

Press release: Weather update: no restrictions planned for A14 Orwell Bridge

Highways England is advising road users in the east of England that there are no current plans to close the Orwell Bridge in Suffolk tomorrow (Friday 3 February).

High winds have been forecast across the region for much of the day, peaking in the afternoon. However, based on the latest information from forecasters, Highways England considers it unlikely that conditions at the bridge will require a closure.

Drivers are asked to pay close attention to the weather forecast in case circumstances change. Safety is Highways England's top priority, and any decision about whether to close the bridge will be based on the safety of road users, taking into account the speed and prevailing direction of the wind.

Whilst the bridge is open, Highways England will continue to monitor wind speeds closely. If there is an increase in the forecast high winds, which would make the crossing unsafe for drivers, the Orwell Bridge, which carries the A14 over the River Orwell near Ipswich, could be closed at some point on Friday 3 February.

If the Orwell Bridge is closed, the planned diversion route is via the A1156, A1189 and A1214 through Ipswich.

Drivers planning to travel on Friday 3 February are encouraged to plan their journey in advance and check the latest weather and traffic conditions along the route. You can get the latest forecast from BBC weather, the Met Office, and BBC Radio Suffolk.

Drivers should be aware of sudden gusts of wind, and give high-sided vehicles, caravans, motorbikes and bicycles plenty of space.

Highways England provides live traffic information [via its website](#), local and national radio travel bulletins, electronic road signs and mobile platforms. Local weather information is also available on Twitter at @HighwaysEAST. The latest weather forecast can be seen on the [Met Office website](#).

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: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea

From:

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Part of:

Mr Simon Smith CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea.

Mr Simon Smith CMG has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea in succession to Mr Charles Hay MVO, who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Smith will take up his appointment during March 2018.

Curriculum Vitae

Full name Simon John Meredith Smith CMG

Married to Sian Rosemary Stickings MBE

Children Two daughters

2016 – present Language training (Korean)

2015 – 2016 FCO, Leader, Review of Buildings Security

2012 – 2015 Kyiv, Her Majesty's Ambassador

2007 – 2012 Vienna, Her Majesty's Ambassador & UK Permanent Representative to the UN

2004 – 2007 FCO, Director, Russia, South Caucasus and Central Asia Directorate /Head of Eastern Department

2002 – 2004 FCO, Head of North East Asia & Pacific Department

1998 – 2002 Moscow, Counsellor (Economic/Commercial)

1997 – 1998 Language training (Russian)

1995 – 1997 FCO, Deputy Head of Southern Europe Department

1994 – 1995 FCO, Speechwriter to the Foreign Secretary

1992 – 1994 FCO, Head of Nuclear Policy Section, Security Policy Department

1989 – 1992 Tokyo, Second Secretary, later First Secretary

1987 – 1989 Language training (Japanese)
1986 – 1987 FCO, Assistant Desk Officer, East Africa Department
1986 Joined FCO
1981 – 1986 Department of Employment

Further information

[£10 million for regeneration of town centres](#)

The third phase of the Vibrant and Viable Places Town Centre Loans Fund will support town centre regeneration in 12 areas of Wales.

The fund works on a recyclable loan basis which means that once the money is repaid, it is used again to fund new loans.

The Local Authorities who have been allocated the loan funding are Denbighshire, Newport, Neath Port Talbot, Cardiff, Pembrokeshire, Wrexham, Conwy, Powys, Gwynedd, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Ceredigion and Anglesey.

Communities and Children Secretary, Carl Sargeant said:

“This funding will help Local Authorities regenerate their town centres by helping them find sustainable uses for empty sites and premises such as affordable town centre homes or tourist and leisure attractions.

“As well as making town centres more attractive places to live this loan scheme will help encourage investment into these areas as well as support the local economy.”

[India Condemns Twin Terror Attack in Kabul](#)

India condemns twin terror attack in Kabul.

[Press release: Major upgrade to Leeds junction gets underway](#)

As part of the £8.3 million scheme Highways England will be widening some of the approaches to the M1 roundabout and adding an extra lane to sections of the roundabout itself, increasing it from 2 to 3 lanes.

Most of the work for the 30 week scheme will be carried out during the day. However, some overnight closures will be required with the first taking place tonight, Thursday 2 until Saturday 4 February between 7pm and 6am.

During the overnight closures the M1 southbound carriageway between junctions 46 and 44, and all the approaches to the M1 junction 45 roundabout will be closed so narrow lanes can be installed. While the scheme is ongoing there will also be a reduced speed limit of 50mph on the M1 and a 30mph limit on the slip roads and roundabout.

Highways England project manager Derek Dobinson said:

We are investing more than £15 billion in over 100 schemes across England that will enhance, renew and improve the network. We recognise that this is an important junction which serves a major route into Leeds city centre and is the main access for a number of major businesses and that is why we are investing £8.3 million to improve it.

This scheme, once complete, will improve capacity, reduce congestion and improve the safety for drivers. Predominantly work will be carried out during the day during off peak hours but they may be the occasional overnight closure of the slip roads and the M1.

As well as carrying out improvements to the roundabout, new traffic signal crossings, and improved cycle and pedestrian routes will be installed.

Further information can be [found on the scheme website](#).

Similar improvements have recently been completed at junction 26 of the M62 where it meets the M606. The extra lane was opened to traffic back in December around Chain Bar roundabout and the new traffic signals were installed this month.

Over the next few weeks, contractors will be taking down the old traffic signals and completing the landscaping and pedestrian and cycle route work. These will be carried out at night when traffic levels are at their lowest.

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