

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
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16th October 2023

Dear Michael Gove

Subject M3 Bagshot Heath footbridge

Thank you for your time at the meeting on 13 October to discuss the concerns you and your councillors have about the M3 Bagshot Heath footbridge closure.

As promised at the meeting, please see below the outline of our next steps.

To mitigate the risk to road users as well as pedestrians, warning signs with height restrictions will be placed on the M3 this week in lanes 3 and 4 where the bridge is at its lowest. We've also made the Police and the hauliers who deal with abnormal load vehicles aware of issues with the bridge and notified them of the new height restrictions.

We've engaged a demolition contractor with experience of this type of post tensioned structure and are working on the safe methodology to remove the bridge as quickly as possible. Due to the nature of the bridge construction, it will need to be removed over a full weekend closure of the M3 motorway in both directions. This requires traffic orders and approval from the local authority for the associated diversion routes which have now been submitted and are pending approvals.

As discussed at the meeting, demolition of this type of post tensioned structure requires careful planning due to the explosive release when the wires that hold the bridge together are cut. The demolition methodology needs to ensure the concrete is safely captured when breaking down the bridge deck, protecting the road and other infrastructure below, including the adjacent gantries. In addition, we need to survey the verges in advance to provide protection for power cables and services to ensure the works can be undertaken safely and seek approval from Natural England due to the environmental considerations as we are working near a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

We are currently planning for the demolition to take place on the second weekend in December with the closure in place from 21:00 Friday 8 December through to 06:00 Monday 11 December 2023.

We've taken on board your comments regarding the condition of the nearby underpasses, and we will be making improvements including removing vegetation, addressing localised flooding and repairing faulty lighting. In liaison with Surrey Heath and Surrey County Council we will also check the approach paths for suitability.

For Lightwater interchange, we've instructed a repair of the pedestrian guardrail and will continue to monitor the traffic signals too, repairing any defects found.

We hope that these improvements will allow pedestrians who use the alternative routes to feel safer in doing so, but we are keen to work with you on any other aspects that may need addressing or improving.

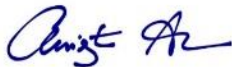
In parallel, we're actively progressing the design of a replacement footbridge to expedite timescales as best we can. We hope the new footbridge will enhance the experience for those in the area, accommodating both pedestrians and cyclists.

We will keep you updated with our progress on both the works to demolish the existing bridge and its replacement and will also update our website for your constituents with the most up to date information: www.nationalhighways.co.uk/bagshot-heath-footbridge.

As discussed, in the next few days we will also provide you with "Frequently Asked Questions" document responding to the queries you and your constituents raised on this matter.

If you have any further questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Christine Allen
Regional Director, Operations South East

Cc: Rebecca Jennings-Evans (Lightwater, West End & Bisley);
Richard Tear (Bagshot, Windlesham & Chobham).