriageway – under overnight closures. For the most part the northbound carriageway will remain open, with narrow lanes installed for traffic management, but there will be occasional overnight northbound closures too.

The first tranche of work will see overnight closures of the north and southbound carriageways at various points between junctions 1 (Hambrook), 2 (Fishponds) and 3 (Bristol City Centre), from 8pm to 6am, Monday to Friday only.

Thereafter the majority of the closures will affect the southbound carriageway in various sections and during the daytime, narrow lanes and 40mph restrictions will be in place both northbound and southbound. Fully signed diversions will be in place when the road is closed, and drivers are encouraged to check www.trafficengland.com for real time updates on the closures.

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[News story: Closer partnerships needed to fight serious and organised crime](#)

Ben Wallace, speaking to an audience of law enforcement and public and private sector representatives at the Home Office's Serious and Organised Crime Conference in Birmingham, said officers needed to share more intelligence with local government representatives in an effort to tackle crime bosses.

The Minister underlined how multi-agency partnerships around the country could help to dismantle serious and organised crime groups, with effective joint working already taking place between local authorities, police forces and sectors within the Government Agency Intelligence Network, such as HMRC and the Environment Agency.

But he called for the level of information sharing and collaboration to be taken to new heights.

The Security Minister said:

We know that crime bosses will look to exploit any avenue that they can tap into in order to make massive profits or launder their dirty money.

Our own research indicates organised crime groups are now looking to benefit from public sector contracts and we must do everything possible to clamp down on this abuse.

That's why I'm asking each police force around the country to work more closely than ever with local authorities and other important partners in their patch – sharing information on known crime groups, identifying attempts to profit from public sector contracts and closing down bogus suppliers.

The Security Minister referred to a Home Office pilot which saw local authorities and police forces in seven areas collaborate to examine the extent to which major crime groups are looking to exploit public sector contracts.

This pilot not only identified the areas particularly at risk of being targeted by crime groups, but also demonstrated how effective partnerships between local authorities and forces could be in disrupting those involved.

Ben Wallace referenced the work as he asked forces to carry out more detailed assessments of the crime groups operating in their area and to share these with local authorities so links can be found with suppliers who bid for public procurement contracts.

The Minister explained this level of information sharing could significantly improve the fight against serious and organised crime.

Press release: Environment Agency shortlisted for UK River Prize 2017

The Environment Agency has been praised for an ambitious restoration project on Hampshire's famous River Avon.

The agency's 'whole river approach' to restoration and natural flood management impressed judges who voted it the best entry in the 'catchment category' of the 2017 UK River Prize, a national competition that celebrates the most innovative and successful river projects across England, Scotland and Wales.

As category winner, the Hampshire Avon project automatically qualifies as a finalist. The Environment Agency is up against three other finalists – each winners of separate categories – vying for the top UK River Prize. The overall winner will be announced at a special ceremony in Brighton next month and presented with a trophy and cash prize.

Russell Spencer for the Environment Agency:

This is well earned recognition for the efforts of many people and organisations working together to help realise the vision for the Avon catchment – and a great springboard for the next phase of the programme, where we would like many more to be involved.

The River Avon Restoration Project was set up to restore the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to a natural river system supporting chalk stream habitats and wildlife to meet the government's obligations under the EU Water Framework and Habitats Directive.

The aim of the project was to restore reaches of the river most damaged in the past by man-made physical changes including the straightening or dredging of the river channel and construction of weirs and sluices. Various methods have been used to improve habitats and restore natural flows and functions including the removal, modification and bypassing of structures and re-alignment of the river to more natural positions in the floodplain.

Led by the Environment Agency, the project is supported by a number of organisations including Natural England, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Wessex Chalk Streams and Rivers Trust, Wessex Water, Wiltshire Fishery Association, National Farmers Union and Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

The restoration started in 2012 and will culminate in the completion of Phase 1 of the project later this year. Further work is needed to restore the remaining 185km of river and enable the catchment to respond and adapt to climate change.

Notes to Editor:

The UK River Prize celebrates the achievements of individuals and organisations who improve the health of our rivers and catchments and recognise the importance of healthy rivers and the benefits they bring to society. It is run by the The River Restoration Centre who will announce the overall winner of the UK River Prize at its annual dinner and conference in Brighton on April 4.

In 2009, the need for a strategic approach to catchment river restoration was identified by the European LIFE funded Strategic Restoration and Management (STREAM) partnership. This led to the creation of the River Avon Restoration Programme (RARP).