



BORDERS AND COASTGUARD AGENCY

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THE GOVERNOR AND LADY DUTTON VISIT THE BORDERS AND COASTGUARD AGENCY

The Governor Sir James Dutton and his wife Lady Dutton continued their familiarisation visits to local services on the Rock by calling on the Borders and Coastguard Agency on Tuesday.

They were met by the Agency's Chief Executive, Mr Andrew Bonfante, who briefed them on the organisation, duties and responsibilities of the Agency. He explained how the Borders and Coastguard Agency has been very successful in its first 2 years of operations, making a good start despite having to manage considerable change.

The Governor and Lady Dutton were given a tour of the headquarters and outposts visiting the frontier and airport. At the headquarters they met the Agency's Training Manager, Mr Andrew Victor, who spoke about the importance of training and development and of achieving professional qualifications for its officers. He also described the on-going plan to continue raising the Agency's professional standards and thus improving the service it provides to Gibraltar.

At the frontier they were met by Mr Joseph Molinari and they had an opportunity to see first-hand the volume of both pedestrian and vehicle traffic coming into Gibraltar in the morning and also saw the Biometric data passport and ID card scanners in operation.

They then moved on to the airport where they were met by the Agency's Duty Manager, Mr James Hernandez, who showed them around the various duty stations including both the hold and cabin baggage search areas where the Governor and Lady Dutton had an opportunity to see high tech x-ray, metal and explosive trace detectors in use to screen baggage and cargo.

"It was a great pleasure for us all to host His Excellency and Lady Dutton. The visit went extremely well and both seemed genuinely interested in our duties and responsibilities, particularly the high number of people we process" said Andrew Bonfante, the Chief Executive of the Borders and Coastguard Agency.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

The Borders & Coastguard Agency

In addition to being regulated locally, the Agency is now inspected quarterly by HMG's Department for Transport in the UK which ensure compliance with EU legislation. To meet these and the demands of a much larger and busier airport and new developments at the frontier and the port, the Agency has recruited 30 additional officers, all of whom have been trained locally to the required EU standards. Last year it moved into ex MoD premises, extensively renovated to meet requirements, and from where it manages all of its deployments and operations. All of this has allowed the Agency to optimise its deployments to meet the demand and has seen a significant improvement in its operations.

At our borders the Agency is now processing over 12 million people a year. Following the amendments introduced to the Immigration, Asylum and Refugee Act allowing Moroccan, Indian, Chinese and Mongolian nationals in possession of Schengen Visas to enter Gibraltar, the Agency has to date processed over 12,000 of these visa requiring nationals as part of the Government's Tourist Visa Waiver initiative. The Agency continues to operate a fine balance between risk and the need to maintain fluidity, and to mitigate this risk balance, the Agency has introduced Biometric data passport and ID card scanners at all of Gibraltar's entry points, as well as other security measures; thus allowing them to interrogate documents and share information with international agencies including Interpol, HMG's Home Office and the UK Border Force. It has established and continues to develop a close working relationship with these agencies and in particular is in regular contact with the UK Border Force studying how best to share information, develop specific points of contact and identify work placement attachments.

The Agency is fortunate to have very professional and flexible staff that strive to provide a professional and operationally focussed output and remain committed to improving the service they provide to Gibraltar.