

M6 junction 13 to 15 project newsletter

September 2018



Welcome to the first edition of the M6 junction 13 to 15 smart motorway scheme newsletter. The scheme is progressing well, covering a 17 mile corridor between Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent. Advanced works commenced in March 2018 and the scheme is due for completion in March 2022.

Why is this work needed?

The M6 between junctions 13 and 15 is one of the busiest sections of road in the UK; it is used by over 127,000 vehicles per day and suffers from heavy congestion and unpredictable journey times, especially during peak periods. Congestion on this stretch of motorway also impacts on local roads.

The scheme will reduce congestion, remove major bottlenecks and improve journey time reliability which will help businesses in the area to be more efficient.

The story so far

The first phase of the traffic management is now complete. So far, we have installed narrow lanes and a safe working area from junction 15 to just short of Stafford Services, (approximately 6 miles) on both the north and southbound carriageways. We have also installed traffic management on railway bridges at Norton, Creswell and Dunston, so that we can widen the hard shoulder safely on each structure. A temporary safety barrier has also been installed in the central reservation from junction 15 moving southbound. The initial central reserve work involves removing the existing metal barrier and topsoil. Teams have started earthworks and installing new drainage, which will be followed by the construction of a safer concrete barrier at this location.

The installation of temporary traffic management has required us to close the motorway on several occasions. We have been utilising these closures to carry out repairs to the carriageways to make sure the road surface is in the best condition possible throughout the length of the project.

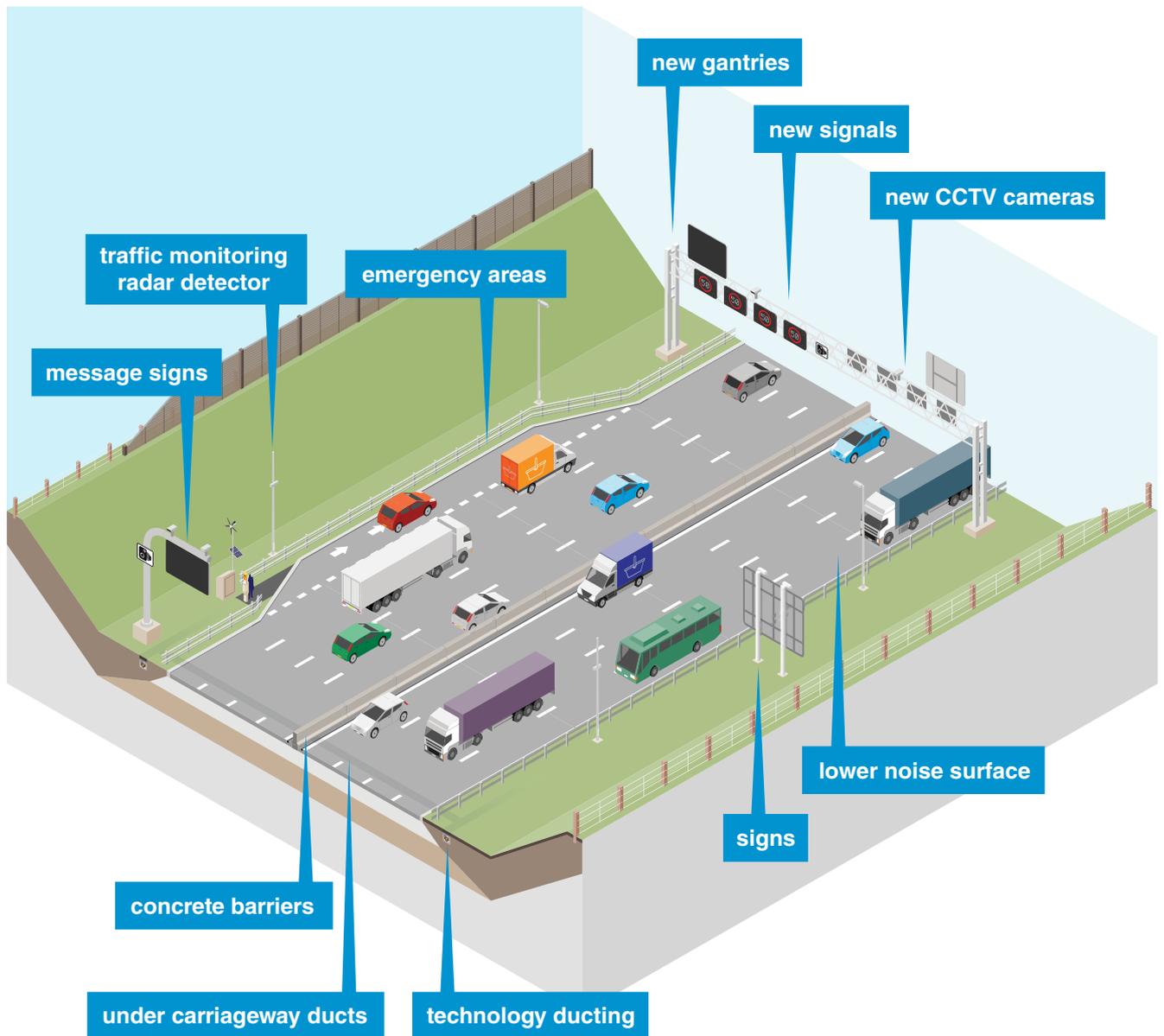
This scheme will:

- reduce congestion by smoothing the flow of traffic to improve journey times and make them more reliable
- facilitate economic growth within the region, by providing much needed extra capacity on the motorway
- maximise motorway capacity while maintaining safety on the motorway, which is already among the safest roads in the world.

Finally, we have installed four information scheme boards and 84 temporary CCTV cameras. The advance work at junction 15, to enable hard shoulder running when accessing the M6 northbound, is now complete. So far, we have been successful in achieving the first of four key project milestones and remain on target to complete the remaining programme of work to schedule.



Features of a new smart motorway



What is a smart motorway?

A smart motorway is an upgraded section of motorway that has technology installed to monitor and manage traffic flow. Smart motorways involve converting the hard shoulder into a live traffic lane to provide the additional capacity required on some of our busiest roads.

As well as the additional capacity from the extra lane, the technology manages traffic using variable speed limits which smooths traffic, reducing frustrating stop-start flow, and improves journey reliability. The technology is used to support the response to incidents, using the signs and signals to close any lane in advance of the incident scene.

What are we doing to minimise disruption?

We're working hard to keep disruption to a minimum as far as is reasonably possible. For example, we will be limiting the roadworks to 6 mile stretches on a 17 mile route up until November 2018. From November onwards, we will then implement a contraflow system, which will allow us to reduce the number of overnight closures on the motorway by nearly

60 percent, benefitting motorists and local residents who are disrupted by vehicles using diversion routes overnight. The contraflow is also safer for our road workers and will allow us to finish the works quicker and more safely. We will also be using variable message signs that use satellite technology to update motorists on their real time journey through the roadworks.

Bridge demolition



[Creswell Home Farm Bridge](#)

Creswell Home Farm Bridge, weighing almost 800 tonnes – the same as around 60 double decker buses – will be dismantled as part of this scheme.

The bridge, north of Stafford, which is almost 200ft in length, will be broken up and the entire 150-tonne centre section lifted clear and taken away in one piece on a specialist transporter to our nearby compound.

Other sections of the Creswell Home Farm Bridge will be taken away later. The old bridge will be recycled and used in the construction of the smart motorway.

This work will require the M6 to be closed between Stafford (junction 14) and Stoke-on-Trent

(junction 15), in both directions for up to 24 hours over the weekend of 22 and 23 September.

Highways England smart motorways project sponsor, Peter Smith, explained: "This is part of our plan to ultimately improve journeys in this area by adding extra capacity and technology to the motorway.

The bridge is no longer in use and is too narrow for the upgraded motorway which will have an extra lane in each direction. Demolishing it is a big and complex job and to do it safely we need to use both carriageways of the motorway, which means it will be closed for up to 24 hours.

We're doing all we can to minimise disruption though and that is why we are arranging to take

the centre section away in one piece, rather than breaking it up which would take more time.

I'd like to thank motorists, businesses and residents in advance for their patience and urge anyone planning to use the M6 in that area on 22 and 23 September to plan their journeys and leave extra travel time.

Removing this bridge will provide extra space to increase the capacity of the northbound entry and southbound exit slip roads and make them safer, as well as remove an unnecessary maintenance liability.



Burton Bank Footbridge

The motorway is due to close at 8pm on the evening of Saturday 22 September 2018 and reopen on Sunday 23 September 2018 as soon as work allows.

Traffic will be diverted off the M6 between junctions 14 and 15 and will use the A34 Stone Road as the diversion route. This route has been agreed with local authority partners and will be kept clear of other works during the demolition. Drivers are warned to expect delays and urged to avoid the area if possible, allowing lots of extra time for essential journeys.

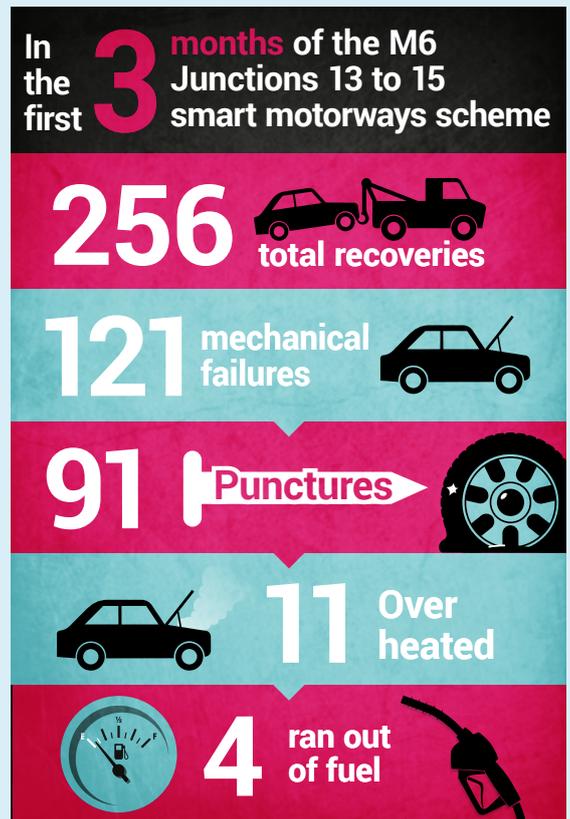
This is the first of two bridges to be removed. A further 24-hour closure will take place in the near future to remove the Burton Bank footbridge. Currently there isn't enough headroom for HGVs between the hard shoulder and the existing footbridge. Its replacement will be entirely within Highways England land and the current public right of way across the motorway will be maintained. More information will be provided in due course.

Don't break down, check your vehicle

During the project we continue to encourage drivers to check their vehicles to avoid breakdowns. Figures from previous smart motorway schemes show that the majority of breakdowns are due to lack of vehicle maintenance. The two biggest causes of breakdowns were poor quality tyres and running out of fuel.

Lots of people break down close to where we are working. These incidents cause delays and put people's lives at risk.

Due to the layout of our roadworks area, there is currently no place of relative safety to exit the motorway other than the slip roads, therefore we are offering a free recovery service for anybody that breaks down within our works area. You and your vehicle will be recovered to a safe area off the motorway to plan your onwards journey.





Get in touch if you would like to receive project updates from the team. We can send you traffic management updates to keep you informed of our planned full motorway closures or you can be added to our update list for copies of the latest newsletter.



For regular updates on Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 September we ask that customers visit the Highways England Twitter feed: [@highwayswmids](https://twitter.com/highwayswmids)

Contact us

If you have any questions or would like to know about this work, please email:

M6.j13-15@highwaysengland.co.uk
or call us on 0300 123 5000.

If you would like to be added to our priority stakeholder e-mail list, so that we can regularly update you regarding temporary closures on the M6, please contact the project inbox:

M6j13-15@kier.co.uk

If you need help accessing this or any other Highways England information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.

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