

Press release: Foreign & Commonwealth Office statement on the Tunisia Inquests

We welcome the thorough work by the Coroner and his team for more than a year on this important investigation, resulting in today's conclusions.

The Sousse attack was the largest loss of British life to terrorism since 7/7, and devastated the lives of so many. Our deepest sympathy remains with all those people caught up in this horrific attack and we hope that the Inquest process has been of some help to the families.

Press release: Winners of Highways England Supplier Recognition Awards announced

The combined efforts of Highways England contractors who worked tirelessly to repair and rebuild a storm-damaged road in Cumbria have been honoured at the company's annual Supplier Recognition Scheme awards. Pulling out all the stops, this vital route was repaired, making a real difference to an area where tourism plays a vital part to the local economy.

Kier Highways, and Cubby Construction JV with the local supply chain completed the work three weeks early, under budget and without a single incident. It meant the local community had the A591 back in action in time for the start of the tourist season and Highways England could notch up a 'first' by delivering improvements on a local road network.

The Cumbria nomination was among 130 entries in this year's awards which also recognised companies for achievements in various fields including safety, customer service, sustainability, capability, value and inclusion. The supply chain – ranging from small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to international organisations – carries out around 90 per cent of Highways England's work.

Jim O'Sullivan, Chief Executive of Highways England said:

We need and value the expertise, ambition and innovation our supply chain partners bring, because without them we cannot deliver the £15 billion Government investment.

We have achieved a great deal since April 2015, and there is much more to do. We are responsible for the largest road building programme in a generation, and have thousands of miles of road network that need to be maintained to a high standard. It is imperative that we achieve this while keeping our network open to traffic, and ensuring the safety of our customers and workforce.

That is what our awards are all about, recognising the contribution our supply chain partners make to the important work we do.

Safety, health and wellbeing

Awarded to suppliers who show industry leading commitment to improving organisational, workforce and road user health and safety.

Winner: A-One+ and Postpullers UK Ltd for a collaborative approach to the development of an innovative solution to remove embedded safety barrier posts. The system reduces the safety risks faced by the workforce: requires only one operator, not two or three; reduces the amount of machinery needed to remove the barrier posts and gets the job done more quickly.

Highly commended: HW Martin (Traffic Management) Ltd; Manchester smart motorways (Balfour Beatty, Carillion, Costain & Bam/Morgan Sindall JV); Carnell Support Services Ltd

Customer Experience

Awarded to suppliers who have demonstrated industry leading commitment to customer service.

Winner: Costain for the work they did to get to engage with communities, stakeholders, road users and community teams working alongside the construction team on the A556 Knutsford to Bowden scheme. The work they did demonstrated a clear understanding of our customer service strategy, and enabled them to build upon the basics to improve customer service. To achieve this, they used a wide variety of communication channels from VMS to social media to communicate with customers, alongside using commercial providers such as TomTom and ABTA.

Their whole ethos was to think about things differently. That pro-active, customer focused, lessons learned approach was what elevated this submission into the winning bid.

Highly commended: Carillion Morgan Sindall JV

Communities

Awarded to suppliers that have engaged with community groups from the outset, understood what really matters to them and identified ways in which they can work differently.

Winner: Carillion Morgan Sindall JV for work on the A1 Leeming to Barton

widening and motorway upgrade. They showed a dedication for changing the face of construction by revolutionising their commitment to social responsibility across the industry, by: proactively working with media to talk about the work they do; health-checks for HGV drivers; showcasing archaeological findings and targeting donations that will positively impact on local communities.

Delivering sustainable and environmental solutions

Awarded to suppliers who have integrated environmental, social, economic and management aspects of sustainable development into the delivery of Highways England contracts.

Winner: Interserve Construction for empowering communities through social value mapping. The company worked alongside an environmental regeneration charity, Groundwork, to track their key objectives. This method enabled a better understanding of the key factors impacting communities where Interserve Construction were operating and their influence on employment, job creation and supply chain spend. This method has ultimately helped Interserve Construction to better identify how they can help Highways England meet their sustainability targets. For example; M3 Black Dam Improvement and M11 Stansted schemes.

Highly commended: Graham Construction

Inclusion

Awarded to suppliers that have created opportunities to bring people into the workplace, developed skills and created an environment where differences are valued and utilised.

Winner: Skanska UK Ltd for their work to initiate and encourage daily conversations with their colleagues, partners, clients and the wider sector about becoming more diverse and inclusive; how together there can be a culture in which everyone feels they can be themselves. They have tracked the impact of this work over the last six years, and have seen an increase in diversity and inclusion engagement scores from 66% to 82%.

Highly commended: VINCI Construction UK Ltd – Taylor Woodrow

Building capacity and capability

Awarded to suppliers that have developed their employees' skills and capabilities through delivery of Highways England contracts.

Winner: HW Martin (Traffic Management) Ltd for their work in building an employment and skills infrastructure. They actively managed the supply chain, bringing on board people from local SMEs, having a commitment to accessible entry level employment (for people from all backgrounds) and offering training opportunities for local people and SMEs – this includes apprenticeships and a self-funding skills development academy.

Highly commended: Costain M1 smart motorways

Managing down cost/improving value

Awarded to suppliers who have demonstrated significant achievement by delivering Highways England contracts in smarter, more efficient ways.

Winner: A-One+ and Urbis Schreder Ltd for taking an existing lighting unit, used on 24 overhead gantries in Yorkshire to display information to road users, and adapting it to meet Highways England specifications. The result was an improved LED lighting unit, which is more visible to road users (especially at night). In addition, by making these changes, the whole life costs of the units was lowered, disruption to road users reduced (the control gear for the units is installed in the hard shoulder, meaning future maintenance can be done from there, without the need for lane closures) and road worker safety is improved (reduces the need for working from height).

Highly commended: Carnell Support Services Ltd

Supply chain management

Awarded to suppliers that demonstrate Highways England's strategic agenda, values and principles through supply chains.

Winner and Chairman's Award: Kier Highways and Cubby Construction JV with local supply chain for the "Reconnecting Cumbria" Project. This saw national, regional and local organisations working together to repair Cumbria's local road network following an unprecedented series of devastating, severe weather events in December 2015. Through collaboratively working with its supply chain, other contractors and stakeholders including Highways England, Cumbria County Council, Lake District National Park and United Utilities, the winning companies enabled Highways England to deliver works on Cumbria's local road network – a first for the government company – three weeks early, under budget and without a single incident.

Winner: Kier Highways for their work with BSI and ToweyDuffy in Area 3 to unlock a new certification process which saw the largest number of SMEs achieve the national standard for Collaborative Business relationships (BS11000) as part of a single assessment. Not only did it reduce costs and result in efficiency savings for Highways England, but it has helped promote collaborative working, improved how information is shared and better delivery.

Highly commended: Costain, Aggregate Industries and Walters; Chevron Traffic Management and Kier Highways, HTM, Golden Orb Solutions, Consillium

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.

Appointments to board of Social Care Wales announced

Social Care Wales will come into effect from 3 April 2017 and will replace the existing Care Council for Wales. This change is being made as part of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

Minister for Social Services and Public Health, Rebecca Evans has today announced that the board will be chaired by Arwel Ellis Owen who is the currently the Chair of the Care Council for Wales board.

The other members will be: Abigail Harris, Aled Roberts, Carl Cooper, Damian Bridgeman, Donna Hutton, Emma Britton, Grace Quantock, Joanne Kember, Jane Moore, Kate Hawkins, Peter Max, Rhian Watcyn Jones, and Simon Burch.

Members will serve for a period of four years, from 3 April 2017 until 31 March 2021.

Rebecca Evans said:

“Social Care Wales will be a dynamic and powerful body. It will take on new responsibilities for driving improvement across our social care sector, as well as retaining existing responsibilities for regulating and developing the workforce.

“Following unprecedented interest and a competitive selection process, I am pleased to announce the membership of the new Social Care Wales board.

“The members, headed up by Arwel Ellis Owen, are passionate about, and committed to, improving social care in Wales. They have a diverse range of skills, experience and perspectives which makes them well-placed to drive improvement in social care.

“I look forward to working with Social Care Wales as it ensures we have a high-quality social care workforce that provides services fully meeting the needs of people in Wales.”

Press release: New £192 million A556 set to open after weekend work

Cheshire's brand new A556 dual carriageway is set to open for the first time a week today (6 March) following a second round of weekend junction and carriageway closures to complete the project.

The M56 junctions 7 and 8, M6 junction 19 and the existing A556 will all be closed next weekend as work to open the new £192 million Knutsford to Bowdon dual carriageway nears completion.

Work during the first of the 3 scheduled weekend closures was completed successfully on Monday morning allowing Highways England to confirm next weekend's arrangements – another full 56 hour weekend closure running from 9pm next Friday night (3 March) and 5am on the following Monday morning (6 March).

Highways England project manager Paul Hampson said:

We made some excellent progress at the weekend and we won't need another full weekend closure until next week – as scheduled. Everything is looking promising for the road to open a week on Monday.

Next weekend's closure will allow the old road to be finally sealed off to through traffic and for the motorway junctions to be tied into the new dual carriageway.

Motorway users will be diverted to alternative junctions to leave or join the M6 or M56:

- drivers on the northbound M6 heading for Manchester and Manchester Airport will need to stay on the M6, join the westbound M56 at Lymm Interchange (M6 junction 20) and then join the eastbound M56 at junction 10 (Stretton)
- drivers on the westbound M56 heading away from Manchester and wanting to join the southbound M6 will also need to travel to junction 10 at Stretton – joining the eastbound M56 from there to travel back to Lymm Interchange and access the southbound M6

Local diversions which will be strictly monitored will also be in place with access to the A50, Chapel Lane and Mereside Road. A one way system, travelling southbound, will be in place at Bucklow Hill to allow access for residents and businesses located between the Bucklow Hill and Mere junctions along Chester Road. Vehicles must use Mereside Road and Chapel Lane to access

Chester Road. Traffic marshalls will be at Mere and Bucklow Hill junctions to facilitate the local diversion.

Over the weekend, only the northbound exit slip at junction 19 of the M6 will remain partially open – allowing drivers to access the southbound, local authority section, of the A556 towards Northwich.

Drivers are advised to build in some extra time for the diversions and to check traffic conditions before setting out on journeys. Highways England provides live traffic information [via its website](#), local and national radio travel bulletins, electronic road signs and mobile apps.

Information is also available from Twitter via @highwaysNWEST as well as services in other regions. Providing they can do so safely, road users can also call the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000 to keep up to date with road conditions.

The new road and the motorway junctions will be closed for finishing works during the project's third and final full weekend of closures between 9pm on Friday 10 March and 5am on Monday 13 March.

Construction of the new A556 link road, between the M56 and the M6, started in November 2014 and is part of a £15 billion government investment in motorways and major A roads by 2021 which is being delivered by Highways England as part of the Northern Powerhouse initiative.

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[Policing plan 'neglects' rural Scotland](#)

28 Feb 2017



Justice secretary Michael Matheson has been warned not to neglect rural Scotland following the publishing of a 10-year strategy for policing.

The single force failed to mention countryside communities once in its

'Serving a Changing Scotland', which was released yesterday.

And today, shadow justice secretary Douglas Ross warned the Scottish Government not to concentrate all its efforts on the central belt when it embarks on policing reforms.

He pointed out the population of Scotland's rural communities is growing at a faster rate than anywhere else north of the border.

And the omission comes despite the strategy highlighting challenges such as migration, health and inequality.

But despite that, Mr Matheson failed to give assurances in Holyrood today when challenged on the issue.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Douglas Ross said:

"It's all very well coming up with a plan for Scotland's cities when it comes to policing.

"But, as ever with the SNP, its obsession with the central belt leaves rural communities neglected.

"The document produced by Police Scotland doesn't mention our rural communities once, and that's utterly unacceptable.

"Crime in these parts of the country can differ significantly to offending in towns and cities, and it's regrettable the single force isn't acknowledging this.

"And when he had a chance in the Scottish Parliament to set the record straight, Michael Matheson failed to do so."

The Scottish Conservatives criticised the document when it was published yesterday:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/02/police-scotland-changes-must-not-deplete-the-frontline/>