

Press release: Record road investment in the Midlands to step up in 2018

Work is soon to start on two smart motorway upgrades on the M6 at junctions 2 near Coventry to junctions 4 near Coleshill and on the M6 between junctions 13 at Stafford to 15 near Stoke on Trent.

Once complete they will add over 30 miles of new lanes to the strategic road network, increasing capacity by a third, and introducing new technology to tackle congestion and keep drivers informed.

These schemes are part of six schemes in the Midlands reaching major milestones between January and June this year.

Other key milestones on schemes in the Midlands include:

- the Preferred Route Announcement to ease three bottlenecks on the A38 in Derbyshire
- a consultation on the improvement of the M42 junction 6 near Birmingham Airport and the National Exhibition Centre (NEC)
- a public information event about the A45/A6 Chowns Mill roundabout upgrade
- the Preferred Route Announcement to upgrade the A46/ A428 at Binley, Coventry

The upgrades are funded by the Government's £15bn investment in motorways and main A roads and being delivered by Highways England.

Highways England chief executive Jim O'Sullivan said:

These upgrades in the Midlands, will improve millions of journeys. Each of these milestones in the Midlands is evidence of Highways England delivering major infrastructure upgrades for the whole country.

April will mark three years since Highways England embarked on delivering the Government's [Road Investment Strategy](#), the biggest investment in the country's major roads since the 1970s.

Nationwide, almost 40 projects will hit key milestones in the first half of this year, joining the 18 major projects that have already opened to traffic since April 2015 and 16 others currently under construction.

Completed schemes in the Midlands include the opening last year of the strategically important Catthorpe Interchange at the M1/M6/A14.

This interchange is providing direct access between these roads and removing the queuing associated with the two very small local roundabouts, previously

used by over 45,000 vehicles per day.

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: Sign up to Make a Difference

Highways England is today urging people interested in making a real difference to road journeys across England to 'sign up' to become one of the dozens of apprentices the company plans to recruit this year.

The Government company, which manages England's motorways and major trunk roads, is responsible for some of the country's biggest construction projects.

Over the next few months it will take on up to 75 apprentices, with places made available through its website. Today, during National Apprenticeship Week, it urged people interested in building a road network for the future to sign up for alerts.

This year's Highways England apprentice of the year, project manager Amelia Kirwan aged 19, said:

I urge anyone in my position to see what Highways England has to offer.

The opportunities available to me are huge. Highways England supports my learning and I am able to explore different areas of a varied sector. Our roads are an important part of everyone's day-to-day lives and are heavily relied upon and therefore my role is really important.

Completing my apprenticeship will result in me achieving a Diploma in Project Management that is recognised worldwide – the possibilities are endless!

Highways England's apprenticeship scheme supports the government goals to

create 30,000 apprenticeships in road and rail by 2020.

New recruits will be helping to play a part in modernising England's strategic road network by developing and delivering technically advanced projects. These include schemes such as the A303 Stonehenge improvements and The Lower Thames Crossing.

The company currently offers apprenticeships in business administration, IT, electrical engineering and civil engineering and Human Resources. It is planning to extend the list to include accounts, quantity surveying, transport planning and project management.

San Johal, Highways England Human Resources Director said:

This is a great time to join our team. We are investing in the next generation, and our apprenticeships are open to all and are a real alternative to traditional routes like university.

With the UK needing an extra 20,000 engineering graduates a year, Highways England is taking part in the Year of Engineering. This national campaign is all about showing young people what an engineer is, and what they can achieve.

For Highways England we need a continuing pipeline of young engineers to help deliver the massive investment planned for our motorways and major A-roads, benefitting the economy and improving people's lives.

Each apprentice's line manager at Highways England has been specifically chosen to teach and integrate the company policies and procedures, and to ensure that the apprentice has easy access to secondment and promotion opportunities. Every apprentice has a mentor and is supported to develop their career within the company.

Highways England continues to develop strong relationships with schools and colleges as part of a wider 'early talent' recruitment plan, to encourage children to continue the study of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects, helping to inspire the engineers and construction professionals of tomorrow.

To find out more, and sign up for e-mail alerts or apply for an apprenticeship [visit Highways England's careers homepage](#)

Schools and parents are also encouraged to log into [The Big Assembly](#) this Thursday 8 March, to join the thousands of people being online at the same time gaining career advice.

Further case studies are also available.

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Press release: Parole Board will have new phone numbers and email addresses from 12 March 2018

What is happening?

The Parole Board is moving to a modern IT platform to help support its work going forward.

What does this mean?

This means that it is necessary for the Parole Board to change all of its phone numbers and email addresses.

When will this happen?

The new phone numbers and email addresses will be active from 12 March 2018.

How will I contact the Parole Board?

Here are the new general enquiries and press enquiries contact details that you can use to contact the Parole Board from 12 March 2018:

What about writing to the Chair or CEO?

Here are the new email addresses to contact the CEO or Chair of the Parole Board:

Things to remember:

- Monday 12 March 2018 is the first day the new numbers and email addresses will be used.

- All phone numbers are brand new
 - All email addresses will end with @paroleboard.gov.uk
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[News story: Tax break to help Black cabs go green](#)

Britain's black cabs will get a new boost to go green when a tax exemption for electric taxis comes into force this April. The exemption, worth £1,550, will apply to new cabs purchased from April onwards, and follows the [Autumn Budget](#) announcement that zero emission taxis worth over £40,000 will no longer have to pay a Vehicle Excise Duty charge.

Currently, all cars over £40,000 are required to pay this charge. By exempting zero emission taxis, it is hoped that cabbies will be incentivised to replace their old diesel taxi for a cleaner, greener electric version.

If just one switches to a zero emission vehicle, it would rid the country of seven tonnes of carbon dioxide a year. With over 75,000 black cabs operating in England alone, the impact this would have on the environment would be significant.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond said:

We're backing Britain's black cab drivers to go green.

This is a victory for the environment and new technologies, which I am determined to support as we build an economy fit for the future.

Ensuring the air in our bustling towns and cities is free from pollution is part of our quest to become the first government to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

CEO of LEVC, Chris Gubbey said:

We are delighted that the Treasury has brought forward previously announced changes to Vehicle Excise Duty for green taxis. These measures will encourage more cabbies to switch to zero emissions transport sooner – meaning improved air quality across the UK.

A small number of drivers who already own the vehicle or are expecting to take delivery in March will still have to pay an additional £310 charge. However, LEVC will compensate these drivers

to ensure that they are not penalised for being the first to make the transition to a cleaner vehicle.

Traditionally, black cabbies have had limited choice in what vehicle they can buy. This has meant that until now, cabbies have been forced to pay charges which their competitors – who can choose more affordable vehicles – can avoid.

Not only will today's exemption save drivers from paying the VED charge but by transferring to a zero emission electric cab they will also benefit from, on average, over £400 a month in fuel savings.

This is part of a wider government plan to transform air quality in our towns and cities. It builds on the £7,500 Plug in Taxi Grant, which helps cab drivers buy a zero emission vehicle.

And, at [Autumn Budget](#), the government announced a £400 million Charging Infrastructure Investment Fund to support the industry to roll out charge points for electric vehicles across the UK.

[Speech: The legislation game](#)

Hayley Rogers, Office of the Parliamentary Counsel

Scratching my head over how to interest civil servants in a training course on the legislative process, I hit on the idea of creating a board game that would lead players through the process, from initial ministerial bright idea to fully implemented Act of Parliament.

For the uninitiated, this journey can often feel rather like an arcane game of snakes and ladders, so a board game seemed like the ideal way of bringing it to life. We were up against a deadline, so I drew the board freehand, and a group of us pooled our collective war stories on bills to come up with some realistic "chance" cards that would send players backwards or forwards through the process.

And so "Legislate?!" was born... that was four years ago, and since then it has been played by hundreds of civil servants at training events, along with students visiting Parliament and members of the public during Parliament Week. It has proved a popular and engaging way of helping people to understand the legislative process, with many comments along the lines of "It's surprising anything ever makes it into law!".

For some time now we've been asked whether we could make the game more widely available, and one player who came along to last year's Parliament Week event just happened to work for GDS. Terence Eden offered us his expertise to turn

the hand-drawn board into something digital, and the cards instructions for players and background information for facilitators into something printable.

You can access [everything you need to play "Legislate?!"](#). If you have feedback, we'd love to [hear from you](#).

Office of the Parliamentary Counsel colleagues