

# [Press release: Prompt action prevents A14 bridge closure](#)

A lorry which struck the underside of a low bridge could have caused chaos on the A14, were it not for the swift recovery work of Highways England traffic officers and their partners.

The vehicle hit the underside of the Huntingdon Railway Viaduct, which carries the A14 over the rail line and through the town, at 1.15am last Wednesday (22 August). The bridge has a 4.4 metre (14ft 6in) height restriction in place on it, with the HGV too big to pass beneath.

A lane was closed on Brampton Road following the crash, which could have seen the bridge beams damaged and made the viaduct unable to support its weight, let alone the 77,000 drivers who cross it daily on the A14, closing both the road and railway beneath it too. Such damage would have seen the bridge need assessments which could take six months, with the repair and inspection work likely costing around £2 million.

Fortunately the damage was only superficial, and Highways England traffic officers, along with contractors Kier, Cambridgeshire Police and Cambridgeshire County Council, were quick to act at the scene, minimising disruption before the morning rush hour hit prevent the town centre road being closed fully. With the lorry trapped beneath the steel beams of the bridge, they released air from the tyres to move it back.

Highways England service manager Austin Adkins said:

Hopefully this will serve as a reminder to drivers of tall vehicles that they need to take extra care on their journeys, particularly with low bridges, as hitting them can easily be avoided yet have a far reaching impact. I want to thank our operatives and partners who worked together to swiftly resolve what could have been a hugely disruptive incident, even with the damage being minimal.

The Huntingdon Railway Viaduct will be demolished after the new £1.5 billion A14 link between Cambridge and Huntingdon opens in December 2021, with new link roads making it easier to travel to, from and around the town.

## **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.

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# [Press release: UK expands counter-IED support in Africa](#)

With the help of the British Army who are working closely with their Kenyan partners to combat terrorism and save lives in East Africa, the facility is expanding into a regional centre of excellence.

Training will be offered to Kenyan security forces and other African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troop-contributing nations in the region. Continued UK support will also include £2.3 million a year from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and mentoring from the British Army.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

“From supporting counter-terrorist operations in Mali to improvised explosive device disposal training in Kenya, our Armed Forces are helping to build a more secure Africa. By tackling the terrorist threat abroad we are helping to keep our streets safe at home.”

Since 2015, 1,000 military and police personnel from East Africa have been trained by the British Army in identifying and destroying IEDs. Yet, in the same period the use of IEDs has increased by around 300 per cent in Somalia, where casualties are often civilians.

By November 2020, the wing is expected to have developed into a fully-functioning, independent centre of excellence where East African instructors will provide specialised IED disposal training.

The expansion forms part of a new UK-Kenya security agreement which is allowing both countries to keep pace with the changing nature of threats and to renew our cooperation on counter-terrorism, child protection, and regional security. The Prime Minister also announced over £7 million of new UK funding to support AMISOM, as she called on international donors to contribute more to the peacekeeping mission.

Her visit reaffirms that the UK will support the project until it operates independently as a regional and continental centre of excellence.

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## **Press release: UK aid helps farmers across Africa grow their businesses**

## and protect livestock

- UK support will help tackle killer cattle diseases and grow smaller scale farms into major commercial operations
- Investment in farming is vital as Africa is facing unprecedented population growth

UK aid will transform the agricultural sector in African countries, including research and technology projects to tackle killer cattle diseases and create better paid jobs for farmers.

A profitable agricultural sector is essential to African countries, contributing half of the continent's total export value. The World Bank estimates the sector accounts for 20% of the continent's entire GDP.

And over the next 30 years, Africa will face unprecedented population growth and producing enough food for that increased number of people will be crucial in reducing poverty.

UK aid, through the Department for International Development (DFID), is supporting a number of separate transformative projects to protect the continent's agricultural sector and its small farmers, including:

- new support to the Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicines (GALVmed), helping to develop seven new vaccines for major neglected tropical diseases and widening their availability across Africa to benefit eight million smallholder farmers. This transformative UK aid research will not only stop diseases from destroying the livelihoods of African farmers, it could also help control livestock diseases on British farms;
- using investor AgDevCo to help small agricultural companies in Africa, including Kenya, attract long-term commercial finance to become profitable operations – allowing them to create jobs, support economic transformation and help countries move out of poverty;
- working with the Gates Foundation to launch a Food Trade and Resilience programme, to support companies who source, process and trade food across African borders, to benefit local farmers and improve countries' resilience to famine and climate shocks;
- attracting more investment into firms that trade with smallholders, UK aid will help bring smaller farmers into commercial supply chains. The Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (CASA) Programme will increase the income of over 130,000 farmers by helping SMEs that trade with smallholders to expand and attract third party investment; and
- new research, led by UK-African partnerships across business and science, to develop new technology and innovations that will help to avoid food shortages and make food more nutritious, affordable, and

resistant to climate change. The Agri-Tech Catalyst is a UK programme that awards funding for research projects looking to improve food production in the developing world.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

With over three quarters of people living in extreme poverty in rural areas and two thirds of those, mainly women, earning a living from agriculture we know that a healthy and prosperous agricultural sector in African countries is vital not only to ending hunger, but also reducing poverty and growing businesses.

This UK aid support will tackle killer livestock diseases and support innovations to deliver sustainable, nutritious food and create more jobs for farmers, as well as supporting global research efforts and fostering breakthroughs with the potential to benefit UK agriculture and consumers too. This is a win for African countries and a win the UK as well.

By 2050, 1 in 4 people on the planet will be African. Producing enough food for the growing population is a both a huge challenge and a very important opportunity for inclusive economic growth, investment and poverty reduction.

UK aid support to the Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicines (GALVmed) will save an estimated £400 million by averting the deaths of livestock and improve the distribution network to widen the availability of the vaccine.

Through the CASA Programme UK aid will help bring small farmers into commercial supply chains by attracting more investment into firms that trade with smallholders. The programme will create new jobs by helping SME firms that trade with smallholders expand and attract third party investment.

As new information, evidence and research is shared with business, governments and other donors other smallholders will benefit with these groups upping their investment in smallholder farming.

UK investor AgDevCo will help early stage agricultural businesses to expand and become fully commercial, allowing them to create jobs, support economic transformation and help countries move out of poverty. The non-profit company operates in Sub Saharan Africa, including in Uganda, Rwanda, Malawi and Ghana. The new UK aid support will allow it to expand into Kenya. Its investment objective is to build profitable businesses that contribute to food security, drive economic growth and create jobs.

AgDevCo has already helped 1.6 million people across Africa increase their incomes by working with and developing agribusinesses. By 2025, UK aid support will allow 3.9 million people benefit from greater food security, higher incomes and more jobs.

The Food Trade and Resilience Programme will make it easier for commercial

companies to buy from smallholder African farmers, helping to boost the income of 1.8 million farming families by 30%. This will make the lives of poorer communities dependent on agriculture more secure and prosperous.

As Africa has become urbanised, there has been a shift to low-nutrition diets which has a negative impact on health and wellbeing, including educational achievement for children. At the same time, additional steps in the 'from field to fork' process (harvesting, collecting and transporting, processing and packaging) have increased the risk of food shortages and price rises, which are likely to disproportionately affect the poor. This risk is made worse by the growing threat of climate change to crops, such as the higher risk of drought, flooding and erratic rainfall.

Innovations funded by UK aid through the Agri-Tech Catalyst will seek to tackle these challenges, ultimately helping to prevent food shortages, price rises and diet-related illnesses, and end hunger around the world.

- DFID is providing £12.6m to the Global Alliance for Livestock Veterinary Medicines (GALVmed) to develop seven new livestock vaccines for major neglected tropical diseases. Our support will also help establish five distribution networks across Africa and Asia, widening the availability of the vaccines to farmers and increasing their uptake. The diseases targeted by this project have been selected on the basis of which have the most significant economic impact and the lack of alternative suitable products.
- UK investor AgDevCo will enable early stage agricultural businesses to expand and become fully commercial, allowing them to create jobs, support economic transformation and help countries move out of poverty. The UK will provide it with a further £55 million in funding, allowing it to extend its programme. By 2025, this will allow 3.9 million people benefit from greater food security, higher incomes and more jobs.
- The UK is investing £20 million pounds to co-fund the Food Trade and Resilience Programme with the Gates Foundation. The project will provide expertise and advice to make it more profitable for commercial companies to buy from smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa. This will increase the income of 1.8 million farming families, while helping to build resilience against rising food demand and climate shocks.
- The UK is funding crucial research, led by UK-African partnerships across business and science, to develop new technology and innovations that will help to avoid food shortages and make food more nutritious, affordable, and resistant to climate change.
- The Agri-Tech Catalyst is a UK programme that awards funding for research projects looking to improve food production in the developing world. The UK is providing £10m of additional investment for research projects seeking to tackle the most pressing challenges facing food production systems in Africa, such as low-nutrition diets, the risk of food shortages and the threat of climate change.