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### **New signs to display high wind alerts on Mersey crossing**

To help alleviate disruption on the local road network, Halton Borough Council has installed 8 new VMS signs on approach roads to The Silver Jubilee Bridge between Runcorn and Widnes. The signs will also link via Siemens Comet to a new wind sensor recently installed on the crossing to detect strong gusts enabling the equipment to automatically alert drivers of high-sided vehicles of bridge closures.

According to the authority's Traffic Manager, Stephen Rimmer, The Silver Jubilee Bridge currently carries over 90,000 vehicles per day in both directions over the River Mersey and traffic flow is extremely sensitive to any disruption. 'The new equipment will be set at 2 levels to detect gusting winds over 35mph and 50mph. Comet will then feed data to signs on both sides of the river advising drivers to either proceed with caution or not to use the crossing respectively', he said.

The Silver Jubilee Bridge experiences high levels of congestion at peak periods and faces significant maintenance problems. During strong winds last year, a vehicle was blown over on the bridge and increasingly stronger westerly winds can now be detected by the authority to help manage traffic flows in the area. Future traffic management measures are also under discussion with Siemens.

When constructed in 1961, The Silver Jubilee Bridge was the third longest span steel arch bridge in the world. It is still believed to be the UK's longest local authority-owned highway bridge and is now a Grade II Listed Building. The proportions of the main span of the bridge are approximately 2/3rds of that of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The bridge and approach viaducts were widened in 1977 to cope with escalating volumes of traffic. Since becoming a unitary authority in April 1998 Halton Borough Council has completed several maintenance contracts on the Silver Jubilee Bridge and its approach viaducts totaling approx £9million. These contracts include steelwork painting, removing and repairing defective concrete, joint replacement and repair, strengthening and parapet replacement.

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### **About Siemens Traffic Controls**

As a division of Siemens plc, Siemens Traffic Controls designs, manufactures, installs and maintains a wide range of traffic engineering products and systems to enhance road safety and improve traffic flow in congested urban and inter-urban areas. In the United Kingdom, the company installs and maintains more traffic infrastructure than any other company and has over 800 employees including around 400 skilled service engineers dedicated every day of the year to maintaining over half of all traffic control equipment installed on the UK road network.

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