

1,000 tonne bridge installation for Southampton motorway this weekend

The new bridge weighs 1,069 tonnes – as much as 15 space shuttles – and will be lifted into place using self-propelled modular transporters, which are remote-controlled, self-powered low-loader lorries. These lorries will lift the bridge into place from the carriageway.

The bridge was built in a compound near to the motorway. Building the bridge offsite and moving it into its final position saved what would have been months of overnight closures of the M27. The bridge deck is 47 metres long and is 16 metres wide.

The work is part of a Highways England project to replace the bridge that carries the A3057 Romsey Road over the M27 northwest of Southampton and is the second of three weekend closures allowing the old bridges to be demolished and the new one installed.

The M27 between junction 3 (for Southampton City Centre) and junction 4 (for the M3) will be closed from 10pm on Friday night (28 June) and will reopen at 5am on Monday 1 July.

Highways England project manager Andrew Winson said:

The installation of the new Romsey Road bridge marks a major milestone in this scheme and is the next step towards opening a brand-new bridge for people in the area and users of the A3057. Our approach to replacing this bridge has meant that we can avoid months of disruption on the M27 and carry out the big operations over three weekends, spread out over time. But, while this means less disruption overall, closing the M27 will inevitably cause disruption this weekend, so I strongly urge drivers to plan ahead and avoid the area if possible.

The weather is expected to be very warm this weekend, so if travelling by car, please take some extra water on your journey just in case the diversion routes are busy, which they are expected to be.

This work has been carefully planned and agreed with local authorities and emergency services. While the motorway is closed, Highways England will also carry out routine maintenance, such as barrier, technology and drainage work, avoiding the need for future roadworks.

Fully signed diversion routes will be in place throughout the weekend, with separate routes for heavy vehicles.

Westbound:

- Light vehicles will be diverted via M3 junction 11 down the A3090 through Romsey and down the A36 to M27 junction 2
- Lorries will be diverted off at M27 junction 5, along the A27 to Chilworth roundabout, then along the A27 through North Baddesley, down the A3057, onto the M271 and re-joining the M27 at junction 3.

Eastbound:

- Light vehicles on the M27 originating from the A31 heading to London/M3 will be diverted off at M27 junction 2 to use the A36 and the A3090 through Romsey towards M3 junction 11
- HGVs on the M27 coming from the A31 heading for M3/London will be diverted off the above route at Romsey. It will be directed onto the A27. These HGVs will then route through North Baddesley to Chilworth Roundabout, where they will pick up the A33 to join the M3 northbound. (This is to avoid the low bridges on the A3090.)
- Traffic of any type on the M27 coming from the A31 and heading towards M27 east (e.g. from Bournemouth to Portsmouth) will be diverted off at M27 junction 3 to head up the M271 and A3057 northbound. Traffic will then be diverted, before it reaches Romsey, to join the eastbound A27, heading through North Baddesley and Chilworth Roundabout to re-join the M27 at junction 5.

The Romsey Road bridge is being replaced because it is nearing the end of its life. Two narrow older bridges are being replaced with a single new one, designed to last 120 years. Work started in September last year when the first of the two old bridges was demolished, with traffic on the A3057 directed over the other bridge. With the new bridge in place, work will begin to get the new bridge ready for traffic, and the final remaining old bridge will be taken down in another weekend's work expected to happen towards the end of the year.

Anyone interested in being kept up to date with the scheme can visit our [scheme web page](#) or email info@highwaysengland.co.uk.

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.

Northumbrian Water to pay £1.179 million for environment offences

Five separate Enforcement Undertakings (EU) have been agreed with Northumbrian Water after the company accepted responsibility for environmental offences in County Durham (West Cornforth, Crook Beck and Chilton) and Marske-by-the-Sea (Longbeck – two offences).

The acceptance of an EU offer is often a direct alternative to prosecution, in cases where the environmental impact was localised, and where the Environment Agency is satisfied that the offending by Northumbrian Water Limited wasn't intentional.

The Environment Agency expects financial contributions to go towards environmentally focussed work located in and around the geographical area where the offences occurred.

The local North East projects to receive donated sums include (in alphabetical order):

- Chilton Primary Friends: £5,000
- Durham Wildlife Trust: £145,000
- Groundwork North East: £50,000
- Industry Nature Conservation Association: £50,500
- Marine Conservation Society: £188,000
- North East Environment Network: £80,000
- Tees Rivers Trust: £253,000
- Tees Valley Wildlife Trust: £308,000
- The Tweed Forum: £15,000
- Wear Rivers Trust: £85,000

Fiona Morris, Environment Planning and Engagement Manager with the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

We feel Enforcement Undertakings are a more balanced response to dealing with these environmental offences. The outcome is beneficial to the environment relevant to where the offence took place. It will also help to change the behaviour of the company and focus on their activities. This approach achieves more than if the company in question had been convicted and fined.

In these cases Northumbrian Water Limited have taken action to rectify the situation and the environment will now benefit from some great work by local charities.

We work hard to protect people and the environment, and a clear regulatory framework with agreed standards and targets has helped to drive major environmental improvements throughout the region.

For all of the national and regional Enforcement Undertakings information including the Northumbrian Water Limited environmental offences [click here](#)

If anyone needs to report an environmental issue in their local community they can contact the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

[Speed limit change helps increase productivity](#)

- new speed limit for lorries was introduced in 2015 to improve business efficiency
- change has brought HGV speeds more in line with other traffic, and reduced the number of speeding lorries.
- report shows speed increase may have improved road safety

A change in lorry speed limits has saved businesses millions of pounds a year and could have helped improve road safety.

A [report](#) shows that allowing heavy goods vehicles over 7.5 tonnes to travel 10mph faster, bringing them closer to the speed of other traffic, has contributed to an increase of 1.5mph in average speeds on single carriageway roads.

An increase of just 1mph would free up 650,000 driver hours and save hauliers more than £10 million a year. The change, which came into force in 2015, allows lorries to travel at up to 50mph on single carriageways and 60mph on dual carriageway roads in England and Wales. It means they are travelling at similar speeds to other vehicles, instead of much slower – with the aim of improving road safety. This report shows there is a possible “statistically significant” improvement to road safety on study roads; which will be further explored in the final report.

Roads Minister Michael Ellis said:

I am pleased to see the improvement in safety while helping to unlock the UK's potential – encouraging growth and enhancing productivity.

Increasing the speed limit for lorries has helped companies save time and money, enabling them to re-invest this in their business and buying newer and greener vehicles.

This move has also potentially improved road safety as it appears to have reduced the risks some drivers take when overtaking slow-moving vehicles.

The report also shows that the number of speeding lorries has fallen by about 70%.

Since the change in speed limit was introduced, the average lorry speed on single carriageways increased by 1.5mph to 45.6mph, and other vehicles also saw increased speeds. On dual carriageways, the average speed increase was 0.4mph, to 52.4mph.

A final report will be published in due course and will provide further evidence on the effects of the change, particularly on road safety.

[Inward investment brings 4,800 new jobs a month to the UK](#)

Figures from the Department for International Trade published today (26 June), show 1,782 new inward investment projects were recorded in 2018/19, creating over 57,000 new jobs and safeguarding nearly 7,000 jobs in the UK.

The figures published today complement recent reports that show that despite a competitive global investment environment, the UK continues to attract more foreign direct investment projects than any other country in Europe.

Of the number of projects that the UK attracted, the Department for International Trade helped to secure 81% of them.

The figures also show UK regions increasing their share of total UK FDI projects since 2016/17. The Midlands Engine and Northern Powerhouse regions saw a 2.6 percentage point and 1.4 percentage point increase in their total share of UK projects.

The software, life sciences and oil & gas industries all saw an increase in the number of jobs attracted into their sectors.

International Trade Secretary, Liam Fox MP said:

Despite global economic headwinds and a competitive investment environment, the UK continues to be the number one destination for foreign direct investment in Europe, accumulating more FDI stock than Germany and France combined.

Today's figures show the UK remains extremely attractive to foreign investors, particularly our European neighbours.

My department will continue to promote the strengths of the UK as a great inward investment destination, with an open, liberal economy, world-class talent and business friendly environment.

Figures from 2018/19 show an increase in the number of FDI projects coming from a number of European countries including Ireland, Netherlands, Italy and France, where inward investment projects have increased by 10.4%, 7.1%, 6.3%, and 4.3%, respectively.

The US continues to be the UK's number 1 source of foreign direct investment investing in 440 projects in the UK, with Germany in 2nd place and India in 3rd place for the number of investments made.

Background

- The full statistical release can be found [here](#)

EY Attractiveness Survey 2019

- The latest attractiveness report by EY shows that the UK remained the number one destination in Europe for foreign direct investment, securing 1,054 investment projects in 2018, despite a fall in FDI projects into Europe.

fDi Intelligence Report 2019

- fDi's intelligence Report 2019 showed the UK attracted more greenfield investment projects in 2018 than Germany and France combined.

UNCTAD World Investment Report 2019

- The latest data by UNCTAD showed that by the end of 2018, the total value of the UK's inwards investment stock was \$1.89tn, the highest in Europe and third highest in the world. The value of the UK's inwards stock was also worth more than Germany and France combined.

ONS

- ONS's latest National Statistics (to the end of 2018) show the inward FDI stock is at the highest level recorded (£1.489 trillion).

Forbes 'best countries for business' 2019

- The UK was found to be the top country for doing business in Forbes' 2019 report, a measure which ranks countries according to how business friendly they are based on 15 different factors from property rights to investor protection.
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Business group established to look at Brexit backstop alternatives

Following the [launch](#) last week of an expert advisory group looking at alternative arrangements to the Northern Ireland backstop, the Government has convened a second group made up of businesses and trade unions to ensure their experience and on-the-ground knowledge informs developments.

The group includes cross-sector representatives from Ireland, Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, and will ensure the views of businesses and their employees are represented in this process.

The new Business and Trade Union Alternative Arrangements Advisory Group will complement the work of the recently-established Technical Alternative Arrangements Advisory Group, which comprises trade and customs experts tasked with considering workable solutions to the backstop.

They will consider processes associated with the movement of goods across borders and options for simplifying them, such as trusted trader programmes and advanced use of data and IT systems.

The UK and EU have a shared desire to replace the backstop with alternative arrangements to ensure there is no hard border – and both sides have committed to prioritising the development of these in the next phase of talks.

The business and trade union group is one of three domestic advisory groups that the Government [announced earlier this year](#) to help inform its negotiations with the EU on this important issue.

The first meeting of the business and trade union group will take place today (Wednesday 26th June). It will be co-chaired by Brexit minister Robin Walker and BEIS minister Andrew Stephenson.

Robin Walker, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union, said:

The development of alternative arrangements to replace the backstop has been recognised as a priority by both the UK Government and the EU Commission. Accordingly, we have a highly-informed group of experts in trade and customs focused on developing and testing workable solutions.

But it is vital that any possible alternatives to the backstop are informed by the views of those on the ground, whose goods cross the border every single day. So I am delighted to chair this important group, which will ensure that the voices of business and trade

union representatives are heard.

Members of the business and trade union group have been chosen based on their comprehensive backgrounds in cross-border supply chains. The group includes large companies who can represent the views of themselves and their suppliers, as well as smaller companies who rely on cross-border “just in time” supply chains.

The Government has made available £20 million of funding to support the development, testing or piloting of any ideas that emerge from the advisory groups.

Business and Trade Union Alternative Arrangements Advisory Group members:

- Aodhán Connolly, British Retail Consortium NI, Director
- John McGrane, British Irish Chamber of Commerce, Director General
- Dr Mike Johnston, Dairy Council for Northern Ireland, Chief Executive
- Seamus Leheny, Freight Transport Association NI, Policy Manager
- Angela McGowan, CBI NI, Director
- Karen Marshall, BoW Leather, Managing Director
- Aidan Gough, InterTradeIreland, Designated Officer and Director of Strategy and Policy
- Conall Donnelly, Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association, Executive Director
- David Nicholl, NC Engineering, Director
- Wilson Del Socorro, Diageo, Global Director of Public Affairs
- Wesley Aston, Ulster Farmers’ Union, Chief Executive
- Ian Hampton, Stena Line, Chief People, Communications and Sustainability Officer
- Marcus Wachtmeister, BMW Group UK, Head of Government Affairs
- Tom McGroder, Sensata Technologies (Schrader Electronics), Global Trade Compliance EU Regional Manager
- Clare Guinness, Warrenpoint Harbour, Chief Executive
- Owen Reidy, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Assistant General Secretary
- Dr Gerard O’Hare CBE, DL, Belfast Harbour, Board Member
- Craig Jones, General Electric, Director of Government Relations