

[Press release: Planned roadworks in Kent and Sussex: weekly summary for Monday 20 March to Sunday 26 March 2017](#)

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of 17 March but could be subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances. All our improvement work is carried out with the aim of causing as little disruption as possible.

A2 Darenth to Bean, Kent: carriageway resurfacing

Work to improve journeys take place this week on the A2. There will be a full closure between the Darenth A282 junction and the Bean B255 junction on Sunday 26 March overnight between 10pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the M25 Junction 1a, A206 and B255.

A2 Gravesend, Kent: carriageway resurfacing

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the A2 between Hall Road junction and the B255 Bean junction. There will be lane closures in place on the westbound carriageway between Pepperhill & Bean on Monday 20 March for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. There will also be a westbound entry slip closure from the A2260 at Ebbsfleet. Traffic will be diverted via the next junction of the A2. Works are scheduled to be complete by the end of March 2017.

A2 Canterbury, Kent: carriageway resurfacing

Work to improve journeys takes place this week on the A2. There will be a full eastbound carriageway closure between Upper Harbledown and Patricxbourne on Wednesday 22 March overnight between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A2050.

A2 Upper Harbledown, Kent: carriageway resurfacing

Works to improve journeys take place this week on the A2. There will be a full closure on the eastbound carriageway between Brenley and A28 Wincheap on Thursday 23 March overnight between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A299 and A256.

A2 Dover, Kent: carriageway works

Works to improve safety take place this week on the A2 Jubilee Way. There will be a full closure southbound from 12pm on Saturday 25 March until 12pm on Sunday 26 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A256.

A20 Dover, Kent: street lighting works

Works to improve journeys take place this week on the A20 between York Street and Limekiln roundabout. There will be lane 2 closures in both directions on Monday 20 March for 5 days between 7am & 6pm. Works are scheduled to be complete by the end of March.

A21 Tonbridge to Pembury, Kent: major improvement

Work to improve journeys on the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury continues this week. A 40mph speed limit remains in place 24/7 between the Vauxhall interchange and the A228.

A full closure will be in place overnight between 8pm and 6am on Thursday 23 March on the southbound carriageway between Quarry Hill and Pembury interchange and on the northbound carriageway between Pembury interchange and Vauxhall interchange. In addition Longfield Road will be closed in both directions between Longfield roundabout and Knights Park roundabout. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A26, A2014, A26 and the A228.

Two way traffic lights will be in place on the A21 overnight between 8pm and 6am from Monday 20 March for three nights and overnight on Friday 24 March.

Tonbridge Road will remain closed after Pembury Hospital up to and including Longfield Road roundabout until Spring 2017. A clearly signed diversion route will be in place via the A228 and the A21.

The scheme is due to be completed in Summer 2017. For further information, [visit the scheme website.](#)

A27 Portslade, Brighton: tunnel inspections

Work to improve journeys by undertaking routine tunnel inspections take place this week. The Southwick tunnel will be closed in both directions overnight on Friday 24 March for two nights between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A270 and A293.

M20 junctions 3 – 5, Kent: smart motorway surveys

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the M20 between junctions 3 & 5. There will be various lane closures in both directions on Monday 20 March for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. Surveys are scheduled to be complete in April 2017.

M20 junctions 4 – 6, Kent: resurfacing

Work to improve journeys begin this week on the M20 between junctions 5 & 6. There will be a full closure of the westbound carriageway between junctions 6 & 5 on Monday 20 March for 7 nights between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed

diversion will be in place via the A229 and the A228. Works are expected to be complete by the end of May 2017.

M23 Junctions 8 – 10a, South Nutfield to Crawley: smart motorway surveys

Work to improve journeys continue this week on the M23 between junctions 8 & 10a. There will be various lane closures in both directions overnight on Monday 20 March for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. Surveys are scheduled to be complete in April 2017.

A23 West Sussex: vegetation clearance

Work to improve journeys take place this week on the A23 between Pease Pottage and Patcham. There will be various slip road closures in both directions on Monday 20 March for 5 nights between 8pm and 6am. Traffic will be diverted via the next junction. Works are scheduled to be completed by the end of April.

A249 Sheppey, Kent: installation of cameras

Work to improve safety take place this week on the A249. There will be lane closures in both directions between Cowstead corner and the Grovehurst junction on Monday 20 March for 2 days between 9am and 4pm. Works are scheduled to be complete by the end of March.

A249 Sheppey, Kent: carriageway works

Work to improve safety take place this week on the A249 by renewing white lining and road studs. There will be a full southbound closure on Wednesday 22 March overnight between 8pm and 6am. There will be a clearly signed diversion via Sheppey Way. There will be a full northbound closure on Thursday 23 March overnight between 8pm and 6am. There will be a clearly signed diversion via Sheppey Way.

A2070 Park Farm, Kent: carriageway improvements

Work to improve safety take place this week on the A2070 between Ashford Road, and Bad Munsteriefel Road. There will be a full closure in both directions on Monday 20 March for 3 nights between 8pm and 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via Hamstreet Road/Ashford Road, and the A2041. Works are expected to be complete by the end of March 2017.

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: Safety scheme to replace M32 central reservation barrier in Bristol](#)

An 11-week programme of work starts on Monday 20 March to replace the sub-standard corrugated central reservation barrier with a concrete steel barrier, making journeys safer for thousands of motorists who use the route on a daily basis.

The work to deliver the scheme will be carried out overnight, in phases, with different sections of the M32 closed at different times.

Highways England asset delivery manager Julian Strong said:

The current barrier has reached the end of its serviceable life, having been in situ since the viaduct was built in the 1970s.

We are now taking steps to replace it with a durable concrete barrier which will improve safety for all users of the M32 and require less overall maintenance moving forward.

During the work we ask drivers to plan their journeys and to allow extra time.

Much of the work will be undertaken from the southbound carriageway – under overnight closures. For the most part the northbound carriageway will remain open, with narrow lanes installed for traffic management, but there will be occasional overnight northbound closures too.

The first tranche of work will see overnight closures of the north and southbound carriageways at various points between junctions 1 (Hambrook), 2 (Fishponds) and 3 (Bristol City Centre), from 8pm to 6am, Monday to Friday only.

Thereafter the majority of the closures will affect the southbound carriageway in various sections and during the daytime, narrow lanes and 40mph restrictions will be in place both northbound and southbound. Fully signed diversions will be in place when the road is closed, and drivers are encouraged to check www.trafficengland.com for real time updates on the

closures.

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[News story: Closer partnerships needed to fight serious and organised crime](#)

Ben Wallace, speaking to an audience of law enforcement and public and private sector representatives at the Home Office's Serious and Organised Crime Conference in Birmingham, said officers needed to share more intelligence with local government representatives in an effort to tackle crime bosses.

The Minister underlined how multi-agency partnerships around the country could help to dismantle serious and organised crime groups, with effective joint working already taking place between local authorities, police forces and sectors within the Government Agency Intelligence Network, such as HMRC and the Environment Agency.

But he called for the level of information sharing and collaboration to be taken to new heights.

The Security Minister said:

We know that crime bosses will look to exploit any avenue that they can tap into in order to make massive profits or launder their dirty money.

Our own research indicates organised crime groups are now looking to benefit from public sector contracts and we must do everything possible to clamp down on this abuse.

That's why I'm asking each police force around the country to work more closely than ever with local authorities and other important partners in their patch – sharing information on known crime groups, identifying attempts to profit from public sector contracts and closing down bogus suppliers.

The Security Minister referred to a Home Office pilot which saw local authorities and police forces in seven areas collaborate to examine the extent to which major crime groups are looking to exploit public sector contracts.

This pilot not only identified the areas particularly at risk of being targeted by crime groups, but also demonstrated how effective partnerships between local authorities and forces could be in disrupting those involved.

Ben Wallace referenced the work as he asked forces to carry out more detailed assessments of the crime groups operating in their area and to share these with local authorities so links can be found with suppliers who bid for public procurement contracts.

The Minister explained this level of information sharing could significantly improve the fight against serious and organised crime.

Press release: Environment Agency shortlisted for UK River Prize 2017

The Environment Agency has been praised for an ambitious restoration project on Hampshire's famous River Avon.

The agency's 'whole river approach' to restoration and natural flood management impressed judges who voted it the best entry in the 'catchment category' of the 2017 UK River Prize, a national competition that celebrates the most innovative and successful river projects across England, Scotland and Wales.

As category winner, the Hampshire Avon project automatically qualifies as a finalist. The Environment Agency is up against three other finalists – each winners of separate categories – vying for the top UK River Prize. The overall winner will be announced at a special ceremony in Brighton next month and presented with a trophy and cash prize.

Russell Spencer for the Environment Agency:

This is well earned recognition for the efforts of many people and organisations working together to help realise the vision for the Avon catchment – and a great springboard for the next phase of the programme, where we would like many more to be involved.

The River Avon Restoration Project was set up to restore the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) to a natural river system supporting chalk stream habitats and wildlife to meet the government's obligations under the

EU Water Framework and Habitats Directive.

The aim of the project was to restore reaches of the river most damaged in the past by man-made physical changes including the straightening or dredging of the river channel and construction of weirs and sluices. Various methods have been used to improve habitats and restore natural flows and functions including the removal, modification and bypassing of structures and re-alignment of the river to more natural positions in the floodplain.

Led by the Environment Agency, the project is supported by a number of organisations including Natural England, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Wessex Chalk Streams and Rivers Trust, Wessex Water, Wiltshire Fishery Association, National Farmers Union and Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

The restoration started in 2012 and will culminate in the completion of Phase 1 of the project later this year. Further work is needed to restore the remaining 185km of river and enable the catchment to respond and adapt to climate change.

Notes to Editor:

The UK River Prize celebrates the achievements of individuals and organisations who improve the health of our rivers and catchments and recognise the importance of healthy rivers and the benefits they bring to society. It is run by the The River Restoration Centre who will announce the overall winner of the UK River Prize at its annual dinner and conference in Brighton on April 4.

In 2009, the need for a strategic approach to catchment river restoration was identified by the European LIFE funded Strategic Restoration and Management (STREAM) partnership. This led to the creation of the River Avon Restoration Programme (RARP).

[Press release: Response to the Home Office review of the retention and use of custody images](#)

The use of facial images has been a regular part of policing since the development of photography led to the taking of custody images. The current use of facial images is different in that images are now digital, can be housed on a national database and searched using software based on algorithms that claim to find possible matches.

The use of such images is important in policing and it is in the public interest that they are used to prevent, detect or prosecute crime. However,

because capturing, storing and searching such images is intrusive of individual privacy there is a need to ensure that the use of facial images is within a governance framework that strikes an acceptable and proportionate balance between public benefit and individual privacy.

In 2012 the High Court held that the governance framework then used by the police was not proportionate in its retention rules and as such was unlawful. The court drew attention to the 'risk of stigmatisation of those entitled to the presumption of innocence' and that holding images of those unconvicted for a long period (a minimum of 6 years) was not proportionate. They added that retaining images in such cases for minors would be especially harmful.

The recently published [Home Office review of the use and retention of custody images](#) makes proposals as to a future governance of the police use of facial images in order to make their use more proportionate in response to the Court's ruling.

The review still proposes that a routine police review of retention of those who should be presumed innocent should happen only after 6 clear years for a Group 3 offence and 10 clear years for Group 1 or 2 offences. The only response to the Court judgment is that such individuals may apply to the police to have their images deleted after the conclusion of proceedings. In considering such applications there should be a 'presumption in favour of deletion' and a 'strong presumption' in the case of those under 18 but that the police are entitled to refuse such an application.

Adding this limited application process does add a degree of proportionality but whether this would be enough in the face of any future challenge may depend on how many presumed innocent people apply successfully to have their images deleted before the minimum 6 year review period. The nearest equivalent existing process is that of the records deletion process whereby people can apply to the police to have their arrest records and/or biometric records deleted from the Police National Computer.

In the year ending on 31 March 2016, Home Office statistics show that 896,209 people were arrested for a notifiable offence and in the same period 1,003 applied to have their police records deleted, of which 233 were accepted by the police.

The review leaves the governance and decision making of this new process entirely in the hands of the police but future public confidence might require a greater degree of independent oversight, transparency and assurance than is proposed.

The applications process, the power to nevertheless retain and the routine reviews mean that the compliance costs of this proposal will be high because individual decisions will have to be made in every case. Although the review proposes that guidance should be issued about making such decisions there still might be variation in decision making between forces resulting in a postcode lottery as to whether images are retained.

In addition, deletion will happen some time after the police decide to take

no further action against a subject and it is not clear how far legacy holdings will be weeded against these proposed new retention rules. If there is a 'presumption of deletion' then these costs could all be avoided and the process made more timely by automatic deletion. This could be built into Police National Database and the next generation of databases currently being developed.

The review suggests that the retention and use of facial images is 'generally less intrusive (than DNA or fingerprints) as many people's faces are on public display all the time'. I disagree with that assertion. In fact for that reason the use of facial images is more intrusive because image capture can be done using cameras in public places and searched against government databases without the subject being aware. Facial images are no longer only used solely for custody purposes and image capture and facial searching capabilities have and are being used by the police in public places.

The review points out that the police are currently using a number of different databases and matching software products. The Police National Database currently holds 19 million images and that does not include all police forces and most notably the images held on a separate database by the largest police force, the Metropolitan Police Service. The review provides no statistical information in relation to how these databases are being used or to what effect.

The fact that so many different systems are in use means that the software used is of varying quality and the consequent processes of interpretation will also vary. In spite of that the review encourages all forces to pool their images in the existing national database. As a recent report by HMIC(S) concluded: 'This means that differing standards are being applied to a common UK database'.

Use of facial image database searching for intelligence purposes requires that users understand the scientific quality and reliability of the software and use a common process of interpretation and assessment that takes account of any weaknesses or biases in the overall system. To achieve this, the police need to move to a common database, matching software and interpretive process which can provide the best available quality and reliability and is understood by all those using the system. Such a new system ought to meet quality standards set by the Forensic Science Regulator.

Furthermore, since the review envisages future facial images database information being available to the rest of the criminal justice system then such a system needs to be totally transparent in its mode of operation if it is to meet evidential requirements.

My predecessor made similar comments about the problems with the current police use and retention of facial images.

Paul Wiles Biometrics Commissioner