

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.

[Speech: PM statement at press conference with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg: 21 June 2018](#)

Prime Minister Theresa May:

Jens, it's a pleasure to welcome you to Downing Street today.

The range of issues we have discussed I think underlines why NATO is as vital now as it ever has been.

And why our commitment to the Alliance remains steadfast.

Not only do we exceed the NATO target of spending 2 per cent of GDP on defence, but as we meet today thousands of our Armed Forces personnel are standing shoulder-to-shoulder with NATO allies around the world.

They serve alongside our Allies in Poland and Estonia to deter Russian aggression as part of NATO's "enhanced Forward Presence".

They are training and mentoring our Iraqi and Afghan partners to help them build a brighter and more prosperous future.

The Royal Navy has led half of NATO's Standing Maritime Forces for the past year and has declared our nuclear deterrent capability to the defence of the Alliance since 1962.

And Royal Air Force Typhoon jets stationed in Romania are patrolling the skies over the Black Sea as part of NATO's Southern Air Policing mission.

I am proud that whenever the call comes from NATO the UK is one of the first to respond.

But while we step up we cannot allow NATO to stand still.

So today the Secretary-General and I welcome the progress made on modernising NATO while recognising that there is more to do.

There has been much discussion about the need for Allies to take on greater responsibility by increasing their spending on defence and we welcome the steps that NATO Allies have taken since the Wales Summit four years ago.

Burden sharing will be one of the key items on the agenda for the Summit in July, where we will take stock of progress since the Leaders' Meeting last May and the Warsaw and Wales Summits.

Europe is shouldering more of the burden but must continue to do more.

And as the challenges we face evolve so must we, which is why another key priority for the Summit will be making NATO more modern and adaptable.

Next month we expect to agree an ambitious package of measures to strengthen our deterrence and defence, to increase our efforts on tackling terrorism, and to address the threats presented by cyber and hybrid warfare.

Our values and our unity are the source of NATO's strength, but as an organisation of 29 based on consensus, there is a risk that we cannot always act as quickly as our adversaries.

So it is reassuring that NATO continues to adapt to ensure that it is less bureaucratic, better at prioritising its activity, and more capable of taking and implementing decisions quickly.

This work will include improving readiness to make sure that we have the right forces in the right place so that they can act to protect our people.

The UK already plays an important part in this by supporting the design of a new NATO Command Structure – and I'm proud to say that we'll be committing an additional 100 posts to that Structure taking our commitment to over 1000 UK Service personnel.

Finally, this is the first time that the Secretary-General and I have met since Russia's use of an illegal nerve agent in Salisbury.

We saw a powerful demonstration of the value of the Alliance in its response to this incident and I would like to thank the Secretary General for his and for NATO's support.

This act was the latest Russian provocation in a wider pattern of malign behaviour – cyber, disinformation, political subversion and increased military posturing.

We will continue to be at the forefront of those opposing Russia's malign activity and the abuse of the international rules-based system, but we remain committed to the NATO approach of deterrence and defence backed up by periodic and meaningful dialogue with Russia.

The message that I have conveyed to the Secretary-General today is that the UK will continue to lead by example in NATO, meeting the 2% target on Defence spending, contributing across the board to Alliance missions and operations and continuing to encourage all Allies to do the same.

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Press release: United Kingdom- Poland Quadriga Joint Communiqué

Today's annual meeting of Foreign and Defence Ministers demonstrates that the UK and Poland are delivering on their commitment to develop our partnership to be even stronger and even more strategic.

We took the opportunity of this meeting to celebrate the hundred years of Polish regained independence and a bilateral relationship that has vastly expanded over a century. During that time the UK and Poland have worked and fought side-by-side for freedom in Europe and the world. We remember the heroism of British and Polish soldiers, sailors and pilots throughout the Second World War and subsequent conflicts. Our countries have a strong trading relationship and deep cultural links through the thriving Polish community in the UK. We are active partners in international fora like the UN, OSCE, EU and NATO, and our troops serve together on the ground in Poland as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence. Today we have discussed concrete ideas for how we can further enhance our strategic foreign, defence and security partnership.

As the hosts of the previous two NATO Summits, we share a deep commitment to the Alliance, and to a successful Summit in Brussels. NATO continues to adapt to the evolving security environment, having made good progress since 2014 in rebuilding and strengthening its Deterrence & Defence posture and Projecting Stability. The 2018 Summit is an important landmark in providing a modern, prepared and unified NATO. It will be an opportunity to review the progress made since Wales and Warsaw, demonstrate Allies' unity, and agree the remaining steps ahead of NATO's 70th anniversary in 2019. Ensuring the

effectiveness of NATO's deterrence and defence, including in the Eastern flank, is of vital importance for both countries. Our partnership in the area of security and defence continues to serve that purpose. Against this background, Poland and the UK stand for a timely and successful adaptation of the NATO Command Structure.

Both the UK and Poland are committed to meeting the NATO target of spending at least 2% of GDP on defence, and 20% of that on major equipment capabilities. We recognise the importance of increased defence spending across the Alliance. We also fully support NATO's open door policy and the 2018 Summit offers an opportunity to recognise the progress made by aspirants, particularly as this year marks the 10th anniversary of decisions made at the Bucharest Summit. We recognize that Euro-Atlantic integration remains an important driving force of reforms in Georgia and Ukraine.

In order to build our collective capability to tackle hostile activity and hybrid threats, the UK and Poland will draw on the complementary experiences of NATO, EU and likeminded partners, ensuring a consistency in approach across multilateral fora to all forms of threats. We commit to strengthen resilience to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear-related risks (CBRN), through practical cooperation including sharing information and lessons learnt. By coordinating the attribution of hostile activity in cyberspace and pushing for all available diplomatic tools to be used in response to cyber-attacks, we will raise the cost of malicious cyber activities. We will also explore new areas of innovation, and seek to harness the commercial cybersecurity opportunities they afford, by facilitating an exchange of ideas and expertise between British and Polish businesses.

Our two countries will enhance our strategic communications and develop strategies to reinforce our democracies, strengthen our societies' resilience, and uphold freedom of expression and a free and independent media in the face of the disinformation threat. We will further continue to initiate joint actions aimed at supporting independent media in Eastern Partnership countries so as to build resilience to Russian disinformation and build plurality and balance across media landscapes. The UK and Poland will work together to tackle hybrid threats through NATO to improve crisis management, identify the tools available to hostile actors, and enhance resilience among NATO Allies and partners. The NATO-Ukraine Platform on Countering Hybrid Warfare can play an important role, and the UK and Poland will work to strengthen this instrument.

We remain committed to continuing our efforts aimed at stabilising the EU neighbourhood and handling various challenges on the Eastern and Southern flanks. The heightened risk from Russia and the bold pattern of its behaviour, designed to undermine the rules-based international order, concerns us greatly. We have worked hand-in-hand to shape Europe's response to Russian aggression against Ukraine and hostile action. Russia's hostility has seen it operating in more agile and asymmetric ways, be it the use of a nerve agent on the streets of Salisbury or cyber-attacks such as NotPetya in Ukraine. We agreed that the best response is to maintain pressure on Russia, including through sanctions, until the Minsk agreements are fully implemented and Russia abides by agreed international norms and standards.

Our discussions also focused on the dire situation in Syria, and we agreed to continue to champion urgent humanitarian access through the UN Security Council. We call on all parties to engage fully in the UN process in Geneva towards a credible political solution. We deplore the repeated use of chemical weapons by the regime and will use the special session of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention later this month to reinforce global norms and work towards a new attribution mechanism for chemical weapons incidents. We also discussed Iran and, whilst remaining concerned about Iran's ballistic missile programme and regional behaviour, we shared a desire to maintain both the JCPOA and Transatlantic unity. The UK and Poland continue to be close partners in the Council on numerous issues, and plan to host a joint event in New York later this year.

We reaffirm our shared commitment to the security, stability, prosperity and sovereignty of all six countries in the Western Balkans. The UK and Poland will continue our close cooperation in preparation for the 2018 and 2019 Berlin Process summits. In particular, we will explore joint projects and activities on priority themes, which include countering corruption, and resilience against disinformation and the malign activity of external actors. Foreign Ministers will make a joint visit to the region between our Summits. This will ensure continuity between the British and Polish Berlin Process summits as well as a lasting, positive impact in the Western Balkans region.

Alongside our foreign and security policy collaboration, we also agreed to deepen our bilateral defence cooperation. In December 2017 we signed a defence treaty that will elevate our bilateral cooperation in the areas of information exchange, collective defence, intelligence and technologies, military exercises and investment planning. In the past year we have also made steps in the development of bilateral capability collaboration projects. The Defence Capability and Industrial Dialogue has been supported by Ministerial and senior official engagement, and we will continue to discuss opportunities for both British and Polish companies.

We have signed the Plan for Bilateral Defence Cooperation for the year 2018, and continue to deliver these commitments; working together across a full range of activities, including in such thematic areas as enhanced interoperability of forces, promoting defence industries' collaboration as well as bilateral visits and exchanges.

The UK and Poland continue to respond jointly to shared threats and hostile state activity. This includes leading discussions in multilateral organisations such as the Northern Group. This year, we both participate in two large scale exercises, SABER STRIKE and ANAKONDA 18 demonstrating the strength of our military cooperation and enduring commitment to Euro-Atlantic security. We are determined to participate in exercises aimed at restoring NATO's ability to conduct large combat operations, including in the Eastern flank.

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