

Highways England awards further groundbreaking major road upgrade contracts

As part of its groundbreaking Regional Delivery Partnerships framework, Highways England has signed contracts worth £435 million with Galliford Try to deliver two major road upgrades – the A47 corridor improvement programme around Norwich and Peterborough and the Sparkford to Ilchester dualling scheme along the A303 corridor in Somerset.

Contracts within the framework to deliver the major projects fall into two categories – Band A (less than £100m) and Band B (more than £100m) categories – and the £300 million A47 contract and £135 million A303 Sparkford to Ilchester contract are the first Band B deals to be announced as part of this new industry-leading approach announced by Highways England last year.

The announcement follows two earlier Band A contract awards – £61.4 million to Geoffrey Osborne Ltd to upgrade the A46 at Binley in Coventry, and £52.4 million with VolkerFitzpatrick to deliver a series of improvements along the A27 near Lewes in East Sussex.

Peter Mumford, Highways England Major Projects Executive Director, said:

I am absolutely delighted to announce the signing of these latest contracts as part of the Regional Delivery Partnerships.

These are among 13 companies that will be working with us to deliver these important road projects, safely, and with our customers in mind. To achieve this we have worked hard to create alignment between ourselves and our supply chain, focusing on the behaviours that support us to achieve our shared goals.

This is clear evidence that new ways of working are being embraced by the market, which is now seizing the opportunity to work in a more integrated way with us, representing a fundamental change in the way we deliver our road projects.

We will continue to work with the supply chain and look forward to completing and announcing more contracts in due course.

The deals have been set up using the Routes to Market Regional Delivery Partnership, with the 13 companies – known as Delivery Integration Partners (DIPs) – working on 18 packages of schemes across the country.

Duncan Elliott, Managing Director of Galliford Try Highways, said:

We're delighted for this opportunity to further strengthen our relationship with Highways England in schemes which will bring such a huge benefit to their customers. The appointment underlines the strategic importance of highways to our construction business and the vast experience, expertise and resource we can offer in this sector.

The A47 improvement programme stretches from the west of Peterborough to Great Yarmouth and involves three sections upgraded to dual carriageway and two junction improvements. Subject to planning consent, the programme is scheduled to be completed in 2024.

In Cambridgeshire, approximately 1.5 miles of the A47 between Wansford and Sutton will be upgraded to dual carriageway and there will be an improvement of the roundabout at the A47/ A141 junction in Guyhirn. In Norfolk, 1.5 miles of the A47 between Blofield and North Burlingham and around 5.5 miles of the A47 between North Tuddenham to Easton will be dualled, while the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction will also be upgraded.

The A303 Sparkford to Ilchester scheme is currently awaiting planning consent and due to start construction in March 2020.

The proposal is to dual a three-mile single carriageway section of the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester, with new two-level junction access with local roads and communities, cutting congestion, reducing journey times, protecting biodiversity and improving access and safety for all road users.

As part of the Government's Road Investment Strategy, Highways England is committed to upgrading all remaining single carriageway sections of the A303/A358 between the M3 and M5 to dual carriageway standard.

As well as the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester scheme, plans are also being taken forward to upgrade the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down and the A358 between the M5 at Taunton and the Southfields Roundabout on the A303.

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.

PM meeting with the Emir of the State of Qatar: 20 September 2019



A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister met His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar, this morning in Downing Street.

The leaders welcomed the depth of our two countries' relationship and the strength of our economic ties. The Prime Minister reiterated his congratulations to Qatar on hosting the upcoming 2022 World Cup.

The Prime Minister told His Highness that the UK remains committed to Gulf unity and to Qatar's national security. They agreed the war in Yemen must come to an end. They also discussed the recent attacks on the Aramco oil facilities in Saudi Arabia.

Additionally they shared concern over Iran's destabilising behaviour and agreed the importance of negotiation in de-escalating regional tensions.

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UN Human Rights Council 42: Statement for the Universal Periodic Review on

Ethiopia



The Human Rights Council takes place in Geneva.

The United Kingdom welcomes Ethiopia's continued engagement with the UPR.

We welcome Ethiopia's acceptance of all three of the UK's recommendations, including enhanced efforts at the Federal level to prevent abuses by intervening in conflicts to ensure the rule of law and the facilitation of local peace settlements.

The UK also commends Ethiopia's acceptance of recommendations on human trafficking, truth and reconciliation, as well as its commitment to undertake effective and impartial investigations, and ensure redress for victims of human rights violations and abuses.

However the UK is concerned about the continuing high levels of displacement of people in Ethiopia resulting from ongoing ethnic conflicts. The UK also urges the Government of Ethiopia to implement a moratorium on the use of the Death Penalty.

We recognise and commend the efforts taken by the Government of Ethiopia in the past year to reform legislation which constrained civil and political rights, including the new civil society legislation and draft media proclamations. A sustained, thorough capacity building process is now required to ensure democratic institutions in Ethiopia fulfil their constitutional mandate. The UK reiterates its offer of support to the Government of Ethiopia to assist with human rights protection and promotion.

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Hair Host LLP

Hair Host is a fast-growing salon based in Buckingham, near Milton Keynes. The salon was opened in September 2015 by Rebecca Blade with support from her parents, Julian and Janet Present-Collins.

From a young age, Rebecca always wanted to be a hairdresser and have her own salon. After working for Toni & Guy for 10 years, gaining vital experience in the industry, she felt it was time to pursue her lifelong ambition.

[Hair Host LLP case study](#)

Setting up the business

Rebecca's parents were able to provide financial backing and help to run the business. While they are responsible for bookkeeping and marketing activities, Rebecca runs the salon day to day.

Speaking about why she wanted to own her own business, Rebecca explained:

I wanted to build a brand that was my vision, rather than someone else's.

My vision for the salon is for it to feel like my living room and have a welcoming atmosphere. Clients can find it intimidating walking into a salon the first time and I don't want people to feel that here.

They registered as a limited liability partnership (LLP) in March 2015. Rebecca and her parents are all designated members and co-own the business.

Speaking about why they decided to register as an LLP, Julian explained:

We sat down with an accountant and explained our set up and who needed to draw a day to day income from the business. On their advice we decided the best route was setting up as an LLP as it gave us more flexibility than say a limited company would.

Although the 3 of us own it jointly, an LLP allows us to allocate some or all of the profits to just one of the partners, supporting Rebecca's needs as salon director.

Building a brand

When planning to open the salon, location was an important factor to consider. They knew that they needed an area with high footfall in order to build a client base. They saw potential in an empty old card shop and moved

quickly to put together a business plan and apply for a business loan so they could buy and renovate the premises.

Raising awareness of the salon and getting customers through the door were some of the most challenging aspects of starting the business. Julian explained:

The biggest challenge for us was getting going. When we opened, we didn't have any customers as we weren't a known brand.

For the first few months it was a bit frightening. We had to work very hard to build our brand, get established and get people in through the door.

Over the past 4 years, the salon has grown into a successful business with a client base of over 2,500. As well as seeing the potential in using social media to promote the business, they also feel it's important to integrate themselves into the local community. They've got good relationships with other businesses and frequently donate vouchers and raffle prizes to local schools and charities.

A family feel and caring culture

Rebecca believes that the team working at the salon has also played a big part in its success. By looking after them and creating a supportive environment, they've been able to put together a team that shares her vision.

Rebecca explains:

Having a strong team is really important and we've been lucky in securing the right team here. They're very dedicated and experienced, and committed to what we're doing.

We don't have zero hour contracts and we try to provide a healthcare package. By creating a caring culture and keeping them motivated and happy, it means that the customers are happy. That's all that really matters.

Looking to the future, they may look to open another salon in time. In preparation for this, they want to develop their staff further and start new apprenticeship schemes to build their team.

By owning her own business, Rebecca has been able to open up her own opportunities, such as taking part in London Fashion Week. She's also been able to have more control over her own work-life balance. Reflecting on the journey so far, Rebecca's proud of the salon's success:

I personally wouldn't do anything differently. There's been challenges that we've faced but you overcome them and learn from them.

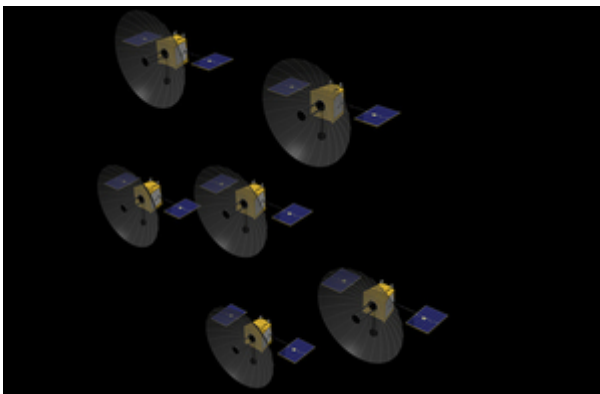
Everything's a lesson. I'm really proud that I've been able to build a brand I believe in.

For Julian, it's creating a business which has a strong family feel:

I think for me the best thing about owning Hair Host is to see how rewarding it can be to bring people into the business and develop them.

It's been great for us as a family, we are a family business at the end of the day, and nice to see that my daughter has been able to realise her dream.

[UK Space Conference](#)



Come and see us on Stand C11. The winners of the Space to Innovate competition, run by the Defence and Security Accelerator on behalf of Dstl, will also be announced during the conference.

Dstl is involved in a wide array of Space projects. In September 2019 we awarded a design study to Airbus for a cluster of ultra-high-resolution Synthetic Aperture Radar satellites for the Ministry of Defence (MOD). Known as Project Oberon, the satellite cluster – which will be the first of its kind ever in orbit – will give greater accuracy of data and finer resolution compared to a single satellite.

This year we also acquired our first satellite ground control station to support future Space research activities for the Ministry of Defence (MOD) based at Portsdown West, Hampshire. This represents the first of a number of significant steps in conducting in-orbit research and concept demonstrator

missions for the benefit of the MOD to better understand the Space domain to enable freedom of action for future UK operations, including the protection of UK operations against emerging Space-based threats.

With such an exciting array of programmes, there are many opportunities for companies to harness their novel and innovative technologies in Space. Dstl is keen to engage with large and small companies to exploit the full potential of Space. Previous experience of working with the defence sector is not necessary. We look forward to seeing you in Wales.

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