

Statement to Parliament: Oxford to Cambridge Expressway: road scheme update

England's road network is a huge national asset and a cornerstone of our present and future economic prosperity. Across the country the government is investing in this network, in order to open up new opportunities, improve productivity and connect people and businesses.

As part of this, after considerable consultation and review, the government is announcing today (12 September 2018) the preferred corridor for the new Oxford-Cambridge Expressway, accepting the recommendations of Highways England.

The expressway, which fills a major gap in the national road network, will work together with the proposed East West Rail link to revolutionise east-west connectivity. In so doing, it will help unlock the commercial development of up to one million new homes.

The expressway is projected to take up to 40 minutes off the journey between the A34 south of Oxford and the M1, so that hundreds of thousands of people will be brought within reach of high quality jobs in centres of rapid growth such as Oxford Science Park. The preferred corridor identified today runs alongside the planned route of East West Rail, so that consumers have a variety of road and rail travel options.

This decision determines the broad area within which the road will be developed: the process of designing a specific route will now get under way, involving extensive further consultation with local people to find the best available options. Members of the public will be able to comment on the full set of front-running designs in a public consultation next year, and the road is on schedule to be open to traffic by 2030.

The choice of this corridor means that the government has ruled out construction in the area of the Otmoor nature reserve, underlining its desire to protect the natural environment.

The government also recognises that no one corridor can support every proposed development across the area. It is therefore commissioning England's economic heartland to carry out a study of how to provide better connectivity across the wider area, so that places outside of the preferred corridor enjoy the benefits of growth as far as possible.

Between 2015 and 2021 the government is investing £15 billion to improve the UK's busiest roads. Already, it has opened the first all-motorway link from Newcastle to London; and after 45 years without change the Department for Transport is working with [Transport for the North](#) to develop 3 upgrades to capacity across the Pennines.

The government is also spending billions to transform connectivity in the south west with the dualling of the A303 and A30, and to create better access to and from our ports and airports through projects such as the Lower Thames Crossing and upgrade of the A14 link between the Midlands and Felixstowe.

The common theme linking all these projects is the need to create and upgrade the UK's infrastructure. So too it is here with the new Oxford-Cambridge expressway.