

[Press release: Planned roadworks in Devon and Cornwall: weekly summary for Monday 6 February to Sunday 12 February 2017](#)

From:

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Part of:

Summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week.

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of the above date 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.

A30 between Trebursye and Kennards House, west of Launceston: resurfacing

Westbound carriageway will be closed overnight from 7.30pm on 6 February until 6am on 7 February. Diversion will be in place via Tregadillett.

A38 between Dobwalls and Turfdown, east of Bodmin: stabilisation work

24-hour one-way system will be in operation between the Halfway House and Trago Mills until 14 April. A 30mph speed limit will be in place between Two Waters Foot and St Neot junction with a 24-hour westbound diversion via the A390 and North Lane to rejoin the A38 west of Two Waters Foot. Trago Mills can be accessed via the A38 as per normal.

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: Planned roadworks in the East of England: weekly summary for Monday 6 to Sunday 12 February 2017](#)

The following information summarises the work being carried out this coming week. It is correct as of the above date 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.

Various roads: routine inspections and maintenance for street lighting

Highways England is carrying out a programme of routine inspections of electrical and structural equipment across the region, which is planned for completion in spring 2017. In addition there is a programme of maintenance which includes bulk lamp changes.

Work will include inspecting equipment on:

- the A1 between Wittering and Stibbington with traffic management but no full closures
- the A12 at Capel St Mary's with traffic management but no full closures

Work will include maintenance and bulk lamp changes on:

- the A1 between Wittering and Stibbington with traffic management but no full closures
- the A1 between Sandy and Biggleswade with traffic management but no full closures

Various roads: barrier repairs

Highways England will continue repairs to barriers throughout the week, using lane closures to keep road users at a safe distance from the work. The work will take place at various locations, between 8pm and 5am. This week we are repairing barriers on the M11 in both directions from Monday 30 6 to Friday 10 February overnight, using lane closures while we are working between junctions 6 (M25) and 9 (A11). We are also repairing barriers on the A120 in both directions, between junction 8 with the M11 and Braintree (Marks Farm).

Various roads: litter picking and sweeping

Highways England will continue litter picking throughout the week on the M11. This will be done using a mobile slow-moving hard shoulder or lane closure. Work will also include sweeping the hard shoulder of the M11 during the day while we litter pick between junctions 6 (M25) and 9 (A11).

M1: technology repairs

Highways England will be working to repair and replace faulty power cables for signage technology on the motorway, including overhead sign lighting, on the M1. This will be done using lane and hard shoulder closures while we are working, between 9pm and 5am, from Monday 6 February to Friday 10 March. As part of this work, it will be necessary for slip roads to be closed overnight on some dates. Where slip roads are closed, drivers will be diverted to continue on the M1 to the next junction, exit and return to leave the junction from the opposite direction.

M11 and A120: structures maintenance

Highways England are carrying out routine maintenance work on bridges crossing the M11 between junctions 6 (M25) and 9 (A11) in both directions. They will also be doing similar work on the A120, between junction 8 with the M11 and Braintree (Marks Farm). These will be done during the day, with the hard shoulder closed while we are working.

M11 and A120 Stansted Airport: pothole filling

Highways England will be filling in potholes on the M11 between junctions 8 (Stansted Airport – Bishop's Stortford) and 9 (A11) in both directions, and on the A120 between Braintree and junction 8 of the M11. This will be done using lane and hard shoulder closures while we are working, between 8.30pm and 6am, from Monday 6 to Friday 10 February.

M11: routine maintenance

Highways England will be doing routine maintenance of structures and technology boxes along the M11 during the day. These will be done with a hard shoulder closure, taking place between junctions 6 (M25) and 9 (A11).

A5-M1 Link (Dunstable Northern Bypass), Bedfordshire: major improvements

Highways England is building a new 2.9-mile, two-lane dual carriageway running from north of Dunstable and joining the M1 at a new junction 11a, south of Chalton. Main construction started in March 2015. Work is progressing well. The traffic management, including hard shoulder closures, safety barriers, signs, CCTV and average speed cameras, will stay in place throughout the construction work, which will be carried out in phases and

should be finished in spring 2017.

Work on the M1

This week there will be M1 lane closures between junctions 10 and 13 from Monday 6 February to Friday 10 February between 10pm to 6am for overhead gantry works.

There will be overnight M1 road closures between Junction 11 and 12 for new sign gantry works as follows:

- Tuesday 7 February M1 closed southbound from 10pm to 6am
- Wednesday 8 February, M1 closed northbound from 10pm to 6am

During the M1 closures a clearly signed diversion will be in place between M1 J11 and 12 via A5120 (Bedford Road), Poynters Road, A505 (Dunstable Road).

Work on the A5 and local roads

This week there will be traffic lights overnight on the A5-A505 between 8pm and 6am for safety barrier installation and construction of a new footpath works. There will be off-peak temporary traffic lights on local roads and A5 between 9.30am and 3.30pm for verge and safety barrier work.

Cycle improvements schemes in Suffolk, Essex, Norfolk and Bedfordshire

Work is substantially completed on the building or improving of cycle paths at 16 locations across the East of England including on the A12, A120, A47 and A5.

The work included the installation of new and upgraded shared-use foot/cycle ways and toucan crossing facilities. The new or improved paths will make it safer and easier to cycle on or around major A-roads and will improve connections with the local and national cycle network.

The project is part of a country-wide initiative which will see Highways England deliver 200 projects over the next five years after the government set up a £100 million dedicated fund for cycling in its Road Investment Strategy.

Ongoing work for this week:

A12 Lowestoft – Station Road/Gunton St/Peters Avenue

There will be off peak three way lights upgrading the existing footpath works. The northbound bus stop opposite the works has temporarily been suspended, whilst the southbound bus stop has been relocated.

A12 Lowestoft: Bascule Bridge maintenance

We will be carrying out routine maintenance works on the A12 Bascule Bridge at Lowestoft. This will be between Monday 6 and Monday 20 February, from 8pm to 6am. During the work the A12 will be closed in both directions at the bridge and a diversion will be clearly signposted via the A1117, A146 and A1144.

A free hourly bus service will be provided for pedestrians wanting to cross the bridge. This will leave from the north side of the bridge at quarter past the hour and from the south side at quarter to the hour.

A12/A47 renumbering

Highways England is renumbering part of the A12 to become the A47. This work is being carried out as part of the improvements to the A47/A12 corridor. We will be replacing road signs that currently show the A12 to now show the A47. The work will last approximately 12 weeks to complete. The section of the A12 that currently runs from Lowestoft to Great Yarmouth will become the A47.

There will be off peak lane closures and two/three way traffic lights during the day and night throughout Lowestoft on the A12 installing sign faces and patches.

A14 Bury St Edmunds: junction improvements

Improvement works are being carried out on the A14 junction 45 Rookery Crossroads/Rougham. Works include construction of new eastbound slip roads, which are being funded by Suffolk County Council as part of the Bury St Edmunds Eastern Relief Road scheme. There is a 24 hour 40mph speed limit in place through the works for safety reasons, works are currently taking place overnight using lane closures in both directions. The works are due to take five months to complete.

A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire: major improvements

Early preparatory construction work on the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon scheme has been underway for a number of months.

We are currently carrying out a variety of tasks which will require us to close lanes / carriageway on the A1, A14 and some of the side roads.

The work are doing will include:

- creating strengthened crossing points for site vehicles on a number of the side roads – these are called plant crossings
- installing access points to our construction compounds
- taking core samples of the existing trunk roads to enable appropriate design and construction

- clearing the site of vegetation which is adjacent to the live carriageway
- installing CCTV and average speed cameras
- installing scheme boards

Wherever possible, work will take place at night (usually between 8pm and 6am) to minimise disruption to traffic. During week commencing 6 February lane or carriageway closures are currently planned for the following locations to enable site clearance, installation of CCTV and installation of scheme boards. All closures are between 8pm and 6 am unless otherwise stated.

Full closures

Monday 6 February:

- A14 westbound between Junction 31 to Junction 27
- A1 southbound between Brampton Hut & Buckden

Tuesday 7 February:

- A14 westbound between Junction 31 to Junction 27
- A1 southbound between Brampton Hut & Buckden

Wednesday 8 February:

- A14 eastbound between Junctions 26 & Junction 31

Thursday 9 February:

- A14 eastbound between Junctions 26 & Junction 31

Friday 10 February:

- A428 eastbound from Caxton Gibbet to Girton

Saturday 11 February 8 am to Monday 13 February 5am:

Lane closures

Monday 6 February:

- M11 northbound between Junction 13 & Junction 14 Lane 2
- A14 eastbound between Junction 18 & Junction 20, Lane 1
- A1 southbound between Alconbury to Brampton Lane 2

Tuesday 7 February:

- M11 northbound between Junction 13 & Junction 14 Lane 2
- A1 southbound between Alconbury to Brampton Lane 2
- A1 southbound between Junction 15 & Junction 14 Hard Shoulder

Wednesday 8 February:

- A14 eastbound between Junction 24 & Junction 26 Lane 2
- A1 northbound between Little Paxton & Brampton Lane 1
- A1 southbound between Alconbury to Brampton Lane 1

Thursday 9 February:

- A14 eastbound between Junction 24 & Junction 26 Lane 2
- A1 southbound between Alconbury to Brampton Lane 1
- M11 northbound between Junction 12 & Junction 13 Lane 1

Friday 10 February

- A1 southbound between Alconbury to Brampton Lane 1
- A14 westbound Junction 34 to Junction 33 Lane 1 A14 Cambridgeshire: drainage repairs

Highways England is undertaking investigations and repairs to the drainage system of the A14 between junctions 32 (Girton – M11 interchange) and 35 (Stoke cum Quy). There will be lane closures between 8pm and 6am while we are working overnight, with all works on weekdays only.

This week we are working on the A14 in both directions with the inside lane closed between junctions 34 and 35. A47 Dogsthorpe: junction improvements (Peterborough City Council)

Peterborough City Council is continuing its junction improvement work at the A47/A15 Dogsthorpe junction, Peterborough. The work will involve some overnight full closure and 24/7 lane closures on the A47.

For more information, [visit the scheme website.](#)

A120 and A12 Essex: essential maintenance work

We are completing essential maintenance work on the A120 and the A12 in Essex, which will be ongoing until May. This work will include resurfacing, safety barrier repairs, and bridge repairs, with work taking place between Braintree and Marks Tey, near Colchester, at Kelvedon, and at Wix. Unless detailed otherwise, work will be taking place between 8pm and 6am.

This week we are resurfacing the road and footpaths and replacing street lights, fencing and road signs on the A120 between Marks Tey and Marks Farm from Monday 6 to Friday 10 February, under temporary traffic signals and full closure. The A120 will be closed Wednesday 8 to Friday 10 February while we are working from West Street to B1024 junction. (Coggeshall). Drivers heading westbound diverted to continue south on the A12 to junction 19, take the A130 northbound to Little Waltham, the A131 northbound through Great Notley, then re-join the A120 at Braintree. Drivers heading eastbound will follow this diversion in reverse. We expect this work to be completed by May.

We are repairing drainage on the A120 Wix bypass on nights from Monday 6 to Friday 10 February. There will be traffic lights in place and a 40mph speed limit while we are working. This work is expected to be complete by late

April.

We are replacing the central reservation safety barrier on the A120 between junction 29 of the A12 (Crown Interchange) to Hare Green (between the B1029 and the A133). There will be narrow lanes westbound with a 50mph limit in place in both directions 24/7 throughout the works until mid-March. In addition there will be a lane 2 closure eastbound from Monday 6 to Friday 10 February overnight. Overnight westbound full closures from Saturday 11 to Sunday 12 February – Great Bromley Junction and A133 link road. Diversion Route via A131 / A1232 to Junction 29 for Temporary Barrier and narrow lanes to be relocated.

We are repairing bridge joints on the A12 Ewell Bridge near Kelvedon. We will complete this works over the weekends between Saturday 4 February and Monday 6 March. The closure will start on a Saturday evening to Monday morning. To keep road users at safe distance from works the bridge will be closed to pedestrians and divers. Drivers will be diverted to take the A120 westbound to Braintree, then take the A131 southbound through Great Notley, then take the A130 southbound and then east around Chelmsford to re-join the A12. Pedestrians who cross over Ewell Bridge westbound from its connection with Windmill Hill will be diverted head south on Windmill Hill to its junction with Highfields Lane, then along Highfields Lane, heading towards Kelvedon, before crossing Maldon Road Bridge to the junction with Ewell Hall Chase, and finally join Ewell Hall Chase to meet with the public right of way in the vicinity of Ewell Hall Farm. Pedestrians wishing to cross eastbound, the diversion is the reverse of the above.

The A120 Blackwater Bridge footpath will be accessible but reduced in width to 1.2m from Monday 6 to Friday 10 February to allow bridge deck investigative works. The works will only take place on a day time, but the pedestrian management will be in place for safety 24hrs a day.

A120 Great Bromley: road surface repairs

Highways England will be repairing the road surface of the A120 near Great Bromley. Subject to weather conditions, we plan to complete this work between Tuesday 7 and Thursday 9 January, working between 8pm and 6am on weeknights only.

To keep road users at a safe distance from the works, we will close the A120 westbound between the Harwich Road junction (shortly before the A133 Hare Green Interchange) and the A12/A120 Crown Interchange at Colchester. The westbound carriageway of the A133/A120 link road will also be closed during our works. There will be a clearly signed diversion route in place via the B1035, B1033, A133 and A1232.

Drivers who miss the Tendring diversion will be turned around at the A120/Little Bromley Road and A120/Harwich Road junctions to pick up the strategic diversion route at Horsley Cross roundabout.

A428 Eltisle: street lighting and road markings

Highways England will be improving street lighting and road markings on the A428 through Eltisle. This will be done between Monday 30 6 February and Friday 31 March. During the works we will have traffic lights in place while we working. As part of this work, it will be necessary for road to be closed overnight on some dates. Where the A428 is closed westbound, drivers will be diverted to take the A1198 northbound at Caxton Gibbet roundabout, then at Godmanchester follow the A14 westbound to junction 21 at Brampton Hut, then take the A1 southbound and follow the A1 southbound to Wyboston junction roundabout, where the diversion ends. Drivers heading eastbound will follow this diversion in reverse.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

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[Press release: Planned roadworks in the North West: summary for Monday 6 to Sunday 12 February 2017](#)

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of Friday 3 February and 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.

Drivers looking for roadworks information (such as overnight carriageway closures) for individual schemes should now [visit Traffic England](#). Some of our larger schemes have project pages giving other information. These can now be accessed from a [dedicated regional page](#).

M6 junctions 16 to 19: Cheshire smart motorway

Work is underway to upgrade the M6 to a smart motorway between Crewe and Knutsford, converting the hard shoulder to an extra lane and introducing new variable speed limits. Narrow lanes and a temporary 50mph speed limit are in place for the safety of drivers and workers. The southbound carriageway will be closed overnight (10pm to 6am) between junctions 19 and 18 for two nights

from Wednesday 8 February, and northbound between the same junctions overnight on Friday 10 February.

M6 junction 19 Knutsford to junction 20 (M56 interchange)

Resurfacing work is due to take place on the northbound carriageway for two nights next weekend. The carriageway will be closed overnight between 10pm and 7am on Saturday 11 February, and between 10pm and 7am on Sunday 12 February. A diversion will be in place.

M6 junction 22 Newton-le-Willows

Essential bridge maintenance work is underway to replace 40 corroded bearings on the M6 junction 22 bridges. Average speed cameras and a 50mph speed limit are in place. The work, between junctions 21a and 23, is due to be completed in the spring.

M6 junction 33 Lancaster to junction 32 (M55 interchange)

Resurfacing work on the southbound carriageway is due to start on Monday 6 February. Two lanes will remain open during the day and one lane will remain open overnight. The southbound carriageway will also be closed overnight for two nights from Wednesday 15 February, between 8pm and 6am. The scheme is due to be completed by early March.

M6 junction 34 Lancaster

Lancashire County Council's new link road between junction 34 of the M6 and Heysham has now opened but finishing work will require lane and hard shoulder closures along the M6 through junction 34 to continue for the time being. More information is available on [Lancashire County Council's website](#).

M6 north of Tebay Services

One lane will be closed during the day and two lanes will be closed overnight on the southbound carriageway for resurfacing work. The work is due to be completed by March and a temporary 50mph speed limit is in place.

M6 junction 45 Gretna Green to junction 44 Carlisle

Resurfacing work is taking place on the southbound M6 overnight, with one lane remaining open to traffic. The scheme is due to be completed by the end of February.

M6/M62 Croft Interchange

A major project is taking place to tackle congestion and improve the flow of traffic between the M6 and M62 at Croft Interchange. Variable speed limits will be introduced on new electronic information signs on the M62 and traffic lights will be installed on the link roads from the M6. Narrow lanes and a temporary 50mph speed limit are in place for the safety of drivers and workers.

M53 junction 1 Wallasey to junction 2 Upton

Work to upgrade the safety barrier in the central reservation between junctions 1 and 2 on the M53 is due to start on Monday 6 February. Lane closures will be in place overnight, with some full carriageway closures later in the project. The scheme is expected to take around a month to complete.

M56 junctions 10 to 11 Warrington

Work to upgrade the safety barrier and paint new road markings on the M56 near Warrington started on Monday 30 January. Lane closures will be in place overnight between 8pm and 5am, Monday to Friday. The project is due to be completed by the end of March.

M60 junction 8 Sale to junction 20 Rochdale

A major smart motorway scheme is taking place to cut congestion and improve journey times on parts of the M60 and the M62 in Greater Manchester. The scheme involves overnight slip road and carriageway closures, with narrow lanes and a temporary 50mph speed limit in place for the safety of drivers and road workers.

M61 to A580 Kearsley

The southbound link road from junction 2 of the M61 near Kearsley to the eastbound A580 East Lancashire Road will be closed overnight for bridge repairs from Thursday 9 February. The work will take place between 8pm and 5am, Monday to Friday, and until 7am at weekends. The scheme is due to be completed by early February.

M62 junction 18 to M60 clockwise link road

The link road from the westbound M62 onto the clockwise M60 will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, for approximately one week for resurfacing work from Tuesday 7 February. A diversion will be in place.

M66 Junction 1 Ramsbottom to Junction 4 at M60/M62

Resurfacing work started on Monday 16 January between junctions 2 and 4 of

the M66. Some bridge repairs and electrical work will also take place. The work will be carried out between 8pm and 6am and will require some lane or full carriageway closures. A temporary 50mph speed limit will also be in place, and the scheme is due to be completed by March.

A556 Knutsford to Bowdon

A £192 million project is being delivered to build a new dual carriageway linking the M56 to the M6 in Cheshire.

A585 West Drive to Fleetwood Cycleway

Work is taking place on a new shared footpath and cycleway between West Drive and Fleetwood. Narrow lanes and a temporary 30mph speed limit are being used along the route to help provide a safe space for workers constructing the new shared paths. Work will take place between 7am and 7pm each day with occasional overnight work. The project is due to be completed by the end of March.

A590 Lindal in Furness

Work is being carried out to tackle flooding between Pennington Lane and Bank End Cottages. Narrow lanes and a temporary 30mph speed limit will be in place until completion at the end of March.

A595 Egremont

Repairs are taking place to the safety barriers adjacent to Wyndham Place on the A595 and are due to be completed by the end of February. A contraflow system is in place on the southern approach to the Main Street/East Road roundabout.

A66 Bassenthwaite Lake

A contraflow system is in place while work is carried out on the embankment in the central reservation next to Bass Lake. The scheme is due to be completed in the spring.

A66 Thornthwaite (Osprey Site)

Construction work is being carried out to protect the A66 from flooding, at the Osprey Site near Thornthwaite, by raising the height of the carriageway. Temporary traffic lights are in place along with a 40mph speed limit. The road will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from Monday 6 February until the end of March, with a diversion in place.

A66 Marron Bridge

Maintenance work is underway on Marron Bridge, between Broughton Cross and Bridgefoot on the A66. The road will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am

from Thursday 9 February, with a diversion in place. The project is due to be completed by March.

A66 Brough

Resurfacing and drainage work is taking place on the eastbound carriageway at Brough. Overnight lane closures will be in place, between 8pm and 6am, with traffic led through the roadworks by a contractor's vehicle. There will also be some lane closures in place during the daytime.

A665 Bury Old Road

A scheme is taking place to upgrade the safety barriers on the A665 bridge on Bury Old Road over the M60 near junction 17. The work will be carried out between 8.30am and 11pm, Monday to Friday, with temporary traffic lights and lane closures in place from 6.30pm. Some overnight and weekend working may also be required. The Kenilworth Avenue junction with Bury Old Road will be closed throughout the scheme, with a diversion in place. The project is due to be completed by March.

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[News story: Venturefest Bristol and Bath: exploring future cities innovation](#)

Venturefest Bristol and Bath 2017 opened last week with a seminar on future cities. Leading businesses from the region discussed the technologies and challenges involved in developing cities that are fit for the future, in the first of a series of activities designed to help find solutions.

The Venturefest events help to identify fast-growth tech companies and start-ups within a region. They also provide a forum for organisations that are developing future cities technologies.

These might include communication networks and connectivity, seamless

automation and robotics, as well as intelligent buildings, smart building bricks and in-home technology.

If you are an innovator based in Bristol or Bath over the next 9 months you can attend events that explore the themes from the opening seminar. The programme will include:

Smart city marketplace

Some of Bristol and Bath's best future city-focussed start-ups and scale-ups exhibited at the launch event. They will be back in October to showcase new developments in their ideas. The marketplace will also see the launch of a crowdfunding bootcamp programme in association with CrowdCube.

Innovation showcase

The showcase will highlight the strengths of the region's tech cluster, including solutions that are either in development or already in use, which are helping to meet the smart cities challenge.

Investor showcase

Delegates will have the chance to meet a select audience of angel investors and venture capitalists. The investor showcase is part of the Silicon Gorge Partnership, which includes SETsquared, Idea Squares, Invest Bristol & Bath, TechSPARK.

Thought leadership conference

The progress, productivity and promise of the region will be highlighted in the October conference. You can see first-hand what the future of urban living looks like in Bristol and Bath. The conference themes will include smart energy, intelligent transport and smart money.

About Venturefest Bristol and Bath 2017

Venturefest Bristol and Bath is one of a series of Venturefest events across the country, supported by Innovate UK. Ian Meikle, Director for Infrastructure Systems at Innovate UK, said:

Bristol & Bath is one of the UK's most important technology clusters, playing a global role in the development of smart city technology.

Speech: Greg Hands speech to British Chamber of Commerce in Germany

Thank you to the British Chamber of Commerce in Germany for inviting me to speak at your annual gala. I accepted the invitation from Peter Brock immediately.

Not only because I have some important messages to get across, but also because there is almost no UK politician with closer natural bonds to Germany than me.

In fact, I was a little surprised when you told me you wanted me to deliver this speech in English, as I would have been as happy to give it in German – as I did a 25 minute speech in German in Munich to the Vereinigung der Bayerischen Wirtschaft in November.

The speech wasn't a problem, although the 45 minute long question and answer section was more challenging! Returning to my story, I took advantage of free movement of labour to move to what was then called West Berlin, in 1985, to take a job as a Bädewarter, in the exotic location of the Sommerbad Kreuzberg, in an area, then as is now, with a strong Turkish influence.

I lived for much of the years 1985 to 1988 in West Berlin, doing whatever holiday jobs I could find, ranging from the Kaufhaus des Westens (or KaDeWe) to McDonalds.

I was lucky to have studied the German language at school. Only 20% of British schoolchildren did so in the 1980s – now the figure is unfortunately below 5%. I want to see that number go back up!

The first part of Germany I entered, as a schoolboy in 1981, was North Rhine Westphalia.

I was travelling to spend 2 weeks in Gummersbach. An enjoyable experience – albeit not quite as exciting as West Berlin 4 years later!

So I had 6 years of German at school – and some school visits – behind me, but nothing that would have prepared me for the unique challenge of 'Berlinerisch' when I arrived in Berlin in March 1985.

I took every advantage of the opportunities there.

My wife is from Berlin, and I am the proud father of 2 children who are just as happy speaking German or English.

My wife is the German teacher at an inner London school, so she is doing her bit to help!

My children have all the advantages of bilingualism and occasionally take advantage of having 2 nationalities.

Before the last World Cup, I asked my son, 'Which country are you going to support in the tournament?'

'Papa,' he said, 'I will start with England and then switch to Germany'. He is a clever boy.

So I have a lot of human capital in the British-German relationship.

I also have a lot of political capital in it.

For 12 years, ever since I became an MP, I have been an active member of the Königswinter group, I attend the Petersberger Dialog not far from here, and I have been to 7 different CDU and CSU Parteitag, of the sister parties of our UK Conservative Party. Some of my best German friends are politicians from North Rhine Westphalia.

Part of the reason for my political interest is that in the 1980s I wasn't only interested in doing holiday jobs in West Berlin. I took full advantage of the city's unique geography to visit East Berlin and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) – in fact, some 48 times. And also to Czechoslovakia, Poland and so on.

It was very easy in those days to see an alternative system to ours, just 20 minutes to cross over at Checkpoint Charlie or Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse. These days, by the way, it's a long way to Pyongyang or Caracas.

Emerging one afternoon in 1985, in East Berlin, as an 19 year old opened up a whole new world for me, in every sense.

Once one got used to the cheap beer – not an insignificant attraction at that age – one quickly realised that this Germany was rather different to the one on this side of the Wall.

I met political prisoners, like my friend Heiko, who was imprisoned, merely for seeking to make what was a legal application to leave the country. I met people who were scornful of their political masters, in a way that one doesn't experience even in today's world of anti-politics.

Trade – or lack of it – was a key part of the experience. Most of the goods were shoddy or expensive, or sometimes both. Mouldy oranges from Cuba. Expensive and unreliable electronics from domestic firms like Robotron. Cars which were consciously outmoded and outdated, made of cardboard, like the Trabant and the Wartburg.

And this was in the Eastern Block's most successful economy – the GDR. Further afield, the situation could be much worse.

So I was given an early lesson in the importance of the free market and the great value of free trade. An early lesson which I carry with me today.

We as politicians, and also as business leaders, need to make the strong case for free trade.

This has never been more true than today, when for the first time since 1989, free trade is coming under political attack.

In the words of our Prime Minister, Theresa May, we want the UK to be the most passionate, compelling and convincing advocate for global free trade.

Let me turn to the UK-Germany relationship.

It is a relationship that I hope very much will remain strong and dynamic.

The UK's vote to leave the EU was not us turning our back on our friends in the EU, but to build a more global Britain alongside a strong Europe.

This comes at a time when the voices of economic nationalism and anti-globalisation are becoming louder.

We cannot let them drown out the voices of free and open trade.

3 myths about Brexit

There are some who claim the UK's vote to leave the EU is symptomatic of this trend.

Specifically, that the UK, a once great outward looking nation, is now turning its back on the world.

That by leaving the EU, we are threatening both its core principles and future stability.

And finally, that the UK is undermining its own chances for future economic success.

These are the classic myths of Brexit. Tonight, I want to address each myth in turn and reiterate beyond any doubt, that the UK will be the global champion of free trade.

Britain in the world

Let me start with Britain's place in the world.

Today's global climate is seeing a slowdown in the growth of global trade.

Protectionist measures are starting to increase.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has warned that, for the first time, trade-restrictive practices are now being instigated at a faster rate than they are being removed.

Yet amidst this climate, it is this UK government that continues to state its intention to be at the vanguard of a freer global trading system.

Free trade has helped hundreds of millions of people escape the scourge of poverty; allowed businesses the world over to gain access to global supply

chains and the flow of technology and ideas; and put power in the hands of consumers – giving them access to greater choice than ever before.

We are strongly committed to free trade!

Whilst we remain an EU member, the UK will fulfil its commitments to push forward trade deals with Japan and Canada; and outside the union, we will continue to champion moves towards a more open global economy, as we take our seat as an independent member of the World Trade Organisation.

But in Brexit, we also see an opportunity.

This is our moment to build a truly Global Britain. A Britain, that whilst maintaining and, where possible, strengthening ties with its European neighbours, also looks to the opportunities beyond the borders of Europe, as well.

Britain has always been a country with big ambition. We now have an opportunity to realise that potential.

We will revive trading relationships with global partners, including those in the Commonwealth and emerging economies from east to west.

Doing business with the wider world is vital.

Since joining the EU, exports as a percentage of GDP has broadly stagnated in the UK. In 2015, it stood at 27%, well behind Germany's impressive 47%. In fact, we are the lowest in the EU28 – second lowest is Greece.

So I am delighted that some of the world's fastest growing economies, from North America to the Gulf to China, have already shown interest in striking future trading deals with the UK.

We will also not forget our global responsibilities.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, NATO, the G7 and the G20 – the UK will continue to play a leading role in tackling the world's most pressing problems – from climate change to terrorism.

We are the only G7 country to meet its obligations to spend both 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defence, and also 0.7% of GNI on international development.

The UK doesn't do isolationism; internationalism is in our DNA.

EU / UK

Let me turn to the second myth, concerning our relationship with the EU.

The UK has no intention of undermining the stability of the EU, nor do we want to become more distant to our European neighbours.

We want the EU to be a success and we want its member states to prosper. That

remains overwhelmingly and compellingly in Britain's national interest.

On 24 June 2016, I didn't wake up and feel any less European. I remember consoling my son, who was in tears, and trying to explain what the result meant.

Being European is an intrinsic part of my British identity.

Our shared values of democracy, tolerance and diversity will endure. No referendum can change that.

But I am, above all, a democratic politician. More people voted to leave the EU in Britain than have voted for anything else in our British history.

They gave this government a democratic instruction, which we must now deliver on.

We want to be the best friend and neighbour to our European partners.

We want to continue to have the closest possible relationship on trade, whilst also maintaining our defence, security and cultural ties.

These ties have sowed peace throughout the continent for 70 years. No-one is turning the clock back.

Looking forward, our first priority will be to build a strong and vibrant future trading relationship with the EU.

I hope, as Chancellor Merkel too has said, that these negotiations can be done in parallel, alongside the negotiations about our exit.

We want to maintain the greatest possible access to the single market, the destination for 44% of our exports, just as I'm sure EU businesses would like continued access to the UK market, with which they trade a €70 billion surplus.

In 2015, to North Rhine Westphalia, the UK exported €9.5 billion of goods and services. €14 billion went in the other direction – almost 50% more. This includes automotive, machines, metals, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and much more.

The UK actually imports more from Germany, as a whole, than from all of the Americas combined.

That is why we will aim to pursue a bold and ambitious free trade agreement with the EU.

One which allows for the freest possible trade in goods and services between companies and consumers in the UK and those across Europe.

In all trade negotiations, countries set out the institutions, industries and values they must maintain; whilst also outlining the flexibility they have to reach an agreement.

This is the first and arguably most important step.

Both the UK and EU member states will keep their national interests at the heart of the negotiations throughout the exit process – and this is as it should be. Anything else would be a dereliction of duty.

But the long-standing tradition of cooperation between the UK and the EU will give us a strong starting point for such negotiations.

Both sides will be seeking to keep as close a relationship as possible in many areas.

Ultimately, we want the best deal for Britain, but this doesn't have to come at the expense of other member states. Trade is not a zero sum game; nor are security or defence.

Businesses around the world have told me that a severe dislocation in our trading arrangement would be unhelpful and unwelcome.

Look at our interlinked supply chains. Five countries, including the UK and Germany, are involved in manufacturing each Airbus plane. One in 5 BMW engines is made in the UK.

That is why Prime Minister Theresa May emphasised the need of a phased process of implementation regarding a future trading arrangement.

This will avoid a disruptive cliff edge, allowing enough time for businesses to prepare for new arrangements.

This is the common sense approach and ensures businesses from Dusseldorf to Dundee, and consumers from Cottbus to Cardiff don't suffer.

Businesses in the UK and here in North Rhine Westphalia must help ensure that pragmatism triumphs over political point scoring and over abstract political ideas – for the sake of all our interests.

Jobs and consumers must come first.

Most people in this room should not be surprised when I say that of all Germany's Bundesländer, North Rhine Westphalia is the one of greatest economic importance to the UK.

A relationship born initially out of necessity and the ashes of conflict, is now one of vibrant economic exchange.

You are our biggest trading partner, receiving 30% of our exports to Germany.

61,000 Germans work for the 1,400 British companies based here.

We are your third biggest investor.

National Express now run 2 regional rail services here in North Rhine Westphalia, winning contracts thanks to rail liberalisation in both countries.

A.O. World Plc – a UK online electrical retailer, which does next-day delivery of washing machines and other appliances – is revolutionising service delivery in Germany and has recently opened its European headquarters, 50km away from here, in Bergheim-Paffendorf – creating 300 jobs.

But it is a 2 way street.

Every day, over 100,000 people wake up in the UK to go and work for 578 companies from this state.

Behind these figures lies an undeniable truth. The fortunes of Germany and the UK are inextricably linked.

So let's approach the coming years as partners with a shared purpose: harnessing the principles of free trade to secure our mutual economic well-being.

Economic future

The final myth I want to address is that the UK will somehow be less competitive and less successful outside the EU.

Having served as the number 2 UK Treasury Minister, I know very well the strength of the UK economy.

It would be wrong to underestimate its resilience and potential.

The UK's fundamental economic strengths will not change.

We have a business environment that is second to none. A low regulation economy combined with a widely admired system of contractual law.

Our world beating universities feed a highly skilled and flexible workforce, and London is widely considered the financial capital of the world.

Our recently launched Industrial Strategy means we will continue to pioneer a whole host of new technologies, working with industry and universities, to ensure Britain remains the location of choice for many sectors – from automotive to fin tech to aerospace.

And global business realises this.

Since the referendum, around £16 billion has been invested in the UK from overseas – a clear vote of confidence.

Siemens have confirmed future investment in UK R&D; and chemical distribution firm Brenntag will invest over £50 million, over the next 5 years, in the UK.

The political infrastructure is now also in place.

My newly established Department for International Trade places trade firmly at the heart of government policy making.

This department will serve as a perennial symbol of the UK's global spirit.

We have an ambitious remit: to promote UK companies abroad; to continue to attract the highest levels of inward investment in Europe as well as promote outward investment; and to develop our trade policy capability – which has already seen the number of UK trade policy experts quadruple since the referendum.

We are assembling the tools to ensure the UK becomes a beacon for open trade around the world.

Conclusion

To conclude, standing here in North Rhine Westphalia, I am always reminded about what can be achieved when our two nations pull together to defend our shared values across trade, culture, defence and security.

The formation of this federal state 71 years ago ushered in that unprecedented level of cooperation.

It was the start of a bilateral relationship which preceded the very existence of the European Union.

It showed that our ties were strong enough to endure whatever uncertainties the second half of the 20th Century would bring.

They remain strong now, and will continue to be so in the future.

Like I said before, no referendum can change that.

Thank you.