

Speech: Leader of the Commons addresses Institute for Government

Introduction

It's a great pleasure to be here this evening, to share with you my belief that this will be a cooperative and collegiate Parliament.

In spite of the, at times, very heated exchanges in the Chamber, which can oddly extend to my choice of clothing(!) –

I get on very well with Valerie Vaz, the Shadow Leader of the House.

And, the same is true for many front benchers, on all sides of the House.

The cut and thrust of debate in the chamber does not always reflect the efficient work going on 'behind the scenes'.

Where in fact, Val and I work closely on a number of House projects, and are both driven by a shared desire for a functioning parliament.

This gets to the very heart of what I would dearly like to see.

And that is a parliament that can work together for the good of the country.

Our late colleague, Jo Cox, was so right when she said, 'we have far more in common than that which divides us.'

The need to work together means that the Government will be listening, and taking into account all views right across the House.

It's often said that the Leader of the House of Commons has two jobs – that of Parliament's representative in Government, and Government's representative in Parliament.

So in the last two weeks, at the request of many different Members across the House:

- We got the Select Committees up and running early;
- I extended the second reading of the EU Withdrawal Bill;
- And provided government time for a debate on illegal traveller encampments, which again, is a topic of concern across the House.

These are all examples of where Members share common ground, and where my role helps to bridge Government and Parliament.

This is a historical time

Now, it won't have escaped anyone's notice that we, in parliament, will be incredibly busy over the coming years.

I suspect that the period between 2016 and 2022 will be the stuff of future PHDs and political textbooks –

And will no doubt shape the next phase in the history of our great country.

Very rarely does the opportunity come along to build on our longstanding principles of tolerance, democracy, and the rule of law – to seize fresh opportunities and forge partnerships with new and old friends alike.

These are exciting and challenging times, in a parliament of great opportunity.

And the job of this Parliament will be to deliver on the vision set out by Theresa May, of a country that works for everyone.

The Government's legislative agenda

So what does that mean for our legislative agenda?

Firstly, crucially, legislation that allows us to deliver a successful Brexit – providing continuity and paving the way for a prosperous future.

Secondly, tackling social injustice and discrimination, to improve life opportunities.

Thirdly, building an economy of higher skills, greater productivity and more rewarding jobs.

Fourthly, to strengthen the precious ties of our union.

And vitally, the fifth challenge is to continue tackling the threat of terrorism, and to keep our country safe.

The Queen's Speech set out an ambitious programme of 27 bills and draft bills.

And so to accommodate the workload of parliament, we have agreed an extended session, that takes us beyond the point at which we leave the European Union.

Brexit

Despite the different views expressed in the referendum, we all share a desire for the United Kingdom to succeed.

In leaving the EU, we will have:

- Control of our own money
- Control of our own laws
- Control of our borders
- And, as the Prime Minister has said, we will be a global leader in promoting free trade

And we have a very positive story to tell:

- The UK is the fifth largest economy in the world;
- Three of our Universities are in the World's Top 10;
- The UK's contract law is world-class, something that is critical for international business;
- The UK is the world's leading financial centre;
- And whilst we all know London is the best capital city in the world, it's been confirmed for several years in a row by the Global Power City Index.

There have been lots of unhelpful metaphors created in the wake of the referendum –

But I prefer to look at the evidence – and the evidence is encouraging.

Since June last year:

- Deutsche Bank have signed a 25 year commitment to a new London headquarters;
- Nissan and Toyota are all investing millions in production;
- Amazon and Google are both expanding their UK operations;
- And Apple, Dyson and ARM are just a few tech companies that have recommitted to their UK HQ's.

Business confidence is critical to our economy, and a strong economy is the only way to keep the excellent public services we all rely on.

So, passing Brexit legislation is a key step towards this new phase in our country's history.

And, I was delighted that this week, we made significant progress – both in passing the 2nd reading of the EU Withdrawal Bill –

And enabling the smooth functioning of parliamentary committees.

Domestic

But as the Prime Minister has made clear, this parliament is about so much more than just leaving the EU.

A strong economy and a fair society is at the heart of a country that works for everyone.

And we are bringing forward wide-ranging legislation to reflect this:

- Such as, new opportunities in emerging technologies;
- Better services for those struggling with mental health conditions;
- And greater support for our armed forces families.

As Chairman of the Parliamentary Business and Legislation Committee, which is known as PBL, it's my job to make sure legislation like this is ready.

You could call it the parliamentary Dragon's Den -giving the business managers and key cabinet colleagues the chance to stress test and scrutinise

all the legislation my colleagues plan to bring forward for introduction.

The level of scrutiny on the legislative programme is greater now than at any time in the last four decades.

My role isn't only to ensure Bills are shipshape – but to make sure they reflect the views of backbenchers, Select Committees, and that MPs know exactly what the legislation will achieve.

As a respected former Leader of the House Lord Young said in an interview with the IfG a couple of years ago – 'one of the lessons, if you are coming to PBL, is "don't wing it."'

Conclusion

Now, before I conclude my remarks, I want to come back to where I started.

The result of the general election is a parliament that quite simply must work together.

We have a huge task of delivering Brexit, and the opportunity to shape the kind of country we want to be after we leave the EU.

Frankly, the public do expect us to conduct our debates in a grown-up fashion.

I'm not suggesting for a moment that political disagreement will somehow fade away –

but I do hope Parliament can achieve proper debate, that reflects the seriousness of the task ahead.

So my message at this historic time is a very simple one:

The Government stands ready to listen and engage with all parties, to work in the best interests of the country.

There will be challenges ahead.

But we can all come together to work towards a stronger economy, a fairer society, and taking a central place on the world stage.

Speech: RESI Conference 2017

[Political content has been removed]

Thank you for inviting me today. It is an absolute pleasure to be here at Celtic Manor.

The last time I was here was with my family a few years ago for a weekend stay. Little did I know that four years later, I would be returning to speak to you at this brilliant venue as Housing and Planning Minister!

You will know better than I that over the past 5 years, there have been 5 planning Ministers. A bit like Doctor Who, I am the latest incarnation.

However, I very much hope to be in place for a decent length of time, to see through many of the reforms which are laid out in the Housing White Paper.

It is fair to say that it has not been the easiest of starts. The day after I was appointed, we had the terrible tragedy at Grenfell Tower.

Those terrible events have raised concerns right across the country. And have led many of us connected with housing to think very deeply about the issues that we need to address.

As you know, the Government is committed to making sure that we get help to those affected. I and other ministers, including the Secretary of State, meet regularly with the individuals affected to try to focus this help. We are ensuring that buildings across the country are safe.

We have carried out extensive tests, issued building owners with guidance on fire safety, announced an independent review of building regulations and fire safety led by Dame Judith Hackitt, and a full independent public inquiry into the tragedy is taking place. In headlines today there's a lot about the start of this.

I will also be meeting with and hearing from social housing tenants in the Grenfell area and up and down the country over the coming years to build up a full picture of some of the immediate issues facing tenants. And identify any common concerns that must inform a national approach.

I have already spoken with national tenant organisations to listen to their views and understand some of the main issues that may be raised.

I will be announcing further details about where I will be going, and when, very shortly.

But stepping back from that initial start and reflecting on what I have learned, what has been absolutely clear to me and that is that we absolutely need to build more homes. And faster. Whether the homes are to buy, or to rent.

We also need to improve the quality and design of those homes.

We need to change the public mind set towards new development.

We need to make sure individuals who need help to buy a home, get that help. And that housing, whether to buy or rent, is more affordable.

We need to support small and medium sized builders to access the market.

And, we need to encourage innovation and choice, and make sure that the skilled workforce that we need is in place to build homes at the rate that we want.

Above all, I believe that everyone should feel a sense of fairness about the housing market. Whether they are home buyers, or they are renting. And whether they are in the private or social sector.

To coin a phrase: we need a housing market which works for everyone.

Ahead of this Conference, the well-known publication Property Week, which is going to become part of my essential weekend reading, threw down a gauntlet listing what the industry wanted from me.

They wanted to me to do five things.

First, turn the Housing White Paper into action –I absolutely agree, that is precisely what my department is engaged in doing.

Second, I was asked to breathe down the necks of local authorities – I agree local authorities need to get their local plans in order. The Secretary of State will be making a statement to Parliament later this morning, setting out our plans to consult on an open and honest approach to assessing local housing need.

Thirdly, address the future of Help to Buy – again, I agree. The industry needs certainty.

Fourth, I've been asked to bang the drum for the construction industry and Brexit talks – yes, I very much understand the importance of access to the labour that you need.

And finally, I was told to be bold on the Greenbelt. As you know, the Housing White Paper is clear that Green Belt land can be released, but only in exceptional circumstances.

So there you have it. That could be the end of the speech.

But I guess you probably want a bit more detail.

So let's start with turning the White Paper into action. Our Manifesto made our commitment to delivering this clear.

We consulted on some of the proposals in the White Paper in May this year. As I said earlier, the Secretary of State will today set out plans to consult on proposals to agree on a clear, open and transparent approach to assessing local housing need.

This consultation will need to be read alongside our other White Paper proposals, so we will publish our combined consultation response early next year, alongside the draft new National Planning Policy Framework.

We believe the sum total of these changes will mean that plans will start

from an honest assessment of the need for new homes. More land and a more diverse range of sites will be brought forward in places that people want to live. And we want to see greater focus on getting sites built-out.

How many of you are developers – let's have a show of hands! And how many of you are connected with the private rented market in some way? And how many of you are financiers? And is there anyone in this room that has walked in by mistake and too embarrassed to leave?

Let's talk about the developers first. I believe that the Housing White Paper sets out lots of carrots for the development players. We have been vigorous in our promotion of our £3 billion Home Building Fund.

This provides £1 billion in loans for small and medium sized builders, custom builders and for offsite construction. And £2 billion of long term loan funding for infrastructure. It has proved extremely popular. Conversations that I have had with the industry suggest that this is precisely what people want.

Now obviously it is too early to see homes completed through this fund, but I am confident that over time it will unlock around 200,000 new homes.

So turning to the private rented sector, I believe the Housing White Paper has something for you connected with that sector as well. We will promote increases in new and quicker methods of quality construction, and increase in the number and quality of homes for private rent.

Many of you will have a crucial role to play in this. For example through increasing the numbers of build to rent homes.

My predecessors did sterling work getting this ball rolling, through the Montague Review. And the Government has supported the sector with funding.

You told us that planning is the biggest obstacle to moving forward. We've consulted on options to change planning policy on build to rent, and published those results last month.

People were positive about making the changes. Our next step will be to spell out the necessary changes in the revised NPPF.

And on build to rent finance, let's not forget we've done a lot already. We have put the Government balance sheet on the line by supporting build to rent schemes through our £3.5 billion PRS guarantee scheme. It is going from strength to strength and approvals have already topped £1 billion.

I recently visited Wembley Park in North West London, the biggest Build to Rent site in England. Here we have announced a £65 million infrastructure debt financing package for this site, under our Home Building Fund. This will help to unlock almost 7,000 quality new rented homes. Wembley Park is a great example of where we have been taking action to create a bigger and better private rental market. Boosting the choice and quality of homes on the market, and meeting the needs of renters.

This comes on top of a £39 million bond guarantee under the PRS guarantee scheme, for the first two PRS blocks at Wembley Park.

We hear that the market is ready to support far more build to rent. This is fantastic news, and we will support you in making this happen.

Although build to rent as a concept is relatively new in the UK, there is an opportunity to build on lessons from the established “multi-family housing” sector internationally. As you will know, the US is now delivering around 300 thousand multifamily homes every year.

But it took them 30 years to get there. We have the opportunity to develop the sector more quickly here, by welcoming international investment and hearing from others.

Having said that, I want to see more UK investors coming into this market as well. So we are listening to your concerns and tackling the problems.

For example, I know some of you have concerns that rent controls may destroy future markets. Let me be absolutely clear, under this Government rent controls are not going to happen.

Turning to local authorities, they have a crucial role to play in housing delivery, and we’ve set out the tools they need to deliver.

We launched a £2.3 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund in July this year, designed to support the infrastructure underpinning delivery of new homes. Infrastructure such as roads, healthcare centres and schools.

It will help ensure that more homes mean better, not more stretched, local infrastructure and community facilities.

This is an opportunity for local authorities to come forward with infrastructure proposals that show real ambition for the future. It will support local authorities to step up their plans for growth, release more land for housing and get homes built at pace and scale.

So far, I can tell you over 150 local authorities have applied. I want to encourage more local authorities to place their bids by the 28th September deadline.

Local authorities say they need more resources. So the Government is offering higher fees and new capacity funding to develop planning departments.

The White Paper outlined a 20% planning application fee increase for local authorities that commit to invest the additional fee income in their planning department.

All planning authorities have accepted, and we are bringing forward the necessary regulations in the autumn to apply the increase.

We are also minded to allow an increase of a further 20% for those authorities who are delivering the homes their communities need and we are

going to be consulting further on the detail of this as part of the local needs consultation.

What I have heard from the developers that I have talked to, both small and large, is that they welcome this as a way of speeding up decision making.

In response, I expect authorities to step up to the challenge of delivering more homes in their areas. There are currently 34 local authorities without a plan. And only a third have adopted a plan since the NPPF came out in 2012. Frankly, this just isn't good enough.

The winds of change are blowing.

And local people need certainty. They don't want speculative applications being approved because local authorities haven't planned properly.

We must also make sure that new homes being built are well designed, good quality and respond positively to the local context. We want to create places, buildings and spaces that work well for everyone.

We have suggested changing the NPPF so that local and neighbourhood plans are expected to set out clear design expectations. And community engagement in early design stages must also improve.

So coming now to the future of the Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme. From its launch in Spring 2013 until March this year, Help to Buy: Equity Loan has helped over 120,000 people purchase a new-build home. It also assists builders to build more homes.

It is a huge success.

As we said in the Housing White Paper, the government has committed £8.6 billion for the scheme to 2021, ensuring it continues to support homebuyers and stimulate housing supply.

We also recognise the need to create certainty for prospective home owners and developers beyond 2021 and so we are committed to working with the sector to consider the future of the scheme.

And so, on to Brexit – I don't think any speech would be complete without Brexit. In my discussions with fellow Ministers, I am making the construction industry's case. There are many issues. Not least supply chains and investment. But one of our key interests is in respect of skills, training and modern methods of construction.

Once again the White Paper set out plans to change the way the Government supports training in the construction industry.

We want to have the best arrangements to ensure strong industry leadership to address the skills challenge, and to diversify the housing market.

And actually it's really good to see so many of these themes reflected at this conference.

And frankly it is absolutely in the sector's interest to play a part in resolving the long-standing manpower and skills shortages.

I'm very pleased that the sector has committed to bringing forward 45,000 new skilled workers by 2019/20. But we need to see progress. In the same way that you have quite legitimately asked of Government in this area, we are asking of you.

Something that has struck me in recent weeks is that yours is an incredibly fragmented sector. There are very many layers of sub-contractors.

And I do wonder whether developers in the sector needs to think harder about employing people direct. Helping to ensure quality and providing an incentive to ensure the workforce is trained properly. And I can tell you from discussions I have had with developers, I know that some of them are thinking along these lines already. One of the other things that will help to speed up building is modern methods of construction.

Countries like Germany and Sweden are far ahead of us in realising the benefits of this.

I am encouraged that many sectors of the market are starting to embrace new technology – from some of the new Build to Rent apartment buildings to housing associations and small builders.

I recently visited – last week in fact – the Graven Hill development in Bicester, where I saw for myself custom built homes delivering greater choice for consumers. And modern methods of construction delivering entire homes much more quickly and cheaply. For me, the benefits were pretty clear.

The last challenge Property Week gave me was to be bolder on the Green Belt.

As I said earlier, the Housing White Paper does allow for development on the Green Belt.

However, I think it is important to say here that there is an onus on the sector to also recognise the legitimate concerns that people have about development on Green Belt land.

Good design is something that people are very concerned about, and it really does make a difference. And overall, changing minds about what new development looks and feels like is what is needed to create real change. Development must be something that local people welcome.

I mentioned earlier that I want to go further than the White Paper. We don't just expect more, and faster build out. We also expect quality.

Over the past couple of months, one fact in particular has really stood out to me. The latest housing survey carried out by the Home Builders Federation found that 84% of new home buyers would recommend their builder to a friend. This figure has fallen steadily from 90% four years ago.

This means 16% of new home buyers would not recommend their builder to a

friend.

In any other market, this would spell the end of the most poorly performing companies. We have seen this dynamic play out for some companies in the sector. But overall the sector has not really been impacted.

I want to see the quality of new homes, and levels of customer satisfaction, improve across the industry.

A new home is one of the largest financial commitments that people make. Home builders need to step up and make this a priority.

This includes making sure that, where something goes wrong, house builders and warranty providers fulfil their obligations to put this right.

There are mechanisms in place for redress – such as the Consumer Code for Home Builders – but these can be complex and don't always provide full coverage.

And those of you who follow what's happening in Parliament there is a growing number of calls for the Government to introduce a New Homes Ombudsman.

The HBF has commissioned an independent report to look at consumer protection in the new homes market. I will review all of the recommendations and suggestions that are coming forward through this report and from others with an interest in this area.

At the end of the day this is about providing fairness for new home owners. I know that many of you, as long term investors in rented housing, have a strong interest in the quality of what is being built.

You bear the long term consequences of how the properties you buy are built.

The Government also wants to see all tenants receiving a good, fair and affordable service from landlords and letting agents.

So we will publish a Bill to ban letting fees paid by tenants in England. I know many of you in the build to rent sector do not charge upfront fees to your customers.

But a ban will help to deliver a more competitive, more affordable and more transparent lettings market across the rest of the sector.

We are also committed to improving standards. In April we brought in tougher measures targeting rogue landlords, including civil penalties of up to £30,000 and an extension of rent repayment orders.

These powers give authorities the tools to crack down on the minority of landlords who disregard the law and take advantage of tenants.

They will also help address any lingering reputational issues for you and those interested in investing in build-to-rent.

We will go further over this Parliament and we intend to introduce a database of rogue landlords and property agents convicted of certain offences. There will also be banning orders for serious and prolific offenders.

So in conclusion, my remarks today have I hope provided you with an insight into what we are doing. And our direction of travel.

As we all know, everyone is affected by the housing crisis. Everyone has an interest in solving this problem.

This must be a combined effort between Government and the Sector.

And we need to ensure that we are bringing people with us, through encouraging good quality, well designed development that changes how people feel about new development.

The Government set out in February our strategy for fixing the broken housing market. This has not changed. It is vital to see through the job of implementing the excellent reforms, some of them longer term, which were set out in the White Paper.

However, the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower has shown us that there is much more to be done in the short term. The backdrop upon which we carry out our work has fundamentally changed.

We are taking the steps necessary to ensure that something like this can never happen again.

As I said at the start of this speech, we want a housing market which works for everyone.

The Prime Minister is committed to this. The Secretary of State is committed to this. And I am committed to this.

As the Housing and Planning Minister, let me give you a categorical reassurance that I will not rest until we have not only turned the White Paper into action. But gone further. Improving fairness, safety, standards and redress for all home owners and tenants. And of course building more high quality homes.

I ask for your support on this shared journey.

Speech: Lord O'Shaughnessy on medical technologies and Brexit

Introduction

Good morning, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today.

I would like to use the next few minutes to outline the government's commitment to the medtech sector, and then to set out the opportunities and challenges we face together as the UK prepares to leave the European Union.

UK medtech sector

We all know the medtech sector plays a vital role in the operation of the NHS, and the health of our population more widely.

As a government, and as ministers, we are deeply committed to helping you – and the wider life sciences sector – to flourish. It's good for your businesses, it's good for UK plc, and most of all it's good for patients in the NHS. The medtech sector is incredibly diverse, with over over 500,000 different products on the EU market, from hip replacements, pacemakers and MRI scanners, to spectacles and plasters.

As I'm sure many of you were, I was at the NHS Expo this week and saw incredibly exciting new technologies, from a device being trialed through an Academic Health Science Network to regulate brain temperature following cardiac arrest to a very simple heart rate monitor that could be used in anywhere from a GP's surgery to your local pharmacy to look for heart beat irregularities as a precursor to stroke.

There are also exciting new frontiers around medical software, 3D printing and companion diagnostic devices – which have the potential to revolutionise the provision of healthcare in the coming decades.

The UK has a rich history in this area. For example, Professor John Charnley pioneered hip replacement surgery in the greater Manchester area, and this legacy is embodied by J&J, who have their orthopaedic R&D centre and European high-value custom manufacturing base in Leeds.

Or look at Siemens Magnets, part of what was Oxford Instruments in Eynsham near Oxford. The company produce most of Siemens' high-field magnets, and export over £400 million of high-value goods every year.

So I don't think our problem is innovation in this country. We're a creative bunch, with both public and private investment ready to help. The real challenge is taking innovation, getting it into the NHS and spreading it through the system. This often involves re-engineering clinical pathways, with all the complexities that involves.

That is one reason I was delighted to announce yesterday that Abbott's Freestyle Libre product will be available on the NHS, a really transformative product that will change the lives of many diabetics. And that's what the NHS should be about – bringing life-changing technologies to patients faster than anywhere in the world.

Encouraging access and uptake is a challenge that we are aiming address in the government's response to the Accelerated Access Review, which I plan to publish by the end of October.

Please be assured that medtech plays a central role in our plans, not least because it can offer genuine cost-savings while also transforming outcomes. We have already shown our commitment in a range of programmes that I announced in July to help companies like yours to change more patients' lives in the NHS.

In addition, with the launch of Professor Sir John Bell's Life Sciences Industrial Strategy, we are listening to what this global sector believes we need as we look to secure the best possible future for Britain's life sciences. Work now starts on a sector deal and I look forward to collaborating with you to come up with a proposal that contains some real game changing ideas.

Brexit and devices regulation

Brexit offers a major opportunity to build on our existing strengths – and we should look upon the challenge both pragmatically and with optimism. There is a collective determination and will in government to make a success of exit from the EU.

In July at the BIA/MHRA Annual Conference, I set out the core principles that will underpin the government's approach to medicines regulation, trade and support for the life sciences sector in the UK:

- First: patients, whether in the UK or the EU must not be put at a disadvantage
- Second: the UK will continue to play a leading role promoting and ensuring public health – both in Europe and around the world
- Third: industry must be able to get their products into the UK market as quickly and simply as they do now, with the UK and Europe remaining at the forefront of medical innovation

Devices regulation

Let me start with the regulation of medtech, which is of importance to everyone in the room.

To reiterate the principles above, our top priority for life sciences during the negotiations is to protect the safety of patients and ensure the integrity of cross-European public health systems.

I want to give this promise: no matter what the outcome of the negotiations – on basic patient safety and public health issues – the UK will be, as it always has been, a willing and reliable partner for Europe.

This partnership is perhaps best illustrated by the leading role played by the UK in the recent negotiations of new EU regulations for medical devices and in-vitro diagnostic medical devices. The UK has already welcomed the new

requirements of these regulations to protect patients while encouraging innovation.

Notified bodies

The UK has also played a leading role in European-wide joint actions, most significantly to raise the standards and consistency of notified bodies, which has seen the number of notified bodies designated to approve medical devices for the EU market fall from around 80 to close to 50 in just 4 years.

While this has undoubtedly created more reassurance in our de-centralised regulatory system, any loss in capacity of third-party assessments, at a time when the new EU regulations will significantly increase demand, is not to be under-estimated.

The 5 UK notified bodies assess a disproportionate number of medical devices. According to a recent independent assessment of the market, UK notified bodies make up the first, third and fourth largest share of assessors, with the British Standards Institution alone having a remarkable 30% share of the European market. Furthermore, we estimate UK notified bodies oversee between 50 and 60% of all the highest-risk devices on the EU market.

We also host over 50% of the EU's authorised representatives for manufacturers based in third countries. We urge the EU to respond positively to the principles in our recent position paper on the availability of goods in the UK and EU markets – and prevent the risk of disruption that could negatively affect patients in the UK and across Europe.

It is also right to acknowledge that the UK's existing relationship with the EU is mutually beneficial. The MHRA plays a big role in this, but it is right too that we should acknowledge the benefits we have gained from the pan-EU burden sharing approach to medtech regulation.

This arrangement has allowed the UK and NHS patients to benefit from outstanding scientific expertise from across Europe.

Sharing this expertise across the EU has led to significant public health and safety improvements. Knowledge and innovation is not and cannot be exclusive to one country.

As the PM declared in her Lancaster House speech, and set out again in our recent position papers, ultimately, we want a deep and special partnership which allows the freest and most frictionless possible trade in goods. It is in the interests of both the UK and the EU that the UK's exit is as smooth and orderly as possible, with as little disruption and uncertainty as possible for UK and European business and patients.

Patients across the EU27 and the UK will be better served if together we continue the strong, effective technical collaboration that accelerates scientific advancement and ultimately benefits patient wellbeing.

And I know it is what industry wants too, which is why I am asking for your continued support in helping to achieve it. The recent letter from MedTech

Europe, ABHI and COCIR to Michel Barnier and David Davis was an important step, and I thank you for it. Now we need you to lobby for your views on what success looks like for both the UK and the EU27.

No deal scenario

A future partnership between the UK and EU is in the interests of both sides.

However, as with other departments, we will be prepared for both a negotiated settlement but also for the unlikely scenario in which no mutually satisfactory agreement can be reached.

Both the UK and the EU would of course cope with a no deal scenario, in our case we would ensure a regulatory system in the UK that protects the best interests of patients, and supports industry. This is not the outcome we are seeking, but our successful past should give us confidence in achieving a prosperous future, whatever form it takes.

I understand the specific legal and operational issues around implementing the new EU regulations, in light of Brexit.

Elements of the new regulations have been applied directly in UK law since May, meaning devices can now be legally placed on the UK market if they are in conformity with the new regulations, invoking all relevant requirements. As it stands, the EU (Withdrawal) Bill would maintain this position beyond March 2019.

I think it is important to make this clear for everyone involved in the sector, as your preparations to meet the requirements of the new EU regulations are already well underway. I hope this provides some certainty.

Trade

Regulation isn't our only consideration as we leave the EU.

The UK wants to see zero tariffs on trade in medtech and medicines, and to minimise the regulatory and market access barriers for medical research services.

We want to have a new customs agreement with the EU that supports these objectives, as set out in the paper on future customs arrangements, which was published in August. This is central to our principle of ensuring that UK companies have the maximum freedom to trade with and operate within European markets – and to let European businesses do the same in the UK.

The UK government wants such an arrangement to help make sure that devices and medicines reach patients when and where they need them and that product integrity is ensured.

The UK and EU have a shared objective in the negotiations: to protect the health of patients, and to ensure safe and timely access to devices and medicines.

We will also be ambitious in pursuing new trading relationships globally, to ensure that medical devices developed and manufactured in the UK can be exported to all corners of the planet. We will support global initiatives like the Medical Devices Single Audit Programme, which aims to minimise duplicative regulatory inspections of individual manufacturers – which burden industry without providing any real additional value. Equally vital to global trade is the global movement of people. I greatly value the contribution of those from the EU and around the world who work in our NHS and in our life sciences industry.

We recognise that medical research and development is a mobile, global business – and we want the best and the brightest, wherever they are from – to be able to study, work and innovate in the UK. Whatever nationality – we want Britain to attract the best and the brightest.

I want to assure you that as the Brexit process progresses, we will continue to work closely with industry and trade bodies, including the ABHI, to plan our policy for a prosperous future as a great, global trading nation.

Conclusion

I hope that by setting out our domestic policy commitment to the medtech sector, as well as setting out clear principles for Brexit and explaining the expected regulatory requirements for medtech in the UK, even in the absence of a deal with the EU, I have been able to demonstrate our significant support for the life sciences sector.

We have challenging but exciting times ahead of us, and we have a superb opportunity to reinforce the UK's position as a global centre of excellence for life sciences – collaborating and working closely with our partners in the EU and internationally.

I am proud that the government is able to work so closely with industry, and am pleased with the very positive level of engagement and debate that has occurred so far between us.

I am confident that the Life Science industry will be able to make the most of the opportunities offered by Brexit, and help reaffirm the UK's position as a global leader in this sector.

Thank you very much.

[Press release: UN Security Council agrees UK-led resolution on Colombia](#)

The United Nations Security Council has unanimously adopted a resolution

giving the mandate for a second UN mission to support the peace process in Colombia. The UK played a leading role in negotiating the resolution.

Sir Alan Duncan, Minister for Europe and the Americas, said:

I welcome the adoption of the new UN Security Council resolution, approving the continued presence of a UN Special Political Mission in Colombia.

The UK has played a privileged role leading negotiations toward agreement of this resolution, which will ensure continued UN support to Colombia's peace process. In its second phase, the UN mission will play a vital role in monitoring the transition of the new People's Alternative Revolutionary Forces (FARC) to civilian life.

This Mission will also help to monitor a crucial, temporary ceasefire between the Government and the National Liberation Army (ELN) announced by President Santos on 4 September.

The UK remains resolute in its support to peace and security in Colombia, and for efforts that ensure the safety of all Colombian citizens.

Policy paper: Statement of the Nuclear Decommissioning Funding Account for the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017

The Statement sets out the notional funding available from the consolidated fund for use by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) during 2016-17 on its activities, and the funding that the NDA drew down from the consolidated fund during that period.