

Orwell Bridge study offers new hope for reducing high wind closures

Reducing the speed limit over the bridge during high winds, using temporary lane closures to mitigate the effect of high winds on vehicles, and keeping the bridge open in one direction are three potential solutions identified in the year-long study, commissioned by Highways England.

The report was carried out by independent experts at City, University of London using ground-breaking techniques designed specifically for the Orwell Bridge to create a more detailed picture than ever before of how wind speeds on the bridge affect different types of vehicles.

Highways England will take forward all the report's recommendations to assess their feasibility, with a view to introducing technology able to change the speed limit in high winds before the end of the year.

Simon Amor, head of planning and development for Highways England in the East of England, said:

We understand the vital importance of the Orwell Bridge for people living and working in Ipswich and also for the people and businesses that depend on goods arriving and leaving the UK at the port of Felixstowe.

Commissioning this study is just one of the steps we have taken to improve the resilience of this vital national asset when there are high winds in the area. Aerodynamic modelling is one of the most complex areas of engineering and we are grateful for the expertise that City, University of London have brought to this complex issue. I'm hugely encouraged that the study has identified these potentially workable solutions. We will take forward the next steps at pace and we're optimistic that we could have improvements in place by the end of the year.

The Orwell Bridge opened in 1982 and carries 60,000 vehicles a day. It stands up to 43 metres tall over the River Orwell, and traffic on the bridge can operate safely at head or tail wind speeds of up to 60mph (or 50mph when the wind is blowing from the side). Above these speeds there is a risk of vehicles being blown off course and causing collisions. Since 2013 the bridge has been closed on 18 occasions due to high winds. It is only closed when essential for safety reasons, and for as short a time as possible. In its findings, the aerodynamic study concluded that the thresholds for closing the bridge at the current 60mph limit are the correct ones for safety, but that reducing the traffic speed limit from 60mph down to 40mph during high winds could mean that the bridge may still be able to remain safely open during wind speeds of up to 70mph.

The findings are theoretical and will need to be validated in a physical environment using a wind tunnel. At the same time, Highways England will also start work on designing ways to introduce a changeable speed limit over the bridge.

The study is part of a series of measures being taken to improve the resilience of the Orwell Bridge. Already in recent years, revised signage has enabled closures to be installed and removed within a 20 minute period (rather than 50 minutes before) and a new protocol for making and communicating decisions about bridge closures to give road users more time to make decisions about their journeys.

Working together with partners, Highways England will also continue to look at any and all steps that can help improve the resilience of the Orwell Bridge and keep journeys on it safe and reliable.

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.

[Message to UK Nationals living and working in Luxembourg](#)

Hello everyone,

You will have seen that the Withdrawal Agreement signed by the EU and UK last October has now been ratified by the British and EU Parliaments.

This means that the UK will be leaving the EU at midnight tomorrow, Friday 31 Jan. There are two parts of the Withdrawal Agreement that I particularly want to draw to your attention: the Transition Period and the Chapter on Citizens Rights.

The Withdrawal Agreement provides for a Transition Period that will run until 31 December 2020. During this 11-month period, although the UK will have left the EU, we will still be subject to the EU acquis. Free Movement Rights therefore continue until the end of the year, so you can work, study and travel in the EU, as you do now.

The Withdrawal Agreement also includes a chapter on the Citizens Rights of

those UK nationals living in the EU (and EU nationals living in the UK) who fall within the scope of the Agreement. In short, anyone currently living or working lawfully in Luxembourg at the end of the Transition Period will be able to continue to do so.

The Luxembourg Government announced last year that UK nationals living in Luxembourg who fall within the scope of the Withdrawal Agreement will be issued with a new residence card that shows that they are beneficiaries of the Withdrawal Agreement. These will be issued automatically to those affected, in phases during the Transition Period, i.e. there is no need to apply for a new document. Existing residency cards will remain valid until the end of 2020.

UK nationals who work in Luxembourg but live in a neighbouring country, and who meet the definition of a cross-border worker (a person who works in one Member State and lives in another Member State, to which they return every day or at least once a week), will be able to continue to do so. According to the Luxembourg Government cross-border workers will need to apply for a document, which certifies their rights deriving from the Agreement. They will set out details of how to do this at a later date.

We are in close contact with the Luxembourg authorities and will update you as soon as there is further information on how these processes will work. In the meantime I encourage you to familiarise yourself with the information that the Government of Luxembourg have made available on guichet.lu and government.lu, and our own Living in [Luxembourg Guide](#).

We plan to hold the next in our series of Citizens' Outreach meetings in early March. We will use the meeting to inform you of what the Withdrawal Agreement means for you, and to answer questions. Details will be announced on the Embassy's Facebook and website pages next week.

In the meantime, we encourage you to:

- Make sure you are registered under the existing system with your local commune
- Exchange your driving licence for a Luxembourgish one if you have been resident here for more than 6 months
- Sign up for alerts to the Living in [Luxembourg guide](#)

Finally, some of you might be wondering how talk of a possible 'no deal' Brexit in December 2020 would affect you. This is a reference to the possibility that at the end of the Transition Period the UK and EU may not have reached agreement on the future trade relationship. This does not affect your rights as set out in the Withdrawal Agreement to continue living and working in the EU.

Many thanks

John Marshall, HM Ambassador

Boost for pensioners in the EU

Under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, UK state pensioners living in the EEA or Switzerland by 31 December 2020 will continue to have their UK State Pensions increased annually, in line with those in the UK.

Currently, the basic State Pension and new State Pension are increased by the “triple lock” mechanism, which ensures they will rise each year by the highest of either 2.5 per cent, the rate of inflation or average earnings.

People will get their UK State Pension updated even if they claim it on or after 1 January 2021, as long as they meet the [UK State Pension qualifying conditions](#) and those of the Withdrawal Agreement.

Also under the Withdrawal Agreement, EEA citizens and Swiss nationals living in the UK can continue to claim benefits on the same terms as now, for as long as they remain lawfully resident and eligible.

The Immigration and Social Security Coordination Bill will ensure the UK can set new rules on benefits and social security. Entitlement for EEA citizens and Swiss nationals arriving in the UK from 1 January 2021 will be aligned with that of non-EEA/Swiss citizens. Non-EEA/Swiss citizens can usually access most benefits after they have been living in the UK for 5 years.

Additional information

about the Withdrawal Agreement

- the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act confirms these protections in UK domestic law
- these protections will apply regardless of whether any agreement is reached on coordinating social security with the EU for the future
- the position of those who do not fall within this group will be covered by the future relationship with the EU, which is yet to be negotiated
- read the [UK state pension qualifying conditions](#)

- full access to the UK benefit system will only be available after settled status is granted, typically after 5 years

For more information on benefits and pensions

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

Follow DWP on:

[Government Chemist responds to Defra call for evidence](#)



The Government Chemist responded to the [Call for Evidence for the National Food Strategy](#) launched by Defra in June 2019. The purpose of this call for evidence is to gather inspiration to transform the UK food system and develop a National Food Strategy.

The Government Chemist responded to the consultation providing information about its expertise and current involvement in the areas of food allergy, food authenticity, environmental challenges and food innovation.

The Government Chemist, in view of the many synergies that the role has with the responsibilities of Defra, the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland, provided some general comments in the attached response document.

PDF, 576KB, 7 pages

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email government.chemist@lgcgroup.com. Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

For more information about the work of the Government Chemist contact:

Published 31 January 2020

[ACMD public evidence gathering: request for written evidence](#)



Getty Images

Following advice in response to COVID-19, 3 public evidence gathering days which were being arranged by the ACMD to inform reports on young people's drug use and naloxone provision have been postponed until further notice.

We are instead inviting relevant stakeholders to provide written submissions to help support these workstreams. If you would like to submit written evidence please use the forms provided and return to Robert.wolstenholme@phe.gov.uk copying in the ACMD secretariat acmd@homeoffice.gov.uk. The period for written submissions will remain open until Wednesday 30 September 2020.

The ACMD are particularly interested in hearing from stakeholders that are able to provide evidence on the following areas for young people:

- prevalence and nature of drug use among young people
- evidence of effective treatment
- descriptions of interventions or treatment models being used
- how responses could be improved
- case studies of note

[Young people's drug use and treatment](#) (MS Word Document, 22.4KB)

And for naloxone:

- prevalence and nature of naloxone provision, carriage and use
- evidence of effectiveness of naloxone provision in different settings

- evidence of who is administering naloxone (police, voluntary services, etc.)
- barriers to uptake of naloxone (both intramuscular and intranasal naloxone)
- evidence of collaborative approaches to provision
- case studies of note

[Naloxone provision](#) (MS Word Document, 22.4KB)

Published 31 January 2020

Last updated 26 June 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 26 June 2020

The period for written submissions has been extended to Wednesday 30 September 2020.

2. 20 March 2020

We have indefinitely postponed evidence gathering days due to COVID-19. We are instead requesting written evidence submissions.

3. 31 January 2020

First published.