

Press release: Highways England wants to hear your views

The organisation is using the mobile visitor centre for the second year following 2017's successful trial to engage with the public, and will give road users and local residents the chance to speak to staff that will be coming to their area, starting with Essex and Suffolk throughout March.

The minibus facility will open out into a larger exhibition, which will feature displays and presentations about road works in the area and road safety.

Highways England Capital Delivery Team Leader, Aran Nugent, said:

We are aware that the work we do has an impact on our road users, and so Highways England is eager to better engage with drivers and local residents so we can hear their comments, allay their concerns and answer any questions they may come to us with.

This mobile exhibition offers us an excellent opportunity to better get into those communities we will be working alongside, so we can speak with people to explain the work we are doing and the benefits it will bring for them, their town and this region. Last year we had a good response with people coming along to learn about roadworks and share their views, so we hope that interest will continue and grow further in 2018.

In the last financial year (2017/18), Highways England spent £61.4 million on essential maintenance across the East, including £3.5 million on new noise barriers on the M40 in Buckinghamshire, £3.1 million for a new roundabout with Harwich Road and the A120 near Wix, and a £3.5 million repair to the accident damaged Saddlebow Interchange on the A47 near King's Lynn.

This essential maintenance work is in addition to the longer term investment work, including new dual carriageways on several sections of the A47, widening the A12 in Essex, the £1.5 billion Cambridge to Huntingdon A14 upgrade, and the £4.4 – £6.2 billion Lower Thames Crossing.

Now drivers will be able to speak to Highways England staff about this whole range of road works that are happening soon and further in the future, with £34.4 million committed to maintaining the East's roads over the next year.

In the next financial year (2018/19), Highways England's maintenance work will include £2.75 million on resurfacing the A14 between Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds, £2.5 million on bridge repairs on the M1, A14 and A1, £2.25 million on resurfacing the A12, and a further £2.24 million on replacing digital message signs on the same road. Our work in the next year will include laying enough tarmac to fill 20 football pitches, enough white lining

to fill an Olympic swimming pool, and enough cats' eyes to reflect enough light collectively to be seen from space.

In March, the exhibition is set to visit:

- Boreham House on Thursday 15 and the town's Springfield Sainsbury's on Friday 16
- Chelmsford city centre (outside Barclays) on Monday 19 and Tuesday 20
- Lion Walk, Colchester town centre on Wednesday 21, Thursday 22
- Braintree Freeport on Friday 23
- Great Bromley Village Hall on Monday 26
- Bricklayer's Arms, Little Bentley on Tuesday 27
- Bypass Nurseries, Capel St Mary, on Wednesday 28
- Ipswich County Council (Russell Road) on Thursday 29

The exhibition will then head to Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire in April, before covering the A47 with Norfolk and Peterborough in May.

These dates may be subject to change, and interested visitors are asked to stay up to date with the latest information by following @HighwaysEast on Twitter.

Members of the public are invited to attend the mobile visitor centre to speak with Highways England staff, which will include traffic officers at some of the exhibitions.

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.

[News story: Annual Safety Review 2017 published](#)

The [Annual Safety Review](#) for 2017 contains information on the AAIB's activity during 2017 and includes an overview of the 29 Safety Recommendations and Safety Actions published in the 39 field and 220 correspondence investigation reports during the year.

It also includes statistical information on the accident causal factors

established by AAIB investigations across the aviation industry. To complement this, there is an AAIB general aviation fatal accident review which looks at the causal trends and has links to further research papers, regulatory advice and other useful sources of information for the private aviator. There is also an article on human factors in accident investigation and how the AAIB is developing its capability in this important field.

[Press release: New government action to create stronger, more integrated Britain](#)

- £50 million to support new Integrated Communities Strategy
- strategy includes bold proposals to boost English language skills, increase opportunities for women and promote British values in education

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid today (14 March 2018) set out an ambitious long-term plan of action to tackle the root causes of poor integration and create a stronger, more united Britain.

The [Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#), to which £50 million will be committed over the next 2 years, seeks views on the government's bold proposals to boost English language skills, increase opportunities for more women to enter the workplace, and promote British values and meaningful discussion between young people.

Britain is on the whole, a well-integrated society, with 85% of people reporting a feeling of belonging strongly to Britain.

But the evidence, including [Dame Louise Casey's independent review into opportunity and integration](#), overwhelmingly points to a significant number of communities being divided along race, faith or socio-economic lines.

This reduces opportunities for people to mix with others from different backgrounds, allows mistrust and misunderstanding to grow, and prevents those living in isolated communities from taking advantage of the opportunities that living in Britain offers.

The strategy sets out a range of actions the government plans to take to bring divided communities together, including:

Boosting English language skills

We are proposing a new strategy to promote adoption of the English language across all communities in England, including a new community-based English language programme, a new network of conversation clubs, and support for

local authorities to improve the provision of English language tuition for those who need it most.

Increasing economic opportunity, particularly for women

Jobcentre Plus will trial new approaches to support people from some of the most isolated communities into work through personalised skills training to address their individual needs.

Ensure that every child receives an education that prepares them for life in modern Britain

New proposals to ensure young people have the opportunity to mix and form lasting relationships with those from different backgrounds, promotion of British Values across the curriculum and increased take up of the national citizen service.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Britain can rightly claim to be one of the most successful diverse societies in the world. But we cannot ignore the fact that in too many parts of our country, communities are divided, preventing people from taking full advantage of the opportunities that living in modern Britain offers.

Successive governments have refused to deal with the integration challenges we face head on, preferring to let people muddle along and live isolated and separated lives.

We will put an end to this through our new strategy which will create a country that works for everyone, whatever their background and wherever they come from. Integration challenges are not uniform throughout the country, with different areas and communities having varying needs.

The government will work with 5 'Integration Areas' to develop local integration plans: Blackburn with Darwen; Bradford; Peterborough; Walsall and Waltham Forest.

These 5 local authorities have already demonstrated a keen grasp of the challenges they face and shown a desire to try new things and learn from what works. Learning from these areas about what works – and, just as importantly, what doesn't work – will be shared more widely as the programme develops.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

We want to make sure that all children learn the values that underpin our society – including fairness, tolerance and respect. These are values that help knit our communities together, which is why education is at the heart of this strategy.

It's also important that children are taught in a safe environment and that we can act quickly if children are at risk or being encouraged to undermine these values. Together, with Ofsted and communities across the country, we will build on the work already underway to achieve this.

We want to start a debate on the Integrated Communities Strategy, to find the most effective ways to address integration challenges. The consultation will run for 12 weeks to 5 June 2018.

Further measures included as part of the Integrated Communities Strategy:

Building stronger leadership

The strategy calls on leaders in national and local government, business and civil society to ensure all services have a strong focus on integration.

Supporting recent migrants to integrate into the community

We will provide a package of practical information for recent migrants in our integration areas to better help them understand and navigate British life, values and culture. We will also improve communities' ability to adapt to migration and manage pressures on local services and amenities in order to promote more effective integration.

Respecting and promoting equal rights

The strategy sets out new measures to empower marginalised women, including exploring reform of the law on marriage and religious weddings. We will support training of faith leaders to practice in the British context understanding British culture and shared values. We will also strengthen action to tackle hate crime and encourage greater reporting of incidents.

Building vibrant communities

An Integration Innovation Fund will be introduced to allow organisations to bid to test out new approaches to bring people from different backgrounds together and we will make better use of shared community spaces such as parks and libraries.

Further information

See the [Integrated Communities Strategy](#).

To deliver the vision set out in this strategy we recognise that we need to talk to individuals and communities to hear what they think the key issues are and how communities and local and national government can tackle them. The consultation period will run for 12 weeks.

85% of respondents felt that they belonged 'very' or 'fairly' strongly to Britain. Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, [Community Life Survey 2016-17](#).

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Twitter – <https://twitter.com/mhclg>

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[Press release: Iconic Spaghetti Junction immortalised in new Birmingham attraction](#)

To mark the 50th anniversary of work starting on the road and to celebrate 2018 as the Year of Engineering, Highways England can reveal that it will be celebrated in a model at the new attraction.

Construction started on the sprawling structure some fifty years ago and today it continues to carry more than 220,000 vehicles every day.

The road will be joining other notable landmarks from Birmingham including The Library of Birmingham, The Cube, New Street Station and the BT Tower.

Highways England's Regional Director, Catherine Brookes, said:

Spaghetti Junction is one of those structures that is known around the world and we're thrilled to see the road included as part of the new attraction.

The opening of the new attraction later this year also marks our Year of Engineering campaign which is designed to get children thinking about engineering and the world around them. It is also 50 years since work started to build Spaghetti Junction and it's timely that it should be recognised for its local and national significance in supporting the motorway network.

The first of 45 incredible scaled masterpieces are now being recreated by a specialist team of LEGO Model Builders.

More than 6,800 hours will be ploughed in to the design and construction of the entire MINILAND complex over the forthcoming months.

Construction of Spaghetti Junction took some four years to complete and its elevated position sees constant maintenance work taking place underneath it, often unseen by many motorists on their daily commute.

Spaghetti Junction in numbers:

- Spaghetti Junction has 559 concrete columns, some reaching to 80 feet high
- Construction started in 1968 and took four years to complete.
- It is known officially as Gravelly Hill Interchange
- Today, it continues to carry more than 220,000 vehicles every day
- It is subject to regular maintenance work, which includes the replacing of the road surface, installation of new waterproofing material, painting and vegetation

To find out more about the Year of Engineering, head online to the [year of engineering website](#).

LEGOLAND Discovery Centre Birmingham is set to open to the general public this summer.

More information can be [found online](#).

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[Press release: £95 million for local full-fibre broadband projects](#)

Thirteen areas across the UK are set to benefit from the first wave of funding from the Government's £190 million Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN), the Chancellor has announced in today's Spring Statement.

Armagh City, (including Banbridge & Craigavon), Belfast, Blackpool, Cambridgeshire, Cardiff, Coventry (including Solihull & Warwickshire), The Highlands, London, Manchester, Mid Sussex, North Yorkshire, Portsmouth, and Wolverhampton have been announced as the successful bidders for the £95 million allocated to successful projects.

Whilst 95% of UK premises can now get superfast broadband, only 3% have access to gigabit-capable full fibre infrastructure. With the need for faster connectivity expected to dramatically increase over the coming years, the LFFN programme aims to leverage local and commercial investment in full fibre across the whole of the UK landscape. It will do this through funding a series of projects that seek to stimulate the market by making the deployment of gigabit-capable full fibre infrastructure more commercially viable.

The successful projects include:

- Using hospitals, health centres and GP surgeries as “anchor tenants” – providing a full-fibre “hub” which surrounding homes and businesses can then also be connected to.
- Upgrading schools, libraries and emergency response buildings to gigabit-capable full fibre connections.
- Strategic re-purposing of existing infrastructure, allowing full fibre to be rolled out at a fraction of what it would otherwise cost.

Creating “fibre spines” along major transport routes and public building networks. These extend a supplier's fibre footprint, making full fibre connections more available to surrounding homes and businesses.

The LFFN programme is part of the government's £31 billion National Productivity Investment Fund aimed at improving productivity, which is key to raising living standards. A main focus of the government's Industrial Strategy is ensuring the right connectivity is in place for the for the UK's digital economy to thrive, and the LFFN programme forms a vital part of this work.

Notes to Editors

- The LFFN Challenge Fund is a £190 million government capital grant programme that aims to help deliver the fastest and most reliable digital communications network available. Funding will be allocated in successive competitive waves, and bidding is open to local bodies. The aim is for local bodies to harness public sector connectivity and aggregate private sector demand to stimulate the market to build new and extend existing fibre networks in their local areas.
- The first wave of the Challenge Fund closed on January 26th 2018.
- We anticipate that the next wave of the Challenge Fund will open in Summer 2018.
- The amount of funding requested by each bid is as follows. Please note these are the amounts of funding bid for, not the final amount that will be awarded – all successful bids will be subject to a due diligence before their final funding amount is confirmed. If you are referring to these figures in a story please refer to each bid as being awarded 'up to' the specified amount of funding.

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon – £2.4m

Belfast – £11.5m

Blackpool – £3.0m

Cambridgeshire – £4.0m

Cardiff – £6.0m

Coventry, Solihull & Warwick – £5.7m

Highlands – £4.5m

London – £8.5m

Manchester – £23.8m

Mid Sussex – £2.2m

North Yorkshire (NYNet) – £15.1m

Portsmouth – £3.9m

Wolverhampton – £4.9m