

# Press release: Highways England repairs project on Oldbury Viaduct enters next phase

Repair teams on the M5 Oldbury Viaduct scheme are gearing up for the next phase of the mammoth scheme with traffic set to switch to the northbound carriageway next month.

Concrete repairs and waterproofing on the southbound carriageway are now nearing completion along a two-mile section of the viaduct.

From Monday 3 September, the entire operation, between junctions 1 and 2, transfers from the south to the northbound carriageway.

For work to begin on the northbound carriageway, traffic will move over onto the completed southbound carriageway. The switching process will last around a week and to minimise disruption will take place gradually overnight to ensure traffic flows during the day.

Highways England Head of Service Delivery, Andrew Butterfield, said:

We're fast approaching completion of work on the southbound carriageway.

I appreciate it's not been straightforward getting here. We were only able to fully assess the condition of the southbound carriageway once the work had started and found around 6,000 individual repairs were needed, which is 4,500 more than anticipated. To add to the challenges, we had one of the harshest winters, followed by warmest summers in years.

As a result, work on this section has taken longer than expected, but we're committing every resource available to get this work done as safely and quickly as possible. "We understand the level of disruption this project involves, and we'd like to thank motorists, businesses and residents for their patience.

At more than £100 million, M5 Oldbury is believed to be the largest concrete repair project, by value, ever carried out in Britain. At the same time, it is also thought to be the largest scaffolding project in Europe, with over 400 hundred miles of scaffolding erected, enough scaffold boards to cover seven football pitches and enough scaffold staircases to reach the top of Ben Nevis and Snowdon.

Much of the work takes place underneath the viaduct and so the workforce, averaging around 500 people, cannot always be seen by the travelling public.

To keep the motorway open during the work, a contraflow system is currently in place with traffic using the carriageway with two lanes operating in each direction, along with a 30mph speed limit.

Slip roads at junctions 1 and 2 will remain open once the switch takes place to ease effects on the local network. When the main concrete repairs are completed, the M5 will return to three narrow lanes in each direction so that work, including central reservation upgrades, can take place. For more information about the work at Oldbury viaduct visit <https://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/oldburyviaduct>.

## **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: Highways England's regional control centre goes 'open house'](#)**

Highways England is throwing open the doors of its high-tech regional control centre at Newton-le-Willows in Merseyside as part of a campaign to encourage people to consider working for the organisation – including young people thinking of engineering as a rewarding career.

As part of the national Year of Engineering initiative, the government company – which operates England's motorways and major A roads – is staging the open day at the North West Regional Control Centre on Saturday 15 September to let people take a closer look at what really goes on behind the scenes.

Some of the region's traffic officers who featured in this year's series of Winter Road Rescue

The ticketed event is open to anyone who is interested in working for Highways England. Visitors can find out how a motorway is run from the control room, meet the traffic officers – some who may be familiar faces from the Channel 5 documentary series Winter Road Rescue – meet some of the project teams who carry out the engineering schemes and find out what initiatives are being planned to improve road safety.

New tyre scanners will be among the road safety equipment on show at the open day

Highways England operations manager Louise Boothman said:

As well as the obvious civil and electronics engineering jobs and on road and control room traffic officer posts, Highways England provides job opportunities across many different disciplines and we have offices and outstations around the North West.

The theme of Year of Engineering is 'take a closer look' and our open day at the control centre is the perfect opportunity for anyone who is interested in applying for a job with us – including budding engineers – to find out more. There really is something for everyone at the event so I would encourage people to book onto 1 of the 2 sessions we are planning – and to book early, as tickets are limited.

During the open day, there will be a chance to look round one of the company's high visibility traffic officer vehicles, see the impact protection vehicles that help protect road workers, and get a closer look of some of the portable signage.

Safer tyre scanners will be available to view as well as the opportunity to talk to some of Highways England's road safety partners who will have various cars and motorbikes involved in road safety for visitors to take a look at.

There will be a guided tour and someone on hand to answer the various questions people may have.

The event will be staged across 2 sessions – between 10am and 12.30pm and between 1pm and 3.30pm. There will be spaces for 70 people on each session. A waiting list will be set up if any further tickets become available. Anyone wishing to book attendance at the event should visit this [weblink at Eventbrite](#).

Although the RCC opened in September 2005 at the launch of the North West Traffic Officer Service, this will be its first ever public open day. The building is situated alongside the southbound M6 just south of Haydock Island at junction 23.

More information on Year of Engineering is available at: [www.yearofengineering.gov.uk](http://www.yearofengineering.gov.uk).

## **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.

---

## **[Notice: SN15 5HH, Mr John Howat, Mrs Christine Howat and Mr Ian Howat: 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: Mr John Howat, Mrs Christine Howat and Mr Ian Howat
  - Installation name: Upper Startley Farm
  - Permit number: EPR/NP3131MZ/V003
- 

## **[Press release: Reducing noise for Wakefield residents](#)**

A new pioneering noise barrier which will improve the lives of residents living next to the M1 at Wakefield will be installed later this year.

Living next to a motorway has its benefits, it makes it easier to access surrounding towns and cities to visit friends and family, or commute to work, but the noise of the motorway can be an issue for some communities.

The innovative design being installed at the Denby Dale junction has never been used before in the UK. The barrier not only reduces noise but will also act as a safety barrier.

Highways England's project manager Sujad Hussain said:

There has been a long standing issue of noise from the motorway at this location and by installing 4 sections of barrier we will be able to improve noise levels for residents living nearby.

We are planning to start work in November but before then we will be holding a drop in session in September for people to find out more about the work. I would encourage people to come along and ask the project team any questions they may have about the barrier and the work that is planned.

Highways England is installing the barrier on 4 sections of the M1 at junction 39: On the southbound carriageway and southbound entry slip road and on the northbound carriageway and northbound exit slip road.

The barriers, 3 at 3 metres high and 1 at 1.85 metres, will be constructed off site meaning there will be less chance of weather having an impact on the work. It will also be safer as there will be fewer vehicles moving around the work site.

During the work a 50mph speed restriction will be in place for safety reasons. The hard shoulder and lane 1 on the main carriageways will be closed along with lane 1 on the northbound exit and southbound entry slip roads so a temporary safety barrier can be installed while the work is taking place. The same slip roads will be closed overnight with clearly signed diversions in place.

Anyone interested in the work can come along to a drop in event on Wednesday 5 September, 2pm-8pm in the Boardroom, second floor, Cedar Court Hotel, Denby Dale Road, Calder Grove, Wakefield, WF4 3QZ

The media is invited to attend the event between 2.30pm and 3pm. Please confirm attendance with Highways England Media Relations Manager Michaela Maunders on 07701295018.

### **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: London market trader fined for selling rotten fruit with\*\*](#)

# incorrect labelling

A London based market trader has been fined for displaying, offering for sale and selling rotten fruit and vegetables that failed to meet the minimum quality standards.

Brian Childs, a stallholder at Queens Market in Upton Park, London was fined £1,998 at Thames Magistrates' Court on 22 August 2018, following an investigation by the Rural Payments Agency's (RPA) Horticultural Marketing Inspectors (HMI).

Mr Childs, who trades under the name of Jaqueline Childs, runs one of the largest independent fruit and vegetable stalls within the purpose-built indoor complex.

An HMI inspection found the stall selling rotten lettuce, plums and papaya, while kakis and limes were being marketed with incorrect country of origin labelling.

Peter Bainbridge, RPA Operations Director said:

The ultimate objective of the RPA's Horticultural Marketing Inspectors is to work closely with the fresh produce industry at all times. They use face-to-face inspection as a means of providing advice and guidance to help support retailers such as Mr Childs understand the role that the marketing standards can play in adding real value to their business.

Unfortunately their advice is not always heeded by individuals and businesses and when all other options are exhausted, the RPA will resort to the use of criminal sanction to bring about a required change in behaviour.

On top of the fine, HMI investigation costs of £2,049 were awarded, along with victim surcharge, producing a total financial penalty of £4,138.

## Background

- Horticultural Marketing Inspectors are part of the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). The team is responsible for the enforcement of the EU marketing standards for fresh fruit, vegetables, salad crops, nuts and cultivated mushroom, throughout England and Wales, wherever fresh produce is grown, imported, exported, bought or sold.