

## [News story: VMD offices closing early on Friday 22 December](#)

The VMD offices will be closed and unable to receive phone calls from 13:45pm on Friday 22 December.

The offices and switchboard will re-open at 8:30am on Wednesday 27 December.

The online services should not be affected but we will update this message if the situation changes once the power is restored.

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## [Press release: Bypass is best A5036 option says Highways England](#)

The company confirmed today it would formally defend its decision to opt for a bypass after Sefton Council applied for a judicial review on the basis that a tunnel option was not included as part of the public consultation.

Following the consultation earlier this year, Highways England announced in August it had decided to take forward the design of a new bypass through Rimrose Valley rather than try to improve the existing route between the port and Switch Island junction where the road meets the M57 and M58 motorways.

Highways England announced in the summer it had chosen the bypass option (above)

Highways England chief executive Jim O Sullivan said:

The considerable cost and disruption of constructing a tunnel and ongoing maintenance and operational costs meant it was never going to be a viable solution.

A bypass will provide similar long-term benefits to a tunnel – an almost junction-free link between the port and motorway network – at a significantly lower cost with less construction disruption and a much shorter delivery time when pressure on the existing road is increasing all the time.

We want to continue talking to the council and local people to ensure we deliver an A5036 Port of Liverpool route which can support the local and regional economy.

The existing route is often heavily congested with vehicle numbers increasing

Explaining why a tunnel was never put forward as an option at the consultation, Tim Gamon, Highways England's regional delivery director for the North West, said a bypass would deliver the same economic benefits as a tunnel but while a tunnel would cost more than £1.5 billion the cost of a bypass was around £250 million.

Mr Gamon said:

The tunnel simply does not provide value for money. Furthermore, the impact of delivering a tunnel through the park would mean the whole of the Rimrose Valley would potentially be 'out of bounds' for recreational use – including the sports pitches – for up to 6 years due to the scale of the construction and safety zones required.

Highways England is working on ideas to help mitigate the impact of a new bypass on the country park, park users and people living nearby, with a package of mitigation and environmental improvement measures including landscaping, planted screening, noise barriers and improved leisure facilities and pedestrian and cyclist links through the valley.

An artist's impression of how the current A5036 could be transformed if replaced by a bypass

Delivering a bypass would mean handing back the existing A5036 to local people to provide a clear separation of local traffic from commercial and commuter traffic between the port and motorway network. Highways England will transform the existing A5036 – delivering improved cycling facilities, better crossing and footpaths, improved connectivity on the inter-city routes crossing the road to benefit local communities.

## **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: PM statement on Saudi-led Coalition decision to extend access to port in Yemen**

I welcome yesterday's announcement by the Saudi-led Coalition that Hodeidah port will now be open for both humanitarian and commercial supplies, including fuel and food. This critical and commendable step has been made in the face of continued provocation and aggression from Houthi forces, and will help ensure the Yemeni people get the supplies and assistance they so desperately need.

It is essential that all parties to the conflict in Yemen allow complete and unhindered commercial and humanitarian access. We remain deeply concerned by continued barriers to delivery imposed by the Houthi rebels.

I was appalled that the Houthis fired another ballistic missile at Riyadh on 19 December, and that they boasted the target was the Royal Palace. This is the second such incident in six weeks, which yet again deliberately targeted a populated area. Such attacks threaten regional security and prolong the conflict in Yemen and I call upon all those with influence over the Houthis to get them to stop.

The UK will continue to support efforts to strengthen implementation of the UN arms embargo and address Saudi Arabia's legitimate security concerns, and strongly supports the UN's investigations into the origins of the missiles.

Recent developments only serve to underline the need for a political solution to the conflict. The Yemeni parties must engage constructively and in good faith with each other and the UN to overcome obstacles and restart dialogue. The UK will continue to lead international efforts in support of a political solution.

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## **Press release: Nottingham man fined for carrying waste without a licence**

A 43-year old Nottingham man has been sentenced to pay a fine of £880.00 plus £1,989 costs and a £88 victim surcharge for an offence committed under s1(1) of the Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989.

Darren Pike from Betts Avenue, Hucknall, NG15 6UP was sentenced at Nottingham Magistrates Court on Wednesday 20 December in relation to a charge of carrying waste without the requisite upper tier Waste Carriers' Licence. Mr

Pike failed to attend Court and the case was proven in his absence.

The charges were brought by the Environment Agency. The court heard how during a multi-agency operation on 11 May 2017, in conjunction with Nottinghamshire Police and Nottingham City Council, a Ford Transit Tipper truck driven by Mr Pike was found to be fully laden with waste, including plastic, furniture, toys, a fridge and a soiled mattress.

A number of waste transfer notes and weighbridge tickets were also found in the vehicle, which suggested that Mr Pike had previously taken waste (scrap metal) to two separate sites, one in Nottingham and the other in Mansfield. A public register search confirmed Mr Pike did not hold a Waste Carriers' licence.

Sinead Chamberlain, Environment Officer at the Environment Agency said:

On carrying out an interview under caution with Mr Pike in May this year, he admitted he was not a registered waste carrier. A letter was given to him containing advice and guidance in relation to registering as a waste carrier however, a subsequent check in August showed he had failed to register.

By not having the necessary licence, which costs just £154 and is easy to apply for, Mr Pike has incurred a total penalty of £2957.

The Environment Agency is working hard to make sure all businesses carrying waste have the correct authorisations to allow them to transport waste – a waste carrier's registration from the Environment Agency.

This case demonstrates we will take action against those who do not operate within the confines of relevant regulations and we hope it will serve as an example for other waste carriers to make sure they have the relevant licence in place.

Mr Pike has 28 days to pay. When sentencing, the Court took into account the aggravating feature of the offence being committed for financial gain, as well the defendant's previous "unblemished" record for environmental offences.

#### Charge

- On 11 May 2017, Darren Pike, being a person who is not a registered carrier of controlled waste, did, in the course of his business or otherwise with a view to profit, transport controlled waste, namely wood, plastics, a mattress and a refrigerator, from Betts Avenue, Hucknall, NG15 6UP, being a place in Great Britain contrary to section 1(1) of the Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989

- The Control of Pollution (Amendment) Act 1989 makes it a criminal offence for a person to transport controlled waste to or from any place in the United Kingdom, with a view for profit, if they do not possess the requisite Waste Carriers' Licence.
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## [News story: To boldly go where no Bill has gone before](#)

The Space Industry Bill to regulate commercial spaceflight from the UK has just had its third reading in the House of Lords. It has provided many opportunities for Star Trek jokes and, for members of the House of Lords during second reading, references to Dan Dare. For those of us lucky enough to have been working on it, it has been exciting, high-pressured and with plenty of scope to stretch yourself – not unlike space exploration, come to think about it.

Although commercial interplanetary travel is many years away, the government hopes this Bill will boost the UK space industry by enabling small satellite launches from UK spaceports. The Bill also regulates 'sub-orbital activities', such as flights of spaceplanes that go to high altitudes to give paying tourists a near-space experience, but do not go into orbit.

In case you don't know your USS Enterprise from your Virgin Galactic, a spaceplane is a vehicle that acts as an aircraft in the atmosphere (deriving lift from the air) but has a rocket motor too, so that it can operate where there is little or no atmosphere. Early flights will start and end in the same location but many years in the future spaceplanes will probably be a standard means of transport: a design proposed by one operator would take passengers from London to Sydney in 2 hours.

The UK Space Agency (UKSA), an executive agency of part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) are all working together on the Bill. The intention is that the CAA will regulate sub-orbital spaceplanes and UKSA will do likewise for space activities.

UKSA already does this under the Outer Space Act 1986. In practice it only regulates launches by UK nationals from overseas and operation of satellites once in orbit; there have been no launches to space from the UK. So the task was to set up a completely new legislative regime, including licensing, safety, security and enforcement. Not many countries regulate commercial spaceflight yet, but we looked at the legislation in those that do. Policy officials studied how the US does things, because it has the most advanced commercial spaceflight industry. New Zealand has just passed legislation regulating spaceflight and high altitude activities and Sweden is also

working on it.

The Bill draws heavily on aviation legislation precedents. Many provisions are closely based on the Civil Aviation Act 1982.

GLD legal advisers in BEIS and DfT worked with policy colleagues to clarify the legal implications. We then instructed Parliamentary Counsel to draft the legislation. A back-and-forth process with drafts and responses followed. Working with 2 sets of policy clients, who had slightly different angles on the policy decisions, added another layer of complexity.

Technology, of course, changes all the time and one of the challenges with the Bill was to future-proof the legislation by leaving the technical details to secondary legislation.

We also had to anticipate scenarios or problems that no one had thought of yet by asking experts a series of 'what if' questions, such as: "What if a rocket goes away from the Earth but not into orbit?" and "What if a spaceplane goes off course?"

Bill work such as this not only gives the lawyers advising the department a close-up view of the fascinating process of making legislation, but the chance to shape that legislation. Sitting in the House of Lords watching peers debate provisions you have worked on and having the opportunity to assist policy colleagues in answering tricky legal issues which come up has been amazing.

Those of us who have worked on the Bill have now learned far more than we ever expected to about spaceflight. Rockets go really, mindblowingly fast for starters. Although the Bill has not yet become law, there is every hope that it will touch down in early 2018. The Space Industry Act ... another small step for mankind.