

Press release: M6 bridge on the move in 24-hour operation this weekend

The bridge, north of Stafford, will be dismantled and the entire 150-tonne centre section lifted clear and taken away in one piece on a 90ft long specialist transporter to a nearby compound.

The work forms part of plans to improve journeys in this area by adding extra capacity and technology to the motorway.

Other sections of the Creswell Home Farm bridge will be taken away later. In total, the bridge contains enough concrete to fill 40 tipper trucks. The old bridge will be recycled and used in the construction of the upgraded motorway.

The transporter that will be used to remove the 150-tonne centre section of the bridge

While work takes place the M6, between Stafford (junction 14) and Stoke-on-Trent (junction 15), will be closed in both directions for up to 24 hours from 8pm on the evening of Saturday 22 September. It will reopen on Sunday 23 September as soon as work is completed, and it is safe to do so.

The bridge is no longer in use and is too narrow for the upgraded motorway which will have an extra lane in each direction.

Highways England smart motorways project sponsor, Peter Smith, said:

Demolishing the bridge is a big and complex job and to do it safely both carriageways of the motorway are needed, meaning the M6 will be closed for up to 24 hours.

We're doing all we can to minimise disruption. That is why we are arranging to take the centre section away in one piece, rather than breaking it up which would take more time.

I'd like to thank motorists, businesses and residents for their patience. I'd also urge anyone wanting to use the M6 in that area to plan an alternative route to avoid congestion between Stoke and Stafford. Please also allow extra travel time and fuel for your journey.

Traffic will be diverted off the M6 between junctions 14 and 15 and will use the A34 Stone Road as the diversion route. This route has been agreed with local authority partners and will be kept clear of other works during the demolition. Drivers are warned to expect delays and urged to avoid the area if possible, allowing lots of extra time for essential journeys.

To reduce M6 traffic on the day, signs will alert motorists to the closure as far away as Dover and Carlisle. Motorists and hauliers travelling between the North West and the Midlands and South of England will be urged to avoid the area by using the M62 and M1.

Work is under way with emergency services and social care providers to ensure they maintain their services along the route.

More information can be found on the M6 junction 13 to junction 15 smart motorway [scheme web page](#).

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.

News story: Lift-off: F-35 take-off technology site opens ahead of historic flight trials

The 'LiftWorks' facility, which has opened at Rolls-Royce in Bristol, makes the 'LiftSystem' to provide F-35 fighter jets with a fan propulsion system that allows them to take off over short distances, hover, swivel mid-air and land vertically.

It is vital to the jets being able to operate from aircraft carriers, and comes ahead of the stealth jets completing their historic first trials off the flight deck of Britain's largest ever warship, HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The site will support more than 100 jobs in the area after more than £20 million was injected into transforming the former Defence Manufacturing building into an advanced facility dedicated to developing the unique technology.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

As we build up to the iconic first F-35 take-offs from our brand-new aircraft carrier, it is timely to open this Bristol site which is making it all possible. The incredibly powerful systems made at

this high-tech facility mean our jets will be able to operate from British sovereign territory anywhere across the world's seas to fight any adversaries which threaten us. The F-35 programme is the biggest in the history of defence, and is supporting a hundred jobs here at LiftWorks – as well as thousands more right across the country.

The LiftSystem, which has a thrust strong enough to lift 17 Mini cars and a clutch that provides enough torque to turn the London Eye, was designed and developed by teams of engineers at Rolls Royce engineers in Bristol and Indianapolis.

The Bristol site is not only making the LiftFan for UK jets, but for all F-35B jets on order across the world. Production at the site has been building up since 2009, with the official opening now marking the fact that the facility is heading towards peak manufacturing levels.

British companies are building 15% by value of all 3,000 F-35s planned for production. It is projected that around £35 billion will be contributed to the UK economy through the programme, with around 25,000 British jobs also being supported.

The 'Liftworks' facility is one of many cutting-edge manufacturing sites across the UK contributing to the wider Rolls Royce LiftSystem contract for the F35 programme. 40% of the work under this contract takes place in the UK, supporting 900 jobs across the supply chain.

During the visit, the Minister unveiled a plaque marking the official opening of the Filton site before embarking on a tour of the facility where he met employees, apprentices and graduates.

A state-of-the-art new facility making unique vertical lift technology for fighter jets has been opened by Defence Minister Stuart Andrew in Bristol. Crown copyright.

Chief of Materiel (Air) for the MOD's procurement agency, Defence Equipment and Support Air Marshal Julian Young said:

The STOVL system on the UK's F-35B Lightning II fleet has been performing exceptionally well for the Lightning Force. We saw this earlier this Summer when F-35s used the Vertical Landing Pads at RAF Marham for the first time. The opening of the new LiftWorks facility at Rolls-Royce promises even greater enhancements to this pioneering technology.

Rolls-Royce Director of Customer Business Defence Alex Zino said:

Rolls-Royce has pioneered STOVL technology through our development of the Pegasus engine for the Harrier and has now taken that

capability to new levels in the shape of the LiftSystem for the F-35B. This new facility enables us to continue produce cutting edge technology to our customer while also ensuring that we are reducing their costs.

The F-35B Lightning multi-role fighter jet is the first to combine radar evading stealth technology with supersonic speeds and short take-off and vertical landing capability.

During his opening speech, the Minister also announced that the UK has accepted its 16th jet, which is now set to fly into Beaufort, South Carolina. There are around 200 British personnel at the American site testing the aircraft. The fighter jets will be jointly manned by the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy and can operate from land and sea, forming a vital part of Carrier Strike when operating from the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers.

It has been a monumental year for Britain's F-35 jets, after the first aircraft touched down on home soil in RAF Marham in June, two months ahead of schedule. They are on track to be operational by the end of the year. There are now nine of the jets at the Norfolk base, whilst more British jets continue to undergo flight trials in the United States.

[Last month saw a British F-35 jet carry out its first trials armed with UK-built weapons](#), showcasing the major role that the UK plays in the supersonic aircraft. The ASRAAM missiles are built by MBDA, and the Defence Minister also paid a visit to their Bristol factory while he was in the region.

The site is [benefitting from contracts worth over half a billion-pounds for Royal Navy missile systems](#) which will go on to protect the new Queen Elizabeth Class Carriers and the extended fleet from current and future threats.

Both sites form a key part of defence's huge footprint in the South West, where it spends £5.1bn with industry – more than in any other part of the country – supporting 33,500 jobs.

[Notice: Y043 4EB, Richard Towse and Helen Towse: environmental permit issued](#)

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit, decision document for:

- Operator name: Richard Towse and Helen Towse
 - Installation name: Marl Farm
 - Permit number: EPR/ZP3432JX/A001
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Notice: HU12 8DS, Tricoya Ventures UK Limited: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: Tricoya Ventures UK Limited
 - Installation name: Tricoya Ventures UK Limited
 - Permit number: EPR/FP3432JH/A001
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News story: Qatari jet export deal swings into action

The deal, worth around £5bn includes the aircraft and a bespoke support and training package. Qatar is now buying nine Hawk trainers, rather than six, which will also be welcome news for BAE Systems' factories in Warton and Brough which make the jets.

Welcoming the news, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This monumental, multi-billion-pound deal is now officially in place, and those from across government and industry who have worked so hard on it together can be extremely proud to see it reach this stage. It's a massive boost to the British defence industry, helping to support thousands of jobs, and it will help us further build the trust between the UK and Qatar to tackle the challenges we both share, support stability in the region and deliver security at home.

UK Export Finance's (UKEF) £5bn package of support was vital to securing the deal, including by providing financing and insurance. UKEF's role is to

support UK exports including by providing export finance to enable overseas buyers to purchase goods and services from the UK, and export insurance for companies selling overseas.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

The UK Government is proud to be a part of this hugely significant export contract, supporting BAE Systems, its nearly 35,000 employees and the 9,000 companies in its supply chain.

This support from UK Export Finance will sustain jobs in one of the UK's key industrial sectors, support economic growth, and strengthen our own defence capabilities as well as those of a key strategic ally.

BAE Systems Chief Executive, Charles Woodburn said:

This contract, effective today, represents a significant step in BAE Systems' long-term relationship with the State of Qatar, as it becomes the ninth country to choose Typhoon. The proven combination of Typhoon and Hawk will provide the Qatari Armed Forces with the most advanced and flexible multi-role combat aircraft on the market today, along with best in class support and training.

The Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and his Qatari counterpart, Dr Khalid bin Mohammed al Attiyah, oversaw the signing of the deal in Doha in December. Deliveries of the first Typhoon aircraft are expected to commence in 2022.

The deal also involves a package of training and co-operation between the British and Qatari Air Forces which will see them working closely together in the future. A new UK-based Typhoon joint squadron, reformed as No.12 squadron, will comprise both Qatari Emiri Air Force and RAF personnel, including pilots and ground-crew based at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire ahead of the delivery of the aircraft. It represents a unique initiative, with the RAF not having formed a squadron with another nation since the Second World War and the Battle of Britain.

The UK and Qatar share mutual interests in countering violent extremism, and ensuring stability in the region, and the deal further reinforces those ties by helping to prevent terrorism from spreading and protecting the prosperity and security of the UK at home.

Qatar is the ninth country to purchase the Typhoon, with the deal sustaining thousands of UK jobs. The MOD continues to bang the drum for the UK's world-leading aerospace industry, with sales of defence equipment to foreign customers surging by 53% last year to £9bn.

The UK is a world-leader in the combat air sector, with a mix of skills and technologies unique in Europe, supporting over 18,000 highly skilled jobs.

The sector delivers a turnover of more than £6bn a year and has made up over 80% of defence exports from the UK over the last ten years.

The support follows the launch of the Government's Export Strategy, which sets out how the government will support businesses of all sizes to make the most of the opportunities presented by markets around the world.