

Press release: UK deepens ties across East Africa

Harriett Baldwin, Foreign Office and DFID Minister for Africa, visited East Africa 4-7 October, travelling to Uganda, Ethiopia and Somalia, including the Somaliland region.

Uganda

In Uganda, the Minister announced up to £210 million to help Uganda support half a million refugees, who have fled from conflicts including in DRC or South Sudan. The funding give 350,000 children and their mothers adequate nutrition, vaccinate 200,000 children, and support 100,000 children to go to school.

As well as meetings with President Museveni and the Prime Minister, she also visited the Medical Research Council/Uganda Virus Research Institute (URVI) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Research Unit to see the 30 year collaboration between the UK and Uganda on HIV research, where she committed [£5.1 million for Ebola preparedness efforts](#).

Somalia

The UK is one of Somalia's largest international donors and in Somalia's capital Mogadishu, Minister Baldwin met Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire, discussing progress on political and economic reform.

The Minister's visit follows the Prime Minister's recent travel to the continent in which she announced new funding for Somalia to support efforts to build a stable and democratic political system; to provide lifesaving food, clean water and medicine; and to support AMISOM's work.

Minister Baldwin said:

As a long-term partner, the UK is committed to supporting reform efforts, from improving security, to delivering democratic elections, to helping build resilience and delivering the long-term economic development that is needed to improve the lives of people across the Somali region.

She also visited a police training facility seeing how the UK is helping train Somalia's security forces, and called on the international community to increase support to the African Union mission AMISOM.

Minister Baldwin then travelled to Somaliland where she met President Muse Bihi, reiterating UK support for economic development, job creation and long-term reform.

Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, new DFID funding will help to create a brighter future for more than a million students, including half a million girls, in line with the UK's commitment to ensure 12 years of quality education for all. It will support training for 125,000 teachers and performance improvements in 9,000 underperforming schools.

On the new partnership, Minister Baldwin said:

The UK and Ethiopia are working together to tackle shared challenges and to make the most of the opportunities East Africa offers, on everything from development and education, to creating jobs and attracting investment. We will continue to support the ambitions of our partners, like Ethiopia, to build a stronger, more prosperous and more peaceful region.

Further information

[Press release: Contract awarded to create reliable North West road network](#)

The Maintenance and Response contract for motorways and major A roads in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire and South Lancashire is worth £325 million, will run for up to 15 years and has been awarded to Amey as part of our Asset Delivery operating model.

The contract, which starts in April 2019, will see Amey carrying out routine maintenance, repairing defects, responding to emergency incidents and providing severe weather services on 260 miles of motorway and 50 miles of major A road.

Our executive director of operations Nick Harris said:

We recognise that how we maintain our roads and respond to incidents are extremely important issues for drivers. By working more closely with our supply chain colleagues who carry out these activities, we will be able to work more effectively, identify innovative ways of working and provide the best possible quality of service to our customers.

We're committed to driving improvement and strengthening our regional expertise. We're delighted to welcome Amey to our North West Asset Delivery supply chain community and look forward to establishing a successful, long-term relationship with them.

Amey's chief executive Andy Milner said:

We are pleased to have been awarded this key contract by Highways England. Working together, listening and learning from our clients and customers, we have reshaped our highways business to put collaboration and service delivery at the heart of our approach. This approach is the basis of developing the this collaborative model with Highways England and the supply chain to deliver services for the communities of the North West.

Further Asset Delivery contracts will be awarded for Design Services and the Construction Works Framework in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire and South Lancashire in the coming months. We'll be working with all the successful contractors to ensure that they are ready to begin delivering key services from April 2019.

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: Roman settlement discovered during A66 Eden Valley works](#)

As well as foundations of the original Roman road, traces of Roman life – and death – have been identified at the site, where we're carrying out major carriageway reconstruction and resurfacing. Pottery, post-holes for timber housing and a Roman grave have all been discovered in the past few weeks.

Project manager Steve Mason said:

As we're essentially replacing the ancient foundations of the A66 between Low Moor and Kirkby Thore we realised before starting the work that we might come across Roman remains.

We've worked very closely with archaeologists for several months and it's been very interesting to see what kind of things are turning up. It has added a bit more complexity to planning and delivering the improvements, but we've been determined from the outset to ensure that what we find on site is treated seriously and sensitively.

We've been working alongside GUARD Archaeology Ltd and Amey Consulting on the archaeological aspects of the A66 improvements.

The route of the modern A66 roughly follows an important Roman road which linked the Roman forts and settlements of Cumbria with the Roman forts and settlements of North Yorkshire, passing by through the vicus (or village) that lay just outside the Roman Fort of Bravoniacum, which lies below modern-day Kirkby Thore.

GUARD excavation director John-James Atkinson said:

Not only have we revealed the foundations of the Roman road but we have revealed traces of timber buildings that lay adjacent to the Roman road to the south-west of the fort. While the timber has long since rotted away, the construction of these buildings has left post-holes and pits from which we have recovered a variety of Roman pottery sherds.

The sherds include Samian pottery from Roman Gaul which was once used as fine tableware for rich and well-connected soldiers and citizens, amphorae which may have once held wine or olive oil from the Mediterranean as well as more common greyware and coarse ware that was made in Roman Britain itself.

A Roman grave was discovered as road workers laid a new water pipe near houses west of Main Street at Kirkby Thore.

We're delivering the biggest roads investment in a generation and are committed to conserving and where possible enhancing the historic environment.

In the context of a carriageway reconstruction project that means allowing archaeological excavations to ensure any significant remains that lie along the route can be recorded and preserved for this and future generations.

Ahead of starting work on any new road or major upgrade, we're required by law to agree plans for how a scheme will deal with the effects it will have on its immediate environment, including local communities, wildlife and plants, and also any archaeological finds that may be found.

More information about the A66 discoveries is available from the [GUARD website](#).

More information on the project, including diversion details, is available on

the [A66 Eden Valley road project webpage](#).

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: New smart road lights prevent lane drifting at motorway junction

We've installed 175 of the airport-runway-style LED road studs to help mark out lanes at one of England's busiest motorway junctions – used by over 90,000 vehicles every day.

The innovative studs are visible up to 900 metres away – far greater than traditional reflective road studs – and have been proven to help stop drivers drifting between lanes, reducing the risk of collisions.

The smart studs have been introduced as part of a £3 million project to improve journeys and safety at Switch Island in Merseyside, where the M57, M58 and three A roads all join together.

Cables under the road surface connect the studs to traffic lights through a nearby controller unit, allowing them to be automatically switched on when traffic lights change to green.

We've already installed the LED studs at Hindhead Tunnel in Surrey to guide drivers through the tunnel but the Switch Island scheme is the first time they have been linked to traffic lights at a motorway junction.

Project Manager Phil Tyrrell said:

We're carrying out a major project to improve journeys and safety at Switch Island and are pleased we've now reached the stage where our new smart road lights can be switched on.

We've found that some drivers can start drifting between lanes when they travel through the junction and the new LED road studs are a great way of guiding drivers and helping them stay in the correct lane, avoiding the risk of a collision.

We're keen to use new ideas to improve safety at Highways England and the new smart studs will benefit the tens of thousands of

drivers who travel through Switch Island every day.

Construction work on the Switch Island scheme, which is being funded by the government's £220 million congestion relief programme, is due to be completed this winter.

The project is designed to improve the flow of traffic and enhance safety, following 49 collisions at the junction in two years – an average of one every fortnight.

As part of the Switch Island scheme, new traffic lights are being installed at a height of over five metres – higher than HGVs and double-decker buses – so that drivers approaching the junction can clearly see when the lights are changing.

Other improvements include changes to the road layout and lane markings, new barriers between carriageways and coloured high friction surfaces. Four new overhead gantries will also display signs over each lane so drivers know which lane they should be in.

And a new 400 metre shared cycle path has been created through the junction, which links up with the existing cycle path alongside the A5036 Dunnings Bridge Road.

The smart road studs which have been installed at Switch Island were designed by Oxfordshire-based company Clearview Intelligence.

Andy Salotti, Clearview's Director of Solutions, said:

This is the first time a project involving dynamic delineation has ever been introduced at a major motorway junction on the strategic road network in England. The LED road studs which illuminate in synchronisation with the green traffic signals will provide drivers with clear and enhanced lane guidance through the complex junction. This solution will reduce the potential of drivers drifting out of their lane, therefore reducing the number of incidents at a key interchange and the subsequent congestion and increased driver frustration which is caused by such road traffic collisions.

We are proud to have worked with Highways England and Balfour Beatty Mott MacDonald on such a high-profile scheme where our aim was to provide an innovative solution on time and within budget which would help increase the safety and wellbeing of the drivers using the network and meet with Highways England's three imperatives of safety, customer service and delivery.

Get more details on the [Switch Island improvement scheme](#).

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: Roche CoaguChek device producing inaccurate results](#)

People on blood thinners who use the CoaguChek device to test their blood clotting function are being urged to check their test strips, following an alert by the manufacturer Roche.

CoaguChek XS PT Test, CoaguChek PT Test and CoaguChek XS PT PST test strips may give inaccurate International Normalised Ratio (INR) results, a measurement of how long it takes the blood to clot. This could mean you over or under-dose with anticoagulant medication, which in the short term can cause problems such as blood clots or an increased risk of bleeding.

It is advised anyone whose reading on their test strip is above 4.5 INR should discuss their results with a healthcare professional.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is urging users to check the lot numbers of their test strips against the lot numbers listed below. It is estimated that more than 125,000 packs have been affected.

Affected products

Product No	Lot No (first 6 digits as below)
CoaguChek XS PT Test PST	from 272167xx up to 334498xx
CoaguChek XS PT Test	from 272167xx up to 334498xx
CoaguChek PT Test	from 272167xx up to 334498xx

John Wilkinson, MHRA's Director of Medical Devices said:

"If you're worried about your readings when using these test strips, we'd recommend speaking to your GP, anticoagulant clinic or a pharmacist as soon as possible.

"Patient safety is our highest priority and we strongly encourage anyone to report any issues with this product, or more generally with any medical device, to our [Yellow Card Scheme](#)."