

Press release: ‘Don’t be a Space Invader’ – says former ‘Stig’ Ben Collins

Ben – best known for his role on BBC motoring show TopGear as the ‘tame’ racing driver in the white suit – has coached hundreds of celebrities from Tom Cruise to Lionel Richie around the race-track, and is also a championship winning Le Mans racing driver.

But today his focus was on the drivers travelling on England’s motorways and major A-roads every day, and a message to them about the risks of driving too close to the vehicle in front.

He said:

I discovered the dangers of tailgating at a very early age – in an overly enthusiastic game of musical chairs. The music stopped. So did the kid in front of me. But I didn’t. I face-planted the back of his head instead.

Following the vehicle in front too closely reduces your vision to zero, along with your time to react to danger. Stay safe, stay back and look ahead.

Statistics show that one in eight of all road casualties are caused by people who drive too close to the vehicle in front, with more than 100 people killed or seriously injured each year.

Nearly 9 out of 10 people say they have either been tailgated or seen it. And more than a quarter of drivers admitted to tailgating.

While a small minority of tailgating is deliberate, most is unintentional by drivers who are simply unaware they are dangerously invading someone else’s space.

Last September, Highways England launched a campaign featuring the well-known Space Invader video game character to alert drivers to the anti-social nature and risks of tailgating.

A survey by the company revealed that tailgating is the biggest single bugbear that drivers have about other road users. And in-car research – using dashcams, facial recognition, emotion tracking and heart monitors – reveals that a driver’s typical reaction to someone who tailgates them is surprise, anger and contempt, with a spike in heart rate.

Highways England says good drivers leave plenty of safe space for themselves and others.

Richard Leonard, Head of Road Safety at Highways England, said:

It's great to have someone of Ben's experience backing the campaign and the message today is really simple around tailgating. We know that if you get too close to the car in front, you won't be able to react and stop in time if they brake suddenly.

Tailgating also makes the driver in front feel targeted and victimised, distracting their attention from the road ahead and making them more likely to make a mistake.

It is intimidating and frightening if you're on the receiving end. If that leads to a collision, then people in both vehicles could end up seriously injured or killed. We want everyone to travel safely, so the advice is – stay safe, stay back.

A host of companies have already backed the 'stay safe, stay back' campaign, including National Express, which is carrying the message on some of its long-distance coaches. Other advocates include the RAC, National Police Chiefs Council, leading road safety bodies Brake and the Institute for Advanced Motorists, and Thatcham.

Highways England has a dedicated [webpage](#) where drivers can find more information about tailgating and what they can do to stay safe.

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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: DASA event: invisible battlespace collaboration day](#)

About the event

DASA is hosting a collaboration day on Wednesday 27 February 2019 as part of the Invisible Battlespace competition.

The event will:

- provide an opportunity for both new and existing suppliers to seek collaborations for Phase 2
- deliver presentations from Phase 1 suppliers on the work they are undertaking
- encourage teaming across industry and academia

Although new funding will not be available at this event, Phase 2 of the DASA competition will be launching later this year and will be seeking collaborative proposals from both new and existing suppliers.

To attend the event

To participate in this collaboration event please register by going to the [Eventbrite page](#).

Please note that places for this event are limited and if the event is oversubscribed, we reserve the right to limit attendance if needed.

The Invisible Battlespace competition

In July 2018, DASA launched Phase 1 of the [Invisible Battlespace competition](#).

Funded by a number of Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) programmes, Phase 1 of this competition sought proposals to enable defence and security to effectively conduct Electromagnetic Operations across the Air, Land (urban and rural), Sea, Space and Cyber domains.

Overall, 22 bids were successful with total funding of £1.9 million awarded.

Phase 2 of the competition will be launching later this year and will be open to both new and existing suppliers.

Further details will be released through the [DASA website](#).

If you have any queries, please do contact us at accelerator@dstl.gov.uk.

[Press release: Minister calls to](#)

dispel girls' misconceptions of STEM subjects

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb has called on teachers, parents and society in general to challenge and dispel misconceptions some girls have about Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

New data published for the first time today by the Department of Education shows school girls in England are substantially less likely than boys to consider taking STEM subjects at A Level than boys.

Whilst the number of girls taking STEM A Levels has increased by 26% since 2010, the research shows 15-year-old boys are more likely than girls to see STEM subjects as being useful when it comes to getting a job and that girls are less likely to consider a STEM subject as their favourite.

Speaking on International Day of Women and Girls in Science, School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

There is growing demand for STEM skills, particularly for sectors such as engineering, construction and manufacturing, and it's essential that gender is no barrier to ensuring that all young people have the knowledge and skills to succeed in our outward looking and dynamic economy.

We've made considerable progress in increasing girls' participation in STEM subjects since 2010, with the proportion of girls taking STEM A Levels increasing by a quarter, and 25% more women accepted onto full-time STEM undergraduate courses.

We are determined to continue this trend, and that's why we are funding programmes to increase the take up of maths, computing and physics, and have reformed the school curriculum to make sure it meets the needs of employers.

This research, however, shows that certain misconceptions are still prevalent, and we all have a part to play, including parents and teachers, to dispel misconceptions about STEM subjects and help encourage our scientists of future generations.

The research published today is based on a survey taken by 10,010 15-year-olds in 2015, as part of a longitudinal study. It shows:

- Girls enjoy STEM subjects less than boys: The proportion of male pupils who ranked KS4 STEM subjects first for enjoyment was almost twice that for females: 59% vs. 32%.
- Girls are less likely to say STEM is their best subject: When asked which subject they were best at, the proportion of male pupils who

ranked a STEM subject first was 60%, which again was almost twice as high compared to females at 33%.

- Boys are more likely to think STEM leads to a job: When asked about which subjects were most likely to lead to a future job, 69% of male pupils ranked a STEM subject first compared to 51% of females.
- Girls and boys both name STEM as leading to highest paid jobs: When asked which would lead to the highest paid job, 81% of male pupils named a STEM subject compared to 77% of females.
- Girls are less likely to pursue STEM at A level: When asked what they planned to study at A-Level, female pupils made up the minority of those naming STEM subjects. Particularly, in Engineering (14% / 86%), Computing (15% / 85%) and Physics (22% / 78%).

Home Office research shows 60% the roles on its shortage list are in the STEM sector while the 2017 Employer Skills Survey found that there is significant demand for skilled and qualified professionals in IT and engineering, as well as a need for complex numerical and statistical skills.

Since 2010, the number of women accepted onto full-time STEM undergraduate courses increased by 25% and women accounted for 54% of UK STEM postgraduates.

We have invested in programmes to encourage take up in STEM-related subjects and courses, including announcing substantial spending commitments in the Autumn Budget 2017 on maths, digital and technical education.

[Press release: James Brokenshire unveils next steps to building integrated communities](#)

- Action Plan sets out next steps to promote better integration amongst communities.
- Measures include creating opportunities for people to mix with those from other backgrounds, boosting English language skills, and supporting migrants to develop a good understanding of life in England.
- This builds upon the proposals set out in the government's Integrated Communities Strategy green paper.

Better integrated communities and a stronger society based on the common themes that bind people and places together are the driving force in the [Integrated Communities Action Plan](#), published today (9 February 2019).

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, has today outlined the government's next steps to deliver the vision of the [Integrated Communities](#)

[Strategy green paper.](#)

This will create stronger, more confident and integrated communities, where people, whatever their background, can live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

Creating confident and well-integrated communities is particularly important as we move towards Brexit and in the years that follow.

The government will be taking 70 actions, including:

- Improving the opportunities for those wishing to learn English by developing a new national strategy for English language.
- Helping new migrants integrate into their communities, by trialling a package of practical information to help them meet, mix and build social connections with neighbours and the wider community.
- Publishing a new Community Guide to Action ensuring that communities across the country, whatever their local interest, have access to the information and advice to enable them to improve their local area. This could include taking much loved local assets into community ownership.
- Working in partnership with 5 Integration Areas to develop bespoke local integration strategies, trying new bold and innovative approaches including helping more marginalised women into work.
- Collaborating with civil society to support refugees to rebuild their lives and integrate in the UK, by taking forward actions that focus on English language, employment, mental health and information for refugees.
- Reaffirming our support for faith communities and empowering faith leaders with the confidence and knowledge to meet the changing needs of their congregations. This would include helping them to identify issues like mental health concerns, as well educating them on UK marriage law.

The Action Plan will build the capability of our leaders, boost English language skills and give people the know-how and support they need to thrive.

It is backed by £50 million of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and additional funding from other government departments as they develop and implement their own commitments to build integrated communities.

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, said:

We are a successful, diverse democracy – open, tolerant and welcoming. These characteristics are as British as queuing and talking about the weather.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that too many places across the country have divides, the benefits and opportunities our great country offers are not always felt by everyone equally.

Our new action plan charts a course for how we will engage and work with communities to bring people together in recognition that there is more that binds than divides us.

And as we embark on a new future outside the European Union, we need to ensure that everyone, whatever their background, has access to the same opportunities.

Recognising that integration challenges are not uniform throughout the country the government has also been working in partnership with 5 Integration Areas (Blackburn with Darwen; Bradford; Peterborough; Walsall and Waltham Forest) to develop local integration plans.

This approach is making good progress supporting partners like local authorities, voluntary organisations, local employers, schools and faith organisations to identify their priorities and the most effective ways to address them.

Through this place-based programme, the government is focused on testing what works in practice to promote integration and on putting processes in place for sharing learning more widely.

This [Action Plan](#) is for England. Government departments aim to deliver the commitments in this Action Plan by the end of this Parliament.

The [Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#) was published on 14 March 2018. Over 3,400 responses from individuals and organisations were received to the consultation. These organisations spanned a wide range of sectors including, faith, education, local authority, social and academic.

It also includes the House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement, whose report of their [recent inquiry](#) formed their response to the consultation.

The [government response](#) to the Integrated Communities Strategy green paper was published today (9 February 2019).

Each of the 5 Integration Areas has set up a Local Integration Partnership to bring local partners together, including businesses and the social and faith sectors. Through engagement and consultation with local people, each Local Integration Partnership has identified its local priorities and the most effective ways to address them.

Blackburn with Darwen launched its strategy, [Our Community Our Future](#), on 6

December 2018 and Walsall launched its strategy, [Walsall for All](#) on 31 January 2019.

The remaining local strategies will be launched in the coming months.

Press release: £67.4 million Ipswich tidal flood barrier officially opened

The Environment Agency's new tidal flood defence barrier for Ipswich has been officially opened by Floods Minister, Dr Thérèse Coffey, ensuring more than 1,600 homes and 400 businesses are better protected from flooding and the impacts of climate change over the course of the next century.

Costing almost £70 million, the new flood defences centrepiece is a 200-tonne rotating barrier which can be raised in minutes, helping to keep the town safe from tidal surges during storms.

The flood gate has a design similar to that of the Thames Barrier and is so large that it is coated with 6 tonnes of protective paint. The flood gate rotates upwards out of the sea floor into the closed position, holding back dangerous tidal surges that could flood the town. The defence also includes 1,100 metres of new and refurbished flood walls and a series of flood gates on the banks of the River Orwell.

Now finished, the scheme will better protect homes and businesses in Ipswich over the next 100 years from the increased flood risks associated with climate change. The new defences will provide a much higher level of protection from the type of tidal surge which threatened the town in 2007 and 2013, both of which were close to spilling over the existing defences.

The government's most recent climate change projections predict that sea levels could rise by up to 1.15 metres, increasing the risk of tidal surges affecting those living on the coast. This project will see Ipswich better protected not only for today's flood risk but also for that faced by generations to come. Aside from the reduced flood risk benefits, Ipswich's new flood defence scheme has the added advantage of helping to boost the local economy through freeing up hectares of land for regeneration.

Today, Dr Thérèse Coffey MP, Floods Minister at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and neighbouring MP for Suffolk Coastal, cut the ribbon to mark the official opening of the barrier at the eye-catching new control building on the waterfront.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

This important new flood scheme, which has received nearly £55 million of government funding, over 80% of the total cost, will better protect over 1,600 homes in Ipswich from tidal flooding over the next 100 years.

The scheme will also secure the future of hundreds of local businesses whilst creating 4,000 jobs to boost the town's economy. I am delighted the Government is investing so significantly in the county town of Suffolk and its future prosperity.

The Environment Agency's Chair, Emma Howard Boyd, said

Climate change means increasing storms and rising sea levels all over the world. This flood scheme will help people and businesses prosper in a more resilient Ipswich over the course of the next century.

The Environment Agency worked closely with the local community, the council and businesses to design and build a scheme that provides a greater level of protection for the town. It's an important step forwards for our six year, £2.6 billion flood investment across the whole country.

The opening event was attended by a number of representatives from project partners, including Ipswich Borough Council who helped to fund the scheme, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Haven Gateway Partnership, and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

Ipswich Borough Council leader David Ellesmere said:

It is good to see this major Ipswich project completed. The money Ipswich Borough Council provided towards this project was a significant investment by the council. I'm glad to see this very impressive piece of engineering is now doing its job of providing peace of mind for residents and businesses in Ipswich.

Minister for Local Growth, Jake Berry MP, said:

This government is committed to boosting economic growth across the whole of the UK and building a Britain fit for the future.

The Growing Places Fund continues to support key infrastructure projects designed to unlock wider economic growth, create jobs and support building new homes across England. I'm delighted that this £6.6m investment has supported the new tidal barrier in Ipswich, which is part of a significant package of works to upgrade flood defences along the River Orwell.

This scheme will help protect homes and businesses in Ipswich from the devastating effects of tidal flooding.

The flood defence scheme, which will reduce the risk of flooding to 1,608 homes and 422 businesses as well as key infrastructure, has been partnership funded by the Environment Agency (£54.6 million), Ipswich Borough Council through the Haven Gateway Partnership (£3.4 million) and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (£6.6 million), the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (£1.7 million) and UK Power Networks (£1.1 million).

The scheme is a major step forwards for the borough council's Core Development Strategy for Ipswich and will release land for development helping to create an estimated 4,000 jobs.