

A338/Blackwater phase one improvement works finishing this weekend

The first phase of the A338/Blackwater Junction improvements is finishing this weekend (10-11 November 2018), slightly ahead of schedule.

Prior to the next phase of works starting, full overnight road closures will be in place in both directions on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 November between 8pm and 6am so that the traffic management can be changed.

This will mean that from Monday morning, 12 November, two lanes will be available southbound heading towards Blackwater Junction. Lane one will provide a dedicated lane for those motorists wishing to exit off the slip road to B3073. Then after Blackwater Junction, all other motorists will use the remaining single lane two, heading past the roadworks straight to Bournemouth. Please follow available signs on site.

Gary Powell, Head of Highways and Transportation, the senior responsible officer for the A338 Improvements, Bournemouth Borough Council, said: "A significant amount of work has been carried out over the last six weeks to widen the central reservation, erect a new barrier and join together the two bridges that carry the road over the River Stour and we are pleased this has all been completed a little ahead of schedule.

"From Monday, new lane layouts will be in place and we hope that once motorists are used to these changes there will be some improvement to journey times, including travelling during peak hours.

"We appreciate that these works are having an impact on everyone's lives and are doing everything we can to ensure the works are carried out effectively and remain to programme. We are still on schedule to reopen all four lanes on the A338 by 10 December ahead of the Christmas period."

The next phase of work starts on Monday 12 November and will include widening of the southbound carriageway into the verge, new concrete jackets to protect the bridge piers and a new parapet rail installed to protect vehicles over the River Stour Bridge.

In order to widen the road adjacent to the B3073 overbridge, the current protection to the bridge piers will be removed and replaced with new concrete jackets. These will then be tied together with reinforcing steel which is a slow and labour intensive process.

The vehicle protection over the River Stour Bridge will also be removed and a new parapet rail installed. Works to strengthen the edge of the bridge will take place to ensure the bridge is strong enough to take the new rail.

In addition, new drainage and safety barriers will be installed on the widened embankment. The widened embankment will have steep slopes so will be reinforced with a geotextile plastic grid to ensure its stability. This work will be carried out at the same time as the bridge works.

These improvements form part of the £45.2million investment in Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership's Bournemouth International Growth (BIG) Programme, aimed at facilitating better access into and around Bournemouth Airport, unlocking employment land and stimulating economic growth.

The A338/Blackwater improvements will:

- create an extra southbound lane on the section of the A338 between Blackwater Junction towards Cooper Dean roundabout
- improve the southbound 'on slip' to the A338 from the B3073 at Blackwater East Junction
- improve the northbound 'off slip' from the A338 to the B3073 at Blackwater West Junction
- include B3073 bridge protection works and widen the carriageway over the River Stour bridge including new parapets and safety fences

The A338/Blackwater improvements are scheduled to last until June 2019. Road users are advised to sign up to the A338 travel blog to stay up to date with road news or check @TravelDorset on twitter for updates.

For more information visit www.A338.info

Launched in January 2016, the BIG Programme is a major economic growth plan focused on employment and development around Bournemouth Airport and Wessex Fields. Over seven years a series of transport and infrastructure investments will:

- Transform accessibility to and around Bournemouth Airport and Wessex Fields through extensive transport improvements;
- Release up to 60 hectares of prime, flexible employment land for high-quality new business premises at Aviation Business Park;
- Provide the single largest employment opportunity in the southeast Dorset conurbation with the potential to create up to 10,000 new highly skilled jobs over the next decade;
- Generate up to £500 million of GVA into the area;
- Deliver around 350 new homes of which up to 50 per cent are affordable;
- Deliver increased broadband capacity to Bournemouth Airport and Aviation Business Park;
- Develop a new approach to improve skills and employee development, better tailoring it to the needs of key business sectors (aerospace, aviation, advanced manufacturing, digital media, marine, defence and financial services).

Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership is overseeing the BIG Programme in collaboration with

Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and Christchurch & East Dorset Councils.

* £45,200,000 has been allocated to fund the BIG Programme from the £98.5 million funding secured by Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership through the Government's 'Growth Deals'.

* "Local Growth Fund"