

Press release: £7 million flood resilience boost for A66 Cumbrian tourist route

In a boost for commercial drivers, tourists, commuters and other local drivers, Highways England has delivered a series of major engineering improvements, including raising carriageways, near and alongside the lake to improve severe weather resilience. In Highways England project manager Peter Gee said:

This is a significant investment in the county's road network and will provide even greater resilience during severe weather incidents – keeping local people and the economy on the move.

Working to deliver these improvements at five different sites has been a major engineering and project planning challenge – not least in raising the height of the carriageway by almost 1.5 metres in places. We'd like to thank drivers and other local people for their patience over the last 11 months with temporary traffic lights and overnight carriageway closures. We hope they'll appreciate the benefits through many winters to come.

Although the A66 generally copes well with prolonged rainfall it was affected by flooding from the lake during the storms of November 2009 and again in December 2015 and Highways England has been determined to reduce the risk of future disruption.

In all, five sections of the route, a mix of dual carriageway and single carriageway sections, have improved since the project started last September.

The phases included:

- £1.5 million spent on raising the eastbound and westbound carriageways by 70 centimetres at Embleton where it runs alongside Dubwath Beck. This work was completed in February
- a further £600,000 realigning and raising the westbound carriageway alongside the lake near Smithy Cottage which was also completed in February
- £2 million and £1.7 million projects to raise the carriageway alongside the lake's 2 Osprey-watching sites alongside the lake near Thornthwaite which were completed with the removal of temporary traffic lights on Friday
- £1.1 million stabilisation work along the rock face along the westbound carriageway to prevent severe weather land slippage which was completed in April

New drainage culverts under the road show how high the carriageway has been

raised

Traffic management for the final phase was removed last week but temporary traffic lights were placed near Thornthwaite on Tuesday (15 August) for some safety-related finishing work.

During the project, Highways England also delivered extra resurfacing – along other sections of the route – to save closing the road again, cleared 40 tonnes of storm debris from a large culvert underneath the road, improved pedestrian crossing facilities at Dubwath crossroads, and built a new bus shelter complete with bat roosts. An improved and enlarged layby at Blackstock also opened this week.

The work has included installing new and improved facilities such as this layby

Raising the carriageway alone – over a total length of 1.6 km – plus resurfacing a total of 3.2 km of the road, has involved using 31,000 tonnes of surfacing material. The work has also involved installing:

- almost 2 km of new safety barriers
- 1 km of new kerbs and drainage
- 250 metres of gabion wall
- 6 new flood relief culverts and 800 metres of filter drain
- 1600 large soil nails to improve embankment stability
- 2,550 square metres of rock netting

The completion of the work around Bassenthwaite Lake follows the delivery of a similar, £1 million project in March along the A590 at Lindal-in-Furness.

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

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: Record numbers of new prison officer recruits](#)

- Prison officer recruitment numbers are at their highest since records began
- Government on track to hit target of 2,500 new officers by 2018 as part of commitment to improve safety across the prison estate
- Comes as a wave of new graduates join the service from the ground-breaking charity 'Unlocked'

Prison officer recruitment numbers are at their highest since records began,

according to new figures released today by Justice Secretary David Lidington.

From January 2017 there has been a net increase of 868 new prison officers joining the hard-working and dedicated staff in our prisons in order to turn them into places of safety and reform.

In addition, a further 738 job offers have been made to potential recruits who are expected to start after June 2018. The new officers will provide a boost to the frontline and, significantly, put the government on track to meet its target of recruiting 2,500 new officers by 2018.

Staffing, and how staff are deployed, is crucial to improving safety and security. The new officers will each be responsible for supervising 6 offenders – providing prisoners the challenge they need to change their behaviours as well as the support they need change their lives.

These new figures come as more than 600 top graduates and career changers applied for just 40 places through new independent charity Unlocked Graduates, with thousands more registering their interest. The 40 recruits have already started work at prisons around London under supervision of some of the most experienced prison officers.

Justice Secretary David Lidington said:

I am delighted to welcome the new prison officers who join thousands of dedicated and hard-working staff undertaking important work to keep our prisons and the public safe.

These record numbers show our recruitment efforts are working. It is encouraging to see that we are on track to meet our target of an additional 2,500 new prison officers by December 2018, with the numbers joining the service still rising.

Boosting the frontline is critical to achieving safety regimes and I am committed to building on these figures.

Today's announcement shows that the government's nationwide drive to recruit the best talent from around the country into the prison service – regardless of age or background – is working.

Launched in January, the Unlocked Graduates programme, saw more than 2,000 expressions of interest to join. This scheme provides applicants the chance to work alongside some of the most experienced prison officers, developing vital and diverse skills whilst completing a Master's degree.

Natasha Porter, CEO of Unlocked Graduates said:

Many people did not believe that the role of the prison officer could ever appeal to graduates.

The overwhelming interest in our programme shows an incredible desire from graduates to tackle one of the major social challenges of our time and provide the skills that will equip you for many future careers.

We are particularly pleased that our first graduates will so visibly challenge the misconception that prison officers are older, white men.

This recruitment drive forms part of the Secretary of State's prison reform agenda, where governors are being given greater flexibility over their local recruitment and encouraged to engage with new schemes and initiatives to attract the best and most committed talent.

By having more staff on the ground, staff will be better supported to do the job they came into the prison service to do, and spend more time reforming offenders.

Notes to editors

- Published figures show that the current rate of prison officer recruitment is at its highest level since 2007.

Since publication of the White Paper:

- We are making a substantial investment in marketing and targeted recruitment to generate even more interest in these valuable roles
- We have increased our POELT training capacity by more than 75% for this year and next.
- Starting pay for a National based Prison officer ranges from £20,751 to £23,052 for a 37 to 41 hour week and this increases to a maximum range of £23,122 to £25,685 for the same hours.
- Find out more about [Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Careers](#)

[News story: A level results day 2017](#)

Congratulations to everyone receiving their results today, which are the culmination of two years of dedication and hard work. We want everyone, regardless of background, to be able to fulfil their potential and, for many, A levels are the pathway to a university degree.

The increase in entries to facilitating subjects, those that give students the greatest choice of options at university, mean even more young people will have access to all the opportunities higher education provides.

There has been a strong uptake in core subjects, such as maths, which continues to be the most popular A level with maths and further maths having

nearly 25 per cent more entries than in 2010. This and increasing entries to science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects bodes well for the economic prosperity of our country. It will help to grow our workforce in these sectors, allowing young people to secure well-paid jobs and compete in the global jobs market of post Brexit Britain.

Increasing the number of girls studying STEM subjects has been an important objective of the Government, so it is particularly pleasing to see that more young women are taking STEM subjects and that for the first time since 2004 there are more young women than young men studying chemistry. I hope everyone receiving their results will go on to successful careers.

[Press release: Lord Lieutenant for West Lothian: Moira Niven](#)

The Queen has been pleased to appoint Ms Moira Niven MBE as Lord-Lieutenant for West Lothian to succeed Mrs Isobel Brydie CVOMBE who retires on 20 September 2017.

Background information:

Ms Niven spent 38 years in public service working in local government, 20 years of which were spent in service to the West Lothian Community. From 2011 to 2015 she was Deputy Chief Executive of West Lothian Council which incorporated the role of Director of Education. She was also responsible for Planning and Economic Development and a wide range of community services including Sport, Libraries, Regeneration and Employability and Community Youth Services.

From 2004 to 2011 Ms Niven worked as Head of Schools within Education Development for West Lothian Council. She was a member of the Education Services senior management team with responsibility for pre-school and primary school education as well as support services including school placement, strategic resources and the school estate. She was a member of the National School Estate Strategy Group. She was awarded an MBE in 2010 for her services to Education.

Previous to that she was Head of Planning and Resources in Education and Cultural Services and was involved in establishing the new Education Service for West Lothian. In her teaching career which spanned from 1977 to 1991, she taught at James Gillespie's High School and then at Balerno High School.

From 1983, as Principal Teacher of Business Studies and subsequently as Acting Assistant Head Teacher, she contributed to the development of the new Balerno Community High School. She was involved in running school hockey and other outdoor education activities such as hill walking, canoeing and weekend

school camps, as well as running a youth club and photography club. Since her retirement, she has been involved in voluntary activities in West Lothian, supporting the work of the Girl's Brigade and working with senior school students assisting with interview experience.

[Press release: Lord Lieutenant for Caithness: Viscount Thurso](#)

The Queen has been pleased to appoint Viscount Thurso as Lord Lieutenant for Caithness to succeed Ms Anne Dunnett.

The Queen has been pleased to appoint The Right Honourable John Archibald Sinclair, Viscount Thurso of Ulbster, PC as Lord-Lieutenant for Caithness to succeed Ms Anne Dunnett CVO who retired on 25 June 2017.

Background information

Viscount Thurso was Managing Director of the Savoy Group's Lancaster 5star Hotel in Paris at the age of 27. He then went on to lead a number of hospitality businesses including Cliveden, which under his leadership became the UK's highest rated hotel, East Sussex National Golf Course, and Champneys. He has served as a non-executive member on a number of public company boards and is Chairman of the family company in Caithness. In 2016 he was appointed Chair of VisitScotland and serves as an Ex-Officio Board Member of VisitBritain. He was awarded a "Catey" for services to Tourism in 2003 and is a Fellow of The Institute of Hospitality as well as a Master Inn Holder. He is President of the Tourism Society.

He served in the House of Lords as a hereditary peer until 1999 and was then elected to the House of Commons as MP for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross until 2015. He returned to the House of Lords in 2016 by winning a by-election for a vacancy created by the death of Lord Avebury. He sits on the Lib Dem benches, but is no longer a member of the Party. He was made a Privy Councillor in 2014.

He is aged 63 and married with three grown up children.