

[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.

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.

Speech: Prime Minister's press

statement in Nairobi: 30 August 2018

Updated: Added image for context.

Thank you, Mr President, for hosting me today, and for your very warm welcome to Nairobi.

I'm delighted to be paying my first visit to Kenya – and indeed the first by a British Prime Minister for 30 years.

Like the many thousands of British tourists who come here every year, I will take away unforgettable memories of this country's vibrancy and its beauty.

Kenya holds a special place in the hearts of the British people and our countries share, as you have said, a long history that has left us deeply connected to one another.

Indeed, it was here that our monarch learned she would become Queen.

But the relationship we hold is about much more than those deep historical ties.

And today we have looked to the future and to a renewed partnership that will unlock the incredible potential of the next generation to benefit both our countries.

And we have agreed to build on the strong foundations of our relationship as we step up our cooperation to secure the prosperity and security that our people need and deserve.

We discussed today how the UK can work with you as you take forward your Big 4 agenda to transform Kenya – aligning our expertise, our investment and our aid behind that vision.

The UK is already the largest foreign investor in Kenya and I have set out this week our ambition to be the G7's number one investor in Africa by 2022.

So as Britain prepares to leave the European Union we are committed to a smooth transition that ensures continuity in our trading relationship with Kenya, ensuring Kenya retains its duty-free, quota-free access to the UK market. And to building on our strong trade and investment ties to create even more opportunities for our businesses and for our consumers.

Mr President, yours is a country of huge opportunity, in a continent of dynamic young people who have the potential to play a transformative role in driving Africa's growth in the years ahead.

Together we will make sure the next generation of energetic, ambitious Kenyans can get good, well-paid jobs so they can contribute to Kenya's long-term prosperity. That's not just good for Kenya, it's good for the UK too.

And we'll work with you and with governments across Africa to make sure your young people have the skills that businesses on the continent need to drive economic growth.

This is a partnership for opportunity but it's also a partnership for our shared security and stability.

And today we discussed the work we're doing together to make both our countries – and the world – more secure. Already, British terrorists and child abusers are in UK jails because of our cooperation.

This afternoon we have signed a new compact that will see us expand our joint work on security even further.

The UK is no longer just training our own military in Kenya, but training with Kenyans to promote stability in East Africa and beyond and to build the continent's capacity to overcome its own challenges and deliver its own security.

Later today I will see our militaries training together in the techniques to identify and destroy improvised explosive devices.

The UK continues to support the commitment of the brave Kenyan soldiers fighting in Somalia against Al Shabaab. And I will announce a new package of funding to support the African Union mission in Somalia.

Mr President, I was glad to hear you call for a transition from peacekeepers to stronger Somali security forces. This is what the UK wants too, and as we work towards this we are leading international efforts to ensure AMISOM has the funding it needs to support its vital battle against terror.

We also spoke about the pernicious effects of corruption in Kenya. And I welcome the commitment you have made to drive this vice from your country, and we stand with you in this fight.

And today, as you've said, we signed an agreement to ensure that any proceeds of corruption in Kenya that end up in the UK will be given back to the Kenyan people and spent for their benefit.

I also welcome, Mr President, your commitment to political reconciliation in this country. The UK stands ready to support an inclusive Building Bridges process as you work to further strengthen your democracy and your institutions.

Mr President, as I conclude my visit this week to some of the UK's most important African partners I have reflected on the role my country can play in partnership with this vibrant continent in the future.

As I have said this week, I want to ensure that the UK's relationship with Kenya and with Africa is more and more about private investment, about doing business and making the most of commercial opportunities together.

Here, as elsewhere in the continent, we are using our aid and our investment

partnerships to lift countries out of poverty, spread stability, and create jobs and prosperity for the future.

The UK and Kenya are two strong, diverse countries. We are partners in the Commonwealth, and global hubs – open to the world.

We thrive because of the entrepreneurship and innovation of our people, the strength of our democracies and our shared values.

Our cooperation today makes our people safer, more prosperous and more secure – here in Kenya, and in the UK.

Mr President, I will leave Nairobi excited by the huge opportunities of Kenya and of this continent. And I look forward to working with you in the years ahead for the benefit of both our countries.

[News story: Minister hails world-class Wales' role in defence industry](#)

Defence invests £945 million in Welsh industry, supporting more than 6,000 jobs. The Minister visited leading firms befitting from defence work such as Defence Electronics and Components Agency (DECA), Kent Periscopes, Qioptiq and Raytheon, which are all supporting essential equipment to the UK's Armed Forces.

The crucial relationship between the MOD and Welsh industry was clearly laid out in the recent publication of an [independent review published by former Defence Minister Philip Dunne](#), and has now been showcased to the former Wales Office Minister on his return to the nation in his new role.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Wales is crucial to our world-leading defence industry, our Armed Forces and their future capabilities. The hundreds of millions of pounds we are investing in Welsh firms means the nation can continue making a massive contribution to our safety in the face of intensifying threats across the globe.

The 6,000 workers in Wales' defence sector can be extremely proud that their entrepreneurship, innovation and skills are ensuring our brave servicemen and women are equipped with the latest equipment and systems so they can protect us at home and around the world.

The Minister's tour of Welsh firms began at DECA Sealand, which will be at the forefront of maintaining the UK's new supersonic F-35 Lightning Force

fighter jets.

The Sealand site will become a global repair hub for the aircraft, providing maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade services for F-35 avionics, electronic and electrical components, fuel, mechanical and hydraulic systems. The fighter jet work will sustain thousands of jobs and pump hundreds of millions of pounds into the local economy.

Whilst at the site, the Minister announced that the F-35B Lightning has carried out its first trials armed with UK-built weapons out in the US.

The minister also visited Raytheon, where he had the chance to see the cutting-edge capabilities for the British aerospace and defence sectors. The company's technology is used in some of the most advanced aircraft surveillance and intelligence systems in existence.

This includes the Sentinel, which is one of the UK's most advanced manned surveillance aircraft, and the closely guarded Shadow special mission aircraft. The Defence Minister's visit coincided with the company celebrating 10 years of Sentinel and more than 30,000 operational hours.



Minister for Defence Procurement Stuart Andrew

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew added:

The Sentinel has proved its enormous worth time and time again, from tracking terrorists in Syria and Iraq, to helping provide overseas aid and even mapping flooding here in the UK.

The fact it has now been on operations for over 30,000 hours not only demonstrates how the RAF are working around the clock to put it to use on behalf of the country, but is a testament to its home here in North Wales.

The workers here in Broughton should be extremely proud of the fantastic work they are doing to ensure this 'eye-in-the-sky' continues to collect the crucial intelligence our Armed Forces need to keep us safe.

The Sentinel programme has supported more than 200 suppliers across the country, while Raytheon has supported 450 jobs through the supply chain.

On the second day of his tour, the Minister was also given an insight into the important work being done by Kent Periscopes. The company provides the British Army with crucial periscopes for armoured personnel carriers, infantry fighting vehicles and tanks.

The minister's final stop involved a visit to Qioptiq, a company that specialises in optics and photonics and provides crucial night vision equipment to UK Armed Forces. Qioptiq's cutting-edge work supports more than 500 jobs in north Wales.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- The Ministry of Defence spent £945 million with Welsh businesses in 2016/17, equivalent to £300 per person per year. This supports over 6,000 industry jobs Wales provides over 3,000 regulars and reserves to the Armed Forces
 - Wales is renowned for its vast training areas for the Army and RAF
 - Since the 2015 SDSR we have announced new contracts with industry in Wales supporting operations at RAF Valley, maintaining F35 components at the Defence Electronics and Components Agency, developing a new battlefield communication system in Oakdale, building AJAX vehicles in Merthyr Tydfil and more. Alongside the many SMEs in Wales that equip and support our Armed Forces, these are a testament to the skills of the workforce in Wales.
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Press release: Dstl scientists take to the high seas on HMS Queen Elizabeth

Dstl has been involved in the development of HMS Queen Elizabeth for the past 20 years, starting with the original study to replace the Invincible light carrier fleet. Dstl helped to define the size and shape of the ship and a specialist team investigated ship-air integration, which supported the design of the flight deck and ski-jump used to launch the F-35B Lightning II fighter jets.

Currently on-board is Dstl operational analyst Tom, who will be joined later in September by Hannah, both of whom will provide vital analysis to the battle group and commanders during the voyage. It will be HMS Queen Elizabeth's maiden voyage across the Atlantic as she prepares to embark her first F-35B Lightning II fighter jets. She is one of two new aircraft carriers built for the Royal Navy with the second, HMS Prince of Wales, nearing the end of construction in Rosyth.

The aim of the flight trials is to use specially equipped test aircraft and sensors around the ship to work out the operating parameters of the aircraft and the carrier itself in a range of conditions. The carrier has already conducted similar trials for helicopters.

During the exercise, Dstl scientists will focus on operational analysis, gathering data that will be used inform future operational activity.

Tom said:

This is a fantastic opportunity, not only to be part of Dstl's continued involvement with the carrier, but to join more than 1,000 military personnel on-board. It's a huge craft and quite daunting – and also the first time I've deployed to sea, let alone on the Queen Elizabeth – but I'm very much looking forward to the tasks ahead and hopefully witness the F-35 jets on-board and in action off the flight deck for the first time.

In addition to providing analytic support to the carrier strike group and commanders, analysis will include looking at the way manpower use can be improved, from how efficiently the vessel can be cleaned to the sortie rates the fighter aircraft can carry out.

Tom added:

Analysis at this level has never been done before, so we will be learning on task; helping to adapt and shape the way the ship will run come its first operational deployment in 2021.