

Press release: Major flood defence exercise in Stratford

The Environment Agency's field team will deploy a temporary flood barrier along the street. The exercise, starting at 0700, will provide an opportunity to test barrier deployment plan and procedures, train staff and test working arrangements with partners, so the barriers can be quickly and safely erected when needed during a flood with minimum disruption.

Waterside will be closed to traffic for most of the day. Pedestrians will be unable to walk along the areas immediately in front of and behind the barrier, between the Encore Pub and the junction of Waterside and Chapel Lane, for health and safety reasons. Businesses on Waterside will be accessible.

The Environment Agency is supporting communities across England that remain at risk of flooding with 40km of temporary barriers which can be deployed at suitable sites during a flood. Stratford has been identified as one of those suitable locations.

Environment Agency Operations Manager Emma Smailes said:

This is a major test of our operational equipment. Although we have carried out numerous barrier deployment exercises at our training depots, doing it on location will give our field team invaluable experience.

Cllr Daren Pemberton, Planning and Administrative Services Portfolio at Stratford-on-Avon District Council, said:

This exercise will allow Environment Agency staff and partners, including the district council, to work together and test this new barrier deployment in Stratford-upon-Avon, thereby gaining valuable training experience.

In the past Stratford-upon-Avon, and Waterside in particular, has flooded and remains at risk of flooding, so the temporary barrier will now help to protect vulnerable properties in this location during future flooding events.

Testing the assembly of the barrier is important to ensure that it all works smoothly in a live emergency situation.

Cllr Howard Roberts, portfolio holder for Community Safety with Warwickshire County Council, said:

Flooding is one of the major hazards potentially affecting Warwickshire residents and it is vital that we are prepared to respond.

Exercises like this are key to making sure that partners are well practised at working together in response to a flood emergency.

Emma added:

It's important to remember that we can never protect 100% against flooding, and we can't guarantee that specific communities will always have access to temporary barriers.

Local residents and businesses should be prepared by checking their flood risk, signing up to flood warnings and finding out what they can do to protect themselves and their property by visiting the Prepare for Flooding page on GOV.UK or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

Environment Agency staff will be available during the exercise to provide members of the public with information about access restrictions, alternative routes and general flood advice. The exercise is likely to conclude around 1300.

[Press release: Environment Agency warns of flood risk in Devon and Cornwall](#)

The Environment Agency is urging people to remain vigilant to potential flooding as a low pressure coastal storm is forecast to hit the south coasts of Cornwall and Devon on Saturday.

Current forecasts show a low pressure storm on Saturday 21 October which, combined with close-to-spring tides, means flood warnings are likely to be issued along the south coasts of Cornwall and Devon and will require the routine closure of flood gates.

On Thursday 19 October the Environment Agency will be deploying temporary flood barriers in Fowey. The temporary barriers are designed to give Fowey better protection from potential coastal flooding. This type of flood defence has been used to prevent flooding from rivers for a number of years but this is the first time they have been used on the Cornish coast.

Environment Agency teams have been mobilised across the area to check on flood defences, clear any river blockages and closely monitor river levels. These teams have been working around the clock to reduce the risk of flooding, and will be out in force over the weekend.

Kevin Ward of the Environment Agency said:

We urge residents to take care on the coast this weekend. Strong winds pose a risk of waves overtopping defences and we advise not to stop and admire the waves or take 'storm selfies'.

Also, avoid exposed coastal areas and do not walk or drive through flood water, which can be dirty and contain hidden debris. Just 30cm of flowing water can move a car and driving through water can also create waves.

The Environment Agency continue to monitor the situation across Devon and Cornwall and will review their plans as the forecasts are updated.

Residents and businesses are encouraged to sign up to [flood warnings on the Environment Agency website](#). People can also call Floodline on 0345 988 1188. Once registered, if a flood warning is issued, they will receive an automatic message by telephone, SMS text message, email and/or fax.

Find out [how to prepare for flooding and if your home is at risk](#).

[Press release: £15billion road upgrade plan updated to minimise congestion](#)

Plans for twenty-six road upgrades have been revised to reduce roadworks taking place in the same area of the network or on popular journey routes at the same time. This will mean less congestion for motorists as Highways England embarks on the biggest road upgrade plan for a generation.

The Supplementary Delivery Plan published today will see Highways England rescheduling its programme for the schemes between three and 24 months – meaning a number of schemes will be completed earlier than planned. All are still set for delivery as part of the Government's first road investment strategy.

Jim O'Sullivan, Highways England Chief Executive said:

Our update today is a sensible and responsible way to deliver major national investment in road infrastructure. It will keep our roads

moving, deliver a lasting legacy for the country and ensure best value for money for the taxpayer.

Now, more than two years into delivery of a £15 billion Government investment in motorways and major A roads, Highways England has already completed 18 major schemes, adding more than 190 lane miles of much-needed capacity to the nation's roads.

The 10 schemes being brought forward are:

- A19 Testos
- A19 Downhill Lane
- M56 junctions 6-8 smart motorway
- M6 junctions 21a – 26 smart motorway
- M6 junction 22 upgrade
- A500 Etruria
- M6 junction 10
- M4 Heathrow Slips
- A47 Acle Straight -small scale improvement
- A47 and A12 junction enhancement

The 16 schemes being re-scheduled to smooth the timing and frequency of roadworks are:

- A5 Dodwells to Longshoot widening
- M3 junction 9 improvement
- A31 Ringwood
- M27 junctions 4-11
- A47 North Tuddenham to Easton
- A47 Blofield to North Burlingham dualling
- M25 junction 25 improvement
- M25 junction 28 improvement
- A1 Birtley to Coal House
- M60 junctions 24-27 and junction 1-4 smart motorway
- A47/A11 Thickthorn
- A47 Wansford to Sutton
- A47 Guyhirn Junction
- A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening
- M25 junction 10/A3 Wisley interchange
- M25 junctions 10-16

Highways England is obliged to ensure that investment in the road network delivers good value for money. Following a full review the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) programme some schemes require further development to achieve an acceptable return on investment. As a result, in addition to the 26 schemes above, 6 schemes have been paused for further review and consideration as part of future RIS planning process.

These schemes are:

- A1 & A19 Technology enhancements

- M11 junctions 8 to 14 technology upgrade
- A12 whole-route technology upgrade
- M53 junctions 5-11 smart motorway
- A14 Junction 10a
- M62/ M606 Chain Bar

Two further schemes required rework to achieve value for money; however, changes in local development plans mean that these schemes can be progressed, albeit in the early stages of Road Period 2. These are:

- M5 Bridgwater junction improvements
- A50 Utttoxeter Project B growth corridor project

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: New guidance to help charities comply with financial sanctions](#)

New [guidance](#) has today been published by the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) to help ensure compliance with financial sanctions which are designed to support UK foreign policy and national security.

OFSI works closely with charities, regulators and banks to understand common challenges faced by those operating in some of the most hostile environments.

The move was prompted by requests, notably from smaller charities, asking for clearer information on issues affecting the sector so they could ensure they complied.

Rena Lalgie, Head of OFSI, said:

We realise that charities often operate in challenging environments. This practical guidance is an important step in our efforts to raise awareness of financial sanctions and help charities and NGOs better understand their responsibilities.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Charity Commission in England and Wales, and its equivalents in Scotland and Northern Ireland, to further the UK's sanctions and humanitarian aid policies.

Michelle Russell, Director of Investigations, Monitoring and Enforcement at The Charity Commission, said:

We have listened to feedback from our outreach work with charities operating internationally. Some charities weren't aware that it is illegal to receive money, goods or economic resources from – or send these to – an individual or organisation subject to financial sanctions unless they have a licence or an exemption applies. Others found it challenging to navigate the rules about this. We're pleased to have worked with OFSI on the guidance to address this knowledge gap.

We will continue to work proactively and collaboratively with international charities and other authorities to ensure that laws designed to restrict access to finances to terrorists and others are complied with, without impacting the important, often life-saving, work of many charities in high-risk areas around the world.

Further information

This guidance helps clarify what activity may be permitted under an OFSI licence and how to apply. It also promotes various sources of information and advice available to charities and NGOs, including OFSI's email and telephone enquiry service and the Charity Commission's toolkit for charities and NGOs.

The new guidance document is available on [OFSI's guidance page](#).

[Press release: Winners of £51 million government competition to develop world-leading self-driving car testing infrastructure unveiled](#)

- the 4 projects will test the speed, safety and potential opportunities for delivering CAV innovation, helping ensure the UK remains world-leading
- 4 consortia have been selected in this first round, led by HORIBA MIRA,

Millbrook Proving Ground, TRL and the Warwick Manufacturing Group

Four projects across 5 locations in the West Midlands have today (19 October) been awarded a total of £51 million in funding for creating the environments needed to fully test CAV technology.

- [HORIBA MIRA](#) in Nuneaton will build a new site alongside its existing vehicle test tracks where automated vehicles can be tested at the limits of their speed and handling to ensure they are safe
- [Millbrook Proving Ground](#) in Bedfordshire and [Remote Applications in Challenging Environments \(RACE\)](#) based in the Culham Science Centre in Oxfordshire will set up a range of different test areas mimicking increasingly realistic city driving environments, where automated vehicles can be tested before being taken onto public roads
- 2 projects will adapt real world locations for testing of automated vehicles in live traffic:
 - [TRL](#) will lead a project to set up live test environments in Greenwich and Stratford's Olympic Park in London
 - [Warwick Manufacturing Group](#) will set up real world test environments in Coventry and Birmingham

Reflecting the UK's ability to compete globally in this hotly contested sector, Jim Hackett, President and Chief Executive Officer of Ford Motor Company, opened Ford Europe's Smart Mobility Innovation Office at the Olympic Park in Stratford yesterday. It will initially host 40 specialists brought together to develop smart mobility technologies for cities.

All the CAV projects announced today will be fully operational and advancing technology development in this sector within the next 18 to 24 months.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

Combining ambitious new technologies and innovative business models to address social and economic challenges lies at the heart of the government's modern Industrial Strategy. Accelerating connected and autonomous vehicle technology development is central to achieving this ambition and will help to ensure the UK is one of the world's go-to locations to develop this sector.

These projects, backed by government, form part of a globally unique cluster running from our automotive heartlands in the West Midlands, down through our innovation centres in Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes, through to London, Europe's only megacity.

To achieve this, government and industry are working together to create the world's most effective CAV testing ecosystem, integrating existing proving grounds and public road test sites across the UK's existing automotive sector, strengthening existing capabilities and creating new ones.

This new ecosystem will be co-ordinated through [MERIDIAN](#), a new government-backed and industry-led hub to develop CAV technology in the UK.

The MERIDIAN programme lays the foundation for a truly unique, world class, future transport technology testing ecosystem in which automotive and digital sectors can compete globally, and emerging businesses have unprecedented access to facilities.

Chair of the Auto Council Technology Group, Graham Hoare said:

Currently no other country has taken this innovative leveraged national approach and this can be a major differentiator on the global stage. This will be a globally unique set of capabilities that is co-ordinated and developed to provide a solution to industry that will enhance delivery efficiency, collaboration and knowledge growth.

Launch Director of MERIDIAN, Jim Campbell said:

As connected and autonomous vehicle technology becomes more complex, ensuring that the UK automotive industry has world-leading facilities to test and refine concepts is of imperative importance. Today's announcement from government is a strong first step to ensure the UK achieves its ambition of becoming a global hub of CAV development in the coming years.

The MERIDIAN will offer world class CAV testing and development in the UK which allows us to accelerate research, development and adoption of these vehicles.

Director of Manufacturing and Materials at Innovate UK, Simon Edmonds, said:

This first wave of testbed infrastructure investment is crucial at establishing a UK cluster of excellence to test and develop autonomous vehicle technology. This is another good example of how the UK is leading the way on this exciting agenda, and how UK companies can take advantage of the massive opportunities it presents.

This important investment, as part of the government's modern Industrial Strategy, will further boost the UK's opportunity to secure a share of the global connected and autonomous vehicles market that is expected to be worth up to £51 billion by 2020.

Automotive and technology companies will be able to accelerate their research programmes in real-life environments in UK cities, along with specially designed virtual and controlled test environments.

As well as securing high quality jobs for the future, it will unlock significant social benefits such as improving safety and provide better

mobility access for the young, the elderly, and the disabled.

Yesterday the government introduced the [Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill](#) as part of plans to boost the green transport revolution. The Bill will increase the access and availability of chargepoints for electric cars, while also giving the government powers to make it compulsory for chargepoints to be installed across the country and enabling drivers of automated cars to be insured on UK roads.

1) The projects are the first to be funded from the government's £100 million Connected and Autonomous Vehicles testing infrastructure programme announced in November 2016 and will be matched by industry.

2) The £51 million funding will be allocated across the UK: £31 million in the West Midlands, £7 million in Oxfordshire and Bedfordshire, and £13 million in London.

3) The winning CAV projects are:

Project title	Location	Public funding	Total project value*	Consortium partners
Smart Mobility Living Lab: London	Greenwich and Stratford (Olympic Park)	£13.4m	£19.2m	TRL (leader), Digital Greenwich, London Legacy Development Corporation, Cisco, Costain, Cubic, TfL, Loughborough University (London campus), and delivery partners, Millbrook and 5G Innovation Centre (University of Surrey)
UK Central CAV Testbed	Coventry and Birmingham	£17.6m	£25.3m	Warwick Manufacturing Group (leader), Amey, AVL, Costain, Coventry University, Horiba Mira, Transport for West Midlands, Wireless Infrastructure Group
MCTEE (Millbrook-Culham Test and Evaluation Environment)	Millbrook (near Milton Keynes) and Culham (near Oxford)	£6.9m	£10m	Millbrook Proving Ground (leader) and UK Atomic Energy Authority's Remote Applications in Challenging Environments (RACE, at Culham Science Centre)
TIC-IT (Trusted Intelligent CAVs)	Nuneaton	£13m	£26m	HORIBA MIRA (leader) and Coventry University

* Full 50% industry match will be met through operation and maintenance of the project facilities.

4) Since the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles was created in 2015 the government has awarded more than £100 million to 51 projects researching and developing connected and autonomous technology advancement.

These projects are all collaborative, involving more than 150 individual organisations from SMEs to global companies. 51 of these projects include a number of high profile trials to understand how members of the public will interact with the vehicles. These include:

- the GATEWAY consortia which will run four autonomous shuttles around the Greenwich peninsula in November this year (2017) for the public to use
- the UK AUTODRIVE consortia which will operate up to 40 autonomous pods in Milton Keynes in 2018
- the VENTURER consortia which has been undertaking a series of increasingly complex trials in the Bristol area
- a third collaborative research and development competition, now open with £25 million of funding available to the winning projects, the competition closes on 25 October