

M5 work moves up a gear

Multi-million pound repair work on the M5 in the West Midlands is moving up a gear.

Concrete repairs and waterproofing work at the Oldbury viaduct, between junctions 1 and 2, get under way in the next few weeks.

To keep the M5 open a contraflow system is being put in place. From the end of July all traffic will be diverted onto the northbound carriageway, with two lanes operating in each direction, along with a 30mph speed limit.

To help with this changes are taking place at key junctions in the area, including M5 junction 4a northbound and M6 junction 8 southbound. This is to increase capacity where the M5 joins the M6 and M42 and reduce the amount of traffic heading towards the roadworks.

Upcoming changes include:

This week: The link between the M42 and the M5 northbound will be changed to one lane. M5 northbound will also be reduced to two lanes from junctions 3 to 2.

Next week: M5 northbound at junction 4a will be changed to provide one lane to the M5 through the junction while still providing two lanes to the M42. M5 northbound will be reduced to two narrow lanes between junctions 2 and 1.

End of July/start of August: Installation of contraflow on Oldbury viaduct, with two lanes operating in each direction on the northbound carriageway.

These measures are essential to manage the volume and flow of traffic through this busy part of the network and reduce the potential impact on local roads.

The scheme, valued at more than £100 million, finishes in autumn 2018, with some minor work continuing into spring 2019.

Slip roads will be kept open throughout, to ease effects on the local network, but drivers are advised to expect long delays.

Motorists travelling from across the country are urged to consider routes such as the M42 and M6 to keep congestion to a minimum on the M5 and surrounding roads while work takes place.

There will be a 50mph speed limit on approach to the 30mph speed restriction between junctions 1 and 2.

Digital travel information signs linked direct to the regional control centres that monitor traffic flows will provide real time advice including travel times and distances.

Highways England senior project manager, Zbigniew Twarowski, said: “This is essential work although we appreciate it will also be frustrating for both motorists and residents.

“We’re doing everything possible to plan and manage the roadworks in order to keep traffic moving, minimise disruption and maximise safety.

“Drivers are urged to plan journeys in advance, allow extra time and consider alternative modes of transport, car sharing or working from home where possible.”

A network of early warning strategic travel advice signs will be deployed many miles from the junctions to allow drivers to choose alternative routes at earlier steps in their journeys.

Some of the suggested alternative routes for motorists include:

- Southbound M6 traffic north of junction 16 (A500) heading South East use A50 / M1
- Southbound M1 traffic north of junction 23A (A42/M42) heading South West use M69 and A46
- Northbound M1 traffic south of junction 19 (M6) heading North West use M1 / A50
- Westbound A14 traffic east of M1 heading North West use M1 / A50
- Clockwise M25 traffic south of junction 16 (M40) heading North West use M1 / A50
- Northbound M5 south of junction 8 (M50) heading for North Wales use M50 / A49
- Northbound M5 south of junction 9 (A46) for North East use A46

The viaduct structure itself is safe but, as it was built in the late sixties, the work needs to be carried out to protect it for the future.

Large stretches of both the M5 and M6 in the Midlands are elevated and repair work is essential to protect the structure, with a £4.7 million concrete repair scheme at the iconic Spaghetti Junction on the M6 also taking place this summer.

For more information about the work at Oldbury viaduct visit www.highways.gov.uk/oldburyviaduct

For more information about the work at Spaghetti Junction visit <http://roads.highways.gov.uk/regions/west-midlands>

Highways England provides live traffic information via its [website](#), local and national radio travel bulletins, electronic road signs and mobile apps. Local Twitter services are also available at [@HighwaysWMIDS](#)