

Press release: Waste vehicle seized from gang

A vehicle belonging to an organised gang operating in South East England has been seized by the Environment Agency and Thames Valley Police, as part of an ongoing waste crime investigation. The vehicle is believed to be linked to the operation of an illegal waste site in the Maidenhead area.

The seizure, which took place last week, comes as the Environment Agency and the police move forward in their investigation to capture those responsible for occupying land unlawfully and accepting tonnes of waste, often from unsuspecting sources, leaving behind the rubbish to be cleared at the expense of the landowner or taxpayer.

Illegal waste crime drains the UK economy of £1 billion each year in clean-up costs and lost tax revenues. It has a devastating effect on the environment and local communities with pest infestations and fires, which could lead to water and land contamination plus air pollution from smoke.

Nick Daykin, Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader, said:

This is a great result in an ongoing investigation with Thames Valley Police to apprehend a group of unscrupulous individuals. The power to seize vehicles is a relatively new and is now an important weapon in our armoury for disrupting this type of criminal activity. This is a big message to the criminal fraternity: you set up site yesterday, we will have one of your vehicles off the road today and we will do it again tomorrow!

Using illegal waste dealers may seem tempting in terms of cost, but it can help fund organised crime. Everyone has a responsibility for their own waste and if your waste is found at an illegal site you could be facing fines of up to £5,000. To avoid this, we encourage members of the public and local businesses to ask their waste carrier for proof of their Waste Carrier's Registration and to ask to see a 'waste transfer note' and if possible take a photo of it on their phone.

Contact

All press enquiries: 0800 141 2743

News story: Reappointment to the School Teachers' Review Body

Sir Robert Burgess has been reappointed as a member of the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) for a second 3-year term to end in November 2021.

Jeanne Watson has been reappointed for an additional 1-year term to end in October 2018.

School Teachers' Review Body

The [STRB](#) provides independent advice to the government on pay and conditions for teachers and school leaders in England and Wales.

Appointments process

The reappointments have been made in line with the [Governance Code on public appointments](#).

Biographies

Sir Robert Burgess

[Sir Robert](#) was the Vice Chancellor of the University of Leicester until September 2014. He previously held a number of roles at the University of Warwick, including Senior Pro Vice Chancellor, Founding Director of the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (a cross faculty research centre), and Professor of Sociology.

He has had experience on several national committees, including the Board of the British Library and the Higher Education Academy Board. He is the Chair of GSM London's Governing Body (GSM London provide industry led vocational business programmes) and Chair of the NatCen Social Research Board. He was knighted in 2010 for services to higher education locally and nationally.

Jeanne Watson

[Jeanne Watson](#) was a secondary headteacher for 22 years. Her experience includes 16 years as the headteacher of The Brooksbank School in Calderdale, an 11 to 18 academy, as well as 2 positions as the Executive Headteacher in schools requiring support. Jeanne has also worked as the Chair of Calderdale Secondary Heads Association with responsibility for school-to-school improvement, and she has extensive experience of partnership working, headteacher training and local authority management.

Statement to Parliament: Home

Secretary statement on the incident in

Salisbury

With permission, Mr Speaker, I shall make a statement on the incident in Salisbury that has been unfolding over the past four days.

Let me first pay tribute to the continued professionalism, dedication and courage of the emergency services. They have handled the incident with their customary attentiveness, alacrity, and sense of public duty. First responders put themselves in dangerous situations on a day-to-day basis, and this incident has underlined that fact – to which, sadly, I shall return later in my statement.

I shall now update the House as far as is possible on the basis of the current facts of the case. At approximately 4.15pm on Sunday afternoon, Wiltshire police received a call from a member of the public who was concerned for the welfare of two people in a park in Salisbury. Emergency services were called, and the two were admitted to the A&E department of Salisbury District Hospital. They were a man in his 60s and a woman in her 30s, with no visible signs of injury. They are understood to be Sergei and Yulia Skripal. Both remain unconscious, and in a critical but stable condition.

I regret to inform the House that a police officer has also fallen seriously ill. The officer was one of the first responders on Sunday, acting selflessly to help others. The latest update from the hospital is that the officer's condition remains serious but stable, and that he is conscious, talking and engaging. Officers from Wiltshire police are providing support for the officer's family and colleagues. Our thoughts are with all three victims, and their families and friends, at what will be an incredibly difficult time for them.

Wiltshire police began an investigation on Sunday to determine how the individuals had fallen ill, and whether a crime had been committed. They declared a major incident on Monday. On Tuesday the Metropolitan police decided that, given the unusual circumstances, responsibility for the investigation should be transferred to the National Counter Terrorism Policing Network. Samples from the victims have been tested by experts at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory at Porton Down, who are world-renowned experts in the field. As Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley announced yesterday, that forensic analysis has revealed the presence of a nerve agent, and the incident is therefore being treated as attempted murder. I can confirm that it is highly likely the police officer has been exposed to the same nerve agent.

I spoke only this morning with Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, and he confirmed that we remain in the midst of a fast-paced, criminal

investigation. As such, I will not comment further on the nature of the nerve agent. We must give the police the space they need to conduct a thorough investigation. All members will recognise that an investigation such as this will be complex and may take some time.

Public safety continues to be the No.1 priority for this government. Professor Sally Davies, the chief medical officer, stated yesterday that, based on the evidence we have, there is a low risk to the public. The UK has a world-leading emergency response. It is regularly tested and exercised to ensure we can deliver an effective response to a wide range of chemical, biological and radiological incidents. The three emergency services are well supplied with state-of-the-art equipment to respond to such threats.

The frontline response is supported by world-class scientific research and advice. This ensures that decision making on the ground, by all agencies involved, is firmly based on the available evidence. This will also support the decontamination activity needed to return the location to normality.

The police are working closely with Public Health England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the DSTL. They have cordoned all known sites in Salisbury that were visited by the two initial victims before they became unwell, and are taking the necessary measures to protect public safety.

I want now to turn to the speculation – of which there has been much – around who was responsible for this most outrageous crime. The use of a nerve agent on UK soil is a brazen and reckless act. This was attempted murder in the most cruel and public way. People are right to want to know who to hold to account. But, if we are to be rigorous in this investigation, we must avoid speculation and allow the police to carry on their investigation.

As the assistant commissioner said yesterday, the investigation now involves hundreds of officers, following every possible lead to find those responsible. Some of those leads have come from members of the public. I would like to thank the people of Salisbury for their help and for the calm they have shown over the last four days. I encourage anyone who visited Salisbury town centre and surrounding areas on Sunday afternoon, who has not yet spoken to the police, to get in touch.

We are committed to doing all we can to bring the perpetrators to justice – whoever they are, and wherever they may be. The investigation is moving at pace, and this government will act without hesitation as the facts become clearer. As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made clear on Tuesday, we will respond in a robust and appropriate manner once we ascertain who was responsible.

I would like to close where I began, by expressing my sincere thanks to the emergency services and hospital staff for their tireless efforts over the last four days. They have acted with utter professionalism both to minimise the risk to the wider public and to care for the victims of the attack, for which I know we are all very grateful. Our thoughts will be with the victims and their families over the coming days.

Finally, I thank members for their understanding that there will clearly be limits on what we can say as this investigation continues. As and when information can be made public, it will be. I commend the statement to the House.

News story: Government confirms commitment to Crewe Hub vision

- plans for HS2 Phase 2a will be modified to support Crewe Hub
- these changes allow an HS2 service to Stoke-on-Trent
- more people to have access to high speed, long-distance train services from Crewe

A high-speed rail service to Stoke-on-Trent, platform extensions and a re-designed junction at Crewe to give more people to access to HS2 are amongst plans being backed by government, Transport Secretary Chris Grayling has confirmed today (9 March 2018).

The government's support for the Crewe Hub vision means plans for HS2 Phase 2a from the West Midlands to Crewe will be modified to include:

- extension of Platform 5 at Crewe to 400 metres, to allow for the splitting and joining of HS2 services, which also opens opportunities to serve Stoke-on-Trent with HS2
- a more efficient design for the proposed platform on the Manchester independent lines, incorporating a transfer deck to the main station
- a change to the design of the southern connection from HS2, so that HS2 joins, and takes over, the central 2 lines on the existing network

The Secretary of State also intends to ask the franchise operator, West Coast Partnership, to include a high speed service to Stoke-on-Trent in its market development and service plans.

Video of Nusrat Ghani on HS2 at Crewe Station

Secretary of State Chris Grayling said:

We have listened to people's views on the Crewe Hub consultation, ensuring that the town's proud history as an epicentre of rail journeys is set to continue, as it plays a vital role in delivering Britain's future railway.

HS2 will be the backbone of our national rail network, increasing capacity on our congested rail network with thousands more seats on commuter services, improving vital connections between some of our

country's biggest cities and generating jobs, skills and economic growth.

It also builds on our earlier decision to bring the benefits of HS2 to Crewe from 2027 – 6 years earlier than originally planned – as well as allowing the benefits of a high-speed service to extend to Stoke-on-Trent.

Extending HS2 to Crewe is a vital step in achieving the government's ambition to build a country that works for everyone. By committing to the Crewe consultation, significant benefits brought to Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent by HS2 are unlocked, allowing more people to access high speed, long distance services.

Combined with a HS2 junction north of Crewe (which will be considered as part of Phase 2b), this could allow 5 to 7 HS2 trains per hour to call at Crewe and improve connectivity on the lines from Crewe to Shrewsbury, Chester and Stoke-on-Trent (subject in some cases to further investment beyond Crewe itself).

The [full response to the Crewe Hub consultation](#) is on GOV.UK.

Press release: UKEF supports export of Bombardier aircraft made in Belfast

Baroness Fairhead, Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion, said:

The UK is at the forefront of the civil aerospace industry and I am delighted that the Department for International Trade is backing this landmark contract, which will support the global success of Bombardier's C Series programme and its operations in Northern Ireland.

This represents a double-first; it is the first time that UKEF has supported a C Series aircraft sale from Bombardier, who are a major investor and employer in Northern Ireland, and it is the first sale of the C Series to an Asian airline.

This contract clearly shows the value of support from UK Export Finance to those investing into the UK as they grow their international businesses.

The announcement comes at a historic moment for the UK and Asia, with two weeks to go until the UK Government hosts the GREAT Festival of Innovation in Hong Kong, designed to boost trade between the UK and Asia.

UKEF has worked in partnership with Canadian export credit agency, Export Development Canada (EDC), to provide Korean Airlines with financing to support the sale to date of two C Series aircraft, whose wings and parts of the fuselage – a significant proportion of the complete aircraft – are made at Bombardier's site in Belfast. UKEF has provided reinsurance support to EDC for the UK elements of the aircraft.

Michael Ryan, President, Bombardier Aerostructures and Engineering Services, said:

The C Series aircraft is the market leader in the 100- to 150-seat segment and subject to significant global demand. This aircraft has advanced carbon fibre wings and advanced technology fuselage sections manufactured in Belfast. We are very proud to have secured our first C Series aircraft sale to an Asian airline and with the backing of UK Export Finance and Export Development Canada look forward to building on this success.

UKEF, Bombardier and EDC are planning to extend the programme, with further support likely to follow for future C Series deliveries to Korean Airlines scheduled for 2018.

1. [UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working alongside the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.
2. It exists to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for want of finance or insurance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.
3. Sectors in which UKEF has supported exports include: aerospace, construction, oil and gas, mining and metals, petrochemicals, telecommunications, and transport.
4. UKEF has a regional network of 24 [export finance managers](#) supporting export businesses.
5. Find UKEF's latest [country cover positions](#).
6. The [GREAT Festival of Innovation](#), taking place from 21-24 March in Hong Kong, is underpinned by a shared desire to build on the success of

longstanding trading relationships between Asia and the UK and to stimulate further growth. It is an exchange of ideas intended to fuel debate and discussion to drive collaboration and partnerships between business, higher education and government, with a programme designed to address the role of innovation in driving prosperity.

7. UKEF supports exporters with a range of products that include:

- Bond insurance policy
- Bond support scheme
- Buyer & supplier credit financing facility
- Direct lending facility
- Export insurance policy
- Export refinancing facility
- Export working capital scheme
- Letter of credit guarantee scheme