

Statement to Parliament: Secretary of State: Statement to Parliament

September 4th 2018

Thank you Mr Speaker, and with your permission, I'd like to provide the House with an update on the progress of Brexit negotiations and the government's No Deal contingency planning.

Exit Negotiations

On Friday I was in Brussels for the fourth time since I became Secretary of State, for a further round of talks with Michel Barnier.

We had an extended discussion, covering outstanding Withdrawal Agreement issues, internal and external security, and our future economic partnership.

We have injected some additional pace and intensity into the negotiations, as we reach the final phases.

The vast majority of the Withdrawal Agreement has been agreed. And when signed, the Agreement will:

- Safeguard the rights of EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU so they can continue to live their lives broadly as they do now;
- It will provide for a time-limited implementation period, giving businesses and citizens the certainty they deserve until we reach the new partnership; and
- It will allow for the UK to make an orderly and smooth transition as we move towards a future deep and special partnership with the EU.

In the course of August, we made further progress across a range of the outstanding separation issues including:

Protection of data and information, the treatment of ongoing police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, and ongoing Union judicial and administrative procedures after exit.

So the scope and the contours of the Withdrawal Agreement are now clear, subject to some further technical detail that we will of course continue to work on.

Northern Ireland

At the same time Mr Speaker we continue work to complete a backstop to deal with the position of Northern Ireland and Ireland, as we committed to do in the December Joint Report with the EU.

As the government has made clear, the EU proposals are unacceptable, because

they would create a customs border down the Irish Sea.

We are determined to reach a solution that protects the Belfast Agreement and avoids a hard border on the island of Ireland.

We will not permit a customs border down the Irish Sea, which would put at risk the constitutional and economic integrity of the United Kingdom, and of course, this can be done without compromising the EU's core principles.

Importantly, Mr Speaker, we look to meet our commitments to the people of Northern Ireland through our future partnership,

So that no backstop would ever need to come into effect.

Future relationship

Mr Speaker, the White Paper we published in July has served as the basis for constructive discussions on our future relationship with the EU.

I, my Right Honourable Friend the Prime Minister, and other Cabinet colleagues have made visits across Europe, explaining our proposals making the case for what we have put forward for our future relationship.

I can tell the House that since the publication of the White Paper, ministers have had more than 60 engagements ministerially with their counterparts across Europe.

I met the French Europe Minister in Paris recently, I saw the Swedish Foreign Minister and the Irish Foreign Minister in London.

And I also met with Guy Verhofstadt, the European Parliament's Brexit coordinator last week.

And we've received a wide range of positive and constructive feedback.

Equally, just as we have presented our proposals in a spirit of compromise,

So too they have proved challenging in some respects for some in the EU.

But, our friends across Europe are engaging seriously with our proposals on the substance.

As my Right Honourable Friend the Prime Minister set out, we are committed to delivering on the vision in the White Paper,

And delivering a future relationship that will see:

- The United Kingdom leave the Single Market and the Customs Union;
- An end to free movement, so the UK controls its own borders;
- The end of the jurisdiction of the European Court; and
- And the UK and the EU meeting their shared commitments to Northern Ireland and Ireland in the way that I have already described.

And at the same time, we want to build up the foundations of a bright, strong and enduring new relationship for the future with:

- Frictionless trade across our borders;
- Continued close cooperation on law enforcement and other security matters;
- The UK free to develop its own independent trade policy; and
- Broader UK-EU cooperation from research to student exchanges, in many of the areas that we prize on both sides.

We approach these talks with ambition, pragmatism and with energy.

And if our EU friends match us, we will strike a deal that is in the clear and overwhelming interests of both sides.

No Deal Contingency Planning

Mr Speaker, I would also like to update the House on steps the Government has taken over the summer to prepare for the unlikely event that we don't reach a deal with the EU.

And while we expect to reach a deal with the EU, while it remains the most likely outcome, and whilst it remains our top and indeed our overriding priority, as a responsible government, we have a duty to prepare for any eventuality.

So on 23 August, we published 25 technical notices, intended to inform people, businesses and stakeholders about steps they need to take in the event of a 'no deal' scenario.

They build on the steady and patient work that has taken place over the last two years to prepare this country for life outside the EU – irrespective of the outcome of the negotiations.

That work has included passing key bits of legislation to ensure a smooth Brexit, including the EU (Withdrawal) Act,

It includes recruiting the staff in Whitehall and our operational agencies so we have the teams in place.

And it includes preparing our institutional capacity, from the Competition and Markets Authority to the Information Commissioner's Office.

The technical notices continue the same, responsible, practical approach to preparing our country for Brexit.

Among the technical notices, there is advice for businesses on some of the new processes they would be expected to follow when moving goods between the EU and UK in a no deal scenario.

Our technical notice on workplace rights sets out how workers in the UK will continue to be entitled to the rights they have under UK law.

And we have set out how, in the event of no deal, we would recognise the testing and safety approvals of existing medicines if they've been carried out by an EU Member State regulator,

To minimise any disruption to the supplies of medicines or medical devices from the EU.

These notices are proportionate.

They are measured.

And they prioritise stability for our citizens, businesses, public bodies and indeed for NGOs.

The 25 notices published in August were the first in a series of updates which we will be publishing over the coming weeks to keep stakeholders informed about what, if any, action they need to take.

Our approach acknowledges that there are some risks to a 'no deal' scenario,

And demonstrates that we are taking the action to avoid, to minimise and to mitigate these potential risks so we are equipped to manage any short-term disruption.

And while it is not what we want, a no deal scenario would bring some countervailing opportunities.

We would be able to lower tariffs and negotiate and bring into effect new free trade deals, straight away.

There would be the immediate recovery of full legislative and regulatory control, including over immigration policy,

And, whilst mindful of our legal obligations, a swifter end to our financial contributions to the EU.

Looking Ahead

So, Mr Speaker, I will continue to meet regularly with Michel Barnier,

Confident that a deal is within our grasp, and if the ambition and pragmatism that we have shown is matched by our EU friends.

But this House and the British people can rest assured, that the UK will be ready for Brexit – deal or no deal – and prepared, whatever the outcome, so this country will go from strength to strength.

And I commend this statement to the House.

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News story: Civil news: reminder to go online to accept 2018 civil contracts

All organisations with 2018 civil contracts uploaded into CWA need to go into the system as soon as possible to accept them.

Guidance is available on GOV.UK on how to 'execute' your contract within the CWA online portal. This needs to be done by Friday 7 September at the latest.

Why are you telling us this now?

The majority of providers have successfully completed verification under the main tender and have had contracts uploaded. But 262 of these providers have yet to execute their contracts online.

Providers are only able to deliver work under a 2018 civil contract once it has been executed online.

Organisations which have not executed their contract by 7 September 2018 will not be authorised to carry out any further work.

Interim arrangements

There are interim arrangements in place until Friday 7 September to allow specific groups of providers to continue delivering work before their new contracts are accepted.

Guidance is available about these arrangements on the civil 2018 contracts tender page. But you should note that these arrangements only apply to providers:

- advised by us that their contracts have been verified but who have been unable to execute their contract in CWA
- who have completed verification but are yet to be assigned account numbers for new offices

Organisations must have evidence from the LAA that their contract has been verified to undertake work under the interim arrangements.

Providers awaiting contract uploads

There are about 350 organisations that bid in the main tender waiting to have their contract uploaded. This breaks down into:

1. 190 organisations still to provide evidence to successfully verify their

tender

2. 160 organisations either in the process for having contracts uploaded having provided verification information or which have bid in the further face to face procurement process and still have issues to be resolved. We will upload 140 of these contracts in the next 2 days.

Where there are verification issues to be resolved we will contact organisations on a case by case basis.

Further tender

The verification deadline under the further tender is 23.59 on Friday 7 September.

Where an organisation has tendered under the main tender process in addition to the supplemental and/or further tender processes we are continuing to work to identify and resolve any duplication of bids.

Further information

[Civil 2018 contracts tender](#) – for 3 September update on interim arrangements

[CWA detailed user guides](#) – for ‘contract acceptance user guide’

[Civil contracts start 1 September](#) – GOV.UK news story 31 August 2018

News story: Public consultation marks next stage in development of UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

A public exhibition and consultation of the latest designs for the new UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre has been launched today (4 September 2018) by the Secretary of State for Communities the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP at a reception attended by the Shadow Foreign Secretary Emily Thornberry and the UK Holocaust Memorial co-Chairs Ed Balls and Lord Pickles.

In 2016 Prime Minister Theresa May launched a design competition for a Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens, adjacent to Parliament in Westminster.

The winning scheme proposed by the team led by architect Sir David Adjaye impressed the jury with a sensitive and impactful design that preserved the green space of the Gardens and respected the UNESCO World Heritage views.

The consultation launched today, running until Saturday 8 September in Central London, will ask for views on the proposed designs for the Memorial and Learning Centre before a planning application is made later this year.

The exhibition will be an opportunity for people to see the designs for themselves. It is crucial that as many people as possible – from a range of different communities – have a chance to be heard before a formal planning application is submitted later this year.

The exhibition reveals further details of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre proposed design and improvements to Victoria Tower Gardens, including:

- The architects' proposals to retain 85% of the green space of Victoria Tower Gardens, through a streamlined design with a separate entrance pavilion to the Memorial and Learning Centre.
- Measures taken to improve the health of trees in the Gardens by improving the drainage of paths.
- Improvements to be made to the surroundings and green space of the Gardens, while retaining their character. This includes the creation of a gentle slope to improve views of the river and Parliament, new seating and pathways along the river bank and better filtration for the green areas to limit issues of flooding in winter.
- Plans to improve access to the existing memorials – allowing visitors to appreciate them in a new way, particularly the Buxton Memorial to the abolition of slavery which could get improved lighting, and, if possible, a reinstated water fountain.
- The renewal of the café area to the south of the Gardens, and plans to consult the local community on improvements to be made to the children's playground.

The proposed design for the Memorial and Learning Centre consists of 23 bronze fins to the southern end of the Gardens. Visitors will walk through an entrance pavilion then across a courtyard where they will enjoy spectacular views of Parliament's Victoria Tower.

The Learning Centre, accessed by pathways set between the fins, is an integral part of the Memorial. Visitors will leave with an improved understanding of the Holocaust and its impact on Britain. It's a chance to reflect, remember and learn.

The content of the Learning Centre is still in development but is expected to focus on Britain's relationship with the Holocaust. It is important that we celebrate the ways we intervened for the safety of the Jewish communities in Europe, but also what more could have been done to protect individuals and families.

At a reception to mark the opening of the public exhibition, Secretary of State for Communities the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

There can be no more powerful symbol of our commitment to remembering the men, women and children murdered by the Nazis and

their collaborators than placing the memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens.

The Holocaust Memorial will stand as a stark reminder that a central role of democracy is to encourage tolerance for ethnic, religious and racial differences and fostering religious freedom, individual rights and civil responsibility.

UKHMF co-chair the Rt. Hon Ed Balls said:

What better way to show that we will not tolerate hatred than our new Holocaust Memorial, right next to our Parliament.

There is no location more fitting to honour the victims of one of humanity's greatest tragedies than side-by-side with one of humanity's oldest democracies. There is no better gift we can pass to future generations than the knowledge of where hatred, unchecked, can lead.

UKHMF co-Chair the Rt Hon The Lord Pickles said:

By building a Memorial and Learning Centre next to our Parliament we are fulfilling a commitment made to a past generation and committing future generations hold our democracy to account.

It reminds Parliament that it has the power to oppress as well the power to protect. The learning centre is a timely reminder, to all communities in the UK, of the cost of indifference to intolerance and bigotry. All who care about our country have a vested interest in standing up to prejudice and hatred wherever and whenever it occurs.

Victoria Tower Gardens as a location

- When conducting a site search of central London locations, the aim was to find the most meaningful location which could best reflect the impact of the Holocaust. Access, footfall and visibility were key considerations.
- Victoria Tower Gardens was selected as the site that best suited joint aims, being the most significant location and offering the greatest value.
- The Foundation recommended Victoria Tower Gardens to then Prime Minister David Cameron, who first announced the chosen location at Prime Minister's Questions on 27 January 2016. Funding for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre
- Total project costs are currently estimated at around £100 million.
- The government has committed £50 million to the project. It will kick-

start a society-wide fundraising effort which will meet the costs of construction and operation.

- Foundation member Gerald Ronson CBE has agreed to lead the fundraising campaign. As well as being a major philanthropic donor, Mr Ronson has extensive experience of raising funds. His family trust has raised close to £200 million for charities at home and abroad.

Flooding and drainage

- As with all sites close to the river, a full flood risk assessment will have to be carried out as part of the planning application process.
- The proposed Memorial and Learning Centre will be located south of the existing Thames Water Storm Relief drain. The project has been discussed with Thames Water and will comply with their requirements for building in the proximity of the storm relief drain.

Tree health

- Measures are being taken to ensure that the trees will not be harmed. We've had accurate GPR (ground penetrating radar) surveys of the tree roots carried out by arboricultural experts and have relocated the Memorial further north to minimise the risk of damage to tree roots.
- Further to this, trial pits are being excavated using air spades to make a precise assessment of the extent and location of the tree roots immediately adjacent to the Memorial.
- By improving drainage and surface permeability, particularly in the hard landscaping and paths, the Memorial and landscaping is likely to be more conducive to tree health.

[Press release: Stourton flood defence works complete protecting businesses](#)

Businesses in the Stourton area of Leeds are benefitting from increased flood protection following the completion of a new 730 metre flood defence wall and property level protection, such as flood gates and demountable barriers.

The project, led by Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency, has reduced the risk of flooding to 88 businesses in Stourton and is one of the first areas of work for the second phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme.

The £1.4m project, funded by Leeds City Council and the European Regional Development Fund, is part of a package of measures of advanced works designed to mobilise defence construction quickly and efficiently to best protect the city, before the main works of the scheme are approved.

As well as the new flood defence wall along the boundary of the Haigh Park Road Industrial estate with the Aire and Calder Canal, property level protection has been installed at four businesses and one Northern Power Grid sit. This has involved supplying 17 aluminium demountable barriers that can be installed by the businesses across door openings in the event of a flood, where surface water flooding could occur due to the water being prevented from discharging into the canal or river as normal.

The works will provide a 1 in 200 year standard of protection to 88 existing businesses in the Stourton Industrial Estate, safeguard over 4,000 existing jobs in the area and help to protect access to the M1.

Leader of Leeds City Council Councillor Judith Blake said:

"It is very pleasing to see these works at Stourton as part of the initial element of phase two of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme completed.

"Similar measures introduced at Woodlesford for phase one proved effective during the Christmas floods of 2015, so these defences will help protect local businesses, safeguard jobs, and vitally offer reassurance and confidence that these improvements do work at a local level.

"These measures provide further protection for our city centre and for the South Bank area, with formal engineering elements supported by the impressive flexible barriers which can be deployed quickly whenever there is a flood threat. We are firmly committed to seeing all our communities and businesses along the River Aire catchment protected through measures like this, and will continue to make the case for the phase two plans."

On 26 December 2015, Leeds experienced significant and widespread flooding with some of the highest river levels ever recorded following Storm Eva. The flooding affected nearly 3,000 residential properties and nearly 700 commercial properties. 40 businesses in Stourton, between Thwaite Mills and the M1, were significantly affected by the floods.

Adrian Gill, area flood risk manager from the Environment Agency, said:

"The completion of these works is great news for the businesses that flooded in Stourton and for the people and communities who depend on them for the services and jobs they provide.

"Following the successful completion of Phase 1 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation scheme in October 2017, the Environment Agency is continuing to work closely with Leeds City Council to develop and deliver Phase 2 of the scheme, which will help to ensure that Leeds continues to be a great place to live, work and do business."

Towngate Plc is an industrial property agent that manages around a dozen commercial properties in the Stourton Industrial Estate. All of its tenants were impacted in the December floods.

Tom Lamb, property manager at Towngate Plc said:

"We were delighted when we were informed of the flood defence plans in Stourton. We understand that projects like this take a while to get off the ground and we were surprised at how quickly it took Leeds City Council and the Environment Agency to make the announcement.

"Since we have been able to tell our tenants about the plans, confidence in the area has boosted as many of our tenants' concerns will now be addressed. We hope this increased confidence will also continue to benefit businesses looking to move here, bringing with them more employment opportunities to the area."

The Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme is led by Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency and is split into two phases.

A big contribution to the flooding at Stourton was the breach of the river and canal at Knostrop. Stourton is located downstream of Phase 1 of the new Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme and at the time of Storm Eva, Phase 1 of the project was under construction, so it didn't provide any flood risk benefit to Stourton.

In October last year, the £50 million Phase 1 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation scheme was officially opened which now provides a 1 in 100 year standard of protection. During construction, there was a repair to Knostrop by-wash with strengthening works including sheet piles. Work also involved the construction of moveable weirs at Crown Point and Knostrop and the removal of a manmade island which separated the canal and river, known locally as Knostrop Cut. The weirs can be lowered when high river flows are expected, to help lower the river level. This work will help protect from another breach happening as it did on Boxing Day, and provide additional protection to Stourton.

The completion of work at Stourton comes as an outline business case for phase 2 of the scheme has been submitted to government, which outlines plans to reduce flood risk to the city upstream of the city centre, taking a catchment wide approach. Phase two identifies measures further upstream including the Kirkstall corridor which was badly hit by the 2015 Christmas floods. It also looks at areas beyond the city boundary to further reduce the possibility of the river flooding in Leeds, as well as additional measures to offer protection for the South Bank area of the city centre which is a key future economic driver for Leeds.

The phase two plans also have a strong focus on Natural Flood Management (NFM), with proposals to create new woodland areas which would more than double canopy coverage in the River Aire catchment. It also proposes water storage areas to be created and developed, operated by control gates system meaning water can be held and then released back into the river when safe to do so. A third element would be the removal of existing obstructions along the river to help reduce water levels, along with lowering the riverbed in places to improve its capacity and flow.

Aside from these measures, phase two would also see some new infrastructure measures installed including landscaping, terracing, embankments and walls,

but due to the range of natural measures the height of any engineered defences would not need to be as high as originally projected, typically averaging 1.2 to 1.5 metres in height.

If approved by the government, proposals for the main works of Phase 2, created by Leeds City Council working with the Environment Agency and BMM jV Limited, would see work scheduled to begin in summer 2019.