

Press release: Minister for Asia visits Singapore for talks on business, investment and the illegal wildlife trade

Mark Field, minister for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is in Singapore to further joint work on issues including security, trade and combating the illegal wildlife trade.

During the two day visit he will meet Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean to discuss the UK-Singapore relationship.

Mr Field will also attend the opening of the Lee Kong Chian Medical School, meet representatives from UK financial and professional services to discuss opportunities and challenges in South East Asia, and visit Lattice80, Asia's largest financial technology (FinTech) hub, to meet Singapore's top FinTech firms.

He will also visit Interpol's Global Complex for Innovation to learn about their work on tackling the illegal wildlife trade through crime networks.

The UK is a key player in the global effort to stamp out the illegal wildlife trade and will host the Illegal Wildlife Trade conference in London in March 2018. Singapore has been committed to helping this work.

Mark Field, minister for Asia and Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said:

Singapore and the UK have deep historic links, and remain major partners on a wide range of issues. In 2015 alone the total UK trade with Singapore was worth nearly £11bn, the most of all the countries in the South East Asia region. We share values and collaborate on education, research, science and innovation.

I look forward to discussing the illegal wildlife trade during my visit. The UK is committed to tackling this crucial issue, and we will continue to work with our international partners, non-Governmental organisations and the private sector to bring it to an end.

The minister's visit to Singapore is the final stage of a tour to Asia which has also included China, Hong Kong and South Korea.

Notes for Editors:

1. Mark Field MP was appointed Minister for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in June 2017. This is his first official visit to Singapore.
2. Singapore is the world's third largest global financial centre and conducted £10.9bn of trade with the UK in 2015.

Further information

News story: Tough new 'real world' test comes into force for diesel cars to clean up our air

- new 90-minute test will recreate real life mix of urban, countryside and motorway driving
- reforms will slash harmful nitrogen dioxide emissions by two-thirds for diesel cars
- designed to stop car manufacturers cheating on the emissions test following Volkswagen emissions scandal

New models of diesel and petrol cars will have to pass a strict new emissions test before they are allowed on Britain's roads from next week (1 September 2017).

The tough standards come into force in the biggest overhaul of emissions rules in a generation.

Under the old test, vehicles were tested in the lab on a rolling road but now they will have a 90-minute real world driving test. The limits are being introduced under European-wide reforms that the British government has led the way in calling for.

The nitrogen oxide emissions requirements for all new car models will be stricter again from 1 September 2020.

Transport Minister Paul Maynard said:

We are taking strong action to clean up our air and these tough new emissions standards will reduce dangerous pollutants.

This government has led the way in Europe pushing for on-road emissions tests, alongside a tough new laboratory test, to clean up

air in our towns and cities.

This will ensure all vehicles meet rigorous standards when driven on our roads – and we are going even further tightening requirements again in 2020.

The government's diesel testing programme last year found that today's Euro 6 diesel cars were emitting 6 times more nitrogen dioxide in the real world than in the lab. Under the reforms, now they will have to slash those emissions by two thirds – helping clean up air in towns and cities across Britain.

The new test is also designed to stop car manufacturers cheating on the emissions test. Volkswagen manipulated test results with sensors that detected when the vehicle was running on a rolling-road in the lab.

During the 90-minute test vehicles will have emissions testing equipment attached to the exhaust pipe, and they must pass before they are approved to go on sale in Britain. The vehicle will have to do roughly equal splits of town, countryside and motorway driving. The test will then be rolled out for all new cars on sale in Britain from 1 September 2019.

The department has also recently set up a Market Surveillance Unit, which tests vehicles already on the road to make sure they meet emissions standards.

[News story: Drug driving crackdown means more dangerous motorists off roads](#)

Tough new drug driving laws are now taking more dangerous drivers off roads, with conviction rates for the new drug driving offence at 98%.

Thanks to government action, which is ensuring police forces now have access to improved screening equipment to test suspected drug drivers, motorists are now just as likely to be convicted for driving under the influence of drugs as they are for drunk driving.

A new law introduced in 2015 makes it [illegal to drive with certain drugs in the body above specified limits](#), and includes 8 illegal drugs and 9 prescription drugs. If caught, drivers can lose their licence for at least a year, be fined up to £5,000 or even end up in prison.

2015 saw 1,442 motorists in the UK – about 4 a day – convicted for offences

including being in charge of, attempting to drive, or causing death after exceeding the legal drug limit.

Transport Minister Paul Maynard said:

Driving under the influence of drugs has no place in our society. It devastates families and ruins lives.

Our tough approach has taken dangerous drivers off our roads and is stopping other crimes taking place.

With higher prosecutions and convictions, we are delivering on our clear message that if you take drugs and drive, you will face the consequences.

The [report](#) out today (27 August 2017) shows that of the drivers who underwent a preliminary drug screening, approximately 94% were male and 64% were aged between 16 and 29 years.

The research also shows these laws are disrupting wider criminal activity as two-thirds of people caught drug-driving have previously committed other offences. Merseyside Police reported 21 arrests in March 2016 for drug driving offences, the majority of whom were criminally active in the recent past or were members of organised criminal groups.

Justice Minister Dominic Raab said:

Our message is that any driver who risk the lives of others by taking the wheel under the influence of drugs will be punished.

We're using better technology to detect this reckless behaviour, and our courts are punishing offenders in record numbers.

Before the new law came into force, police would have to gather evidence that the driver was impaired, which would include carrying out tests or getting a medical opinion, before being able to take a blood or urine sample at a station.

Police forces now have access to improved screening equipment to test suspected drug drivers for cannabis and cocaine at the roadside. They are also able to test for other drugs such as ecstasy, LSD, ketamine and heroin at a police station with a blood test, even if a driver passes the roadside check.

It makes it quicker to identify those driving under the influence of drugs and helps the prosecution of drug drivers.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Roads Policing, Chief Constable Anthony Bangham said:

Targeted legislation against drug driving in March 2015 has made it much easier for police to consistently identify those driving under the influence of drugs. This change in law has enabled us to prosecute thousands more dangerous drivers who may have previously escaped detection yet still presented a very serious threat to other road users.

Far too many people still attempt to drive under the influence of drugs. We are better prepared to catch them than ever before and will ensure that they face the full penalty of law.

News story: The AAIB has sent a team to Dorset

[unable to retrieve full-text content]The AAIB has sent a team to investigate a light aircraft accident in Dorset.

Press release: New fund launched to reduce litter through innovative projects

Almost £500,000 will be awarded to community projects to tackle the blight of littering, Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey announced today.

The money will support the development of new innovation and approaches for tackling litter, from behavioural research for better positioned bins and recycling points so more people throw their rubbish away, to digital technology. This includes apps and 'smart-bins' that can text alerts to rubbish collectors when they are full, stopping nasty litter from spilling out onto our high streets or leading people to litter nearby.

Cleaning up the country's streets costs the tax payer almost £800 million a year when much of this is avoidable litter, and money that could be better spent in the community.

Despite this, a worrying 1 in 5 people have admitted to dropping litter in the past. As we head into the bank holiday weekend, with people out enjoying the warm weather, they are reminded to throw their rubbish in bins or take

their rubbish home, rather than spoil our spaces with rubbish.

The Litter Innovation Fund will support local areas to crack down and reduce littering in our communities by enabling local authorities, community groups, charities, educational institutions, and small and medium enterprises to apply for funding towards innovative and creative solutions to the problem.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey, said:

Tackling the litter that blights streets across our country is an important part of our drive to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than we found it. I pay tribute to those who help clear up our pavements and verges.

The Litter Innovation Fund offers a great opportunity for the most creative solutions to littering to receive funding and for us all to learn new ways of how to stop littering happening. 10% of the fund is entirely dedicated to preventing marine litter, a growing problem with global consequences for our precious marine environment.

I encourage groups to get involved and showcase the wealth of options there are out there to tackle littering. Let's help people make the right choices.

Communities Minister Marcus Jones, said:

The Litter Strategy detailed our plans on education and awareness, improving enforcement and better cleaning and infrastructure. I said in that strategy that I am passionate about our need to reduce litter in this country and I meant it.

Many areas are similarly keen to tackle litter locally by encouraging their communities to bin their rubbish properly rather than littering their streets and green spaces.

We are looking to support the most creative plans with a funding boost from the Litter Innovation Fund.

Welcoming the fund's launch, Keep Britain Tidy Chief Executive Allison Ogden-Newton, said:

Innovation is vital if we are to change the behaviour of the minority of people who still think it is OK to drop their rubbish on the ground for someone else to pick up.

Keep Britain Tidy's Centre for Social Innovation was created to develop and test new approaches to behaviour change and we are delighted to see the Government has recognised the importance of

innovation to tackle the blight of littering in our country.

All projects will be measured and evaluated to assess their effectiveness and the most successful could be rolled out more widely. This will ensure local authorities and communities make the best use of a host of innovative solutions in focussing their resources to tackle the scourge of litter.

In addition, some £45,000 of the fund will be exclusively dedicated to projects designed to address marine littering and help prevent the amount of plastic entering our oceans.

The fund builds on the Government's wider Litter Strategy for England and the Government today has also [published responses](#) to the public consultation on penalties for environmental offences including littering.

Information for applicants to the Litter Innovation Fund can be found on [WRAP's website](#) from 10am on Saturday 26 August.

For further information please contact Defra press office on out of hours on 0345 051 8486.