

Press release: A303 consultation events rearranged due to poor weather

The scheme to improve the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down includes plans for a 1.9-mile long tunnel past Stonehenge, a free-flowing dual carriageway and a much-needed bypass north of Winterbourne Stoke.

Consultation on the plans launched on 8 February but severe weather which swept across the region at the end of last week affected two public information events, at Mere and Salisbury.

They are due to rescheduled for later this month.

The news comes at the conclusion of a three-day fact-finding mission to Stonehenge of a delegation from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation).

The aim of the mission was to explain how the designs of the proposed 1.9-mile long road tunnel will bring together the World Heritage Site landscape currently split by the A303.

Derek Parody, Project Director for Highways England, said:

We are grateful to the representatives from ICOMOS who have taken the time to be with us on a 3 day visit to understand the scheme we are proposing. It is been an excellent opportunity for us to explain how we have responded to their previous recommendations and how the scheme is developing.

We look forward to the panel's report in due course, which will help us further refine the scheme, as well as to all the feedback from all interested parties during the current public consultation.

The consultation events continue today at the Society of Antiquaries at London's Burlington House (12 noon-8pm).

Since the last ICOMOS visit early last year and the announcement of the tunnel route plan in September, Highways England has continued to work with heritage groups including the National Trust, Historic England, English Heritage, and experts in the field, including the Stonehenge Scientific Committee – a body of leading independent archaeologists – to ensure a new route is built sensitively to the World Heritage Site.

The route was carefully chosen to avoid monuments and barrow groups, and Highways England's modified plans also included moving the position of one of the entrances to the tunnel to avoid conflicting with the Winter Solstice alignment.

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.

[News story: International co-operation on the fight against illegal wildlife crime](#)

The UK and China recently held a joint-workshop in South Africa to pass on best practice in the fight against illegal wildlife crime across national borders.

The workshop featured in the [Daily Mail](#) and on South African radio station, [702](#) and in other international media including: [Namibian Sun](#), and [AP](#).

Seminars on UK and China law enforcement structure, investigation practice, cybercrime and forensics were led by Border Force officials from the UK and the Chinese State Forestry.

Grant Miller, Head of National CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) Enforcement Team in the UK said:

We are committed to tackling wildlife crime globally and when one country develops best practice in tackling a problem, we share that quickly across nations so that we can all benefit. This means that ultimately people are confident that the government is taking action which is both transparent and robust against these criminals.

The positivity of all those turning up at the conference leaves me with great hope that we may be the generation who can turn the tide, and start to protect our environment and wildlife in the manner that it deserves.

[News story: Defence Secretary praises contribution female military personnel make to keeping Britain safe](#)

On a visit to RAF Brize Norton, the Defence Secretary met with women on the front line of the RAF's transport operations, including a Voyager air to air refuelling and troop transport pilot, logisticians and engineers. Mr Williamson also recognised the hard work that has gone into making the armed forces more diverse.

Over 10% of the military is now made up of women, with the RAF leading the way with 14% female representation. Increasing numbers of women are also joining the armed forces, with over 12% of new recruits this year being female, up from 11.2% last year. The MOD is committed to reaching its target of 15% of the military being female by 2020. 42% of MOD civil servants are also female.

Defence Secretary meets with female RAF personnel on International Women's Day

Speaking at the event, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Women play a crucial role across our Armed Forces and it is important we reflect on the amazing contribution they make every single day keeping the British people safe.

It is vital that we have the very best people our society has to offer and that they also represent the society that they defend. Today has been a great opportunity to meet some of those inspiring women who make our Armed Forces the best in the world.

Women are an essential and valued part of Defence and play a key role in keeping Britain safe. Over the last year, female members of the armed forces have contributed to defeating Daesh in Iraq and Syria, delivered essential humanitarian aid to British Overseas Territories affected by Hurricane Irma and most recently helped with the military's support to snow relief in the UK. In December 2017, six Army officers also become the first all-female group to cross Antarctica.

(Left to right) Flight Lieutenant Kerry Bennett, Sergeant Sim Rezazadeh-Wilson and Squadron Leader Eleanor Taylor pictured in front of an A400M transport aircraft at RAF Brize Norton.

The military is currently in the process of opening its ground close combat

roles to women, a historic move first announced in June 2016. The Royal Tank Regiment has already opened its close combat roles to women and last year the RAF became the first service to open all of its trades and branches to women, with the RAF Regiment starting to take female applications in September 2017.

By the end of this year, all infantry regiments in the Army and the Royal Marines will have opened their close combat roles to women. While visiting Brize Norton, the Defence Secretary met with a number of women who are working across a number of trades in the RAF, including Voyager Pilot Flight Lieutenant Kerry Bennett, Squadron Leader Eleanor Taylor, an engineer and Logistic Mover Sargent Sim Rezazadeh-Wilson.

[Speech: Foreign Secretary remarks on the visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman](#)

Good afternoon,

It's a pleasure to welcome my friend, His Excellency Adel Al-Jubeir, and I'm delighted that His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has chosen to come to Britain during his first official visit overseas.

This is a moment of huge significance in Saudi Arabia when ambitious reforms designed to achieve economic and social renewal are taking place.

In the nine months since His Royal Highness became Crown Prince, we have witnessed changes that would have been hard to imagine just a few years ago, and as a longstanding partner of Saudi Arabia, Britain will do everything in our power to support those reforms and help advance the ambitions contained in the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

Adel and I have just come from Downing Street and an afternoon of excellent meetings that we had with the Prime Minister and His Royal Highness and I believe this occasion marks the beginning of a new era in our friendship because the very breadth and ambition of Vision 2030 allows our relationship to move forwards to include cooperation in education, health, culture, sport and technology, with it creating new opportunities for British companies and delivering jobs and growth here in Britain.

And I'm delighted that we've reached an agreement that should lead to new Saudi investment in and through Britain, and procurement in companies worth up to £65bn, virtually \$100bn, over the next 10 years. Providing a vote of confidence in London as the leading financial centre in the world.

Today, our talks have focused on how the UK can use its world-beating expertise to support Saudi Arabia's reforms and how we can work together to end the tragic conflict in Yemen.

It is vital that we bring this appalling conflict which has inflicted so much humanitarian suffering to an end. Britain supports Saudi Arabia's right to defend its national security against missile attacks from Yemen, many of which have targeted the Kingdom's cities, including Riyadh.

Any solution to the conflict must ensure that Saudi Arabia no longer faces this cross-border security threat. Today we have agreed to strengthen the UN inspection of shipping in order to ensure that all Yemeni ports remain open to the humanitarian and commercial supplies that Yemen's people so desperately need.

We also call on the Houthis to do what they must and allow unimpeded humanitarian access in the areas that they control.

We will redouble, we in the UK will redouble, our efforts to support the UN political process and we hope to convene our counterparts from the US and the United Arab Emirates before Easter in order – that's to say, Adel and I will do that, in order to make more progress towards a political solution which we believe to be absolutely vital.

I'm delighted that Saudi Arabia will also develop a plan for the reconstruction of Yemen after any settlement of the conflict.

Saudi Arabia is changing and so is Britain's partnership with the Kingdom in order to benefit the security and the prosperity of both our Kingdoms for many years to come.

Thank you.

News story: CNC secure prestigious Counter Terror Policing Award at national event

The Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) were the proud winners of the Counter Terror Policing Award at the annual Security and Counter Terror Exhibition at Olympia on Tuesday (6/3).

The annual exhibition incorporates the Counter Terror Awards, where public and private sector organisations from across the UK and internationally are recognised in 10 categories for their contributions to reducing the threat from global terrorism.

The CNC were nominated in the Counter Terror Policing Award, which recognises the efforts of the police sector in combatting domestic terrorism through prevention strategies and operational excellence. The nominees in the category were:

- The CNC, for the planning, exercising and testing that led to two very successful live deployments under Operation Temperer in 2017
- National CT Policing, for the 'Action Counters Terrorism' campaign designed to encourage the public to play a part in helping tackle the terrorist threat
- City of London Police, as the first force to launch Project Servator
- Bedfordshire Police, for their introduction of an app entitled 'Cross the Line' which is designed to deter young people from committing hate crime

In the face of strong competition from the other nominees, the Civil Nuclear Constabulary were announced the winner by the guest of honour, Sir Michael Fallon, who recognised in his speech the ongoing threat from terrorism in the UK and the challenges that have been faced in responding to and defeating planned attacks.

Supt Graham Bell, Head of Operational Support and Development, and Eugene Johnson, the Resilience and Business Continuity Manager, accepted the award on the behalf of the CNC.

Chief Constable Mike Griffiths said: "It was an honour for the CNC to receive this national award and is recognition of the hard work, dedication and commitment of all our officers and staff. They went above and beyond to deploy over 800 officers across two deployments to 23 different Home Office force areas in a matter of hours. At the same time, military personnel were received onto the civil nuclear sites we police to support remaining officers in maintaining the safety and security of the sites.

"Our Authorised Firearms Officers provided armed support to these forces and reassurance to the public after the tragic Manchester Arena attack in May and the Parsons Green incident in September.

"This huge deployment of our officers wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and planning which went into the Operation Temperer plan and the close working relationship we have with our stakeholders and I am very proud that the work of my officers and staff has been recognised with this national award."

Supt Bell said: "It was a privilege for Eugene and I to collect the award, which reflects the enormous amount of hard work that went on in the planning stages, and the commitment of everybody who was involved – either through deploying to forces or working with the military when they came to our sites.

"This national recognition, against strong competition, came as a very welcome surprise and is a huge recognition of the CNC. We have now set the bar very high, which is why we keep our plans under constant review, as we never know when we may have to instigate them again but I have every

confidence that if called to again we will deliver.”