

[Press release: Highways England gears up for M27 smart motorway upgrade](#)

15 miles of the M27 will have an extra lane created in both directions, with upgraded signs, signals and technology to inform drivers about conditions ahead.

Today (Tuesday 19 June) plans about the upgrade have gone on show ahead of the start of main construction.

Highways England delivery director Mike Grant said:

This upgrade of the M27 between Southampton and Fareham will tackle congestion and improve journey times not only for the tens of thousands of drivers who use the M27 every day, but also holiday makers using this busy stretch of motorway to get to the south coast ports as well as the South West of England.

Smart motorways are central to our ambitious plans for modernising the motorway network and will add 120 miles of new lanes to motorways in the South East by 2020. They add vital extra capacity, improve journey times and maintain high levels of safety. Drivers will also see better information about conditions through new smart motorway technology which helps us to manage incidents, smooth traffic flow and make journeys more reliable. I encourage anyone interested in this upgrade of the M27 to a smart motorway to come to meet the project team at one of the information events, starting this Friday, 22 June in Southampton.

Drivers, business owners and local residents are invited to find out more about the plans, which will add an extra lane in each direction to the M27 from junction 4 near Southampton (the interchange with the M3) and junction 11 for Fareham, to upgrade it to an all-lane-running smart motorway. New technology will help to manage traffic to reduce delays and give drivers up to date information about conditions on the road ahead.

The M27 is a key strategic road which runs between Cadnam, to the west of Southampton, and Portsmouth and connects the M27 with the M3, and major routes into London and the rest of the UK. Around 140,000 vehicles use the M27 each day.

This stretch of the M27 is heavily used by traffic travelling along the south coast and suffers with heavy congestion, especially during UK holiday periods. The upgrade to a smart motorway will add a third extra capacity on this section, and will improve safety, ease congestion make journey times more reliable.

Under the plans, the hard shoulder will be permanently converted into a live

running lane between junctions 4 and 11 in both directions. New signs and signals will be used to vary the speed limit to reduce congestion at busy times, and to control traffic if there is an obstruction on the road ahead.

Preliminary work is already underway, with main construction scheduled to start later this year. The smart motorway will be fully operational in 2021.

Public information events are starting this week (Friday 22 June, West End Parish Centre, Southampton) with a further 10 events running until Friday 11 August. People are encouraged to attend to find out more about the plans and put any questions directly to the project team.

For more information on the scheme including the public information event dates and locations, [visit the scheme website.](#)

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.

[Press release: UK Government Ministers support rural businesses at Royal Highland Show](#)

The UK Government will show its support for Scotland's agriculture, food and farming sectors this week (from Thursday 21 June) when it takes part in the Royal Highland Show.

The UK Government's presence at the four day Edinburgh event will give the rural industries and members of the public the chance to speak to UK Government ministers and staff about what is important to them and find out more about how the UK Government delivers for people in Scotland.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

The Royal Highland Show is Scotland's biggest agriculture event and the UK Government will be taking this excellent opportunity to engage with the industry, underline the importance of the rural economy to Scotland and wider UK and show how determined we are to

get a good deal for the sector in our EU exit negotiations.

Scottish agriculture is worth £1.4 billion a year to the UK economy and my message is clear: We need to be bold and ambitious and maximise the opportunities Brexit brings. To achieve this it is vital that the UK and Scottish Governments work together – as well as with businesses – to ensure our rural economy can continue to grow.

Attracting almost 200,000 visitors last year, the show also provides an important platform for show-goers to find out how the UK Government is delivering for people in Scotland – including on funding for childcare, pensions, defence and business start-up support. I look forward to meeting businesses and members of the public over the course of the show, to hear about their priorities over the coming months and years.

The Scottish Secretary will meet industry leaders and tour the show to meet businesses and show-goers. UK Government Environment Secretary Michael Gove, UK Government Minister of State for Exiting the European Union, Lord Callanan and UK Government Minister for Scotland Lord Duncan will also visit the show.

UK Government Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

I am very much looking forward to attending the Royal Highland Show and celebrating the very best of Scottish farming, food and rural life.

As we leave the EU we want an ambitious agricultural framework that works for all of the UK. This means more freedom for Scotland to support their farming sectors and enhance their beautiful and environmentally rich landscapes.

We are continuing to work together ahead of the Agriculture Bill taking a common approach where it benefits all farmers and consumers to do so.

According to official figures, in 2016 agriculture contributed approximately £1.4 billion to Scotland's economy, employing around 67,000 people.

The Scottish Secretary will also host a Scottish beer reception, showcasing the best of Scotland's brewers.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Department for International Trade (DIT), will be promoting the GREAT Campaign: Food is GREAT. Overseas Scottish food and drink exports were worth approximately £6 billion in 2017 and food and drink businesses now employ around 115,000 people.

For further information contact the Scotland Office press office on 0131 244

[Press release: £20 million investment to help tackle loneliness](#)

- Funding will support charities and community groups to bring people together
- The money will go to support programmes that are proven to benefit individuals and society
- Hundreds of thousands of people will be helped to make connections in their communities

Charities and community groups will get £20 million of new funding to help isolated people and those suffering from loneliness, Prime Minister Theresa May said today.

The funding will go to support and expand programmes that bring people together and are proving to benefit communities.

This includes a new £11 million 'Building Connections Fund' that will be distributed to successful applicants that can help bring communities together. This will help make the most of local spaces, opening them up for community use, as well as help businesses and local services combat isolation. It will also fund projects that use technology to link those in remote areas and help improve transport connections to make face-to-face contact easier.

It will support groups to understand the impact of their work and share best practice about how to prevent loneliness.

The fund has been created as a partnership between the Big Lottery Fund and the government – who have equally pledged £5 million – and the Co-op Foundation, who has allocated £1 million to tackle loneliness among young people

In addition to this new fund, People's Postcode Lottery has committed £5 million of players money to top up existing grants it has given to charities that combat loneliness. The Health Lottery will give out £4 million to charities that work to improve social links in disadvantaged areas across England.

Prime Minister, Theresa May, said:

Feeling lonely or isolated can have a profound and devastating impact on people's lives – it can affect anyone of any age and from any background. But just as loneliness can affect any of us, so any

of us can help to overcome it.

The new funding set out today will make a big difference, helping more people to establish and maintain connections. This will build on work already going on, including through the second Great Get Together this weekend, which will see people up and down the country celebrating the strength of their communities.

This is just part of Jo Cox's legacy, and I am determined we continue to take this forward. That's why we need to do all we can to tackle loneliness, and our forthcoming strategy will build on today's funding.

Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, said:

Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, said:

This funding will support charities across the country that are fighting against loneliness. It will help improve people's lives and create a shared society for the future.

I am incredibly grateful to our funding partners for their support. There is no single solution to this issue, but together we will reduce stigma around loneliness and build on Jo Cox's legacy.

Funding applications for the Building Connections Fund will open from July 2018 with grants available until the end of December 2020.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

SUPPORTIVE QUOTES

Dawn Austwick, Chief Executive of the Big Lottery Fund, said:

As the largest funder of community activity in the country we support thousands of initiatives across the UK each year which enable people to build new friendships and celebrate community spirit. This sits at the heart of the National Lottery and we are delighted to partner with Government and the Co-op to deliver funding that will build a greater sense of belonging and happiness in communities.

Jamie Ward-Smith, Chair of the Co-op Foundation, said:

The Co-op Foundation is working to connect and empower 5,000 young

people to tackle loneliness in their communities. Our new match funding partnership with the Government, announced today, will help us build on this, extending our network of partners and reaching even more young people. We believe youth loneliness is best tackled at community level, by working with young people to overcome the stigma around this issue and helping them shape their own solutions.

Allan Leighton, Chair of the Co-op, said:

The Co-op knows through its own research that loneliness is not the preserve of the elderly, it can affect people at different life stages. Through my involvement with the Co-op Foundation I've seen how it has brought attention to the widespread, but long-overlooked issue of youth loneliness. I'm delighted that the Foundation is partnering with the Government on the Building Connections Fund, to invest £2 million in projects that bring young people together, develop their skills and help them get more involved in positive activities. Through this we will learn more about what works in tackling some of the root causes of long-term loneliness, helping young people live healthier, happier lives.

Clara Govier, Managing Director of People's Postcode Lottery, said:

Despite being more digitally connected than ever, we are facing a dire epidemic of loneliness with far reaching consequences for people's health and mental wellbeing.'

Thanks to grant-giving trusts supported by supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery, a £5 million fund has been created to benefit charities working towards more connected communities. This will tackle the issues behind loneliness which affect so many people across Great Britain.'

John Hume, Chief Executive for People's Health Trust who distribute funds for the Health Lottery said:

Social connections not only have an impact on reducing the risk of dying younger but they can also help people to recover quicker when they do become ill. That is why it is so important to support marginalised local people and communities to come together and build social links and ties.

We're grateful to players of the Health Lottery who have helped provide these vital funds and we're looking forward to working with fellow funders and the Government in addressing this important issue.

Kim Leadbeater, Jo's sister, on behalf of the Jo Cox Foundation said:

Tackling loneliness was an issue dear to Jo's heart. She began work on setting up a Loneliness Commission almost as soon as she was elected to parliament. She would be so proud to see how much progress has been made in recognising the importance of building stronger and better connected communities to help reduce the terrible damage done by loneliness. I'm particularly pleased that this significant funding announcement is being made in the week that we remember my sister's murder two years ago and celebrate the values she lived by with The Great Get Together this coming weekend.

The government's work will be led by Tracey Crouch, who was appointed the ministerial lead on loneliness in January 2018, following the report of the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness in December 2017.

ABOUT THE FUNDING PARTNERS

Big Lottery Fund uses money raised by National Lottery players to help communities achieve their ambitions. From small, local projects to UK-wide initiatives, its funding brings people together to make a difference to their health, wellbeing and environment. Since June 2004 it has awarded £8.5 billion to projects that improve the lives of millions of people.

The Co-op Foundation is a charity set up by the Co-op as part of its commitment to stronger communities. The Foundation's UK-wide 'Belong' network aims to share learning between projects that help young people beat loneliness.

The Health Lottery is made up of a collection of local society lotteries. Each society lottery raises money for good causes within their respective areas. [People's Health Trust](#) oversees the distribution of grants into these respective areas.

People's Postcode Lottery manages multiple lotteries on behalf of charities and good causes across Great Britain and globally. A minimum of 32% goes directly to charities and players have raised £310 million for good causes across the country. Players play with their postcodes to win cash prizes.

[News story: Programme: EU-UK Article 50 negotiations Brussels, week of 18](#)

June 2018

Tuesday, 19 June 2018

- Northern Ireland/Ireland

Wednesday, 20 June 2018

- Future relationship

News story: David Bunting appointed interim General Counsel and Solicitor

David, currently working in the Cross-Government Border Delivery Group, will take up the role from 1 July, becoming Director General of the Solicitor's Office and Legal Services Group and joining the department's Executive Committee, reporting to our Chief Executive Jon Thompson.

There will be an open recruitment process in the coming months to fill the role permanently.

David has more than 20 years' legal experience. He trained in the Inland Revenue and has worked extensively on tax matters, leading large HMRC legal teams dealing with tax policy and legislation in relation to UK business and environmental taxes including Corporation Tax, VAT, Customs and Excise duties, oil and gas taxation, Landfill Tax, Climate Change Levy and betting and gaming duties.

He has also led HMRC's litigation activity, overseeing about 10,000 cases at any one time involving billions in revenues. He was promoted into the Senior Civil Service in 2008 and in 2012 became a legal director at HMRC.

In 2017 David moved to the Border Delivery Group led by Karen Wheeler, a cross-UK government team focusing on the operational and practical impacts that EU exit may have on the UK's border.

He lives in Bristol and is married with two sons.

We will confirm any new arrangements in Border Delivery Group in due course.