

Press release: Highways England boosting local economy with multi-million pound upgrade of M1

The section of M1 between junctions 13 and 16 is nearly 23 miles in length, passing through Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire and provides connections to the towns of Bedford, Milton Keynes and Northampton.

It is also a key route for traffic travelling north and south and will see some 60 miles of smart motorway connecting the south of England at the M25 all the way to Catthorpe (Leicestershire) at junction 19.

Work officially starts on the scheme on 8 August and once completed, some £959m of benefits for the local area will be delivered by boosting productivity with less congestion and more reliable journeys.

It will also provide added-lane capacity on the motorway to support the development of new houses.

In Northamptonshire some 18,870 new homes are due to be built from 2011 to 2029. In Milton Keynes before 2031, the council proposes to build 26,500 new homes.

Motorists travelling through the area currently suffer from congestion with daily traffic volumes around 116,000 vehicles per day on each section, with that number shooting up to more than 140,000 vehicles per day on a Friday.

In amongst that mix, heavy goods vehicles include between 16 and 21% of the total traffic flow. Once complete, the work will see:

- an upgrade of junctions 13 to 16 to four lanes running with no hard shoulder to increase capacity
- 38 new emergency areas (EAs) and emergency roadside telephones will be installed at emergency areas
- provision of new superspan gantries to support variable mandatory speed limits and driver information
- the hardening of the central reserve and installation of a rigid concrete barrier (RCB) between J13-15 to help prevent vehicle cross-overs from opposite sides of the carriageway

Highways England project sponsor, Tabatha Bailey, said:

This is vital work to improve journeys through a busy stretch of the M1 and once complete, will boost the local economy by increasing capacity and supporting future housing development.

It will provide a continuous smart motorway from the M25 all the way to junction 19 at Catthorpe. This means that a key arterial route in England will offer increased capacity and more reliable

journeys for the hundreds of thousands of people that use the M1 every day.

To make journeys more reliable, motorists using that stretch of road will be given real-time traffic information using the latest technology which will allow them to plan more efficiently.

Narrow lanes will be in place for the duration of the work with a speed limit of 50mph in place to ensure the safety of motorists and the workforce.

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.