

M6 milestone after weekend closures

Highways England is constructing a bridge over the M6 at junction 19 at Knutsford to improve traffic flow between the motorway and the A556 and reduce congestion around the junction roundabout.

Work to lift dozens of steel bridge beams into place over the motorway was completed on Monday 1 February with the M6 re-opening after two successive weekend closures. A drone video released today shows how much progress was made during the work.

January's torrential rain damaged Acton Bridge along the A49 over the River Weaver near Northwich and meant plans to use a long-standing A54 and A49 diversion route during the Friday and Sunday night closures had to be altered at the last minute. Highways England had to use the A50 instead, prompting a 'thank you' message to residents.

Highways England project manager Khalid El-Rayes said:

"During the first weekend we were forced to change the diversion route at very short notice. Last week, when it became clear the bridge would not be repaired in time, we worked hard to advise local people we'd be using the A50 again, including writing to about 800 householders along the route.

"We would like to thank people in Holmes Chapel, Knutsford and everyone along the A50 for their patience and support over the last couple of weekends. They have helped us reach a significant milestone in this important project to provide smoother, safer and more reliable journeys for local people and everyone else relying on what is one of the busiest junctions in the North West."

The work to crane the 18 pairs of 40 tonne bridge beams – each up to 42 metres in length – into place over the motorway involved 100 contractors delivering some 12,000 hours of activity safely. Over the two weekends, United Utilities staff were also involved in completing a water mains diversion at the roundabout as part of the overall project.

Pictures from a drone show how much progress was made during the two weekend motorway closures

Pat Cumming, senior project manager for AmeySRM which is the lead contractor on the Highways England M6 Junction 19 project, said:

This was a tremendous achievement and a real team effort. I'm extremely proud of everyone involved. We will continue to work together safely and efficiently to deliver the project with minimal disruption to Highways England customers.

Highways England revealed today it had also used the two weekend closures to do routine motorway maintenance away from the bridge site – with vegetation clearance, gully cleaning and litter picking among the tasks completed and reducing the need for lane and carriageway closures in the area at other times. Features of the operation over the two weekends included:

- Clearing or cutting overgrown vegetation and trees along 26 miles
- Cleaning almost 500 gullies, 108 manholes and more than two miles of drainage
- Removing 200 tonnes of silt along about 12 miles of the motorway
- Collecting ten cage van loads of large debris – including bumpers, tyres and ladders – and litter picking, filling over 800 black plastic bags
- 22 safety barrier repairs and all refuge areas cleaned and jetted

The new bridge is set to open in the summer. More information on the project is available at the [M6 junction 19 scheme 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.