

# Press release: Tomorrow's office, today – Alun Cairns opens UK's first energy-positive office in Swansea

Buildings currently account for around 40% of UK energy consumption. This new building, known as the Active Office, points the way to a new generation of low-carbon offices which produce their own supply of clean energy.

The office will be opened by Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns. It was designed by SPECIFIC, a UK Innovation and Knowledge Centre led by Swansea University.

The Active Office combines a range of innovative technologies that will enable it to generate, store and release solar energy in one integrated system, including:

- A curved roof with integrated solar cells – showing the flexible nature of the laminated photovoltaic panel;
- A Photovoltaic Thermal system on the south facing wall – which is capable of generating both heat and electricity from the sun in one system
- Lithium ion batteries to store the electricity generated and a 2,000 litre water tank to store solar heat

The 'buildings as power stations' concept has already been shown to work. Right next to the Active Office is the Active Classroom, the UK's first energy-positive classroom. Also built by SPECIFIC, this was recently named Project of the Year by the RICS Wales. In its first year of operation, the Active Classroom generated more than one and half times the energy it consumed.

The Active Office and Classroom will be linked together and able to share energy with each other and electric vehicles, demonstrating how the concept could be applied in an energy-resilient solar-powered community. They will provide functional teaching and office spaces, as well as building-scale development facilities for SPECIFIC and its industry partners.

Energy positive buildings could benefit the UK significantly. A 2017 analysis showed that it would mean:

- Lower energy costs for the consumer
- Less need for peak central power generating capacity and associated reduction in stress on the National Grid, leading to improved energy security
- Reduced carbon emissions

The Active Office has been designed to be easy to reproduce. It is quick to build, taking only one week to assemble, with much of the construction taking

place off site. It also uses only technologies that are commercially available now, which means there is no reason why they could not be used on any new building.

**Kevin Bygate, chief operating officer of SPECIFIC, said:**

Offices are enormous consumers of energy, so turning them energy-positive has the potential to slash fuel bills and dramatically reduce their carbon emissions.

Turning our buildings into power stations is a concept that works, as the Active Classroom shows. This new building will enable us to get data and evidence on how it can be applied to an office, helping us refine the design further.

The Active Office is a first, but it isn't a one-off. It is quick to build using existing supply chains, and uses only materials that are already available. This is tomorrow's office, but it can be built today.

**Ian Campbell, Executive Chair of Innovate UK, said:**

It's difficult to overstate the potential of developing a building that powers itself. The concept could genuinely revolutionise not only the construction sector but completely change how we create and use energy, so the opening of the Active Office in Swansea is an exciting step forward.

Developing technologies like those demonstrated in the SPECIFIC Active Office can play a strong role in the Government's modern industrial strategy to create 'clean growth' and fulfil our mission to halve the emissions of new buildings by 2030.

**Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP, Secretary of State for Wales, said:**

I am delighted to open the Active Office, a living example of how a building can make a difference to us and our environment using innovative technologies –and equally importantly creating jobs in Wales.

Research and innovation has a proven track record to stimulate our economy. The UK Government has been a proud supporter of the project, and last year awarded £800,000 of funding towards it via Innovate UK.

The UK Government is ambitious for Swansea, and the Swansea Bay City Region deal is expected to deliver more than 9,000 jobs and £1.3billion of investment across the region.

I have no doubt that I'll be back to Swansea University in the near future because of the great strides they are taking in the science and research field which are being recognised around the world.

The Active Office was funded by Innovate UK, with support from Swansea University and the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government, and is sponsored by Tata Steel and Cisco.

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## **News story: Ruyter report published**

The MAIB report on the grounding of Ruyter on the north shore of Rathlin Island on 10 October 2017, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened and subsequent actions taken, [read more](#).

### **Press enquiries**

Press enquiries during office hours  
01932 440015

Press enquiries out of hours  
020 7944 4292

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## **Press release: PM meeting with Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha of Thailand: 20 June 2018**

The Prime Minister hosted Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha of Thailand for talks at Downing Street earlier today.

They welcomed the long history of friendship between the UK and Thailand, agreeing on the importance of reinvigorating our strategic partnership on issues of mutual interest, such as trade and security.

On trade, they agreed that as the UK leaves the EU our bilateral trade and investment relationship would continue to go from strength to strength. The PM welcomed the work of the UK-Thai Business Leadership Council in

identifying areas where bilateral trade could be further liberalised.

They discussed the importance of continuing to cooperate on a range of shared international security challenges, including how we can work together to tackle the scourge of modern slavery, and how to strengthen the ability of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to attribute chemical weapons attacks. They also discussed the importance of the international community continuing to come together to counter violent extremism and enhance cyber security, and to take forward efforts to tackle the illegal wildlife trade.

The Prime Minister urged continued progress towards free and open elections in Thailand in line with international standards, including restrictions on political parties being lifted at an early stage.

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## [Speech: ICC's Role to Achieve Justice for Victims in Darfur](#)

Thank you Mr President.

I would like to thank the Prosecutor for her 27th report on the situation in Darfur pursuant to Security Council resolution 1593 (2005), and for her briefing today. I would also like to commend her and her staff for their hard work and their dedication to these investigations.

The ICC has an important role to play in global efforts to end impunity for the most serious crimes of international concern and the United Kingdom fully supports its efforts to hold perpetrators to account and achieve justice for victims. We understand how difficult these investigations are proving to be for the prosecutor and her team and how disheartening that can be, but we encourage them to maintain their current level of commitment, as the victims and witnesses deserve nothing less.

Whilst the UK welcomes reductions in armed conflict between government forces and the armed opposition, we are concerned by the ongoing clashes between the Sudan Liberation Army – Abdel Wahid (SLA-AW) and government forces in the Jebel Marra region. Reports of villages being burnt, aerial bombardments, civilian casualties and displacements are particularly troubling. It is unacceptable that the Government of Sudan has prevented UNAMID and humanitarian actors from accessing areas of recent conflict, and we call on the Government to provide unfettered access immediately.

As the security situation shows signs of improvements in some parts of Darfur, small numbers of internally displaced persons are beginning to return to their area of origin. However many of these returns are short-lived and precarious due to localised insecurity, the occupation of lands by militias

and the absence of basic services, and we note that the Prosecutor's office is highly concerned for the fate of some of these IDPs. We are also concerned that the situation is particularly perilous for female IDPs given the ongoing prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence. The Government of Sudan, with the support of UNAMID and international donors, must focus its efforts on creating the conditions necessary for the safe and voluntary return of all IDPs, in accordance with applicable international law, as required by Security Council resolution 2363 (2017).

The continued lack of progress in the peace process is a cause for significant frustration. We urge all parties to engage meaningfully and to focus their efforts on implementing the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) Roadmap. Linked to this, the Government must ensure the protection of fundamental human rights, including freedom of expression and freedom of association, in order to create an environment conducive to political dialogue and democratic reform.

Mr President,

In adopting UN Security Council resolution 1593, this Council committed to support the Office of the Prosecutor in its efforts to investigate the situation in Darfur. We must therefore act upon the Prosecutor's request to the Council to take effective measures to enable the Court to carry out its mandate in Darfur, in particular asserting the need for all States to cooperate with the Office's investigations. In this regard, the United Kingdom looks forward to the Arria-formula meeting on UN Security Council-ICC relations on 6 July initiated by The Netherlands and co-sponsored by the UK and others. We encourage our fellow Member States to engage constructively with this meeting and to consider carefully what more we, as a Council, can do to ensure that the Court receives the necessary support. The United Kingdom joins those States which believe that the Council should consider steps that it might take to address non-compliance findings by the Court when these are referred to the Council by the Court's judges.

In this connection, the UK again calls on the Government of Sudan to fulfil its legal obligations pursuant to resolution 1593, to cooperate fully with the Court, and to arrest and surrender the suspects to it without further delay.

Mr President,

The United Kingdom continues to be frustrated that fugitives of the Court, including President Al-Bashir, Mr Harun and Mr Hussein, are still travelling to certain countries unhindered. For our part, the United Kingdom will continue to raise our concerns with the relevant governments, including through the European Union. We renew our call to all States Parties to cooperate with the ICC and abide by their obligations under the Rome Statute. We also urge them to consult the Court if they feel that they are unable to co-operate with it for any reason.

Finally Mr President,

We again thank the Office of the Prosecutor for its continued commitment to pursuing these investigations and achieving justice for victims in Darfur, despite the fragile security situation, access restrictions and lack of cooperation. We urge them to continue with this important work.

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