

News story: Government invests in Warrington congestion cutting scheme

Thousands of new jobs and homes could be created in Warrington after the Transport Secretary approved £142.5 million for a new Western Link.

The new road, which will connect the A56 at Chester Road with the A57 at Sankey Way, will create a new crossing point over the Mersey, cutting congestion and opening up land for development for up to 24,000 new homes and substantial employment opportunities.

The scheme will also create job opportunities at the Port of Warrington, boosting the economy of the whole area.

Roads Minister Jesse Norman said:

Investment in roads cuts travel time, increases productivity and helps create new job opportunities.

The new Western Link Road will significantly benefit both road users and residents in Warrington, and is the latest instalment of the government's record £13 billion investment in transport across the north of England.

The Western Link Road creates an additional key link between the north and south of Warrington, taking shipping traffic away from the town centre.

It will also ease congestion close to Warrington Bank Quay station, improving journey times in and around the town, while an additional bridge will be built over the Manchester Shipping Canal.

Construction on the new road could start as early as 2021.

This is part of the government's £13 billion investment in northern transport, which includes [Highways England's £1.5 billion to enhance motorways and major A roads in the north west](#) as well as [£1.57 billion from the growth deal for more than 60 transport schemes in the region until 2021](#).

In addition, [Warrington West Station, which received £4.23 million from the New Stations Fund](#), is due to be completed later this year. When complete, Northern Rail will provide two trains an hour.

Press release: UK listed status application approved to assure animal and animal product movements in a no-deal Brexit

The UK's listed status application has been agreed by European Union (EU) member states after it met the animal health and biosecurity assurances required for a third country to export live animals and animal products.

This confirmation is part of the EU's published no deal contingency planning – without it, exports of animal products and most live animals to the EU could not take place in the event of a no-deal exit from the EU on April 12.

It also means the movement of equines between the UK and the EU will also now continue in a no deal scenario, offering welcome reassurance to this sector.

Food and Animal Welfare Minister David Rutley said:

This is good news for UK businesses. It demonstrates our very high standards of biosecurity and animal health which we will continue to maintain after we leave the EU.

If you or your business import or export animal and animal products or imports high risk food then I urge you to visit our guidance pages on gov.uk for what you need to do to be ready to continue to trade post-Brexit.

Our top priority remains delivering a negotiated deal, but it is the job of a responsible government to ensure we are prepared for all scenarios, including no deal.

The EU's Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (SCoPAFF) confirmed the acceptance of the UK's listed status application yesterday [9 April]. National listed status is the EU's classification for non-member states and the UK's application, submitted in November 2018, has passed the high criteria on biosecurity measures for animal health and food hygiene.

UK exports of animals and their products to the EU will need to go through an EU Border Inspection Post and businesses will still require an Export Health Certificate (EHC) and meet its requirements. Our guidance remains to send an EHC with the export consignment, and to send a copy of the EHC to the EU importer.

With listed status now confirmed, exporters will need to follow the EU rules for exports from third countries to the EU. Our guidance for [importers](#) and [exporters](#) is available on GOV.UK.

In a deal scenario, the UK will not need to be listed during the implementation period. To give certainty to businesses and citizens, common rules will remain in place until the end of the implementation period meaning businesses will be able to trade on the same terms as now up until the end of 2020.

Disruption for those businesses which import live animals, germinal products and certain animal products will also be minimised as they will now continue to have access to the TRACES (TRAde Control and Expert System) after the UK leaves the European Union until later this year. TRACES is the system used by importers to notify authorities of such imports from non-EU countries.

As originally planned, imports from non-EU countries will need to go through the UK's new IPAFFS system from day one.

Background:

- The latest guidance for businesses on this topic is [available here](#)
- This decision by the European Union applies only to a no-deal Brexit on April 12 2019. There would need to be another vote if the UK was to leave in a no deal scenario on a different date.

[Press release: Singapore eCommerce Enterprises Development office opens to help UK businesses trade with Singapore](#)

[The Singapore-United Kingdom Partnership for the Future](#) launched in January 2019 to mark the significant year for both countries. Digital economy and sustainable business and innovation are key pillars, especially as trade between Singapore and the UK has never been stronger with the UK exporting £8.6bn of goods and services to Singapore in 2017, from under £3bn in 1999.

The significance of Singapore as a major trading partner was highlighted in a visit to Singapore in August last year by the Rt. Hon Dr Liam Fox MP, Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade to showcase the UK as a great place to invest and to promote Singapore as a land of opportunity for UK firms.

With assistance from Enterprise Singapore, a trade and enterprise development government agency, SEED, a consortium of Singaporean companies, has established a presence in the UK. With the opening of the SEED office, it will support UK businesses to sell their products to ASEAN's growing population through e-commerce.

The SEED office will provide UK companies with the information needed to help them expand into the region using Singapore as the entry point. Services will include market research, data analytics and development of an e-commerce strategy.

The opening of the SEED office recognises the brilliant innovative talent of UK brands and companies and of the UK being a global market leader in retail consumer goods and products.

Commenting on the opening of the SEED office, Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion at the Department for International Trade, Baroness Fairhead said:

I very much welcome the opening of the Singapore eCommerce Enterprises Development (SEED) office in the City of London.

The opening of this office recognises the strength and excellence of British brands and their appeal to consumers. ASEAN eCommerce sales are projected to grow to approximately £77bn by 2025 with 650m people across the region eager to buy the UK's innovative and high-quality products and services.

With its state of the art distribution network, a sophisticated economy and its ease of doing business, Singapore acts as an ideal gateway for UK companies into the region.

I urge any UK businesses looking to expand into the region to get in touch with the Department for International Trade to find out more about the support we can offer. From connecting UK businesses to overseas buyers, to providing support through our award-winning export credit agency UK Export Finance, the Department for International Trade is committed to helping British businesses achieve international success.

As we celebrate the bicentennial of relations between the United Kingdom and Singapore this year, I wish to thank the consortium of Singaporean companies who make up SEED, alongside Enterprise Singapore for choosing the UK to establish their first overseas operation, and strengthening the trading ties between our two nations.

For further information about SEED visit the [website](#) or email info@asiacommercehub.com.

News story: Six-figure taxpayer-funded public sector exit payments to end

A cap of £95,000 will be introduced to stop huge exit payments when public sector workers leave their jobs, the government announces today (10 April 2019).

More than 1,600 highly-paid workers received payments of more than £100,000 in 2016-17 when they left public sector roles, costing a total of £198 million. English local government six-figure payments alone accounted for £98 million. Exit payments across the public sector were £1.2 billion in 2016-2017.

To ensure exit payments are value for money for the taxpayer, a [consultation is launching today](#) outlining how the government will introduce the cap. The UK Civil Service, local government, police forces, schools and the NHS are included in a first round of implementation which will cover the vast majority of public sector workers.

The policy has been carefully designed to protect long-serving, lower-earning staff.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Liz Truss, said:

It is clearly wrong when people leave public sector roles with massive payoffs. It incenses the public when they see their hard-earned money used badly like this.

That's why we are capping exit payments to stop unacceptably large pay-outs for senior managers.

Under government plans, exit payments under the cap – covering redundancy lump sums and pension top-up payments – will continue to be available so public sector employees can support their families, find new employment or have a bridge until retirement age.

While capping pay-outs at the top, the government is delivering the biggest public sector pay rise in ten years, announced last summer, with the highest rises going to the lowest paid nurses, teachers and police officers. The government announced in May 2015 that it intended take forward its commitment to end six-figure exit payments for public sector workers. It has been considering the most appropriate way to implement the cap, and is now announcing how it intends to introduce it.

Press release: Britain opens its doors to communities in need

- Stoke-on-Trent, Bradford, Rochford, Kettering and Slough to benefit from new trial project
- Government trial aims to support the changing face of the high street by welcoming community groups to make use of vacant spaces
- Spaces could be used for small group activities like book clubs or after school activities for young people

Towns across the country will benefit from a new scheme which will see landlords turn their empty shops into vibrant community hubs open to the public, Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP has announced.

The Open Doors project in partnership with the [Meanwhile Foundation](#), will help community groups transform their town centres by renovating unused retail units and making them fit for purpose.

Working with experts in managing the process of vacant high street properties which are temporarily available or for 'meanwhile use', the government will work to match public and private landlords with community groups offering vital services from well-being classes to business support sessions and mentoring for social enterprises.

The partnership will help tackle social problems linked to declining high streets such as crime, unemployment and loneliness.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Our high streets are the beating heart of the places we call home and make a real difference to the wellbeing of our communities.

This pilot is a great way to tackle some of the challenges faced by landlords and communities. It will support groups across the country and demonstrate the potential 'meanwhile use' of unused spaces.

High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP said:

The Open Doors Scheme encourages us to be more creative when tackling the social and economic challenges faced by our communities.

This pilot is just a glimpse of what we can do to revamp vacant

properties on our high streets, boost more community hubs and create more spaces for people to work, live and shop.

The confirmed locations that will be part of the scheme are Stoke-on-Trent, Bradford, Rochford, Kettering and Slough.

The Open Doors project, which has been backed by Sir John Timpson's [High Streets Expert Panel](#), is just one of the ways the government is feeding into the wider plan to transform our high streets.

The government recently announced [£9.75 million to local authorities](#) in England to champion community-led clean-ups of high streets and town centres all across the country ensuring they look their best.

The government is committed to helping local high streets evolve and adapt to the changing retail landscape and is keen to see thriving places where communities feel engaged and enjoy their vibrant town centres and high streets.

'Meanwhile use' refers to the short-term use of temporarily empty buildings such as shops until they return back to commercial use.