

## News story: IHAT to close at the end of June

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon today announced that the Iraq Historic Allegations Team (IHAT) will officially close on 30 June 2017. This follows his decision in February to bring IHAT to an end by the summer, enabled by the striking off of Mr Phil Shiner.

The remaining cases, expected to number around 20, will then be dealt with by the Service Police – a combination of Royal Navy Police and Royal Air Force Police, led by a senior Royal Navy Police officer. All investigations are expected to be completed by the end of next year.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

We took the unprecedented step of submitting evidence which saw Phil Shiner struck off and allowed IHAT to dispose of many false allegations he made. Now I can confirm that IHAT will close in June and the Service Police should complete investigations into the small number of remaining cases a year earlier than planned.

We are taking steps to make sure the reputation of our Armed Forces cannot be attacked in this dishonest way again.

In 2015 the Defence Secretary directed the MOD to submit evidence of wrongdoing by Phil Shiner which led to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal striking Mr Shiner off in February.

The exposure of the dishonesty of Mr Shiner meant that many of the allegations that his now defunct firm, Public Interest Lawyers, had brought forward were discredited and enabled the Defence Secretary to decide to close IHAT. IHAT's caseload is expected to reduce from a peak of over 3,000 allegations to around 20 investigations by the time it closes.

Chief of the General Staff General Sir Nick Carter said:

The Army's Leadership Code requires the highest values and standards. It is right therefore that on the occasions that there are credible allegations of unacceptable behaviour they should be investigated.

However, a significant number of claims made against our soldiers have not been credible. The recent exposure of unscrupulous law firms and vexatious claims has clearly shown this to be the case; it is right therefore that the Defence Secretary has decided to close IHAT and hand over the remaining investigations to the Service Police, a process the Army supports.

Mutual trust is at the heart of the Army Leadership Code as is the care of soldiers and their families. We therefore welcome the Government's commitment to ensuring we have the Nation's confidence and the tools to do our jobs effectively on operations, free from the burden of unjust litigation.

The Service Police will be supported by a minimum level of essential contractor support for specialist back office functions, such as the operation of the Forensic Data Handling computer, in order to complete its investigations. Contractors will have no contact with UK witnesses or suspects.

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## [Press release: What goes bump in the night?](#)

With traffic speeds increasing by 10 per cent after dark, night time can be a particularly vulnerable time for Highways England's traffic officers.

In addition to faster traffic, officers have to contend with tired drivers and those struggling to adjust to road conditions after nightfall.

The final episode of ITV's Britain's Busiest Motorway, covers "things that go bump in the night", as traffic officers on the M25 have to help clear debris from a wardrobe and escort horses off the motorway.

One recent night time incident saw traffic officers narrowly avoid serious injury when an out of control car skidded across the motorway, smashing into the back of a van parked in the hard shoulder.

The crash happened around 8pm on Tuesday 8 March near junction 23 of the M25 clockwise.

Traffic officers Mark Cooper and Paul Graham had been speaking with the driver of the van following its break down, and were fortunate the crash did not happen a moment earlier when they were stood at the back of the van.

### [YouTube video](#)

The passengers of the van also had a close call as they were sat on the hard shoulder when the crash happened, quickly leaping off and scarpering to safety following the impact.

After the crash, Mark and Paul attended the car to ensure the driver was not hurt, and medics were able to treat the driver who was fortunate to have just suffered minor injuries after the smash .

Caner Okanay, operations manager at Highways England, said:

This incident serves as a timely reminder of the need for drivers to pay extra attention when driving at night. With traffic moving faster and road users feeling tired, accidents are more likely to happen.

Safety is our top priority at Highways England, and we want to minimise the risks faced by both our traffic officers and drivers. This incident was a lucky escape for all involved – for the driver who was unhurt, for the traffic officers who moments before were behind the van, and for the passengers on the hard shoulder.

People do not realise how dangerous the hard shoulder is – these passengers were in danger by casually sitting on the barrier and not paying full attention. The hard shoulder is for emergencies only, and those who do have to use it need to stay behind the barrier, to remain safe and remain vigilant.

## **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: Environment Agency warns landowners in East Anglia about illegal storage of waste](#)**

The warning comes from the Environment Agency after a spate of incidents across the country.

Businesses are being targeted by waste criminals looking to dispose of waste by dumping it in warehouses, industrial units and some open spaces. They can be very convincing in persuading landowners to allow them to use their properties and are able to fill the sites with waste which would cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to clear, ultimately leaving the landowner with an expensive clearance bill.

The Environment Agency is urging all landowners to use reputable agents and brokers, carry out suitable checks and due diligence before allowing potential criminals to use buildings or property.

Kevin Rutterford, Environment Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

It's crucial that all businesses understand their duty of care responsibilities for the waste they produce, who they allow to transport it and ultimately where it goes.

Too often, when these responsibilities are misunderstood or ignored, we see the impact of waste crime where waste is deliberately dumped on land illegally. This can cause serious pollution, put communities at risk and undermine legitimate businesses that are doing the right thing.

Even if the landowner has no involvement, legally they may still be responsible for that waste and that could mean a large clear up bill.

Waste stored inappropriately can create issues for neighbours through smells and pests. It can also have a detrimental effect on the environment and impact on rivers and streams. There is a high risk of waste fires due to the waste not being stored correctly.

Recent survey statistics released by the Right Waste Right Place campaign <http://www.rightwasterightplace.com/news/> show that agricultural businesses and rural land owners throughout the UK are bearing the brunt of waste crime. More than a third of those in the East of England (39%) have suffered incidents of fly-tipping on their land in the past 3 years with almost half (48%) of them disposing of the waste themselves at their own cost.

In recent years a man was sentenced to prison for dumping hundreds of thousands of tyres at sites he had leased across the country, including in Essex and Norfolk, which he failed to clear.

Fires involving mixed baled waste can be hard to extinguish and pose a risk to public health and the environment as they often contain hazardous materials. In extreme cases this can lead to the loss of the property in which the material is being stored.

Dumping commercial waste like this is a crime. Individuals involved in such illegal activity can be hostile and the Environment Agency urge members of the public not to put themselves in any danger if they encounter any such activity and to avoid any direct contact with the culprits.

Anyone suspecting any illegal waste activities, who has been approached to store waste or may currently be storing such waste are urged to contact the Environment Agency via a 24 hour incident hotline 0800 807060. Alternatively they can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

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## **[News story: DIT roundtable boosts UK business opportunities in Pakistan](#)**

China is supporting \$51 billion of infrastructure development in Pakistan as part of the 'China Pakistan Economic Corridor' (CPEC) to develop key infrastructure projects like roads, railways and power stations which will modernise Pakistan's economy and boost access to trade.

It is part of China's broader 'Belt and Road Initiative' to replicate the ancient Silk Road trade routes with modern trading relationships and investments across Asia, the Middle East and into Europe.

Greg Hands met yesterday (4 April) with leading UK businesses, policy experts and senior representatives of the Chinese and Pakistani governments as the UK is poised to be a key partner of CPEC, ahead of a larger CPEC conference in Islamabad in May being hosted by the UK.

International Trade Minister Greg Hands said:

Britain is a country of free-trade influence and can be an important partner for China and Pakistan in the delivery of huge infrastructure projects that are being planned between the 2 countries.

As part of an outward looking Global Britain, we have a clear

ambition to increase trade with both China and Pakistan and UK businesses are well placed to capitalise on the new opportunities the region.

Participants in the roundtable included the Chinese Ambassador, Pakistani High Commissioner to the UK and UK High Commissioner to Pakistan. As well as experts from CityUK, the Royal United Services Institute and the China Britain Business Council. Businesses including HSBC, Deloitte and Standard Chartered also discussed how they and other British firms can support the delivery of CPEC.

A joint statement in 2015 between the UK and Chinese governments committed both countries to support each other's commercial co-operation in new markets, including the Belt and Road, and the \$51 billion being invested by China in Pakistan presents big opportunities for UK businesses in the next few years.