

# Press release: New M20 junction leads record South East road investment

The construction of junction 10a, near Ashford, will unlock job-creating developments, improve journeys, and open the door to further inward economic investment for communities along the M20, a crucial link to the south coast.

Since the project was given the go ahead in December 2017, final preparations for starting construction in 2018 are nearly completed and now work will start on setting up a site compound ahead of main construction starting in the spring.

It is one of four major improvements that will start construction across South East England in the first six months of 2018, promising better, safer journeys.

The projects hitting milestones between January and June 2018 across the South East

Between now and June this year, work will also start on three smart motorway upgrades in Kent, the Solent and on the M23 near Gatwick. Together valued at over £550m, they will add around 65 miles of new lanes, increasing capacity by a third, and introducing new technology to tackle congestion and keep drivers informed. Four other upgrades across the region will hit crucial points – including public consultations that will help shape the proposals, and route announcements.

A consultation on improving junction 9 of the M3 near Winchester launched in January. And on Monday 12 February 2018, a consultation into major improvements of the M25's interchange with the A3 near Wisley in Surrey will also begin.

Highways England chief executive Jim O'Sullivan said:

These upgrades in the South East will improve millions of journeys. Each of these milestones in the region is evidence of Highways England delivering major infrastructure upgrades for the whole country.

Nationwide, 37 projects will hit milestones over the same period, including seven schemes starting construction and four improvements opening to traffic, adding much needed extra capacity to some of the country's busiest roads and improving journeys for millions of drivers.

The upgrades are funded by the Government's £15bn investment in motorways and main A roads and being delivered by Highways England.

April will mark three years since Highways England embarked on delivering the

Government's Road Investment Strategy, the biggest investment in the country's major roads since the 1970s.

The 37 schemes reaching milestones in the first half of this year will join the 18 major projects that have already opened to traffic since April 2015. A further 16 are presently in construction. Those which opened include the M3 smart motorway between the M25 and Farnborough, and a new dual carriageway on the A21 near Tonbridge in Kent.

### **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.