

Press release: Partnership work to repair unexpected voids under M11

A lane closure on the M11 at Girton was lifted yesterday (Thursday 16 November) after Highways England and its partners worked together to repair a series of unexpected voids found beneath the motorway.

The voids, one of which is pictured here, were found in September, with Highways England quickly realising the urgent need to repair it and keep the 40,000 drivers that use the motorway daily moving.

Highways England project manager Karl Brooks said:

Safety is at the heart of everything we do at Highways England, and once we realised the extent of these voids underneath the M11 we moved quickly to get it repaired.

While we want to limit the impact that our work has on people's journeys, these voids did need to be repaired with haste and we needed to ensure that there would be no more surprises. We have worked with our partners to minimise the impact this work has had, and are pleased that we are now able to fully re-open the M11 to traffic at Girton.

The work to fill the voids, which were up to three meters deep in places, saw 1,200 tonnes of filling material used. Interserve and WSP, working on behalf of Highways England, had to dig out the voids to fully realise the extent of them, before being able to repair and resurface them. Drainage repairs, sheet piling installation and environmental works were also done to ensure there would be no recurrence of these voids. Further work will continue on the embankment, including replacing rabbit netting and top soiling, but this will be completed off the road itself, with a hard shoulder closure and temporary 40mph speed limit the only remaining restrictions.

The team also worked closely with their colleagues completing the new £1.5 billion A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon link road, upgrading 21 miles of the A14 to three lanes. This improved A14 will cut journey times by up to 20 minutes, and is on target to open to traffic in 2020. Both teams were able to share road closures to maximise productivity while minimising the impact on road users.

The emergency work to repair the voids is part of a wider £11 million package of work which also includes resurfacing, renewing digital message signs and safety improvements at key locations along the motorway, and on the A120 and A11.

Now completed, the temporary lane closure on the M11 at Girton has been removed, with just a hard shoulder closure and temporary 40mph speed limit

remaining to enable additional work to take place safely away from the carriageway.

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.