

# News story: Lord Duncan hails golden age of agricultural innovation at Royal Highland Show

UK Government Minister Lord Duncan will today [22 June 2018] attend a series of engagements at the Royal Highland Show as he reflects on his first year in office and the importance of scientific innovation in farming and agriculture to help grow this vital sector.

Speaking ahead of the show, Lord Duncan said:

“Agriculture is part of the lifeblood of the UK. It feeds us, fuels us, pumps in billions of pounds to the UK economy, and supports nearly 400,000 jobs in Scotland alone. Indeed 80% of Scotland’s land mass is involved in agricultural production.

“It is also an area which is at the cutting edge of science and technology. Anyone who thinks that farming is tweedy and dusty would be astounded at the level of technology and scientific precision involved in modern day agriculture. “From robotics to genetics and feeding the world, the UK is a pioneer in technological innovation.

“We know that this work in innovation is key to increasing productivity and sustainability in agriculture and will allow the UK to continue to compete globally, meeting the growing demand for British food around the world.

“The UK Government is helping pioneering Scottish scientists lead the way in tackling problems such as pests and disease. The Department for International Development (DFID) is funding new cutting-edge research to allow farmers to grow crops that are more nutritious, more resistant to disease and better able to withstand severe floods or drought in Africa.

“This is being carried out by scientists at the University of Edinburgh, who are also leading ground-breaking work on devastating diseases which cause huge economic losses for African farmers.

“DFID is also contributing £4m funding to the Centre for Tropical Livestock Genetics and Health, which is based in both Edinburgh and Nairobi and progresses scientific advances in genetics and genomics that help smallholder dairy and poultry farmers in sub-Saharan Africa.

“In February, Business Secretary Greg Clark announced £90 million of new funding through the UK Government’s modern Industrial Strategy, to support agricultural technology through Artificial Intelligence, robotics and earth observation to improve supply chain resilience in the agri-food sector. He highlighted how new technology is boosting farmers’ earning power and making agri-businesses more productive and profitable than ever before.

“The funding, delivered as part of the new the Industrial Strategy Challenge

Fund, will make it easier for food and agri-business to embrace technology and innovation that will be critical to meeting the increasing food demands of a growing population, fuel rural growth and create high-skilled jobs.

“While at the Royal Highland Show I’ll be having a ‘superfood breakfast’ at the James Hutton Institute tent, and hearing about their ground breaking work in developing science to help feed the world – from right here in Scotland. They are key partners in the developing Tay Cities Deal – which will see the UK Government working in tandem with the Scottish Government and partners to develop projects which will impact the Tay Valley and the world.

“It’s been one year since I became a UK Government minister, and in that time I have put championing innovation and agriculture at the heart of my priorities, travelling the length and breadth of Scotland to visit farmers, scientists and stakeholders, and I look forward to seeing even more of the exciting future that agriculture has at the Royal Highland Show.”

Examples of UK Government work in supporting technological and scientific development in agriculture:

#### [UK Aid: Super-Crops](#)

- In January International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt announced UK aid research, which is being carried out by international organisation, CGIAR, during a joint visit to the University of Edinburgh with Bill Gates into super-crops.
- UK scientists are leading new cutting-edge research to allow farmers to grow crops that are more nutritious, more resistant to disease and better able to withstand severe floods or drought in Africa, in addition to developing medicines to protect farmers’ livestock from devastating disease.
- At the University of Edinburgh, scientists are also leading ground-breaking work on diseases which cause huge economic losses for African farmers, including Animal African Trypanosomiasis (AAT), a disease which kills over 3 million cattle a year, has been estimated to cost over \$4bn a year in total to African economies and can cause sleeping sickness in people.
- Ms Mordaunt also announced plans to develop the Centre for Tropical Livestock Genetics and Health, which is based in both Edinburgh and Nairobi.
- DFID will support CGIAR with funding of £90m over 3 years. CGIAR’ was originally the acronym for the ‘Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research’. In 2008, CGIAR redefined itself as a global partnership. To reflect this transformation and yet retain its roots, ‘CGIAR’ was retained as a name. CGIAR is now a global research partnership for a food-secure future. The role of CGIAR is to deliver new agricultural technologies to support food and nutrition security and growth. Access to high-yielding, drought, heat and disease-resistant crops and livestock underpins the livelihoods and incomes of poor farmers and is essential to combat hunger and reduce the risks of crop failure.
- Technology developed by CGIAR was at the heart of the green revolution,

tripling yields and lifting millions out of poverty and hunger. CGIAR-developed varieties of the 10 main food crops are now grown on over 200 million ha in developing countries.

- This new funding will support the development and deployment of: crop varieties that are climate resilient, more resistant to heat, drought and flooding; crop varieties that are more nutritious, with elevated levels of essential micronutrients; agronomic practices that boost resilience and reduce the use of costly inputs; new livestock varieties, diagnostics, vaccines and medicines, to reduce the risks faced by livestock farmers.
- The Centre for Tropical Livestock Genetics and Health (CTLGH) will receive £4 million through funding by DFID. It is a joint venture launched by three partners – the Roslin Institute of the University of Edinburgh, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) and CGIAR – International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), who have created a new, multidisciplinary Centre for Tropical Livestock Genetics and Health, with two main nodes, one in Edinburgh and one in Nairobi.
- The Centre will mobilise the most recent scientific advances in genetics and genomics that have led to substantial gains in livestock productivity in temperate zones and apply these to improve livestock productivity in tropical environments, for the benefit of smallholder dairy and poultry farmers in sub-Saharan Africa.

### [Agri-Tech](#)

- Global demand for food is projected to grow 60% by 2050 – we want Britain, with its scientific know-how and flair for innovation and quality, to be in a superb position to take advantage.
- Technological innovation is key to compete globally, unlocking the potential of farming by improving productivity and tackling problems such as pests and disease.
- UK Government investment will help build on the strengths of the UK's booming agri-food sector, which employs around 4 million people across the UK, and support it by:
  - bringing together businesses, farmers and academics to take forward priority research projects through new Challenge Platforms
  - supporting Innovation Accelerators which will be responsible for exploring the commercial potential of new tech ideas at pace
  - demonstrating innovative agri-tech projects and how they will work in practice
  - launching a new bilateral research programme that will identify and

accelerate shared international priorities and help build export opportunities for pioneering agricultural-technologies and innovations overseas

- UK farmers, agri-tech companies and research centres are already leading the way in this area, using technology like data, robotics and AI to help create new technologies and herald innovative new approaches, including:
  - the Agricultural Engineering and Precision Innovation (Agri-EPI) Centre is bringing together leading organisations in the food supply chain to become a world-leading centre for excellence in engineering and precision agriculture
  - the mobile app and website CROPROTECT, developed by Rothamsted Research, is helping farmers to protect their crops with farmers and agronomists using it to exchange best practice and tips on smart management of pest, weed and diseases
  - Ordnance Survey have used their satellites to accurately map 232,342 miles of England's farmland hedges to create a new digital dataset and use planes with fixed state-of-the-art digital cameras to record thousands of individual photos that can map out farms and entire green landscapes

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## Speech: Mansion House 2018: Speech by the Chancellor of the Exchequer

My Lord Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Last year this Dinner was cancelled out of respect to the tragedy that was unfolding at Grenfell Tower.

Tonight, our thoughts are with the victims and their families, and I underline again this government's twin commitments to justice for the victims; and regulatory change to ensure that such a tragedy can never happen again.

And of course, we remember Jo Cox, whose death cast a long shadow over this event two years ago.

My Lord Mayor – it's a pleasure to be here this evening. The only event of the year at which I get slow hand-clapped before I've opened my mouth!

I know that some in the room will be distracted this evening, their thoughts elsewhere.

Nervous about the challenge to our nation's survival from Belgium.

About the aggressiveness of France and Germany.

About the threat from a resurgent Russia.

But enough of England's chances in the World Cup.

And apologies that you are here listening to me rather than watching Messi take on Croatia.

At least the Governor won't be missing any Canada games.

Just as the world is embarking on a technological revolution that will transform the way we live and work, and the organisation of our society and our economy.

We are seeing a rising tide of sentiment, here in the UK, in Europe, and around the world, against the conventional wisdom that free trade and open market economies are the best way to deliver prosperity for our people.



And here in Britain, we face the additional challenge of charting a new relationship with our European neighbours.

These profound changes will bring extraordinary opportunities that we must embrace.

But also huge challenges that we must address.

And tonight I want to speak about how we navigate these challenges – and seize these opportunities – to ensure that post-Brexit, Britain continues to be a world leader in innovation, and extends London's position as the world's number one international financial services centre.

And this matters, because decisions we make and positions we take over the next few months, will shape our economy for decades to come.

The good news is that we build on strong foundations.

Britain's economy is fundamentally sound.

Unemployment is at a 40-year low, and employment is at a record high.

Real wages are, at last, beginning to rise.

Last year investment spending grew at the fastest rate in the G7.

And goods exports grew by over 7%.

But there is no room for any complacency.

And that is why our economic plan raises public investment to its highest sustained level in 40 years.

Expands the National Productivity Investment Fund to £31 billion.

With a Modern Industrial Strategy that will target high growth sectors and spread prosperity to all parts of our country.

And underpinning this economic plan is a responsible fiscal strategy.

The lowest deficit in over a decade.

With today's borrowing figures showing lowest May borrowing since 2005.

A current budget in surplus.

And the OBR forecasting debt will begin falling as a percentage of GDP this year on a sustained basis for the first time since 2001.

This week, the PM announced a 5-year NHS funding package that will boost spending on health by over £20 billion a year in real terms in England alone.

Partly funded by lower contributions due to Brussels.

Making the NHS our number one priority in the forthcoming Spending Review.

But, she also confirmed we will stick to our fiscal rules.

And will continue to reduce debt.

So, as the Prime Minister said, taxpayers will have to contribute a bit more, in a fair and balanced way, to support the NHS we all use.

While delivering on our fiscal commitments.

Of course, the immediate key to maintaining Britain's leadership in innovation and strengthening London's position as the world's leading international financial services centre.

Is ensuring we get a good Brexit deal.

And that we protect markets from uncertainty during the transition.

Working with the European Commission, we've set-up a Technical Working Group between the Bank of England and the European Central Bank which is working to manage transition risk and provide further reassurances to our financial services firms.

Our clear long-term goal is to secure an enduring partnership that reflects the four and a half decades that the UK has been a member of the EU.

That recognises that our European neighbours are our most important trading partners.

And that Dover to Calais is the busiest trading corridor in Europe.

That our peoples are connected by centuries of shared history and culture.

And that the security of our entire continent depends on our shared commitment to defending it – through our collaboration every day on intelligence, counter-terrorism, and defence.

So as we leave the EU.

We need to forge a new relationship with our European neighbours that protects those patterns of trade; those business relationships that have been painstakingly built over decades.

That maintains low friction borders and open markets.

That does not make the Treasury, on my watch, "the enemy of Brexit"; rather, it makes it the champion of prosperity for the British people outside the EU, but working and trading closely with it.

And part of that successful partnership must be a mechanism that enables UK EU financial services trade to continue.

Delivering the benefits of open markets and deep regulatory cooperation to

businesses and citizens across our continent.

Of course, we recognise that this will be a new kind of relationship.

Reflecting a new, and fair, balance of rights and responsibilities.

In my speech at Canary Wharf in March I outlined a vision of a future financial services partnership.

Where we remain highly aligned and deeply interconnected.

Even though we will be outside the EU.

And explained why this is in the overwhelming interest of UK and EU businesses and citizens.

Of course, we are not yet at the stage of formal negotiations on financial services.

But since I gave that speech, I have discussed our approach with many counterparts in the EU and beyond.

There is a mixture of views.

The view of the Commission and some Member States is that the only possible route for future financial services access is through the EU's existing, off the shelf, equivalence arrangements.

I don't agree with that.

In my speech in March I set out why the existing equivalence regime would not work for UK-EU financial services trade.

It is piecemeal, unilateral and unpredictable.

And therefore does not provide the stability that a well-regulated market requires.

And I think these weaknesses are increasingly recognised.

I know there is now an active debate in Europe about some form of 'enhanced equivalence' to structure the relationship with the UK for financial services.

But enhancement, like beauty, is very much in the eye of the beholder.

And I will be frank.

I do not consider some of the measures currently under consideration in the EU on third country regimes for CCPs.

Or some of the proposals put forward in the European Parliament on restricting investment firms, to represent "enhancements".

Because these proposals have nothing to do with equivalence.

And everything to do with an ambition to force the location of business into the Eurozone.

So although I have heard talk of 'enhanced equivalence', I have not yet seen a credible proposal for what it might mean or a clear articulation of how it might work.

So, as of today, the most developed model for a stable and efficient future financial services relationship between the UK and EU, is the one I set out in March.

And there is another point I want to make.

The UK will continue after Brexit to lead and influence international thinking on the regulation of financial services – and we will do so as the hosts of a global financial centre.

But we will all be stronger and have more influence in shaping the global debate, if we and our EU neighbours remain closely connected.

Divided, we damage all our chances of growing businesses in Europe capable of competing in a future that will be dominated by major global players located in the US and Asia.

Players who operate not only in the field of finance, but in data and technology, the new drivers of competitiveness.

Brexit is, and must remain, my most immediate priority as Chancellor.

But I am also focused on what happens next.

How Britain remains the global powerhouse for financial services that it is today.

Through Brexit.

Through the ideological squalls buffeting free trade and open markets.

And through the technological revolution that is to come.

At times of rapid change, history has a habit of making fools of us.

In 1876, Sir William Preece, chief engineer of the British Post Office, reported that: "The Americans have need of the telephone, but we do not. We have plenty of messenger boys".

There's a man who literally "missed the call of history".

Just a couple of years later, a parliamentary committee reached a verdict on Edison's new light bulbs, and I quote: "Good enough for our transatlantic friends, but unworthy of the attention of practical or scientific men".

Apparently, we really didn't like American inventions back then.

But today as we stand once again on the brink of a technological revolution.

Artificial Intelligence, robotics, biotech, Fintech, and a whole lot more.

We do so as the world's leading financial centre; a global innovation hub; the world's legal and regulatory jurisdiction of choice; a country with robust institutions; global centres of academic excellence; a vibrant culture and civil society; and fingers crossed a national football team to be proud of!

In short – an ecosystem of prosperity.

But future success is not ours by right.

If we are to retain – and entrench – our position as the world's leading financial centre.

We must act now to secure it in the face of global challenge.

By building on three core strengths.

First, industry, regulators, and government must work together to build the most innovative, pro-growth environment in the financial services world.

Our regulators already lead the world.

The FCA's regulatory sandbox has been copied, almost universally, as other countries race to keep up.

And the Bank of England is working with the FCA to explore how RegTech can revolutionise the way firms engage with regulation, potentially transforming the world of compliance.

Our Open Banking initiative will completely change the way in which consumers and small businesses engage with banking, helping them access better value and more targeted services.

Our FinTech Sector Strategy sets out to ensure Britain remains the best place in the world to setup and grow a FinTech business.

And last week we launched British Patient Capital – a £2.5 billion public investment.

As part of our plan to unlock £20 billion of new finance for UK growth companies over the next decade.

And it is not just FinTech.

We're leading the way in Green Finance too.

This is important for London as a financial centre.

And it is important for our planet.

The UK is already leading the charge in this market – with nearly 80 green bonds raising more than \$24 billion across seven currencies.

But if we are collectively to meet our global climate goals, we will need to mobilise \$90 trillion by 2030.

And it is my ambition that the UK leads the world in financing this investment.

So tonight I can announce we are establishing a new Green Finance Institute here in London, jointly funded by government and the City of London.

So that firms from across the world can access our one-stop-shop for world-leading climate science, and for capital.

Here in the UK – the home to the markets of the future.

Second, we must build our resilience.

Regulating with the right balance between protecting stability and fostering competitiveness.

Let me be clear.

Because the UK's financial services markets are around ten times bigger than our GDP.

And because we have to protect our taxpayers from unacceptable risks.

We will always champion high regulatory standards in financial services markets.

We aim to be the safest and most transparent place to do business.

Leading the "race to the top".

That means supporting our regulators, including our independent central bank.

Today I have announced that we will further strengthen the Bank of England, with reforms to its financial framework.

With a package including a £1.2 billion capital injection into its balance sheet.

Reinforcing its resilience, and its ability to meet its monetary and financial policy objectives in the future.

But resilience goes beyond regulation.

And nowhere is this more evident than the growing and evolving cyber threat.

The UK is a leader in national cyber capability.

And we have set up the National Cyber Security Centre – the first nation to leverage the unique cyber capabilities of the state and our intelligence community.

To directly strengthen the resilience of our critical business sectors.

Making the UK the most secure place in the world to do online business.

Third, we must commit to being the most open market in the world.

Open to competition.

And open to talent.

Our announcement last week that we will take doctors and nurses out of the Tier 2 Visa cap, frees up hundreds of additional places a month for highly skilled workers.

Making it easier for our financial sector to hire the best from around the world.

But the digital revolution, artificial intelligence, and automation will radically change the nature of work in this sector.

Just last week Citi estimated that machines would displace up to half its technology and operations staff in just the next five years.

That doesn't mean mass unemployment.

But it does mean the nature of work will change – as technology makes people more productive and frees many to take on a different role.

So we will need to ensure that – in addition to access to international talent – the UK has a long-term pipeline of domestic skills to meet this transformation.

To harness the brightest young minds of today to meet the needs of the financial sector of the future.

So tonight I am pleased to announce the creation of a new industry-led Financial Services Skills Taskforce

Convened by CityUK, and led by former City Minister Mark Hoban.

To understand and respond to changes in the shape of financial services.

To ensure we meet the long-term skills needs of the sector over the coming decades.

And creating opportunities for the next generation.

And there is another key factor that will power our future.

Connectivity was always at the heart of London's success.

And to succeed in the future, we must remain connected to the world – including the important emerging markets.

Today we're home to world-leading banks, from the US, from Europe, from Asia, and elsewhere.

We're the leading global hub for Renminbi trading outside of Greater China.

A major player in Rupee financing.

We're the western hub for Islamic finance.

And we have Fintech Bridges with Singapore, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, and Australia.

So while some question the benefits of openness.

Being open to the world, to its capital, its ideas, and its talent, will continue to be a foundation of the UK's economic success.

And this evening I can announce a Global Financial Partnerships Strategy.

Bringing together governments, regulators, and industry.

To build an enhanced framework for cross-border financial services.

Facilitating access to global markets.

And positioning the UK as the gateway of choice.

Our vision is for a new set of partnerships.

Combining new tools, like financial services trade agreements, and existing ones, like our financial dialogues.

Positioning the UK as the most global financial services market in the world.

Because "Global Britain" is not just a strategy for Britain's economic future.

It's a statement about what kind of people we are – and about the economy and the society we are seeking to build.

To close, my Lord Mayor – I want to return to an earlier period of transition in our history.

In the years after the Second World War, as Britain faced the end of empire – and the need to redefine our relationship with the rest of the world.

There were many who feared for our prospects

Without the colonies, trade would dry up.

Our long, proud history would end in decline.



They were wrong.

Redefining our place in the world then, presented many new challenges, at home and abroad.

But it also delivered transformative new opportunities.

Today, Britain looks and feels nothing like that post-war world.

We have emerged from that period of transformation fundamentally stronger – because of the creativity and ingenuity of the British people.

And because of the agility and resilience of our institutions.

Today, we face new challenges.

We must redefine our place in the global order once again.

But we approach the future with the confidence of a global leader in innovation, possessed of those same fundamental strengths that have always allowed our nation to rise to challenges and seize opportunities.

Determined to build on the advantages that took so many generations to achieve.

We will seize those opportunities – and we will build that better future for our country.

Thank you.

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## [Speech: Protecting Civilians in Central African Republic](#)

Thank you Mr President, and may I start by thanking our briefers, Special Representative and Under Secretary-General Onanga, Special Representative Nebie, and General Maio for your briefings and also for your and your teams' continued efforts in the Central African Republic. We know how difficult and challenging your missions are, as is the context you are operating in.

And let me then also take this opportunity to offer my condolences, on behalf of the British government, to the family of the peacekeeper who lost his life in Bambari last week.

This senseless death, one of three in the past five weeks, serves to illustrate the deteriorating security situation in the Central African Republic, which concerns the United Kingdom, like other Security Council members, very deeply.

Security in areas that were once considered relatively stable, for example in Bambari and Bangui, has deteriorated. And we commend MINUSCA's efforts to respond to and quell the violence and uphold their mandate to protect civilians.

Mr President, today, as the Secretary-General's report states, a quarter of the population have been driven from their homes as they seek safety. There are now more internally displaced people in Central African Republic than at any other point in the country's history.

And over half the population is in need of humanitarian assistance. 70 per cent of families do not have access to clean water, and 80 per cent of families do not have access to latrines. Despite this, only 20 per cent of the humanitarian response plan has been funded. The UK has given \$9 million so far in 2018, and we encourage all member states to respond to this appeal.

Mr President, we call on all armed groups, in Bangui and throughout the country, to immediately cease all forms of violence. But we also urge political, religious and community leaders to stop incitement to violence on religious and ethnic grounds. We have seen the tragic consequences of such calls to violence over the last few months. Those in positions of leadership have particular responsibility for their words.

The authorities and the international community must hold accountable those involved in attacks, violations of international humanitarian law, and abuses and violations of human rights. We must send a clear message: this behavior is not acceptable and there will be consequences, as the national justice system continues to develop and the Special Criminal Court makes progress towards operationalisation through the enactment of a new legal framework and the appointment of judicial police officers.

Mr President, we welcome the progress made to extend state authority to all areas of the country, including through the recent redeployment of civil servants and justice representatives, and we recognise the real challenge of doing so.

The deployment of the FACA units trained by European Union Training Mechanism in CAR is an important step. We commend the EUTM's efforts to support the reestablishment of a cohesive and well-trained national security force. This is not only essential for peace and security in the short term. A well-trained force which respects human rights will help to build trust between civilians and the government of the Central African Republic and thereby help to mend the social fabric which has been so deeply damaged by the conflict.

Mr President, as we have discussed in this Council many times, an inclusive political peace process is the best way to address the grievances of all parties to ensure long-term peace and security.

We very much welcome and support the African Union's leadership on this issue, through the African Peace Initiative. The visit to take stock of armed groups' grievances was a good step. The regional credibility of the African Union allows it to positively engage with all groups and we strongly

encourage the AU to continue their good work.

Indeed, we should reflect on how we, the Security Council, and the international community, can best support the African Union and enhance and support the peace initiative. The UK is open to the African Union's suggestions on how the Council and the international community can play a more supportive role, and we look forward to the interactive dialogue later.

Thank you Mr President.

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## **Press release: Giant 40-metre-wide structure to help improve journeys on M6**

The huge 20-tonne gantry will span the width of the motorway, hold 10 large electronic signs and is the biggest single structure being installed as part of a £274 million upgrade of a 20-mile stretch of the M6 to a smart motorway.

The Highways England scheme between junction 16 at Crewe and junction 19 at Knutsford involves converting the hard shoulder to a permanent extra lane and introducing new variable speed limits to help tackle congestion and keep traffic flowing.

A similar smart motorway scheme on a stretch of the M62 in West Yorkshire, which was completed in 2013, has resulted in commuters saving an average 30 minutes each week.

Arun Sahni, Project Manager at Highways England, said:

This is a major milestone for the project and a lot of planning and preparation work has been carried out to make sure the gantry can be lifted into place as quickly and safely as possible.

The superspan gantry is one of a series of structures we're installing along the smart motorway route to hold over 250 electronic signs that will provide drivers with live information about their journeys, and help to improve journey times by tackling stop-start conditions caused by sudden braking.

We'd like to thank drivers for their patience while this work takes place. We're on schedule to complete the smart motorway upgrade by spring next year and are doing everything we can to minimise disruption, including keeping all of the lanes open in both directions during the day.

Superspan gantries are constructed off-site using a series of symmetrical steel bars, and are becoming a familiar sight on motorways across England.

The gantry on the M6 between junctions 18 and 19 will be lifted into place overnight on Wednesday 27 June, with a crane lowering it onto two pillars which have already been installed on either side of the motorway. Electronic signs will then be fitted to the structure at a later date.

The southbound carriageway on the M6 will be closed between junctions 19 and 18 on Wednesday 27 June from 10pm to 6am to bring the crane onto the motorway for the gantry lift.

Police will hold traffic on the northbound carriageway for several minutes during the lift so that drivers can then continue their journeys once the gantry is in place without needing to come off the motorway to follow a diversion.

Stretches of the route will also be closed overnight, Monday to Saturday, later in the summer to install similar, smaller gantries on each carriageway. Drivers will be able to follow diversion routes when parts of the motorway are closed and details on closure dates will be publicised nearer the time once they have been finalised.

Around 500 people are currently working on the project to upgrade the M6 to a smart motorway through Cheshire. When the scheme is complete, 258 electronic signs will be used to alert drivers to changes in the speed limit, lane closures and incidents ahead.

A total of 70 CCTV cameras will also be installed to provide 100% coverage of the route and allow Highways England's traffic officers and the emergency services to respond quickly to incidents. And 18 emergency areas will be built to provide drivers with a safer place to stop if they break down.

More details are available on the [scheme website](#).

## **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.