

A55 update

He said:

“Firstly, over the last 4 years we have undertaken a major programme of works to bring the A55 tunnels at Conwy, Penmaenbach and Pen y Clip up to current legislative and design standards. I am pleased to report that the programme came to an end last night with the re-opening to normal operation of the Conwy tunnel. It is now my expectation that all maintenance and improvement works for the medium to long term will be carried out overnight.

“Last week also saw the re-opening of the westbound A55 at Abergwyngregyn where we are carrying out advance flood alleviation works to improve the resilience of that section of the A55. Works will now continue off-line with little impact on traffic.

“However, the A55 recently suffered a significant partial failure of a bridge joint just west of Llanddulas. We have had to put together an emergency package of works to minimise the impact on the A55 should that joint fail completely. We are thus installing a full central reserve crossover at Rainbow Bridge. This is vital, as any further failure of the joint, which would require immediate and full closure of the westbound carriageway, would allow us to effect contraflow on the eastbound carriageway. That would cause significant delays in itself, but without the crossover the only option would be to divert all traffic, 24/7, onto the old road from Llanddulas to Colwyn Bay (which would result in disruption similar to that caused by last year’s chemical tanker spill but over a much longer period).

“The crossover works, which are being carried out to a extremely challenging programme by local contractors, will be complete by Wednesday 5th April at the latest. The works cannot be removed at the weekend because it is too unsafe to leave a gap of over 200 metres in the central reserve.

“Our suppliers are, concurrently, progressing a design of a temporary fix for the bridge joint which will provide sufficient support to keep the joint from complete failure until we can effect planned contraflow next winter to replace the joint.

“As the works will continue over the forthcoming weekend we are extending messages across the border to warn motorists to allow extra time for their journeys.

“Finally, you may not be aware but we have resurfaced long lengths of the A55 over recent weeks, all carried out overnight with very little disruption to traffic.

"I hope this gives you confidence and reassurance that investment in the A55 is being made at pace, with the aim of minimising disruption. I will not compromise on the safety of motorists, but I am also determined to ensure infrastructure upgrades are carried out in a most timely fashion.

"I will be inviting journalists to visit roadwork sites on the A55 in the future and would welcome the opportunity to host you on such visits."