Progress

The main construction work within the central reserve has now been completed on the M6 between junctions 16 (Crewe) and 19 (Knutsford). We carried out a traffic management switch in October following the successful installation of the final piece of concrete barrier between junctions 16 and 17 (Sandbach). The traffic switch means that we are now working entirely in the motorway verge along the whole length of the project from junction 16 to junction 19. We are upgrading the existing drainage system, installing gantry bases to house the new signage, piling the gantry foundations and constructing the emergency areas along the north and southbound carriageways.
We are working at night between 10pm and 6am to complete activities such as vegetation clearance, survey works, environmental inspections, CCTV maintenance, carriageway resurfacing, ground investigation works and vario guard barrier alterations. Night works are normally completed under lane closures so that our teams can safely work with the required equipment in areas which are inaccessible in the daytime when the network is busy.

By the end of January 2018 we should be ready to install the first of the many new gantries between junction 18 (Holmes Chapel) and junction 19 (Knutsford). These gantries will house the electronic signage for the new smart motorway.

M6 Cheshire smart motorway in numbers
Are you ready for winter?

We’re well into the winter period now, and our project team have been making preparations on site for the cold winter months. The decrease in daylight working hours and the inevitable drop in temperature affect how we work so it is important that we forward plan. Our vehicles and plant machinery have had a winter health check to make sure that they have anti-freeze in the fluids, the tyres and brakes are both in good shape and they are serviced to make sure the mechanics and electrics are all sound and ready for the coming months.

What about your own vehicle?

Is it ready for winter, has it been serviced recently and do you know when the tyres and brakes were last checked? Prevention is always better than cure so make sure you keep your car well maintained, check your tyres and make sure you have enough fuel for your journey. Vehicle maintenance is especially important in the winter months: no one wants to break down in the cold or in the dark.

What can you do to prevent a breakdown?

All motorists should be able to make their own recovery arrangements in the event of a breakdown. We advise that you have breakdown cover and carry details of this with you at all times. Make sure you have some snacks and drinks in your car for emergencies, along with some extra warm clothes or blankets and a shovel in case you need to dig your vehicle out of snow, ice or mud.

The figures in the table show the three main reasons why vehicles required our free recovery service in the month of November. Our recovery service is available for all vehicles that stop in the live lanes of traffic in our construction zone between junctions 16 and 19. As there is no hard shoulder or emergency area available to pull into within the roadworks, we provide a free recovery service, to take you and your vehicle off the motorway network to a place of safety, normally the service areas. The figures highlight the three top reasons why vehicles break down in the live lanes. In November, it was electrical faults and mechanical faults followed by running out of fuel. Please help us by ensuring your vehicle has sufficient fuel for the journey and is serviced regularly to prevent any faults.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of vehicles recovered in November*</th>
<th>Reason for needing free recovery service</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Electrical fault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Mechanical fault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>No fuel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures provided by Egertons recovery service who remove all broken down vehicles from this project.
What if my vehicle stops in roadworks?

If your vehicle is damaged or experiences difficulties in road works on a motorway, always try to exit the motorway first or reach the nearest service area. If you cannot do this then try to get to the left hand side of the carriageway nearest to the verge, switch on your hazard warning lights and await rescue.

Roadworks without an accessible hard shoulder are covered by CCTV that operates 24/7.

They will alert the free recovery service and someone will be on their way to you, so await rescue. You may also be assisted by Highways England Traffic Officers.

Once recovered, your vehicle will be moved to a place of relative safety. It is not a full breakdown service, so the driver or vehicle owner will need to organise getting it home or to a garage.

Emergency areas

Previously referred to as ERAs (emergency refuge areas), emergency areas are spaced along the carriageway of an all lane running smart motorway where there is no hard shoulder.

We are building a total of 18 new emergency areas on this section of smart motorway, which will be spaced along each carriageway. This will ensure there is never any more than 2.5km between each exit point from the motorway, whether this is an emergency area, slip road or motorway service area.

M6 J16-19 community engagement

M6 junctions 16 to 19 project presentations

Here at the M6 junctions 16 to 19 project, we like to invite members of the local community to site to learn more about how we build a major project, how a smart motorway works and why we are building one. We also like the opportunity to answer your questions or concerns. We have already invited over 50 groups to site and given them a greater understanding of what we are doing here.

Are you part of a local group with an interest in smart motorway construction? We can offer a short project presentation of no more than one hour to small locals groups to give an insight into how a major project like this is constructed. If you would like to know more, please contact sam.thorpe@kier.co.uk
Sandbach School get recycled cable ducting
A 60m length of purple cable ducting offcuts were given to Sandbach School after they spotted the ‘purple stuff’ in the central reserve of our works and thought it looked like the perfect pitch divider! Jake Davies, PE teacher at the school said: “This is great; the lads really appreciate it, as all the teachers do. It does a great job, far better than the foam divider we had before, which wasn’t hard wearing. Thank you.”

The project has a high recycling rate and does not like to see anything going to waste and the school get full marks for finding an alternative use for such a standard piece of kit!

Special thanks to the project team
We recently received a thank you letter from a motorcyclist who had been travelling through the works in June and passed out whilst driving, narrowly missing the HGV travelling behind. Members of the team who were working nearby acted quickly to assist the motorcyclist in the live lane, staying with him until the air ambulance arrived. To add to the significance of this event, the customer owned a company called ‘Last Ride’, which organise funerals for bikers and transport cremated remains around the UK to family and final resting places. On the day of the accident, the rider was taking an urn to Liverpool. A member of the team spotted the urn on the bike and kept that safe, too, so that it could arrive at its destination.

The project team were delighted to receive the letter and rewarded the two staff members with an excellence in customer service award. This was to illustrate to the rest of the team how what seemed like such a small act had such a massive impact and that the customer will not forget it in a hurry. He is now back at work having recovered from a hand injury.

For the second year running the M6 project helped the Sandbach Christmas lights switch on by providing crowd barriers and supported the Weston Winter Wonderland near Crewe. This annual fund raiser for the Donna Louise children’s hospice is held at Graham Witters family farm in Weston in December and attracts hundreds of visitors who come to look at the festive lights display and Santas grotto at the Winter Wonderland.

We provided traffic cones and trak mats with the help from our supplier Speedy hire, which turned a field into a large car parking area, creating 50% more spaces for the event visitors. Both events were delighted with our support.
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 full closures or lane closures or you can be added to our update list for copies of the latest newsletter.
Contact us

If you have any questions relating to the M6 junctions 16 to 19 smart motorway project, please get in touch. You can contact the stakeholder engagement manager, Sam Thorpe on switch board number: 01767 358 320 (office hours).

You can also contact the Highways England project team at: M6J16-19SmartMotorway@Highwaysengland.co.uk

Work within the central reserve has now been completed