DIGITAL signs could play a pivotal role in plans to tackle Britain’s £10 billion pothole crisis, it has been claimed.

Local authorities facing a massive maintenance backlog are hoping a new strategy to tackle road repairs can keep cost and disruption to a minimum.

And portable Variable Message Signs (pVMS) are being seen as the best way keep the country moving while the improvements take place.

Councils, businesses and utility services revealed the collaborative approach to streetworks issues last month in what was described as a new relationship between public and private groups.

Key representatives in each sector signed up to an agreement based on co-operation, communication, quality, safety and impact reduction.

Andrew Leigh, of Mobile Traffic Solutions (MTS), believes digital signs can be crucial to the new approach.

He said: “It’s great that public and private sectors have agreed to work together at last.

“Everyone hates disruption, delays and inconvenience, so if roadworks can be co-ordinated and well managed, then it would benefit us all.

“Portable variable message signs can provide vital support to the new strategy.

“They provide advance warning and reliable, up-to-date driver information that can be changed at the flick of a switch, so they’re an excellent, versatile solution that will help keep delays to a bare minimum.”

Mr Leigh pointed to the success of a complex project in central London as a striking example of how pVMS can assist the collaborative approach to road repair.

A string of utility suppliers joined forces to carry out maintenance work at the same time and MTS were called on to help keep traffic and cycle routes on the move while the roadworks took place.

Contractors wanted to be able to change the message on the signs at short notice, at day or night, throughout the length of the works to re-direct traffic one way or the other, to help reduce congestion and warn of possible delays.

“Our flexible signs were able to create a smooth operation through effective communication and that will be one of the main priorities in this new way of doing things,” added Mr Leigh.

“It was a big project right in the heart of the city, but thanks to careful management, the roadworks were completed ahead of schedule.”

The Advantage 4280 pVMS used in London is fully compliant for highways or urban roads but compact enough to deploy in many different locations. It’s a cost-effective solution which is easy to operate and manoeuvre, requires low maintenance and is highly sustainable.
The battery-powered unit is a full matrix LED trailer-mounted sign which uses innovative battery powered solar recharge technology to give it an energy efficient advantage.

Each sign is pre-programmed with up to 200 Highways Agency approved messages and pictograms, but creating bespoke messages with drop-down menus is simple.

All displays are fully programmable and, thanks to remote access via the internet, they can be changed by logging on to any web-enabled device. And the Advantage 4280 is capable of displaying up to five lines of 16 characters over multiple pages.