

Press release: Operation Brock – overnight work to start on the M20 in Kent

The work will pave the way for HGVs travelling to mainland Europe to be held on the coastbound carriageway while a contraflow system will minimise the impact for other people living, working and travelling in Kent.

The arrangement is part of a package of measures, known collectively as Operation Brock, that will help improve the resilience of the county's roads. They also include Manston Airfield and the M26.

Highways England Chief Executive Jim O'Sullivan said:

The steps we are putting in place on the M20 are based on our extensive experience of working with partners to keep the road network in this region operating safely and reliably.

They incorporate the lessons learned from our experience of Operation Stack in 2015 and techniques from our major construction schemes in other parts of the country. They will make a significant difference to reducing the congestion and disruption to both the M20 itself and the wider road network and people of Kent.

Roadworks to install the temporary steel barrier on the M20 that will be used for Operation Brock is starting this weekend and is scheduled for completion by mid-March. Overnight closures will be in place between junctions 9 (Ashford) and 7 (Maidstone) to enable the work to take place safely. From Tuesday 12 February until mid-March there will be narrow lanes and a 50mph speed limit.

During the overnight closures a clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A20. If drivers need to travel while these works are taking place, we recommend they plan ahead and allow more time for their journeys.

Operation Brock gives Kent Resilience Forum partners a set of scalable measures that can be used to queue lorries heading for mainland Europe, while keeping other traffic flowing. Highways England is working in close partnership with Kent police, Kent County Council and the Department for Transport to ensure that each phase of Operation Brock can be deployed sequentially and scaled up or down to meet demand.

These new arrangements offer a significant improvement to Operation Stack and, crucially, keep the M20 open to traffic in both directions in all but the most extreme circumstances.

Highways England will also publish traffic orders that will underpin the new

arrangements.

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.