

Press release: CPTPP will be a 'force for good' in promoting free trade

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox welcomed the introduction of Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), saying that the alliance will be 'force for good' in providing economic opportunities for hundreds of millions of people.

The Pacific has been the focus of increased trade tensions and the introduction of protectionist measures, by both China and the US who have a major influence in the region.

87% of Chinese exports are subject to distorted trade measures in the US market and 92% of US exports are subject to distorted trade measures in the Chinese market.

CPTPP will eliminate 95% of tariffs on goods trade between 11 countries around the Pacific rim, including Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Its members currently account for 13% of global GDP and £95bn worth of the UK's trade. Many more countries are expected to join the agreement in the future and the UK will potentially join after we leave the European Union.

The UK is considering seeking accession to the agreement and the Department for International Trade is currently analysing responses to its 14-week public consultation on potential accession to CPTPP.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

Joining CPTPP would cement our strong economic ties with old friends, like Canada and Japan, as well as establishing new links with some of the world's fastest growing economies.

We know from our recent public consultation that UK businesses want to join CPTPP as it would help them to expand into new markets and capitalise on the growing demand for quality British goods and services.

This agreement will also help to promote free trade against a backdrop of heightened tensions in the global trade system. It is in all of our interests to ensure an open and rules-based trading system wins out and that a trade war in the Pacific does not hit British households in the pocket.

DIT's consultation on CPTPP included 12 events throughout the UK, which confirmed that there is demand from businesses to join CPTPP. It also revealed that there are many businesses that are unaware of the opportunities

on offer but would benefit with support from DIT trade advisers.

DIT has already engaged with all 11 members of CPTPP and there is support for UK membership. In October the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said that the UK would be welcomed into the agreement 'with open arms' and the Australian PM has said 'the British would be pushing at an open door'.

The agreement is widely recognised as one of the most progressive free trade agreements, with provisions for digital trade, e-commerce, trade in services and protection of intellectual property. It also sets new standards in agreements for sustainability, anti-corruption and improving workers' rights.

If the UK joined, we would be able to benefit from the opportunities of membership and we would be able to shape the future rules of the agreement.

Many British businesses could benefit from the UK's potential accession to the CPTPP including Dudley-based technology company Simworx who are a world leading supplier of 4D effects cinemas and motion simulation attractions for entertainment, education and corporate markets worldwide.

The Asia-Pacific is an important market for the company and they have recently secured a contract worth £46 million to provide rides for four major theme parks across China.

Joining CPTPP could make it is easier for Simworx to secure more contracts in rapidly growing Asia-Pacific countries and it could make their services more competitively priced.

CEO of Simworx Limited Terry Monkton said:

As a small and growing business, emerging markets in Asia and Latin America represent excellent opportunities to grow Simworx.

Our products are already sought after in Vietnam and Mexico and that's helped Simworx treble its turnover and employ over 50 people in the UK.

But businesses like mine face particular barriers when we look to export, particularly import duties, and agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership would make it simpler for me to reach new customers.

- The 11 members of CPTPP are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.
 - CPTPP comes into effect today for the seven countries that have ratified it: Australia, Canada, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam.
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News story: Communities to have greater say in protecting local trees

Environment Secretary Michael Gove today announced plans to create greater protections for trees in urban areas.

The proposals would ensure councils can't cut down street trees without first consulting communities.

The measures reflect the important role trees in towns and cities play in improving our health and wellbeing, as well as providing crucial environmental benefits.

Launching a [consultation on a raft of new forestry measures](#), the Secretary of State unveiled proposals designed to ensure local people have a bigger say over what happens to the trees in their communities.

The proposals include:

- Making sure communities have their say on whether street trees should be felled with requirements for councils to consult local residents;
- Responsibilities on councils to report on tree felling and replanting to make sure we can safeguard our environment for future generations;
- Giving the Forestry Commission more powers to tackle illegal tree felling and strengthen protection of wooded landscapes.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

It's right that the views of local people are at the heart of any decision that affects their community – and the futures of the trees that line their streets are no different. Trees have often been rooted in our towns and cities for many years, and are undoubtedly part of our local heritage.

These measures will enhance the protection given to urban trees, ensuring residents are properly consulted before trees are felled and safeguarding our urban environment for future generations.

The government's Tree Champion Sir William Worsley said:

Urban trees are an amazingly valuable natural resource, and with this consultation I hope we can take further steps towards strong and robust protections to ensure their futures.

By planting the right trees in the right place we can ensure that they continue to improve health and wellbeing and encourage people to enjoy the outdoors.

Forestry Commission Director of Forest Services Richard Greenhous said:

The Forestry Commission recognises that our trees and woodlands are under increasing pressure, especially in and around urban areas. With this consultation we hope to be able to better protect more of our cherished woodlands from illegal felling.

This consultation forms part of the government's ongoing work to protect and promote our precious trees, including our commitment to plant one million trees in our towns and cities in addition to eleven million trees nationwide over the course of this parliament.

Protecting and planting more trees is a key part of our ambitious [25-Year Environment Plan](#), which will ensure we leave this environment in a better state for the next generation.

[News story: A CNC police officer is to be awarded an MBE](#)

Chief Superintendent Duncan Worsell who has worked for the Constabulary for over 25 years has been awarded the MBE for his services to policing.

Chief Constable Mike Griffiths said: "I am delighted to hear that Duncan is to receive this prestigious award and would like to congratulate him and his family. This achievement is a true recognition of his hard work, dedication and achievements both as a police officer and to the local community he serves.

"Duncan's personal leadership, compassion and extraordinary commitment is a consistent thread throughout many of the major changes the Civil Nuclear Constabulary has gone through in its history. He is an example to us all.

"I am sure many people will want to congratulate Duncan individually but, I offer him many congratulations on behalf of the Constabulary."

On hearing the news, Duncan said: "I am both humbled and honoured to receive this award, it means the world to me. I take enormous pride in the Constabulary, and the great privilege of being one of its leaders, it is without doubt the most brilliant thing that I have done with my working life.

"I am incredibly fortunate to work with the most fantastic people, helping me achieve my aspirations, and supporting others to meet theirs, and many of them have been working hard through this Christmas period, protecting our country and its people. I sincerely believe that the honour which has been bestowed upon me is as much representative of them and their efforts as it is

of my own.”

Duncan is a highly regarded police officer and a servant to all of the communities he serves. Since the age of 17 his working life has been public service, firstly in the Royal Navy and for the last 26 years as an officer within the Civil Nuclear Constabulary, rising to the rank of Chief Superintendent.

For the last five years he has been responsible for a complex operational division including Sellafield and Dounraey and four EDF sites, with an operational staff of over 800.

News story: Commuting by bike to become easier in new year following funding boost

Commuting by bike is set to become easier in 2019 as new facilities are set up at stations across the country.

In the latest in a series of funding boosts, £1.6 million of government investment will help people make cycling a seamless part of their daily journey, Cycling and Walking Minister Jesse Norman announced today (29 December 2018).

The Cycle Rail Programme – which has already been backed by almost £36 million from the Department for Transport – is allowing cyclists to make their journeys to work as joined up and sustainable as possible.

Now this further funding will extend the benefits, enabling more people to cycle directly to their station and lock up their bike securely.

Cycling and Walking Minister Jesse Norman said:

Improving cycling access to railway stations is good for cyclists and good for rail users, whether they're commuters or tourists – and it has terrific knock-on benefits, by improving air quality, reducing obesity and increasing economic productivity.

That's the purpose of the government's Cycle Rail Programme. Some £36 million has been invested to date, and I'm delighted we can now raise this by another £1.6 million.

The programme has already improved access to stations for cyclists through a number of initiatives, including cycle hire schemes, brand new footpaths and

safe and secure cycle parking.

It has also led to considerable improvements to infrastructure for cyclists in and around railway stations – for example a new cycle path in Buckinghamshire, which links Aylesbury Station and the National Trust's Waddesdon Manor

The programme has already tripled the number of cycle parking spaces at over 500 stations across the country, bringing the total to over 80,000. This includes the creation of Dutch-style cycle parking hubs at major centres – for example, over 1,100 spaces in St Albans and almost 3,000 spaces at Cambridge station.

The funding is available to Train Operating Companies and the Department for Transport will be writing to them in the near future to outline the application process.

Commenting on behalf of the Walking and Cycling Alliance, Xavier Brice, CEO of Sustrans, said:

Everyone should be able to easily access their railway station by bicycle or on foot. This helps people make a healthy start to their journey while reducing local road congestion and car emissions.

The increased funding is very much welcome as it will help integrate more train journeys with cycling by improving cycle parking and contributing to safe routes for all to use.

The programme is in support of a 2017 manifesto commitment to upgrade facilities for cyclists at railway stations. It is just one of a number of ongoing government measures designed to encourage safe cycling and walking among all age groups.

This includes the announcement last month of a number of ground-breaking road safety initiatives as part of the government's new 2 year action plan to improve cycling and walking safety.

The £1.6 million in funding will top up the £4.08 million that has already been made available for the programme in this financial year.

[News story: Activity 'passport' to inspire schoolchildren and boost](#)

resilience

Primary school children will be challenged to go on a nature trail, visit a local landmark or make a treasure map through a new 'passport' of activities launched by the Education Secretary to encourage more family time and help build children's character and resilience.

Endorsed by organisations including the Scouts, Girlguiding and the National Trust – as well as children's charity Action for Children – the list of activities is intended to support parents and schools in introducing children to a wide variety of experiences and fulfilling activities like flying a kite, learning something new about the local area or putting on a performance.

The list of activities was inspired by the Education Secretary's visit to St Werburgh's Primary School, in Bristol, where every child is encouraged to take part in a list of tasks and experiences, with key achievements for each school year to tick off. The list will be sent to schools in January for teachers to adapt to meet the needs of their pupils and local communities, helping young people to build their personal skills and qualities during the school day and at home.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

When I first became Education Secretary, almost a year ago, I went around asking everyone I met what they wanted for their children. The instinctive answer that came back was never about the curriculum or qualifications, vital as these are – what they wanted first and foremost was for their child to be happy and healthy. As a father that's what I want for my children and as Education Secretary that's what I want for all children in this country.

I regularly hear from teachers that it's important that children have the chance to try things out, to get a taste of the world around them, to see and do things that they wouldn't normally do, or go to places they wouldn't normally go. Experience is a great teacher and can equip children with valuable skills that prepare for any challenges life may throw at them. What's on the inside – someone's character, drive, resilience, and the ability to stick to a goal – is just as important as their academic achievements.

As the New Year approaches, we inevitably think about our resolutions for the year ahead – getting fit, spending more time with our families, or taking up a new hobby. Within this list of activities children may find something they want to come back to again and again, but I hope that, whatever they do, they will enjoy and learn from them.

The 'My Activity Passport' list is part of the Education Secretary's vision

for every child to have the opportunity to enjoy new and varied experiences, no matter their background – comprising of key areas: drive and tenacity; sticking at the task at hand; understanding how to work towards long term goals when reward might be a long way off in the future; and being able to pick yourself up and bounce back from life's challenges.

Matt Hyde, Chief Executive of the Scouts, said:

We know how much young people get out of enrichment activities like these: broadening their experiences, having fun and developing skills for life. Not everything can be taught in a classroom, so it's great to see DfE recognising the value of extra-curricular activities and encouraging young people to build confidence, resilience and get involved in their communities as well.

These activities will inspire children's ability to problem-solve, provide opportunities to see or visit new places and develop wide interests in new subjects.

The activities are designed to be accessible so that every child and family can get involved and include milestones for each primary school year group. Tasks that schools and families can set children include:

- Painting a self portrait
- Posting a letter
- Looking at the stars on a clear night
- Playing a board game
- Writing and performing a poem
- Going hiking
- Planning and cooking a meal
- Interviewing someone

Among the list of activities will be opportunities for children to engage in social action that helps them make positive changes for themselves and others. Schools will also be able to adapt the list to meet the needs of its pupils and local communities.

Hilary McGrady, Director-General of the National Trust, said:

Connecting children to nature and the great outdoors is at the heart of the National Trust's mission. We know those first experiences such as skimming a stone or watching butterflies encourages an early love for nature which is more likely to stay with them into adulthood. Our 50 things to do before you are 11 and three quarters has been enjoyed by thousands of children across the country already, and we support the Department for Education's efforts to engage even more children with our amazing natural world.

Emma Dixon, member of the Girlguiding Advocate panel, made up of members aged 14 to 25, said:

We believe all young people should have opportunities to build their confidence, raise their aspirations and have adventures, both inside and outside the classroom. The activities in our new programme, launched in July, already benefit hundreds of thousands of girls each week, and we hope even more young people will be able to enjoy and learn from the activities included in the new passport.

Julie Bentley, Chief Executive of Action for Children, said:

Every day at Action for Children, we see families struggling with the ups-and-downs of everyday life. Parents want to do everything they can to help their child feel ready to cope with life's challenges when they arise.

Through programmes such as the Department for Education's 'passport' of activities and our Build Sound Minds campaign where we provide advice and activities, parents can find ways to improve their child's resilience and emotional well-being.

Anna Feuchtwang, Chief Executive of the National Children's Bureau, said:

Our research has shown that significant numbers of children grow up suffering poor mental health. Part of the remedy lies in developing a firm foundation of wellbeing and resilience in children and young people, both at home and at school. We welcome this effort to immerse children and young people in activities that can build their confidence, develop their curiosity and support their growth beyond academic attainment, so they can enjoy emotional wellbeing throughout their lives.