

[Press release: Defined benefit green paper to look at the security and sustainability of the sector](#)

Member protection, funding and investment, scheme affordability and consolidation will be reviewed as part of the consultation.

The government will also consider strengthened powers for [The Pensions Regulator](#).

The green paper will be a wide ranging call for evidence from employers, the pensions industry and consumers.

Background

Defined benefit schemes, many of which are also known as 'final salary pensions', are an important pillar of the UK economy and our pensions system. Currently, around 11 million members in the UK will rely on a defined benefit scheme for all or part of their retirement income and defined benefit pensions hold around £1.5 trillion of assets.

Increased life expectancy, changes to working patterns and the economy mean that defined benefit schemes are operating in very different circumstances from when they first became popular.

The purpose of the green paper

The government is committed to a system that works for employers, schemes and the 11 million people who are in a defined benefit scheme.

The green paper will consider the powers of [The Pensions Regulator](#) and encourage a debate about striking the right balance between the needs and aspirations of sponsoring employers, members, the [Pension Protection Fund](#), and the wider economy to ensure that no one group is unfairly disadvantaged.

Minister for Pensions, Richard Harrington, said:

People need to have confidence in their pension and it is vital that they feel that they are secure. With recent high profile cases highlighting the risks inherent in defined benefit pensions, we want to ensure that these important pension schemes remain sustainable for the future and that the right protections are in place for members.

Over the coming months we'll be working closely with the pensions industry, employers and scheme members to see what more can be done to increase confidence in defined benefit pensions.

While there is no evidence of a systematic issue, the government recognises that recent high profile cases have raised concerns regarding pensions and is looking to improve confidence in the sector and hear from a wide range of experts, employers and consumers about what action or support could be put in place.

The green paper looks at a range of issues that have been raised by various stakeholders. In particular it focuses on 4 key areas so that we can start to build consensus on whether we may want to reform the current system. They are:

- funding and investment
- scheme affordability
- member protection
- consolidation.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0203 267 5117

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[News story: Commercialisation of quantum technologies: apply for funding](#)

From:

First published:

20 February 2017

Businesses can win a share of £14 million to either develop quantum technology prototypes or establish technical or market feasibility.

Innovate UK and the [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council](#) (EPSRC) are inviting business to apply for a share of up to £14 million to develop quantum technologies.

Quantum technologies have the potential to significantly improve imaging and

computing. We predict they will have a major impact on the finance, defence, aerospace, energy and telecommunications sectors.

The competition aims to encourage collaborative research and development (CR&D) projects and feasibility studies that will either:

- develop prototype devices and demonstrators of quantum technologies or their component technologies
- improve the understanding of the technical, business or market challenges of taking a new device or service to market

There are 2 streams of the competition to support technologies at different stages of development.

Feasibility studies

This competition strand is seeking collaborative feasibility studies that will improve understanding of the technical or market feasibility of a product or service. Projects can be technical or non-technical projects and focus on understanding the business or market opportunity and challenges. They should last between 6 and 12 months with costs from £50,000 to £500,000.

Collaborative R&D

Projects in the collaborative research and development strand should be challenge-led. We are looking to fund projects that produce prototype devices and demonstrators with a clear commercial application or market need. They should last between 12 and 18 months with costs from £500,000 to £2 million.

- this competition is open and the deadline for registration is midday on Wednesday 29 March 2017
- proposals must be collaborative and a UK-based business must lead the project
- there will be briefing events for potential applicants in Edinburgh (21 February) and Birmingham (2 March)

[News story: Business customers now receive fewer online documents](#)

From:

First published:

20 February 2017

We have changed how we confirm online applications for Land Registry portal and Business Gateway users.

To help customers process their work and save time, we have reduced the number of documents we send to confirm their application.

From today, customers who send an application to us online will receive fewer confirmation documents.

Customers who receive their completed applications through [the Land Registry portal](#) or via [Business Gateway](#) will now receive a single Register Completion Sheet. This will contain important information that used to be on the Title Information Document. The Title Information Document duplicated much of the information in the Register Completion Sheet and contained information that is no longer relevant.

We will send a bilingual Register Completion Sheet when we complete any application against a Welsh title.

In November 2016, [we introduced this change for customers who receive confirmation through the post](#).

We are currently testing an option for customers who use our online services, to choose whether they receive separate completion documents, or whether they receive a single combined PDF. We hope to introduce this option next month.

[Press release: Planned roadworks in West Midlands: weekly summary for Monday 20 February to Sunday 26 February 2017](#)

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of 17 February 2017 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.

A38 – Claymills to Wood End Lane: carriageway repairs

Southbound carriageway closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A449 – Gailey Roundabout to Brewood Road:

carriageway repairs

South and northbound carriageway closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A45 – A4423 to Church Road: carriageway repairs

Eastbound carriageway closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February until 25 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A45 – Stivichall to Tollbar End: carriageway repairs

Westbound carriageway closed overnight for one night from 8pm 21 February until 6am the following morning (22 February). A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A45 – Stonebridge A45/A46 Stivichall Junction and A45/A46 Tollbar: carriageway repairs

Eastbound carriageway and slip roads closed overnight on 22 and 24 February from 8pm until 6am the following morning. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A46 – Oversley to Shottery: carriageway repairs

Carriageway will be closed in both directions overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February until 22 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A46 – Salford Priors to Oversley: carriageway repairs

Northbound carriageway will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A46 – Stoneleigh to Stivichall and exit slip road: carriageway repairs

Northbound carriageway and exit slip road closed overnight for one night from 8pm 20 February until 6am the following morning (22 February). A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A46 – Binley Wood to Tollbar: carriageway repairs

Southbound carriageway closed overnight on 23 and 24 February from 8pm until 6am the following morning. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A46 – Stoneleigh to Stivichall: carriageway repairs

Southbound carriageway closed overnight for one night from 8pm 23 February until 6am the following morning (24 February). A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A5 – Wall Island to Muckley Corner: carriageway resurfacing

Westbound carriageway closed overnight between 7pm and 6.30am from 20 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A5 – Churchbridge to Turf Island: carriageway resurfacing

Eastbound carriageway closed overnight for one night from 9pm 20 February until 6am the following morning (21 February). A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A5 – Chase Road to Rising Sun island: carriageway resurfacing

Westbound carriageway closed overnight for one night from 9pm 22 February until 6am the following morning (23 February). A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Meir Tunnel to Stanley Matthews Way: carriageway repairs

Westbound carriageway closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Heron Cross to Stanley Matthews Interchange Burton Road entry slip: carriageway repairs

Westbound carriageway closed 24 hour 7 days a week from 8 Feb ongoing until 7 July. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Blythe Bridge Entry Slip Road to Meir Tunnel: carriageway repairs

Westbound carriageway closed overnight for one night from 8pm 20 February until 6am the following morning (21 February). A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Heron Cross exit slip road to Foley Road Interchange: carriageway repairs

Eastbound carriageway and all associated slip roads closed overnight for one night from 8pm 20 February until 6am the following morning (21 February). A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Foley Road exit slip road to Trentham Road: carriageway repairs

Eastbound carriageway and all associated slip roads closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 21 February until 24 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Heron Cross exit slip road to Meir Tunnel: carriageway repairs

Eastbound carriageway and all associated slip roads closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 24 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A500 – Talke Island including exit slip roads and approaches: carriageway repairs

Eastside of the gyratory including all associated slip roads and approaches closed 24 hours 7 days a week from 11 January ongoing until 30 March. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M42 – junction 5 exit slip road: carriageway works

Northbound exit slip road closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 20 February until 23 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M42 – M6 junction 4a to M42: carriageway works

Southbound carriageway closed overnight between 10pm and 5am from 20 February until 25 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M42 – junction 3a to junction 5 including junction 4 entry slip: carriageway works

Northbound carriageway including junction 4 entry slip road closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 20 February until 24 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M42 – junction 1 exit and entry slip road: carriageway works

Entry slip and exit slip roads closed overnight in both directions between 9pm and 5.30am from 20 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M42 – junction 4 entry slip road: carriageway works

Southbound entry road closed overnight from 10pm 22 February until 5am the following morning (23 February). A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M42 – junction 5 entry slip to junction 6: carriageway works

Northbound carriageway closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 23 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M42 – junction 6 exit slip road: carriageway works

Northbound exit slip road closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 23 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M42 – junction 5 to junction 6: carriageway works

Northbound carriageway closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 17 February until 19 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M5 – junction 4a to junction 5: carriageway works

Southbound carriageway closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February to 24 February and then at the same time on 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M5 junction 5 to junction 4a: carriageway works

Northbound carriageway including northbound entry slip at junction 5 closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February until 22 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M5 junction 6 to junction 5: carriageway works

Northbound carriageway including junction 6 northbound entry slip closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February until 22 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M5 junction 5 to junction 6: carriageway works

Southbound carriageway including southbound entry slip closed overnight between 8pm and 6am on 23 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M50 – junction 1 to junction 2: major scheme works

Westbound carriageway closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M50 – junction 4 to junction 2: major scheme works

Westbound carriageway closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February until 22 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M54 – junction 5 to junction 6: carriageway repairs

Westbound carriageway closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M54 – junction 5 entry slip road: carriageway repairs

Westbound entry slip road carriageway closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 20 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M54 – junction 6 entry slip road: carriageway repairs

Westbound entry slip road carriageway closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 24 February until 27 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M54 – junction 4 to junction 3: carriageway repairs

Eastbound carriageway closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 24 February until 27 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M54 – junction 3 to junction 4: carriageway repairs

Westbound carriageway closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 24 February until 27 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 10 to junction 7 including junction

10 and 9 entry slip roads and link from M5: carriageway works

Southbound carriageway and associated slip roads closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 20 February until 25 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 11 entry slip road to junction 10 exit including M54 junction 1 entry slip road: carriageway works Southbound carriageway and associated slip roads closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 20 February until 25 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 7 to junction 8: carriageway works

Northbound carriageway closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 20 February until 24 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 7 entry slip road: carriageway works

Northbound entry slip road closed 24 hours 7 day days a week from 17 February ongoing until 24 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 7 to junction 10 including junction 9 entry slip and link from M5 northbound: carriageway works

Northbound carriageway and associated slip roads closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 20 February until 25 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 10 entry slip road to junction 11 exit slip road: carriageway works

Northbound carriageway and associated slip roads closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 20 February until 25 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 7 entry slip road: carriageway works

Northbound entry slip road closed overnight between 9pm and 9am from 24 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 7 to junction 8: carriageway works

Northbound carriageway closed overnight between 9pm and 9am from 24 February until 26 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

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 North West: summary for Monday 20 to Sunday 26 February 2017](#)

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of Friday 17 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](#).

M53 junction 1 to junction 2 (Wallasey to Upton)

Work to upgrade the safety barrier in the central reservation between junctions 1 and 2 on the M53 started 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.

M53 junction 9 to junction 10

Overnight, 10pm to 5am, Monday to Friday work to renew the safety barrier in the central reservation will start on Monday (20 February) for 5 weeks. This work will require overnight carriageway closures with clearly signed diversion in place.

M56 junction 10 to junction 11 (Stretton to Preston Brook)

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.

M6 junction 16 to junction 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.

M6 junction 19 (Knutsford) roundabout resurfacing

A £75,000 project to resurface the junction roundabout will be delivered overnight during week nights over the next 2 weeks. The work will start on Monday night (20 February) with nightly overnight closures of the roundabout between 10pm and 5am.

M6 Junction 21 and junction 21a (cycle improvements with A574 Birchwood Way)

We're improving pedestrian and cyclist access across the M6 with improvements to the existing overbridge and along the bridge's links with the A574 Birchwood Way.

The project will also improve the bridge parapet. Works started today (Friday 17 February) for 2 weeks. Cycleway improvement work is taking place between 9.30am and 3.30pm Monday to Friday, requiring the closure of the footway along the southern side of the A574 Birchwood Way with a localised pedestrian diversion route. A lane closure will also be required on the A574 Birchwood Way westbound carriageway between the same hours.

Bridge improvement works will follow between 10pm and 4am, Monday to Friday.

The M6 between junction 21 and junction 21a will be closed overnight on Thursday (23 February) and Friday 3 March (both northbound only) and Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday (20, 21, 22 February) and Wednesday and Thursday 1 and 2 March (all southbound). Clearly-signed diversions will be in place.

M6 junction 21a and /M62 junction 10 (Croft Interchange)

Construction work on a major project to tackle congestion and improve the flow of traffic between the M6 and M62 at Croft Interchange has now started. While the work is taking place, a 50 mph speed limit, backed by average speed cameras, will be in place along main carriageways of both the M6 and M62 and interchange link roads. Some overnight slip road closures will also take place.

M6 junction 26 to junction 27 (Orrell to Wigan)

We're renewing the boundary fence and carrying out drainage repairs in the verge alongside the northbound M6 between Junctions 26 and junction 27 in a 2 week project that starts on Monday (20 February). The work is taking place between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

M6 junction 33 to junction 32 (Lancaster to M55 interchange)

Resurfacing work on the southbound carriageway started on Monday 6 February. 2 lanes will remain open during the day and 1 lane will remain open overnight. 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.

M6 junction 34 to junction 35 (carriageway and drainage repairs)

Overnight drainage and carriageway repairs along the northbound carriageway between Lancaster and Carnforth started on Monday (13 February). Drivers can expect lane – but no full carriageway – closures between 8pm and 6am each night until Friday (24 February).

M6 junction 39 to junction 38, north of Tebay Services

Resurfacing is taking place north of Tebay Services with 1 lane closed during the day and 2 lanes closed overnight on the southbound carriageway. The work is due to be completed by March and a temporary 50mph speed limit in place.

M6 junction 45 to junction 44 (Gretna Green to Carlisle)

Resurfacing work is taking place on the southbound M6 overnight with 1 lane remaining open to traffic. The scheme is due to be completed by the end of February.

M60 junction 8 to M62 junction 20 (Sale to 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.

M66 junction 1 to junction 4 (Ramsbottom to Simister Island)

Resurfacing work is continuing and 4 nights of closures of the southbound carriageway between junction 1 and junction 2 are scheduled to take place before Friday (24 February) between 9pm and 5am – with clearly signed diversions in place. The scheme is due to be completed by March.

A5103 Princess Parkway

Drainage repairs along the northbound exit slip road from the A5103 onto the M60 will start on Monday (20 February) with one lane of the slip road closed and re-positioning of the bus stop. Work will take place in several phases between 8am and 6pm and midnight and 5am.

A556 Knutsford to Bowdon

Construction work to provide a £192 million dual carriageway linking junction 19 of the M6 at Knutsford and junction 7 of the M56 at Bowdon, has entered a final phase with the first of 3 full weekend closures of the motorway junctions and the old A556 taking place from 9pm tonight on Friday (17 February) until 5am on Monday (20 February). Routine overnight A556 – 9pm to 5am – closures will continue on weekdays next week and include the northbound between Mere and Bowdon roundabout, southbound between Bowdon roundabout and Bucklow Hill and all M56 slip roads at junction 7 and 8. Overnight traffic travelling between the A56 Lymm and A56 Dunham roads will be managed by temporary traffic lights overnight.

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. 24hr temporary traffic lights are now in place until late 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. Traffic management for the project will be removed next week with a full overnight closure of the carriageway – between 8pm and 6am – on Tuesday night, February 21.

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)

Flood resilience work is continuing. Full overnight – 8pm to 6am – closures of the carriageway nightly until the end of March started on Monday 6 February. Clearly-signed diversions are in place. During the day, Temporary traffic lights are in place along with a 40mph speed limit.

A66 Marron Bridge

Maintenance is underway on Marron Bridge, between Broughton Cross and Bridgefoot. Nightly overnight – 9pm to 5am – closures, with a clearly-signed diversion are in place. Due to the temporary bridging plates, a 30mph speed limit backed by speed cameras is required during the day. 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 day.

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 (Whitefield). 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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