

Press release: Foreign Secretary travels to Washington for talks with Secretary of State Pompeo

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt will travel to Washington today for talks with the US Administration and other senior US politicians on a range of foreign policy issues including Yemen, Iran, Syria, cyber security and the future of the UK-US relationship.

Press release: Top marks for Highways England visit to Birdlip Primary School

Traffic officers Lynne Watkins and Dave Hayett, who normally spend their days patrolling the M5 in Gloucestershire, took time out to visit the primary school as part of a Highways England awareness day.

During the visit this week, five and six-year-old pupils got the chance to chat to the traffic officers about their jobs and see their patrol vehicle and the equipment used every day as they patrol England's major A roads and motorways.

Birdlip Primary School teacher, Sue Harding, said:

Children's learning is always enhanced by real life, hands-on experiences and the children really enjoyed meeting the traffic officers and hearing about the important role they play keeping people safe on the M5.

Around 30 pupils took part in the session and had a chance to sit in the traffic officers' vehicle and try out the controls.

Highways England traffic officer, Lynne Watkins, said:

This visit offered a great opportunity to explain our work and raise the issue of road safety with a young and very enthusiastic audience.

Children in a Traffic Officer vehicle during the visit

On the same day the team behind the A417 Missing Link also attended the school to host a bridge-building exercise with nine and ten-year-olds. The team helped the pupils design and build their own bridge as part of a longer-term STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) Highways England initiative.

Mike Goddard, A417 Senior Project Manager said:

The bridge building was designed to be a fun activity for the students while allowing us to start a conversation about the importance of engineering in our everyday lives.

The A417 team is currently putting its expertise to use refining proposals for the upgrade to the A417. Known locally as the 'missing link' at Air Balloon roundabout, this stretch of single carriageway road between the Brockworth bypass and Cowley roundabout restricts the flow of traffic on a key route which is otherwise a continuous dual carriageway between the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon.

Upgrading this section to dual carriageway will help facilitate 54,000 new homes and 370 hectares of employment land due to be created before 2031, helping people live and work, and businesses to invest in the south west.

Mike Goddard added:

The A417 is a vital route that helps people get to work, school, visit friends and family. We are working to upgrade this section of road to improve safety, support the economy and ease congestion and pollution, making it more convenient for its regular users and improving the well-being of those who live nearby.

This scheme presents some particular challenges given the route passes through the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, alongside the very challenging topography.

More information about proposals for the A417 can be found on the [scheme website](#) where Highways England hold a live monthly web chat. Members of the public can join in and ask questions about the scheme.

For more information on the roles and responsibilities of a Highways England traffic officer go to the [Traffic Officer web pages](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: Top marks for Highways England visit to Birdlip Primary School](#)

Highways England traffic officers proved to be a real 'class' act when they dropped in to see pupils at Birdlip Primary School near Gloucester.

[Press release: UK and ASEAN agree importance of future relationship](#)

Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific, Mark Field met the Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 23 January.

[Press release: UK and ASEAN agree importance of future relationship](#)

During the meeting, FCO Minister Mark Field reaffirmed the UK's strong commitment to forging a stronger partnership with ASEAN building on the foundations of the our strong bilateral relationships across Southeast Asia.

The meeting came during Secretary General, Dato Lim Jock Hoi's two day visit to the UK.

The ministers discussed likely areas of focus for future co-operation, including FinTech and green finance, the development of smart cities, cyber security, education and increased defence co-operation. The Minister also told the Secretary General about the launch of two new UK programmes

supporting ASEAN priorities for economic reform and low carbon energy.

Minister of State for Asia, Mark Field said:

UK investment in Southeast Asia exceeds our investment in China and India combined, and with ASEAN businesses collectively ranking as the third largest Asian investor in the UK, it isn't hard to see why developing our relationship is a priority.

As Minister for Asia I am glad to have the opportunity to discuss with the Secretary General how we can build on our strong relationships in the region to forge a new, national partnership with ASEAN as a bloc.

On his two day visit to London, the ASEAN Secretary General met a range of UK Ministers, including Cabinet Office Minister David Lidington, as well as engaging with UK business and the Prime Minister's Trade Envoys, reflecting the UK and ASEAN's many areas of shared interest.

UK investment in Southeast Asia exceeds UK investment in China and India combined, and the region is a growing and important source of investment into the UK. UK exports to Southeast Asia rose 19% in 2017 alone. ASEAN sits at the centre of Asian multilateralism, and plays an important role in upholding the rules based international system.

The visit follows a host of activity already this year, including a speech by the Foreign Secretary in Singapore, and a visit to Vietnam by Minister of State for Asia & the Pacific, Mark Field MP.

Further information