

Press release: Motorists urged to make plans for major M5 scheme

Concrete repairs and waterproofing work at the Oldbury viaduct, between junctions 1 and 2, get under way at the end of this month.

The scheme, valued at more than £100 million, finishes in autumn 2018, with some minor work continuing into spring 2019.

To keep the M5 open a contraflow system is being put in place. From the end of July all traffic will be diverted onto the northbound carriageway, with two lanes operating in each direction, along with a 30mph speed limit. Slip roads will be kept open throughout, to ease effects on the local network, but drivers are advised to expect long delays.

Motorists travelling from across the country are urged to consider routes such as the M42 and M6 to keep congestion to a minimum on the M5 and surrounding roads while work takes place.

To help with this there will be changes at key junctions in the area, including at M6 junction 8 southbound and M5 junction 4a northbound. This is to increase capacity where the M5 joins the M6 and M42 and reduce the amount of traffic heading towards the roadworks.

These measures are essential to manage the volume and flow of traffic through this busy part of the network and reduce the potential impact on local roads.

Changes include:

- from early July: At the link between the M6 and the M5 southbound, one lane will lead onto the M5, with three lanes continuing onto the M6, to encourage drivers to take the alternative route around Birmingham.
- from mid-July: At M5 junction 4a northbound, the layout will be changed to provide 2 dedicated lanes to the M42 and 2 dedicated lanes to the M5. The link between the M42 and the M5 northbound will also be changed to one lane
- from mid/late July: The M5 northbound at junction 4a will be further changed to provide one lane to the M5 through the junction while still providing 2 lanes to the M42. The M5 will be reduced to two lanes in each direction at Oldbury/West Bromwich in preparation for the contraflow
- end of July/start of August: Installation of contraflow on Oldbury viaduct

At those locations motorists will see a mixture of cones, lining on the road surface and barriers and there will be a 50mph speed limit on approach to the 30mph speed restriction between junctions 1 and 2.

For the first time upgraded travel information signs linked direct to the regional control centres that monitor traffic flows will provide real time

travel advice.

These digital signs are being rolled out in the Midlands to coincide with work starting on the viaduct and can suggest multiple alternative routes with up to date travel times and distances.

Highways England project manager Alastair Warnes, said:

We're doing everything possible to plan and manage the roadworks in order to keep traffic moving, minimise disruption and maximise safety.

That includes using the latest technology to help motorists adapt their journeys, using real time travel information to reduce delays as much as possible.

A network of early warning strategic travel advice signs will be deployed many miles from the junctions to allow drivers to choose alternative routes at earlier steps in their journeys.

Some of the suggested alternative routes for motorists include:

- southbound M6 traffic north of junction 16 (A500) heading South East use A50 / M1
- southbound M1 traffic north of junction 23A (A42/M42) heading South West use M69 and A46
- northbound M1 traffic south of junction 19 (M6) heading North West use M1 / A50
- westbound A14 traffic east of M1 heading North West use M1 / A50
- clockwise M25 traffic south of junction 16 (M40) heading North West use M1 / A50
- northbound M5 south of junction 8 (M50) heading for North Wales use M50 / A49
- northbound M5 south of junction 9 (A46) for North East use A46

Highways England has liaised with local authorities to minimise clashes with other works. It is also keeping the haulage, freight and distribution industries informed of the essential work to allow their lorry drivers to plan ahead and seek alternative routes.

Motorists are urged to plan journeys in advance, allow extra time and consider alternative modes of transport, car sharing or working from home where possible.

The viaduct structure itself is safe but, as it was built in the late sixties, the work needs to be carried out to protect it for the future.

Large stretches of both the M5 and M6 in the Midlands are elevated and repair work is essential to protect the structure, with a £4.7 million concrete repair scheme at the iconic Spaghetti Junction on the M6 also taking place this summer.

The work is part of a major government investment to build a modern and resilient road network. By maintaining this key corridor Highways England is delivering a huge investment that will support economic growth locally and in the wider West Midlands.

For more information about the work visit the [Oldbury viaduct project pages](#) and for information about the work on the [Spaghetti Junction project pages](#).

Highways England provides live traffic information via its website, local and national radio travel bulletins, electronic road signs and mobile apps. Local Twitter services are also available at @HighwaysWMIDS.

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.