

Highways projects | M4/M5 in the Bristol region

Public Information
Summer 2009

Technology to reduce congestion

The junction of the M4 and M5 motorways at Almondsbury has been recognised as a site where the use of Managed Motorways technology can smooth traffic flow and offer more predictable journey times during times of peak congestion.

The Managed Motorways concept has been developed using evidence from a successful trial on the M42, which has shown that hard shoulder running increases the capacity of the motorway and reduces congestion at a significantly lower cost than full motorway widening. Sensors in the road will enable traffic and congestion to be detected. Information signs will inform drivers of traffic conditions ahead; speed limits; and the availability of lanes, including the hard shoulder.

The speed and availability of lanes will be controlled so that traffic is able to flow more smoothly which will help to reduce congestion.

Installation of the Managed Motorways system is expected to take place from March 2010 until summer 2012.

Major investment in highways network for the South West

Several major road works projects will be taking place in the coming year to renew and improve the highways network in the South West. As part of the 'Building Britain's Future' initiative, the Department for Transport will be investing an additional £700m in highways infrastructure. As detailed on pages 2 & 3, this will include works on the M4 and M5, around Bristol.

David Sledge, Area Performance Manager for the Highways Agency explains:

"A number of these projects have been accelerated for delivery as

part of a wider package to help stimulate economic recovery. The high volume of work to be delivered in the near future will mean some short term disruption, however the future benefits for road users in the Bristol area will be a more reliable highways network capable of supporting future economic growth and managing congestion."

Building 
Britain's Future
 HM Government



Avonmouth Bridge Resurfacing Phase 2: Northbound

Avonmouth Bridge, was opened in May 1974 and carries 60,000 vehicles per day in each direction on the M5 to and from the South West of England. It was last resurfaced fully in 2000, however high levels of heavy traffic and adverse weather has caused the bond between the concrete deck and the waterproofing/surface to start to fail, necessitating this project.

The new surface material is non-porous, which prevents water seeping below the surface and breaking it up from below. As a result, the expected service life could be up to 20 years, with a significant reduction in the disruption caused by ongoing maintenance.

It was decided to break the work into two stages, resurfacing the north and south bound carriageways separately to avoid disruption during key holiday periods. Resurfacing of the south bound carriageway was undertaken between September and December 2008. Work to resurface the north bound carriageway is scheduled to take place from September 2009 and be completed by the end of the year. A contraflow arrangement similar to that used in 2008 will be used once again to maintain 3 lanes in each direction during the work.



New barriers to deflect unwanted attention

The main purpose of barriers in the central reservation of motorways is to retain vehicles on the carriageway and reduce the risk of collision with vehicles in the opposite carriageway. The Highways Agency is installing new high containment concrete barriers which improve safety and lower incident related congestion by reducing the likelihood of a vehicle crossing the central reserve. This type of barrier also suffers less damage when struck, reducing congestion caused by barrier repairs which can often take several hours following a large accident.

The concrete barriers are virtually maintenance free, and with a life span of 50 years compared to 25 years for traditional metal barriers, they will continue to provide benefits for many years. In the Bristol area, concrete central reserve is being installed on the M5 between Cribbs Causeway and Avonmouth, and on the M4 between Bath and the M32. In the coming years, they will also be included in future renewal schemes on other sections of the network.

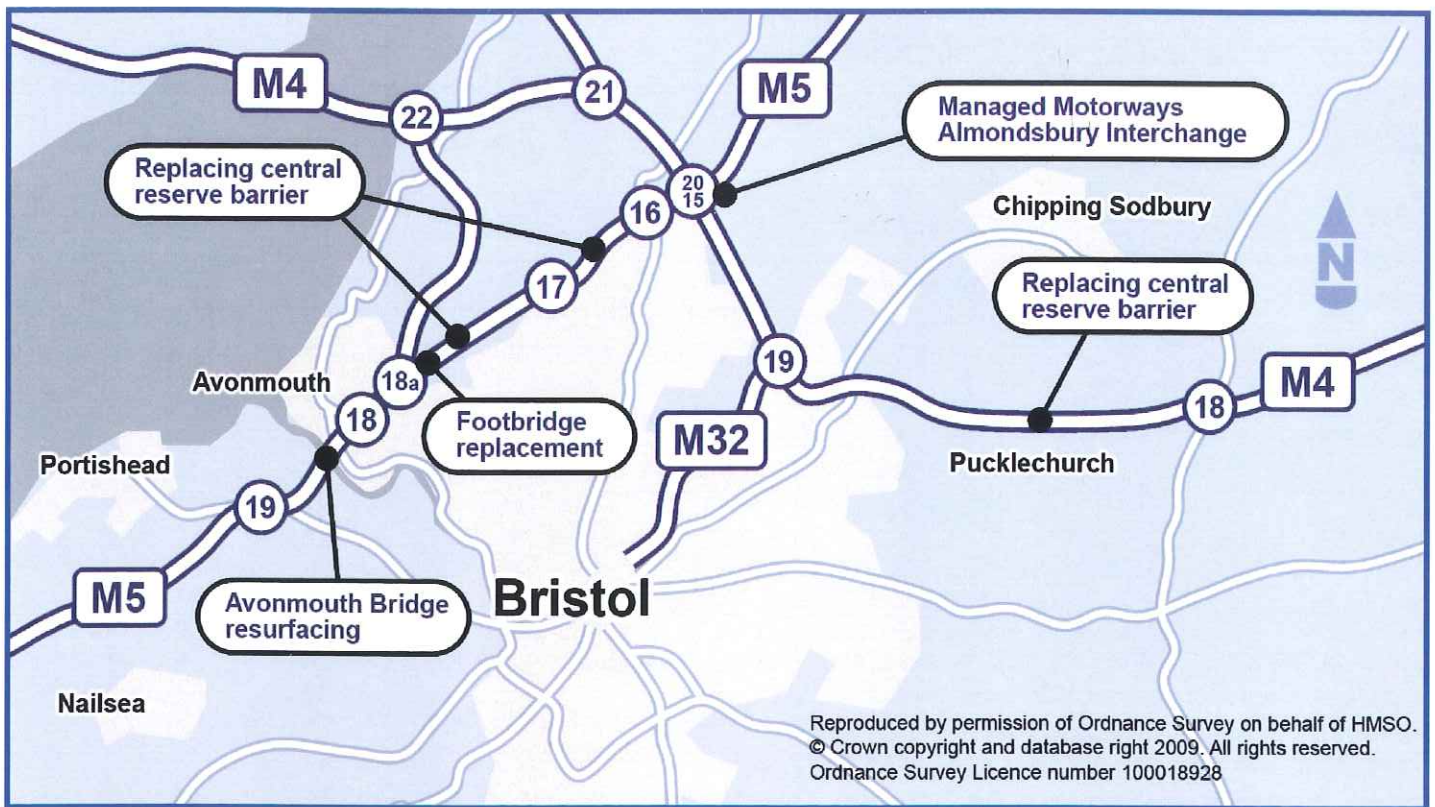


Lawrence Weston bridge replacement

Lawrence Weston over bridge has been closed to vehicle traffic for several years and is now to be removed completely and replaced with a single span steel truss footway/cycleway structure.

It will be necessary to completely close the M5 for a period of 16 hours to demolish the existing structure. To minimise disruption to the travelling public, this is planned to take place on Christmas Day, starting just after midnight. A second closure will be required next year to install the new bridge.





What, When, Where...

The list below provides an overview of the main projects that will be taking place within the 'Bristol box' between September 2009 and March 2010. For more specific details about any of these schemes, visit the Highways Agency web site: www.highways.gov.uk/bristol



Resurfacing of Avonmouth Bridge, M5 J18 to J19
 September to December 2009
 Contraflow and 50mph speed restriction with 3 lanes in each direction. Additional lane closures during overnight off peak.

Replacement of central reserve barrier, M5 J17 to J18
 September to December 2009
 Contraflow and narrow lanes with 50mph speed restriction. Traffic management for this project will link with that for Avonmouth Bridge.

Replacement of central reserve barrier, M5 J15 to J17
 January 2010 to March 2010
 Contraflow and narrow lanes with 50mph speed restriction.



Replacement of central reserve barrier, M4 J18 to J19
 January 2010* to March 2010
 Contraflow and narrow lanes with 50mph speed restriction (*off peak lane closures during December 09).

Replacing Lawrence Weston over bridge, M5 J17 to J18
 December 2009 to March 2010
 Narrow lanes with 50mph speed restriction during March. Two overnight closures of motorway for demolition and installation of new bridge structure.

Other projects in the South West

Replacement of central reserve barrier, M4 J15 to J16 near Swindon
 September* to December 2009
 Contraflow and narrow lanes with 50mph speed restriction (*off peak lane closures during August).

Replacement of central reserve barrier and drainage improvements, M5 J25 to J26 near Taunton
 September to December 2009
 Narrow lanes with 50mph speed restriction.



Road renewal, A303 Mere
 June 2009 to March 2010
 Overnight road closures and off peak closures until February 2010. Total road closure Feb/March 2010.

Helping you plan your journey

The Highways Agency has planned the traffic management required for its roadworks to reduce disruption as much as possible, however due to the nature of these projects it is inevitable that some delays will occur particularly at peak times. In order to inform the public about where and how long the delays are, we will be providing traffic information using a variety of sources.

Before you go

The [Highways Agency web site](http://www.highways.gov.uk) www.highways.gov.uk contains real time traffic information. Using this you can view current traffic conditions and even look up what messages are being displayed on the roadside message signs on your route. The web site has links to images from the road side traffic cameras which allow you to see live traffic conditions for yourself. You can also download your own [live traffic ticker](#), bringing the latest information to your desktop. This can be filtered so you only receive traffic data specific to your region or chosen motorway. In Wales, information about the M4 is available from the [Traffic Wales website](http://www.traffic-wales.com), www.traffic-wales.com, and information line on 0845 602 602 0.

If you do not have access to the internet, the Highways Agency's [automated telephone service](#) also provides live traffic information. The service has both keypad and voice activated commands, so you can simply tell us the road or region you are interested in and we'll give you the latest information.

On the move

[Variable Message Signs](#) (VMS) are now located at many key points on the motorway network. These signs can be set to display real time travel and delay times, helping to give a realistic indication of how



long your journey is likely to take. We will also deploy mobile VMS to locations around Bristol not currently served by fixed VMS.

The Highways Agency is one of the key partners in a national [Traffic Radio](#) service. This continuous traffic information station is available via digital radio and can also be heard via the web site.

How you travel

You can also avoid the delays by:

- Altering your method of travel
- Timing your journey to avoid the busiest periods
- Escape making some journeys, for example by working from home from time to time.

If everyone did one of these once a week, it would reduce demand on the motorway sufficiently to cut delays at peak times. There is plenty of help too: go to www.transportdirect.com for travel options for A to B journeys. We are also working with public transport operators in the region to provide additional information on the key routes.

For journeys up to five miles, why not consider cycling once a week? There are good free route maps; training and other support available at www.cyclewest.co.uk

For further information on journey planning, follow the links at: www.highways.gov.uk/bristol

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

Live traffic information is available from:

- www.highways.gov.uk/trafficinfo
- www.traffic-wales.com
- www.highways.gov.uk/radio
- www.transportdirect.info
- 08700 660 115*

Got a question or comment?

- 08457 50 40 30*
- email: ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk

*Calls from BT landlines to 0845 numbers will cost no more than 4p per minute and to 0870 numbers no more than 8p per minute, mobile calls usually cost more.

Safety at roadworks



The Highways Agency is working with the industry and road users to reduce the risks of working on the roads.

For the safety of roadworkers and all road users, when you are approaching roadworks:

- Keep within the speed limit – it is there for your safety.
- Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching.
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks.
- Be alert for works' traffic leaving or entering roadworks.
- Keep a safe distance – there could be queues in front.
- Observe all signs – they are there to help you.

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