

[Press release: Minister Ellwood statement on death sentences in Gaza](#)

I strongly condemn the three death sentences carried out in Gaza on 6 April. This decision reflects a worrying trend of increasing use of the death penalty in Gaza.

It is the long-standing position of the UK to oppose the death penalty in all circumstances. We have repeatedly called for the de facto authorities in Gaza to respect the Palestinian Authority's moratorium on implementation of the death penalty.

[Vote Green to protect local services and the environment, co-leader says](#)



7 April 2017

***Party standing record number of candidates**

***Co-leader Jonathan Bartley launches campaign in Worcester**

***Campaign priorities listed in five point pledge**

The Green Party has pledged to protect the environment after Brexit and oppose cuts to local services as it launched its local elections campaign this morning.

Co-leader Jonathan Bartley launched the campaign in Worcester today, where Green councillors hold the balance of power [1]. The party is aiming to attract voters across the country who feel let down by other parties.

Over 90% of people in the UK live within 20km of a site protected under the EU's nature laws [2] and Green councillors will be fighting to protect the local environment after Brexit. The Green Party is campaigning for a new Environmental Protection Act to replace EU legislation [3].

The Green Party will be challenging council cuts at a local level as well as opposing an extreme Brexit. Candidates will be campaigning to stop cuts to essential services and calling for investment in affordable housing, clean transport, healthcare and education. On Worcestershire County Council, the two Green councillors have held the council to account for the building of an environmentally damaging new incinerator and for attempting to reduce bus services.

The party has unveiled a five point pledge for its local elections campaign. Green councillors will fight for:

*Local green spaces

*Decent social care

*Air fit to breathe

*Affordable homes

*Action on climate change

The Green Party is fielding a record number of candidates in the elections on May 4, with 1,561 standing across England, Scotland and Wales [4].

Bartley said:

“Brexit is an unprecedented threat to the environment and puts 40 years of legislation at risk. These laws protect our air, water and climate and they affect everyone in the UK who values our natural world.

“Our message today is clear: vote Green on May 4 and our councillors will stand up for the environment, whether they are fighting fracking, improving air quality, investing in renewable power and natural flood defences or divesting council pensions from fossil fuels.

“Wherever they are elected, Green councillors make a meaningful difference in their communities, by working with other progressive parties to improve people’s lives and oppose unnecessary cuts to local services. Everyone deserves proper social care and to live in their own home.

“The Green Party is the only party fighting both an extreme Brexit and Tory Government cuts, protecting public services locally while strengthening relationships internationally.”

Notes:

1. Worcester City Council was one of the first to adopt the Living Wage. The two Green councillors also worked with other parties to set aside money in next year’s budget to install solar panels on a council-owned multi-storey car park, generating income as well as operating electric car charging points. They also helped introduce energy efficiency measures at the Grade 1 listed Guild Hall and to plant trees in air pollution hotspots to help reduce health problems.

2. The contributions of the EU nature directives to the CBD and other multilateral environmental agreements. *Conservation Letters*, 9(6), 479-488. Beresford, A. E., Buchanan, G. M., Sanderson, F. J., Jefferson, R., & Donald, P. F. (2016).

3. <https://inews.co.uk/essentials/news/environment/caroline-lucas-accuses-government-extraordinary-complacency-brexit/>

4. The Green Party also has candidates in five mayoral elections on May 4. Will Patterson is standing in Greater Manchester, Tom Crone in Liverpool City Region, James Burn in West Midlands, Julie Howell in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and Darren Hall in West of England. Jess Mayo is contesting the Manchester Gorton parliamentary by-election.

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[News story: Prince Harry meets Invictus Games hopefuls at UK trials](#)

His Royal Highness Prince Harry attended the UK team trials at the University of Bath Sports Training Village today, ahead of the third Invictus Games being held in Toronto, Canada this September.

More people than ever before have applied to take part in the Games, which is a multi-sport event showcasing wounded, injured and sick serving personnel and veterans. Of the 306 trying out, 212 have never taken part in the Games before but are using sport as part of their recovery and hope to be selected to represent the 90-strong UK team that will head out to Toronto.

The Invictus Games, first held in London in 2014, set out to harness the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding and respect for our servicemen and women who have suffered mental or physical injury.

The UK team is selected based on the benefit the Games will give an individual as part of their recovery, combined with performance and commitment to training. Getting involved in sport helps with self-confidence and feeling psychologically empowered. These significant health benefits can be translated outside of sport and into everyday life.

The UK delegation to the 2017 Invictus Games is once again being delivered by a partnership comprising the Ministry of Defence, Help for Heroes and The Royal British Legion.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

The Invictus Games promote the importance of sport in the recovery process, and provide inspiration and opportunity to our injured Servicemen and women. I saw first-hand the strength and determination of competitors at the previous Games and I wish all

those taking part in this year's trials the best of luck as they take on this challenge.

Between Thursday 6 April and Sunday 9 April, competitors are taking part in 11 sports at the trials: athletics, archery, wheelchair basketball, road cycling, golf, powerlifting, indoor rowing, wheelchair rugby, swimming, sitting volleyball and wheelchair tennis.

The MOD is a partner in the [Defence Recovery Capability](#), a programme which helps wounded, injured and sick Service personnel either return to duty from injury or provides a mechanism to help them back into civilian life – link. A key activity of the Defence Recovery Capability is the Battle Back programme, an MOD initiative that delivers an adaptive sport and adventurous training programme.

The [Invictus Games Toronto 2017](#) will take place from 23 – 30 September.

[News story: Fuel for thought as motorists head off on Easter getaway](#)

Almost 98 per cent of motorways and strategic A roads will be roadworks-free over the bank holiday, meaning motorists and their passengers can enjoy journeys with as little disruption as possible.

We are also reminding drivers to check their vehicles before they set off as it was revealed around 20 motorists break down every day because they have run out of fuel.

Latest statistics show almost half of all breakdowns are caused by simple mechanical problems which could be avoided with simple checks. Nearly a quarter are caused by tyre problems.

Highways England Chief Executive, Jim O'Sullivan said:

I want all drivers to arrive at their destinations safely. We are removing almost all of our roadworks across the country to make people's journeys easier for people this Easter and we are urging drivers to make sure they are ready by checking their fuel, tyres, and lights. Anyone who runs out of fuel is putting themselves and other road users, including their own passengers at risk. With a few simple checks that risk can be overcome and everyone will be safer.

The government is investing £15 billion to improve the strategic road

network. The improvements will keep traffic moving even in the busiest periods, cutting congestion – and we are taking action to reduce delays over the bank holiday break. We are completing 190 and suspending 119 miles of roadworks by 6am on 13 April until 12.01am on 18 April to help people get away this Easter with as little disruption as possible.

Schemes completed in time for the Easter getaway include:

- A556 – the £192m Knutsford to Bowdon dual carriageway linking junction 19 of the M6 to junction 7 of the M56 was completed on time and on budget after a 28 month build programme
- A590 – our £1m project to realign and raise the carriageway at Lindal near Ulverston, removing a the long-running Lindal ‘Dip’ issue which led to carriageway closures during flooding was completed
- £191 million improvement scheme at Catthorpe Junction 19 of the M1 – which will revolutionise the journeys made by more than 142,000 vehicles through the area every day

And before they set off we are urging drivers to:

- check fuel: make sure you have enough to get to your destination
- check tyres: before setting off on a long/significant journey, check your tyre pressure and the condition of your tyres, including the spare; look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit
- check engine oil: use your dipstick to check oil before any long journey, and top up if needed; take your car back to the garage if you’re topping up more than usual
- check water: to ensure you have good visibility, always keep your screenwash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen
- check your lights: If your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself at risk; in addition, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MOT

You can [view a map showing the locations of lifted and completed schemes](#).

By suspending or completing roadworks, more lanes will be open and many speed restrictions will be lifted. Those wishing to find out more about driving on smart motorways can find further information on our [smart motorways guidance page](#).

Drivers planning to use the Dartford Crossing are reminded to pay Dart Charge in advance or by midnight the day after crossing.

More information can be found [on our website](#) or by calling our information line (0300 123 5000) to keep up to date with conditions on the roads.

For more detailed information on how to carry out your vehicle checks, [view the Think! website](#).

[View our vehicle checks video](#)

Roadworks lifted

A38 Glynn Valley (near Dobwalls) Slope stabilisation 4.75mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

M1 Jct 20 to 21 (near Leicester) Carriageway resurfacing 5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

M69 M1 (Jct 21) to Jct1 (near Hinckley) Drainage works 5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A1 Colsterworth to Barrowby (near Grantham) Drainage works 10mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A1 Harlaxton to Barrowby (near Grantham) Drainage works 5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A1 Tinwell to Colsterworth (near Stamford) Drainage works 10mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A1 Elkesley (near Retford) Electrical works 4.25mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A1 Barrowby to Long Bennington (near Grantham) Drainage works 5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A5 Gibbets Hill to Crick (near Rugby) Drainage works 5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A5 Old Stratford to Tove Roundabout (near Towcester) Carriageway resurfacing and drainage works 5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A14 Jct 3 to 10 (near Kettering) Horticultural works 10mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A14 M1 (Jct 19) to Jct 1 (near Rugby) Horticultural works 5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A14 Jct 10 to 13 (near Kettering) Horticultural works 10mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A14 Jct 1 to 3 (near Market Harborough) Horticultural works 5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A38 Palm Court to Kingsway (near Derby) Horticultural works 2.5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A38 Markeaton (near Derby) Horticultural works 2.5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A43 Abthorpe (near Towcester) Carriageway improvement 5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A45 Billing to Wilby Way (near Northampton) Carriageway repair works 5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A52 Bardills to Priory Roundabouts (near Nottingham) Horticultural works 5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A52 Radliffe on Trent (near Nottingham) Carriageway improvement 1mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A52 Radliffe on Trent (near Nottingham) Carriageway improvement 0.5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A453 Farnborough Road to Silverdale Roundabout (near Nottingham) Horticultural works 0.5mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

A5 Gledrid Roundabout (near Chirk) Widening the carriageway on the approaches and exit of the roundabout 1mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

M18 Jct 4 (near Doncaster) Bridge waterproofing 0.4mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

M621 Jct 1 to 5 (near Leeds) Electrical scheme 6.2mile(s) of roadworks lifted for Easter period.

Roadworks completed

M32 Jct 2 to 3 (near Bristol) Installation of bus only lane 1 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M4 Jct 16 (near Swindon) Structures maintenance 0.65 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M23 Jct 9 to 8 (near Crawley) The scheme addresses verge cracking along the embankment crest. Works involve removal/replacement of safety barrier, earthworks, ducting works and other maintenance activities. 7 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M20 Jct 4 to 10 (near Kent) Electrical works 3 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M2 Jct 1 to 7 (near Kent) Electrical works 3 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M20 Jct 5 to 6 (near Maidstone, Kent) Resurfacing 3 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

A2 (near Dunkirk, Kent) Resurfacing 12 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

A2 (near Gravesend) Resurfacing 4 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

A13 Slip road closure, southbound (near Essex) Carriageway –

reconstruction/repair 0.16 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

A1(M) Jct 3 to 4 (near Hertfordshire) Carriageway – reconstruction/repair 1.59 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

A282 Jct 31 to 1A (near Essex / Kent) Carriageway – reconstruction/repair 2.11 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct10 anti-clockwise entry slip (near Surrey) Carriageway – reconstruction/repair 0.23 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 10 anti-clockwise off slip (near Surrey) Carriageway – reconstruction/repair 0.21 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 11 anti-clockwise entry slip (near Surrey) Carriageway – reconstruction/repair 0.18 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 28 anticlockwise exit slip (near Essex) Carriageway – reconstruction/repair 0.25 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct10 to 11 (near Surrey) Carriageway – reconstruction/repair 1.11 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 11 to 10 (near Surrey) Carriageway – reconstruction/repair 2.51 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 11 to 9 (near Surrey) Carriageway – reconstruction/repair 2.7 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 12 to 10 (near Surrey) Carriageway – reconstruction/repair 1.52 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M20 Jct 2 to 1 (near Kent) Communications 1.44 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M4 Jct 3 to 1 (near Hillingdon / Hounslow) Construction – improvement/upgrading 6.29 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 4 to 3 (near Kent) Drainage 0.99 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 4 to 3 (near Kent) Electrical works 0.57 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 16 to 15 (near S. Bucks) Electrical works 0.65 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 9 to 8 (near Surrey) Electrical works 0.44 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M20 Jct 1 to 2 (near Kent) Horticulture (cutting & planting) 2.45 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

A3 JA244 to JA245 (near Surrey) Inspection/survey 0.65 mile(s) of roadworks

completed for Easter period.

A3 southbound (on slip) at Esher Common Junction (near Surrey)
Inspection/survey 0.41 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

A40 Denham Roundabout eastern quadrant (near Buckinghamshire)
Inspection/survey 0.06 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

A40 Denham Roundabout western quadrant (near Buckinghamshire)
Inspection/survey 0.65 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct10 to 9 (near Surrey) Inspection/survey 0.42 mile(s) of roadworks
completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 15 to 16 (near S. Bucks) Safety barrier/fence Repairs 0.59 mile(s) of
roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 22 to 21A (near Hertfordshire) Safety barrier/fence Repairs 0.14
mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period.

M1 boundary to Jct 6 (near Hertfordshire) Signs – maintenance 0.22 mile(s) of
roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 10 to 11 (near Surrey) Signs – maintenance 1.41 mile(s) of roadworks
completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 12 to 11 (near Surrey) Signs – maintenance 2.31 mile(s) of roadworks
completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 15 to 16 (near S. Bucks) Signs – maintenance 1.51 mile(s) of
roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 15 to 16 (near S. Bucks) Signs – maintenance 1.43 mile(s) of
roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 16 to 15 (near S. Bucks) Signs – maintenance 2.42 mile(s) of
roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 17 to 16 (near S. Bucks) Signs – maintenance 1.32 mile(s) of
roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 21 to 21A (near Hertfordshire) Signs – maintenance 0.78 mile(s) of
roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 21 to 22 (near Hertfordshire) Signs – maintenance 1.59 mile(s) of
roadworks completed for Easter period.

M25 Jct 6 to 5 (near Kent) Signs – maintenance 2.91 mile(s) of roadworks
completed for Easter period

M25 Jct 11 exit slip.(clockwise) (near Surrey) Signs – maintenance 0.2
mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

M3 Jct 1 to 2 (near Surrey) Signs – maintenance 0.6 mile(s) of roadworks

completed for Easter period

M3 Jct 3 to 2 (near Surrey) Signs – maintenance 0.68 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

M3 west to M25 anti-clockwise link road (near Surrey) Signs – maintenance 0.27 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

M4 Jct 3 to 2 (near Hounslow) Signs – maintenance 0.62 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A282 Dartford east tunnel (near Kent) Structure – new/reconstruction 0.33 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A282 Dartford east tunnel (near Kent) Tunnel maintenance 1 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A282 Dartford west tunnel (near Kent) Tunnel maintenance 0.97 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A120 Jct 29 (near Hare Green) Central reserve vehicle restraint system replacement 2.3 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A120 Jct 29 (near Hare Green) Central reserve vehicle restraint system replacement 2.3 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

M1 Jct 21 to 21a (near Leicester) Electrical works 5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

M1 Jct 26 (near Nottingham) Electrical works 0.75 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

M1 Jct 28 to 27 (near Sutton-in-Ashfield) Sign repairs 1 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

M1 Jct 26 (near Nottingham) Sign repairs 1 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A1 Blyth (near Retford) Bridge repairs 2.5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A1 Little Ponton (near Grantham) Surveys 1.5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A1 Barrowby-Newark on Trent (near Newark On Trent) Drainage works 5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A1 Tickencote to Little Ponton (near Melton Mowbray) Drainage works 5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A1 Newark on Trent to Tuxford (near Newark On Trent) Drainage works 5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A1 Apleyhead to Blyth (near Retford) Drainage works 5 mile(s) of roadworks

completed for Easter period

A1 Wothorpe to Tinwell (near Stamford) Horticultural works 1.25 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A5 Hinckley to Nuneaton (near Hinckley) Surveys 0.5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A5 Litchborough (near Daventry) Drainage works 1.25 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A5 Towcester (near Towcester) Carriageway improvement works 1.5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A5 Weedon to Kilsby (near Daventry) Horticultural works 2.5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A14 Jct 7 to 13 (near Kettering) Communication works 5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A14 M1 (Jct 19) to Jct 1 (near Rugby) Horticultural works 1 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A14 Jct 1 to 3 (near Market Harborough) Horticultural works 1.5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A45 Wellingborough (near Wellingborough) Road marking 0.25 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A46 Cossington to Six Hills (near Loughborough) Horticultural works 5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

M6 Jct 37 to 38 (near Tebay) Parapet connection and barrier upgrade 1 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A66 (near Embleton) Contraflow 2.7 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A66 (near Thornthwaite) Traffic signals 1.4 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A66 (near Thornthwaite) Full closure 1.4 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A585 (near Thornton) Traffic signals 1 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A1 Jct 73 (near Newcastle upon Tyne) Electrical work 0.3 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

M18 Jct 5 to J6 (near Doncaster) Barrier renewal 0.6 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A1T Ferrybridge to Barnsdale Bar (near Pontefract/Doncaster) Resurfacing

works 13.7 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A64 Scampston (near Malton) Barrier renewal 0.5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A64 Rillington (near Malton) Footway improvements 6.2 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A64 Hopgrove to Stockton (near York) Resurfacing works 4.3 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

M18 Jct 1 to 2 (near Doncaster) Carriageway repairs 6.4 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A19 northbound & southbound A684 Osmotherley (near Northallerton) Construction of central reserve crossover to facilitate contraflow system 0.5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

M5 J4a to J5 (Phase 1) (near Droitwich) Constructing the infrastructure for Smart Motorways (ALR) 4.8 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

A180 & A160 Brocklesby Interchange (near Immingham) Carriageway improvement works 3.5 mile(s) of roadworks completed for Easter period

[News story: New Quality and Assurance framework open now](#)

Crown Commercial Service is helping the public sector to test the quality of IT services with a new framework agreement, developed in partnership with the Home Office.

Quality and Assurance Testing is [live now](#), and gives central government and the wider public sector access to pre-evaluated suppliers of IT testing services.

Of the 42 suppliers on the framework, 26 (62%) are small and medium-sized enterprises.

What is the framework for?

If you're designing and/or building a digital requirement or cloud service integration, you may need independent, specialist quality assurance and/or testing before you go live to ensure a smooth implementation.

The new agreement complements other [digital agreements](#) such as:

- Digital Outcomes and Specialists (DOS)
- G-Cloud
- Cyber Security Services
- Crown Hosting

The services available will support testing functionality, usability and performance using independent specialist service expertise.

What is on offer?

Buyers can choose from one of four flexible mini competition options, to select their supplier to deliver a wide range of testing and quality assurance services.

Services available under the new agreement are:

- Lot 1: Quality Assurance and Testing Specialists
- Lot 2: Automation, Agile and Development Opportunities
- Lot 3: Load and Performance Testing
- Lot 4: Functional Testing
- Lot 5: Infrastructure Testing and Environments
- Lot 6: Operational Acceptance Testing and Disaster Recovery
- Lot 7: Quality Assurance and Testing Management
- Lot 8: Strategic Quality Assurance Consultancy

Buyer Confidence

Only Suppliers who have passed the Home Office's robust evaluation will be able to bid for work under the agreement, giving you an extra level of reassurance.

All Suppliers on this agreement have signed up to government terms and conditions, making tendering simple and effective.

Want to know more?

[Complete the online form](#) to register your interest in the Quality Assurance and Testing for IT Systems agreement.