

Highways England traffic officers prove a real role 'model' for 10-year-old Toby

And to help him get accustomed to handling one of the company's signature Land Rover Discovery vehicles, he and father Dinos have spent some of their lockdown hours customising a remote-control Range Rover into his very own model traffic officer vehicle.

Delighted with the new addition to his remote control collection, the truck-mad youngster from Devon tweeted an all-action video of his creation – prompting not only a number of likes, but also high praise and a personal invite from Highways England to have a trip out in a real vehicle once the lockdown eases.

Toby's Traffic Officer Vehicle

Andrew Page-Dove, South West Regional Director for Highways England, said:

It's a fantastic model of a traffic officer vehicle, and fantastic recognition of the work of our traffic officers. We were so impressed, we'd love to give Toby a personal ride-out in one of our own vehicles once the current restrictions are relaxed.

It's lovely that he'd like to consider a career as a traffic officer too – they carry out a fantastic, helpful and supportive service for all drivers on our road network – and we'd love to get him out on the road and to show him around our control room once we get the opportunity.

The youngster, from Plympton, first became acquainted with Highways England's on-road support service when a traffic officer tended to him and his dad following a minor road traffic incident on the M43 last year.

Dinos, an office manager for Plymouth-based HT Gardner Distribution, said:

Toby loves trucks and during a VIP trip to Eddie Stobart's HQ in Rugby we were involved in a collision on the M43. A traffic officer tended to us and was incredibly helpful, and that made a lasting impression.

Later, we visited the Highways England stand at a Truckfest event in Somerset and since that day Toby's said he'd like to be a traffic officer – that or a truck driver of course!

He knows all there is to know about the traffic officer service and

their vehicles and he still says there's a couple of things not exactly right with his model version.

Woodford Primary School pupil Toby is also a member of the Plymouth RC Trucks and Models club and regularly posts videos of his growing remote and perfectly scaled vehicle collection on YouTube.

Highways England's official invite, complete with goodie bag, was hand-delivered to Toby by South West traffic officer and team manager Angela Fenne during a socially-distanced visit to the M5 Exeter Services.

Toby said:

It's been quite difficult not going to school, or the club, and not being able to see my friends during the lockdown. But this has been cool, a real highlight, and I can't wait to go out for a ride-out with a Highways England traffic officer.

Angela added:

We all loved the remote-control traffic officer vehicle, absolutely brilliant, and just like the real thing. It will be a pleasure to have Toby along as a passenger once the lockdown restrictions are relaxed.

Highways England's traffic officers patrol England's motorways and major A roads – including the M4, M5 and A30 in the South West – to help to keep traffic flowing smoothly.

Traffic officers do not have enforcement powers, but they do have the power to stop and direct traffic, close lanes and carriageways and manage traffic, and road users must obey their directions.

Working closely with police forces, as well as incident management, they also deal with broken down and abandoned vehicles on the strategic road network, recover vehicles causing a blockage or hazard, and ensure that the scene of an incident is safe, for both road users and working partners.

Find out more information on the [roles and responsibilities of a Highways England traffic officer](#)

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.

[Highways England awards major south-west bridges contract to Amey](#)

Following an 18-month procurement and tender process, Highways England has awarded a 15-year Specialist Bridge Inspection and Maintenance (SBIM) contract to infrastructure, highways and public services provider Amey.

The contract, worth £16 million per year, will see Amey maintain the three major structures from the end of November, and this will include structural inspections, routine maintenance and major renewal schemes.

The three structures are vital to the economy of the south-west and Wales, and the M4 Prince of Wales Bridge alone can see 70,000 daily vehicle crossings.

Highways England Operations Director Nick Harris said:

Our roads and bridges are among the safest in the world and partnerships like this will help maintain high standards on the three large bridges in the south-west.

By working more closely with our supply chain who carry out maintenance, we will be able to work more effectively, identify innovative ways of working and provide the best possible quality of service to road users.

We're delighted to welcome Amey to our south-west community and look forward to building a successful, long-term relationship with them, driving improvement and strengthening our regional expertise together.

Each of the structures has its own unique characteristics and structural complexities – the M5 Avonmouth Bridge spans 1,400 metres, the M4 Prince of Wales Bridge comprises three structures, the Avon Viaduct (2,100m), Cable Stay (948m) and Gwent Viaduct (2,077m), while the M48 Severn Bridge, a suspension bridge covering 1,600 metres of Highways England road network, has the second highest tidal range in the world at 14.5 metres.

Peter Anderson, Managing Director for Transport Infrastructure at Amey, said:

Amey will bring a wealth of innovative operational solutions and capabilities regarding bridge infrastructure, which has been

recognised by Highways England, through our work on the Forth Road Bridge amongst other structures across the UK.

Ensuring our people are safe, our ability to deliver to a high standard and putting the customer at the heart of our operations, guarantees that this approach encompasses Highways England's imperatives and we look forward to bringing our experience to bear when the contract goes live in November.

As part of the contract, Amey will become a member of the South West Asset Delivery Community, ensuring the contract provides the best possible value for money and service to its customers through the collaborative network with suppliers and other service delivery partners operating on this contract.

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[ESFA Update: 5 August 2020](#)

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[Two charged in small boat people smuggling investigation](#)

News story

Two men have been charged as part of an Immigration Enforcement investigation into a suspected small boat people smuggling incident in Southwold.



Two men have been charged as part of an Immigration Enforcement investigation into a suspected small boat people smuggling incident in Southwold.

Denys Khvatkov, 19, and Bohdan Lutskyi, 29, appeared at Norwich Magistrates Court on Monday (3 August) charged with facilitating a breach of the UK's immigration laws. The Ukrainian nationals were remanded in custody to appear at Ipswich Crown Court on 1 September.

The men had been arrested on Friday (31 July) after a Border Force cutter had targeted a yacht as it sailed from the Netherlands towards the east coast of the UK.

When the sailing vessel moored at Southwold Harbour shortly after 9pm, Border Force officers boarded the yacht and found four people – Khvatkov, Lutskyi and two Albanian nationals with no leave to enter the UK.

Following the arrests the case was referred to Immigration Enforcement's Criminal and Financial Investigation team.

Minister for Immigration Compliance and the Courts Chris Philp said:

We will not tolerate ruthless criminals looking to break the law by smuggling people into the UK illegally.

Working together with partners at home and abroad, Border Force and Immigration Enforcement are determined to disrupt and dismantle organised immigration crime networks. Those who profit from the misery of others will be brought to justice.

The Albanian nationals are being dealt with in line with the immigration rules.

Published 5 August 2020

£2.8m innovation funding to boost detection of explosives, weapons and illicit drugs

News story

DASA launches competition to find and develop new technology to screen people, possessions, goods, vehicles, areas and buildings



The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) is launching a £2.8 million competition to find state of the art and technological solutions for the improved detection of explosives, weapons and illicit drugs.

[The Innovative Research Call \(IRC\) 2020 for Explosives and Weapons Detection](#) is a cross-governmental programme that seeks proposals from industry and academia for the screening of people and/or their possessions, goods, vehicles, and buildings and areas.

DASA delivery manager Laurence Bickerton said:

We are looking for the best innovations to keep our communities safe from the deadliest threats we face.

To tackle this challenge, we are looking for new concepts and advances in current technology – and we are appealing far and wide for the best ideas and innovative solutions to help create a safer future for all.

The competition takes place in two phases. Up to £1 million is available in Phase 1 with proposal bids in the region of £70,000 for six months to develop proof of concept.

Proposals of a higher value will be considered if appropriately justified.

Proposals of higher technical readiness that do not require Phase 1 funding

will still need to submit their proposals in Phase 1 in anticipation of Phase 2 funding.

Up to £1.8 million will be available for proposals in Phase 2. Projects will need to develop and evaluate their prototypes or demonstrators by the end of September 2023.

The deadline for Phase 1 proposal submissions is midday on 28 September 2020.

Full technical requirements and examples of use cases are available in the [competition document](#).

The IRC competition is run on behalf of several government departments and law enforcement agencies, including:

This is the fifth run of IRC, with successful calls occurring in 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016.

Published 5 August 2020