

Speech: PM's words at the regions and nations lobby drinks reception: 11 October 2018

Thank you all for coming today. I know some of you had to travel some considerable distance.

We all know that free, plural and vibrant media is the backbone of this country's democracy. This is a belief that I and the government hold very strongly. Your coverage, be it in print or broadcast, is a reflection of the rich diversity of the views that can be found right across the United Kingdom.

I think it is true to say, regional and local media is fearless. It is independent and we are committed to safeguarding its future.

I know from the discussions I have with my own local paper the significant pressures that are on regional and local press at the moment. Nowhere is this more true than in print journalism where the rapid changes in consumer behaviour and technology have led to falling circulations and advertising revenues. As we know, a quarter of local papers have closed in the past decade.

That is why we launched the Cairncross Review, to examine what more we can do to improve the long term sustainability of high quality journalism, because it is that high quality journalism, at a local and regional level, that is so important in underpinning our democracy.

Obviously, we'll wait for the review's findings and recommendations before we make specific policy decisions but nothing is off the table. This commission was launched because we see that there is a problem there and we need to have those voices looking into it for us and coming forward with their recommendations.

I have already heard of one group that has been sending in not just comments on the challenges but also some solutions. And I am sure that you all will be talking not just about the challenges you face but how you are also reacting to those challenges, to the digital age and what you are doing to improve sustainability. And I am sure you all have ideas on what the government might do to help in this area.

As a member of parliament, I have often seen that it is regional and local media which is a trusted source of news for millions of citizens. It keeps all politicians alive to what really matters beyond the Westminster bubble – understanding what is happening out there is so important for us all. Of course, we see it in our own constituencies but getting that wider reflection of what happens is important.

When that trusted local news comes under threat, then I think democracy suffers and people become ever more vulnerable to disinformation. So this is our local press, it is your profession, it is imperative that we work together to ensure it has a very good and viable future.

So thank you for all that you do to maintain those local independent voices, and we want to work with you so that we continue to see that vibrant local and regional press. That is an important element, underpinning our democracy.

News story: Science Minister signals hi-tech expansion for Culham

Science Minister Sam Gyimah announced today development of Culham during his visit to [Culham Science Centre](#).

The planned development – which is estimated to bring 200 new jobs – aims to cater for the increasing number of companies wanting to move to Culham. Currently, the existing on-site accommodation, which hosts approximately 60 tenants, including 20 start-ups, is full.

In his visit, Science Minister Gyimah also revealed further Government funding to extend UKAEA's Materials Research Facility to allow for increased lab space for conducting research on nuclear reactor materials. The Minister also welcomed a new £3.6m academic partnership with the US in order to make the most of transatlantic research talent. The collaboration between UKAEA and Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory will see UKAEA post-doctoral researchers undertake extended visits to Princeton to work on areas of common interest in fusion science.

Minister Gyimah addressed UKAEA employees during his visit, and underlined the government's commitment to fusion research post-Brexit.

He said:

From fusion energy, to software for driverless cars, to air-breathing rocket engines, this site is engineering some of the most exciting science in the world.

The UK is an innovation powerhouse and with science and tech experts moving here, thriving here and growing their businesses here, it's a vote of confidence in UK science industry. We are committed to attracting and retaining both homegrown and international talent and will keep supporting international collaboration as we tackle the grand challenges of tomorrow and

build a Britain fit for the future.

Ian Chapman, UKAEA's CEO, said:

The Minister's announcement on site development is excellent news. It means we can establish Culham as a home for hi-tech business in fusion and adjacent sectors and reinforce Oxfordshire's reputation for world-leading science.

The visit was also an opportunity to show the Minister how UKAEA's new research facilities will help to get fusion energy on the grid. Fusion could be the ultimate low-carbon energy source, but commercialising it entails overcoming challenges in physics, materials science, engineering and robotics. Recent government support is enabling Culham and the UK to be right at the centre of this world-changing technology.

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News story: Windrush compensation scheme consultation extends

Following a recommendation from Martin Forde QC, the independent adviser appointed to oversee the development of the scheme, the decision was made to extend the period of time that people have to respond. The consultation will now close on 16 November 2018.

Based on his engagement with community groups and the roadshows he is undertaking across the country, Martin Forde advised that it was clear people needed more time to respond.

The Home Secretary has committed to listening to the widest possible range of

voices, including those affected and their families, community groups and specialist legal representatives and extending the consultation will ensure that this is possible.

In addition, the Home Secretary has announced that a framework will be developed to make individual payments ahead of the compensation scheme in urgent and exceptional cases.

Martin Forde QC said:

I have travelled around the country to seek the views of those affected and it became very clear to me that people need more time to engage with the consultation.

With that in mind, and on my advice, the consultation has been extended. This will help us get as many views as possible and make sure we can design an effective and fair compensation scheme.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I've been clear that we must right the wrongs experienced by the Windrush generation and the compensation scheme is a key part of that.

It is absolutely vital we get the scheme right and give everyone who wants to participate in the consultation the chance to input their views.

In the meantime, we will ensure that individual payments are made in urgent and exceptional cases

Following the consultation, the priority of the Home Secretary is to establish a compensation scheme which will start making payments as soon as possible.

There are already several measures and initiatives in place to help those of the Windrush generation who are concerned about benefits, housing or employment. A dedicated team for vulnerable people has been set up within the Windrush Taskforce, it has already assisted over 450 people where an urgent need for support or advice was identified.

In addition, a Fast-Track service with the Department for Work and Pensions has been established to arrange access to benefits; steps to secure accommodation with local authorities for those identified as homeless; and interim guidance to employers and landlords. An agreement with Citizens Advice has also been put in place to provide bespoke professional advice to anyone experiencing immediate financial problems.

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