

# Press release: Good news for drivers as first phase of Midlands M1 smart motorway opens

The first phase between Northampton (junction 16) and the M45 (junction 17) of a new smart motorway tackling congestion and improving journey times for tens of thousands of drivers daily is now open on the M1 in the Midlands.

Up-to-date technology will help keep traffic flowing more smoothly and, with four running lanes instead of three, capacity on the motorway is being increased by a third, now junctions 16 to 17 are open to traffic.

The Highways England upgrade between Catthorpe (junction 19) and Northampton (junction 16) is part of a major government investment worth £15bn to build a modern and resilient road network and further stretches of the new smart motorway are due to open over the coming weeks.

Shaun Pidcock, Director of Highways England's smart motorway programme, said:

This is a significant upgrade for the M1, which connects the north of England and London, and will deliver real benefits for the 125,000 drivers who use it every day. We've added new lanes and completely overhauled the technology, to reduce the frustrating 'stop-start' traffic and give drivers better information to help with their journeys, while maintaining high levels of safety.

As well as the upgrade, we have also been carrying out extensive maintenance, fully resurfacing the motorway and its slip roads and restoring it to an 'as new' condition. We have also introduced new style highly visible 'orange' emergency areas for use when drivers get into difficulty.

I'd like to thank drivers for their co-operation and understanding while we've been building this new, improved road and hope they enjoy the improved journeys.

The smart motorway links with the highly successful new interchange at Catthorpe which is already making a huge difference to people's journeys by improving access to the A14 corridor and removing queueing traffic on the M1, M6 and A14 approaches.

When the smart motorway is complete, traffic sensors will automatically monitor vehicle numbers and adjust the speed limit accordingly. A total of 50 CCTV cameras will also provide 100 per cent coverage of the 15-mile route, and allow Highways England's traffic officers and the emergency services to respond quickly to incidents.

To minimise disruption, Highways England has worked hard to keep all of the lanes open in each direction during the day by carrying out major construction work overnight.

This project is part of the larger M1 junctions 19 to 13 smart motorway project, which is targeted to be completed by 2021-2022, as set out in the 2014 Road Investment Strategy.

For more information, [visit the scheme 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.

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# **[News story: Healthy eating guidance published for the early years sector](#)**

New example [menus and recipes](#) have been published to help early years providers plan healthy, tasty meals for young children.

The resources have been jointly developed by the Department for Education, the Department of Health and Public Health England, with advice from a panel of early years and nutrition experts including the British Nutrition Foundation.

Minister for Children and Families Robert Goodwill said:

A good early education is vital to set every child on the path to fulfilling their full potential, and getting healthy, balanced food during the day is an important part of high-quality childcare.

Providers can use these menus to create appealing meals for young eaters – which any parent with small children knows can be a challenge. I have seen for myself what an important role caterers and kitchen staff have in the settings I've been able to visit, so I'm pleased that these new resources can now help them in their work.

The menus and accompanying resources published today (November 13) set out

the information simply for early years settings offering meals and snacks throughout the day. They will also be accessible for parents to help them prepare healthy, balanced meals at home and introduce their child to new foods.

This builds on the good practice already being seen and shared among the sector, and is part of the wider package of support and advice the government is making available to providers, helping them run high-quality childcare businesses in a sustainable, cost-effective way.

The example menus will contribute to delivery of the government's ambitious Childhood Obesity Plan by helping early years settings meet the latest government dietary recommendations. The plan aims to significantly reduce childhood obesity over the next decade, and providing a healthy, balanced diet in early childhood is key to this.

Public Health Minister Steve Brine said:

We are absolutely committed to giving children the best start to life. We know how important a balanced diet is in shaping a healthy lifestyle and getting this right in early childhood is key. These practical tools will help providers to deliver healthy meals in early years settings.

This is yet another positive step in our world-leading Childhood Obesity Plan—which includes taxing sugary drinks, helping children to exercise more and cutting sugar and calories in food before it reaches consumers.

Dr Alison Tedstone, chief nutritionist at Public Health England, said:

This is an important milestone in introducing healthy balanced meals from a young age. With far too many children entering school already overweight or obese, early years settings play an important role in helping children to develop good habits and avoid poor health later in life.

We hope early years providers embrace this guidance and play their role in supporting the health of future generations.

Professor Judy Buttriss, Director General of the British Nutrition Foundation, said:

It's vitally important that children eat well in early life, not only to provide them with the nutrients they need to grow and develop but also for their lifelong health. With almost a quarter of children starting school overweight or obese, children's health in the early years needs to be a key focus in tackling the obesity

epidemic.

We welcome the guidance published today, especially as the Foundation is a partner in the Early Years Nutrition Partnership, which provides support on food and nutrition practice in early years settings.

The guidance has been developed to make it easier for providers to meet the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework – all providers must follow this framework.

Sir Tony Hawkhead, Chief Executive of Action for Children, said:

Action for Children supports parents, carers and practitioners by providing tools and guidance to ensure that children receive the very best start in life.

We are seeing too many starting school overweight, which often leads to long-term health issues. This is avoidable, and by using this essential, practical guide, early years practitioners can support young children to learn good food habits, laying the foundations for a healthy future.

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## [News story: Space launch plans tour the UK](#)

The Government wants to make the UK a world-leading destination for companies offering launch services. New legislation to regulate launch is currently before Parliament and in early 2018 the UK Space Agency will announce the outcome of its call for grant proposals to achieve low cost access to space. In total 26 proposals were submitted to the call, and the UK Space Agency is currently considering grant applications to support the first launches from UK soil.

These initial missions from the UK will pave the way for a commercial launch market, where multiple small satellite launch vehicles and sub-orbital spaceplanes could pursue rising global demand from a number of UK spaceports.

Launch companies that choose to base themselves in the UK will benefit from access to the UK's world class space and aerospace manufacturers on their doorstep. The LaunchUK roadshows aim to raise awareness of this opportunity and the wider benefits of having launch capability in the UK – to companies in the supply chain, for example.

Science Minister Jo Johnson, speaking at the first Launch UK event in Belfast on 9 November, said:

“This is genuinely one of the most exciting industrial opportunities the country has.

“We need to get behind it as government and we are. We’re pulling together a really exciting programme for industry that we want you to be aware of to take full advantage of it.

“One of the things we’re doing is to put in place a new regulatory framework that will make it possible for us to compete in new segments of the space value chain.

“We see this as an opportunity that is going to be good for businesses in this sector throughout the UK, in every part of the country.”

LaunchUK will spread new opportunity throughout the space and aerospace sectors. The UK Space Agency and its partners want to explore how the market could develop, what opportunities it offers for new supply chains, and how the benefits can be delivered across the UK.

The following roadshows are coming up:

- Nottingham, 15 November 2017
- Harwell, 24 November 2017
- Durham, 29 November 2017
- Cardiff, 5 December 2017
- Glasgow, 15 December 2017

There will also be a chance for the public to find out more about plans for small satellite launch and sub-orbital flight from UK spaceports, with each roadshow having an open evening with experts from the UK Space Agency and Civil Aviation Authority on hand to answer questions.

Visit our [LaunchUK Roadshow event page] for more information.](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/launchuk-roadshow>)

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## **[News story: Foreign Secretary attends November 2017 EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting](#)**

We are here on the European end of the efforts to keep the Iran nuclear deal going after what we were doing last week in Washington, trying to make sure that they don’t unscramble it on the Capitol Hill and the White House.

And clearly the effort is all about seeing what we can do to push back on some of the disruptive things that Iran is doing in the region, whilst not throwing the baby out with bathwater and keeping an essential nuclear deal going. The deal whereby Iran pledges not to develop nuclear weapons in exchange for economic co-operation. There will be obviously discussion on the Middle East more widely, the stability of the region. Everybody wants to see for instance a sovereign and independent Lebanon as I said in a statement last night.

More widely than that we got new sanctions on Venezuela – which we, the UK has been leading on, trying to get Mr Maduro to see sense about what he is doing and we'll be looking at the new European plans for defence and security co-operation. The UK is supportive of these as I often say. We are there as a flying buttress to support the cathedral and we think there's a lot of promise in the ideas and we'll be backing them up.

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## [News story: UK and Australia step up defence relationship as ministers meet](#)

Amongst the discussions was a meeting with her Australian counterpart, Minister Christopher Pyne, who is responsible for procurement for the country's military.

Australia is the UK's 13th biggest export market, with £8.6bn of goods and services sold in 2015 and the Type 26 Global Combat Ship has been shortlisted for Australia's Future Frigate programme.

The Type 26 is an advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare frigate that will provide essential protection to Britain's nuclear deterrent and new aircraft carriers.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

From the first world war to defeating Daesh in the Middle East right now, the UK and Australia continue to fight side-by-side for the values we both share.

In the face of mutual intensifying threats, the strong relationship between our countries allows vital discussions over how best to protect ourselves. As the Australian Navy looks for a new frigate, the Type 26 is a very strong candidate and I hope to see it form the backbone of our Five Eyes partners' navies for decades to come.

Minister Baldwin touring Australian Navy Fleet Command facilities in Sydney.

The visit to Australia comes shortly after Minister Pyne came to London and met Minister Harriett Baldwin earlier this month.

During his visit, BAE Systems announced that they had awarded a further 15 manufacturing contracts to suppliers of the Type 26 programme. Not only did that increase the number of UK maritime jobs supported by the programme to over 4,500, but it also included contracts with two Australian companies, showing the deepening co-operation between the British and Australian defence industries.

The Australian Army show Minister Baldwin the Bushmaster vehicle.

On the flipside of the countries' export relationship, the UK was Australia's fifth largest export destination in 2016, valued at almost A\$15bn. Whilst in the country, the Defence Minister viewed a Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle demonstration.

The Bushmaster protected vehicle, already in service with the Australian Army, is manufactured by Thales Australia and is one of two potential solutions under consideration as the UK looks for another troop-carrying vehicle and protected battlefield ambulance. A decision on the procurement, package two of the UK 'Multi-Role Vehicle-Protected programme' (MRV-P), is anticipated next year.

Alongside Australian Defence Minister Pyne the Defence Minister announced the intention to look at the feasibility of fitting a cutting-edge Australian radar on future British warships. The pair announced that a capability study to fit CEA Technologies' 'CEAFAR' radar to British ships will begin early next year at the second Australia/UK Defence Industry Dialogue in Adelaide. The radar is already in-service with the Australian Navy.

Minister Baldwin at CEA with British High Commissioner to Australia, Menna Rawlings, looking at radar systems.

The Defence Minister also laid a wreath on behalf of the UK at a Remembrance Sunday commemoration event in Canberra on Saturday.