

Statement to Parliament: Transport investment strategy

We have made significant progress in realising our ambitious plans for transport infrastructure, built on the investment of over £61 billion in the 5 year period to 2021. We have taken big decisions on transformational projects like HS2 and our preferred option for a new runway at Heathrow, and are part way through delivering major investment programmes to maintain and upgrade our road and rail networks.

I am today (5 July 2017) publishing a [Transport investment strategy](#), setting out how we will build on that progress and – through the investment decisions we go on to take – how we will respond realistically and pragmatically to today's challenges and deliver a transport network that works for everyone.

The decisions we take now will shape the transport network for decades to come and help to determine the contribution that transport can make to our national success and wellbeing. The 'Transport investment strategy' describes:

- what we are trying to achieve through our investment in transport infrastructure
- the priorities and propositions that will guide future investment decisions
- the institutional frameworks within which those decisions will be taken
- the actions we are taking to help meet our ambitions

I want our investment to:

- create a more reliable, less congested and better connected transport network that works for the users that rely on it
- build a stronger, more balanced economy by enhancing productivity and responding to local growth priorities
- enhance our global competitiveness by making Britain a more attractive place to trade and invest
- support the creation of new housing

As we shape and deliver the balanced investment programmes that deliver these objectives, we will be guided by a set of priorities and propositions that put the needs of transport users at the heart of decision making, whilst getting the best value out of the network and our investment, retaining a resolute focus on delivery and remaining adaptable in the face of change.

As part of the strategy I am announcing my intention to launch a consultation on the creation of a new Major Road Network (MRN) for the most important local authority A roads. This would mirror the success of the Strategic Road Network which has created planning and funding certainty for motorways and major dual carriageways, and would mean our most important local authority A roads were actively planned and managed to deliver a better service for

drivers. As part of this consultation, we will make proposals to allocate a proportion of the National Roads Fund to the MRN.

I am also determined that, through our investment, we should go further in helping to raise prosperity and productivity across the country. In the [Industrial strategy green paper](#), the government committed to taking account of the balance of spending per head between different regions. In addition, we will develop a new assessment standard that will require transport investment programmes to be judged on how they contribute towards the creation of a more balanced economy, as part of the assessment of their strategic case.

I have placed copies of the document in the libraries of both Houses.

[Government launches transport investment plan for Britain](#) press release, 5 July 2017.

[Press release: Welsh Secretary: Heathrow expansion is the right move for Wales](#)

Now is the time for Wales to seize the opportunities Heathrow expansion presents and to show the world that Britain is open for business.

This will be the clarion call from the Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns during a keynote speech to an audience of Welsh SMEs in Cardiff today (5 July).

The UK Government's preferred location for airport expansion was announced in October last year, signalling its commitment to supporting infrastructure projects for the next generation.

A new runway will improve connectivity in the UK itself and crucially boost Wales' connections with the rest of the world, supporting exports, trade and job opportunities.

Speaking at the Heathrow Business Summit at the Cardiff City Stadium, Alun Cairns will call for Wales to be at the "heart of the action" in the delivery of the £16billion project.

He will say "The close proximity of the majority of the Welsh population to Heathrow means that we will be able to maximise the commercial opportunities presented by this investment". He will add "it is of utmost importance that we provide support to such projects to strengthen the Welsh economy."

SMEs already play a crucial role in Heathrow's supply chain – with the airport spending over £1.5 billion annually with more than 1,200 suppliers from around the UK – and their role is set to grow with the expansion.

The Summit will give Welsh businesses a chance to cement relationships and forge new connections with some of the UK's largest suppliers which could also be leveraged for further work outside of Heathrow's expansion project.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns added:

From the commitment to cut the Severn Tolls to the construction of HMP Berwyn in Wrexham, the UK Government is committed to opening the infrastructure support channels to boost the Welsh economy. By supporting the construction of a new runway at Heathrow, we are sending a clear message to the world that the whole of Britain is open for business.

The airport's supply chain are in Cardiff in great force today, ready to build networks and partnerships with Welsh businesses.

I am confident that Wales will not disappoint. Expansion of Heathrow Airport is the right move for Welsh companies, for Welsh passengers and for our communities. Let's take full ownership of the opportunities this exciting project presents.

The Secretary of State will also take the opportunity to underline the importance of both UK and Welsh Governments working together to "address the issues that matter most to businesses in Wales" and that only a "joined up approach can drive forward our opportunity to take ownership of the opportunities presented by Heathrow. That process starts today."

[Press release: PM call with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi: 4 July 2017](#)

The Prime Minister spoke to His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, this afternoon.

She began by thanking him for the UAE's messages of condolence and solidarity after the recent terrorist attacks in the UK, and the tragedy at Grenfell Tower.

They agreed that the threat of terrorism and violent extremism is one we share, and that we must continue to work together to keep our people safe. In particular, they discussed the need to tackle terrorist financing and the

spread of extremist ideology on the internet.

They also committed to continuing to build on our close cooperation on trade and investment.

The PM raised the current situation in the Gulf. She reiterated the need for all sides to maintain dialogue and find a resolution that everyone can support to restore Gulf Cooperation Council unity.

She welcomed the extension that had been given to Qatar to respond to the concerns that were raised. She was clear the UK hopes to see engagement continue beyond the Qatari response and remains committed to supporting this process.

They agreed on the importance of Qatar working with its regional partners to combat terrorism and ensure stability in the Gulf.

[News story: Political talks update by Secretary of State \(4 July 2017\)](#)

Despite the progress made by the parties to restore devolved government in Northern Ireland, gaps remain.

Following discussions with the two largest parties and with the Irish Government this morning, it is clear that these issues cannot be resolved quickly enough to enable an Executive to be formed in the immediate term.

All parties have, however, emphasised their desire to remain engaged and to find a way to return to and resolve these issues. The Government welcomes this and will do all it can to work with the parties to achieve a successful outcome. But we will not forget our responsibilities to uphold political stability and good governance in Northern Ireland. I will reflect carefully in the coming days on any further steps which may be required to support the continued effective provision of public services in Northern Ireland.

The Government remains steadfast in its commitment to the Belfast Agreement and to governing in the interests of all parts of the community in Northern Ireland.

Our overriding priority remains to reach agreement on restoring an inclusive power-sharing Executive – which is what the overwhelming majority of people across the community in Northern Ireland want and what Northern Ireland needs.

[Press release: Business rates boost for broadband](#)

Homes and businesses across England are set to benefit from better broadband thanks to new laws introduced by the government today (4 July 2017).

The [Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill](#) is paving the way for a gold standard of full-fibre broadband and future 5G communications. By enabling 100% business rates relief for operators who install new fibre on their networks, the Bill will incentivise operators to invest in the broadband network.

By seeking to improve the speed, service quality, security and reliability of broadband services, the Bill has the potential to transform the way in which modern businesses work together, reach their consumers and target their export markets.

The benefits of better broadband will be felt wider than businesses. It will also increase internet speeds for households and enable households with multiple devices and users to download and upload huge amounts of data. For example, simultaneously streaming high definition TV and films, playing online games, and working from home quicker and more reliably than ever before.

These measures will provide important support for a more productive economy and boost the prospects for economic growth.

Minister for Local Government Marcus Jones said:

Regardless of where you live or work, we want everyone to benefit from access to the fast, affordable and reliable broadband they need to thrive.

From making it easier to work from home to allowing digital businesses to flourish, our measures are creating the right conditions for more high-skilled, high-paid jobs of the future.

We've already committed £400 million for new digital infrastructure fund and this government's Digital Strategy is helping bring together business organisations, local authorities and communications providers.

Now the Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill is going one step further to kick start the installation of new fibre, paving the way for better connectivity across the country.

Minister of State for Digital, Matt Hancock said:

We want Britain to remain the digital world leader that it is, and that means having the right infrastructure in place that will allow us keep up with the rapid advances in technology now and in the future.

We want to see more commercial investment in the gold standard connectivity that full-fibre provides, and the 100% business rate relief and the Digital Infrastructure investment fund will provide a strong incentive for this.

At the 2016 Autumn Statement, the government announced £1 billion of new funding to boost the UK's digital infrastructure. This includes investment of £400 million in a new Digital Infrastructure Investment Fund to support emerging fibre broadband providers.

Today's announcement builds on the recent, pioneering new Digital Strategy, which has skills, infrastructure and innovation at its heart to support Britain's world-leading digital economy.

As we make the most of the opportunities presented by exiting the European Union, it will help to make the UK the best place to start and run a digital business – creating more of the high-skilled, high-paid jobs of the future.

This 100% rate relief for new full fibre infrastructure in England will apply for 5 years and be backdated to 1 April 2017. The relief will provide £60 million of It will support to telecom companies who invest in their fibre network by installing new fibre lines to support our digital infrastructure.

[Read more information on the Bill.](#)