

Press release: UK-wide Industrial Strategy engagement tour continued in Yorkshire

- Business Secretary Greg Clark and Ministers hosted 100 business leaders at an Industrial Strategy evening reception in Leeds.
- Lord Prior of Brampton opened a new Metals Discovery Centre in Rotherham, Margot James chaired an Industrial Strategy roundtable with the IoD in Harrogate and Nick Hurd visited BASF, the largest chemical producer in the world, in Bradford.

The government's regional engagement programme for its Industrial Strategy continued last week (30 March) in Yorkshire, where business ministers met companies and workers from across the area to encourage them to contribute to the [consultation](#), which closes in just over 2 weeks.

The day culminated in an evening reception, hosted by Business Secretary Greg Clark and ministers, at KPMG in Leeds with over 100 businesses from a range of sectors in attendance. The reception gave ministers an opportunity to hear the views of Yorkshire's business community on how best to get the region's economy growing.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

A modern British Industrial Strategy must build on our strengths as a country and extend excellence into the future, closing the gap between the UK's most productive companies, industries, places and people.

Through our modern Industrial Strategy and Northern Powerhouse investment we are going to build on Yorkshire's unique strengths in industries such as offshore wind and specialist engineering, to make the region one of the most competitive areas in the UK to start and grow a business.

We launched our strategy as a green paper because we want this to be a conversation with businesses and employees. My ministerial team and I have visited sites all over Yorkshire to encourage businesses and workers alike to contribute and refine our vision.

Lord Prior of Brampton visited Rotherham's Advanced Manufacturing Park to open the Metals Discovery Centre, following a £10 million investment by metal and alloys company Metalysis. The company is launching its Materials Discovery Centre at the Park to expand its research and development capabilities, and once complete Metalysis hope to employ 100 people across its South Yorkshire sites.

Small Business and Consumer Minister Margot James was in Harrogate hosting an Industrial Strategy meeting with the Institute of Directors (IoD), discussing how the strategy can drive growth in the local economy. The minister then toured the Otley-based and family-run textiles company Marton Mills which has been producing a range of fabrics in the region since 1931.

In Bradford, Industry Minister Nick Hurd visited BASF, the largest chemical producer in the world, to learn about the company's international chemical operations and the local plans for the site. After this the minister hosted a meeting on Industrial Strategy with the manufacturing group EEF at the hydraulics company Oilgear UK in Leeds before meeting with the Leeds Local Enterprise Partnership.

The regional engagement follows the launch of the government's green paper, 'Building our Industrial Strategy', in January which outlined 10 pillars of focus to be discussed as part of a 12 week consultation period. The pillars cover a broad range of themes including skills, infrastructure, affordable energy and clean growth.

The strategy proposes plans for driving growth across the country, with a framework to build on local strengths and reduce regional disparities in opportunities and prosperity.

With a clear ambition of creating an economy that works for everyone, the green paper contains a number of proposed announcements set to benefit Yorkshire and the Humber such as:

- capitalising on our strengths in the modern energy market, like offshore wind, so businesses such as Siemens in Hull can win a substantial share of the global market
- building on the work of Transport for the North bringing together planning across the region to develop plans for a west-east rail link
- investing in skills so there are enough engineers in the region to support the thriving offshore industry

The government has issued an open invitation to industries, businesses and local groups in Yorkshire to visit the [Industrial Strategy consultation](#) and help set the priorities for a modern Industrial Strategy.

The consultation period has just over 2 weeks remaining, closing on April 17, after which the government will consider responses before publishing a white paper later in the year.

[Press release: New measures to unlock](#)

[brownfield land for thousands of homes](#)

Councils will have new tools to speed up development of derelict and underused land for new homes, Housing and Planning Minister Gavin Barwell confirmed today (3 April 2017).

Local authorities across the country will now have to produce and maintain up-to-date, publicly available registers of brownfield sites available for housing locally.

The new registers will help housebuilders identify suitable brownfield sites quickly, promising to unlock land for thousands of new homes.

Communities will be able to highlight local derelict or underused building sites that are primed for redevelopment. This can bring investment to the area and increase the number of new homes in the area.

As set out in the recently published [Housing White Paper](#), the registers are part of the government's ambitious programme to speed up house building, promote brownfield sites for development and release land to deliver many more new homes.

Housing and Planning Minister Gavin Barwell said:

We need to build more homes in this country so making sure that we re-use brownfield land is crucial. We want to bring life back to abandoned sites, create thousands more homes and help protect our valued countryside.

These new registers will give local authorities and developers the tools to do this.

Brownfield registers were first piloted in 2016, when 73 local planning authorities across the country pioneered the measures.

In addition, the £3 billion [Home Builders Fund](#) will be used to support the development of brownfield sites, with an additional £1.2 billion provided to unlock at least 30,000 Starter Homes on brownfield land.

Permission in principle

The government has also introduced a new way of obtaining planning permission through these new registers. It will make it easier for developers to deliver housing in the places where people want to live.

'Permission in principle' will simplify the planning process for developers. It will give them more certainty over whether a site is suitable for development ahead of working up costly proposals to obtain full planning permission. This will encourage new development and increase the amount of

land available to build on, helping to boost housing supply.

Further legislation will follow this year to roll-out 'permission in principle' more widely through the planning system.

Further information

The [government's response](#) to the technical consultation on the implementation of the Housing and Planning Act, chapters 2 and 3 on permission in principle and brownfield registers, has been published today.

The regulations implementing brownfield registers and permission in principle through brownfield registers have been laid in Parliament as part of secondary legislation relating to the Housing and Planning Act. They will come into force 21 days after being laid.

Statutory guidance for local authorities will follow to explain the role of brownfield registers and permission in principle in more detail.

[News story: University of Edinburgh to become centre of excellence for cyber security research](#)

- Scotland to get its first Academic Centre of Excellence in Cyber Security Research
- Edinburgh joins Warwick amongst 14 centres announced across the UK
- Cabinet Office: Research centres will ensure we build the capabilities to tackle cyber threats

Ben Gummer, Minister for the Cabinet Office, visited the University of Edinburgh to praise its efforts in becoming the first such centre in Scotland to gain the accolade – making it one of the leading establishments in this growing field of work.

Chosen from more than 20 applicants from across the UK, the 14 selected universities are:

- University of Birmingham
- University of Bristol
- University of Cambridge
- Lancaster University
- Imperial College London
- Royal Holloway University of London
- University College London

- Newcastle University
- University of Oxford
- Queen's University Belfast
- University of Southampton
- University of Surrey
- University of Warwick
- University of Edinburgh

As announced in the Government's [National Cyber Security Strategy](#) last year, Academic Centres of Excellence will specialise in developing the latest cyber security techniques and contribute to the UK's increased knowledge and capability in this field.

All are now recognised by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) – launched in February 2017 in London – as meeting the tough minimum standards required:

- commitment from the university's leadership team to support and invest in the university's cyber security research capacity and capability
- a critical mass of academic staff engaged in leading-edge cyber security research
- a proven track record of publishing high-impact cyber security research in leading academic journals and conferences
- sustained funding from a variety of sources to ensure the continuing financial viability of the research team's activities.

The NCSC looks forward to working with these 14 universities over the next five years to continue to grow UK academia's capacity and capability in cyber security research and to cement its position as an international leader in this area.

With NCSC-approved research moving into Scotland for the very first time at the University of Edinburgh, the Minister gave an address to students on the campus, and spoke to leading academics about their work.

Universities will have Centre of Excellence status for five years from June 2017 before assessments are carried out again.

Ben Gummer, Minister for the Cabinet Office & Paymaster General, said:

This Government is determined to make the UK the safest place in the world to live, work and do business online.

That is why we need truly ground-breaking research to stay one step ahead of the growing threat of cyber attacks. I am pleased to announce the University of Edinburgh as the latest academic institution to contribute their expertise to this vital field, joining thirteen other universities from around the country.

By engaging with business, industry and academia, we will ensure that we develop the skills and research we need to tackle this growing threat to the UK.

Chris Ensor, Deputy Director for Cyber Security Skills and Growth at the NCSC, said:

It's fantastic to see so many leading universities committed to trailblazing improvements to the UK's cyber security research, and it is particularly good to see Scotland represented for the first time.

At the NCSC, we are absolutely committed to maintaining and improving our already strong reputation as a global leader in cutting edge research, and look forward to collaborating with these establishments to make the UK the safest place to live and work online.

These universities conduct world-class cyber security research and this initiative will improve the way academics, government and business work together – benefiting the whole of the country.

Professor David Aspinall, of the University of Edinburgh's School of Informatics, said:

Cyber security and privacy is now an essential aspect of modern life which impacts the technology we see and use, as well as the behind-the-scenes technology we rely on that supports the physical and virtual infrastructures.

Our recognition as a centre of excellence will bring fresh impetus to our research, to help make the digital world safer for everyone.

Underpinned by £1.9 billion of investment, the National Cyber Security Strategy sets out the Government's key cyber security objectives:

- deter hostile action against the UK
- defend the UK against evolving cyber threats
- develop the cyber security industry, create a self-sustaining pipeline of talent into the UK

Investment into cyber security is almost doubling in order to meet the growing threat and to build the infrastructure necessary to put UK cyber security on a sustainable footing.

All universities which are recognised as an Academic Centre of Excellence in Cyber Security Research have met rigorous criteria which assess the quantity and quality of their researchers, their research output and the impact of their research. All of the successful universities have invested considerable capital – financial, intellectual, managerial, leadership and so on – over years to grow their capacity and capability to the point where they meet the standards for recognition.

The Universities of Edinburgh and Warwick join the list for the first time. The remaining 12 have all successfully had their applications for Academic Centre of Excellence status renewed since the scheme was first established in 2012.

The UK Government would be delighted to see more universities recognised as Academic Centres of Excellence and, to this end, the NCSC has committed to working with unsuccessful applicants to provide guidance and encouragement to help them work towards submitting another application in future years.

[Press release: Secretary of State visits HMP Onley to meet staff and see reform in action](#)

The Warwickshire-based establishment this week launched the Ricoh training centre at the prison, which will give offenders the opportunity to gain digital media qualifications and get a job with the firm on release.

This follows the successes of the prison's Halfords bicycle academy, which provides trainees with repair and maintenance skills. More than 30 offenders from the prison have gone to achieve employment with the company.

Rehabilitation is a crucial part of the Justice Secretary's Prisons and Courts Bill, which outlines that a key purpose of prisons is to reform offenders so they stop committing crime.

Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss said:

I have always been clear that as well as punishing offenders, our prisons must become places of safety and reform. We must do all we can to give prisoners the best chance to turn their lives around.

There is some fantastic work going on across the prison estate and I am delighted that the innovative schemes formed by the hardworking and dedicated staff at HMP Onley are having a positive impact on lives.

Tackling the risks of reoffending will help reduce the £15billion annual cost it has to society and reduce the turmoil faced by people who become victims of crime, therefore creating safer communities.

Since taking up post, the Justice Secretary has taken immediate action to boost safety, announcing £100m a year to recruit 2,500 prison officers to

bolster the frontline and increase staff numbers.

A further £10m has been invested for increased security measures in a number of prisons. HMP Onley received £160,000 and has used the money to increase CCTV and on the wings and bringing in staff with specialist security and safety training.

Staff at HMP Onley have built relationships with local businesses, such as Halfords and the Ricoh, to explore opportunities for prisoners to gain training and employment.

This is an example of governors being empowered to take control over how they run their establishments – a key commitment in the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper.

Notes to editors:

Progress made on key reforms so far includes:

Recruitment and retention

- boosting pay for hard-working staff by up to £5,000 at some of the most difficult-to-recruit prisons and those with high levels of staff-turnover
 - appointing 75 mentors for new starter prison officers to help them in their first few months in the job which we know can be a difficult time;
 - starting targeted local recruitment initiatives at 30 sites so that governors can more easily recruit the people they need;
 - launching a new Prison Officer apprenticeship scheme next year for over 1000 new officers that will help increase diversity and make it easier to join the prison service.
 - developing a new graduate scheme that will encourage people from a broader range of backgrounds to join the service;
 - we have set up a Troops to Officers scheme that will support people to join the prison service after leaving the military.
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News story: New water choice for English businesses

The world's biggest competitive water market officially opened on April 1st, which for the first time gives more than 1.2 million businesses, charities and public sector bodies the chance to choose their water provider wherever they are in the country.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom welcomed the launch of the market, which will deliver up to £200 million of benefits to the economy and water customers over the next 30 years, through improved service and better value for money.

By opening the market, companies ranging from businesses with very few employees to multinationals, as well as charities and public sector organisations, will be able to shop around for the best deal from all water utilities in England.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

Over a million businesses, charities and public sector organisations will now be able to find the water deal that works best for them. Opening the market is an historic milestone, paving the way for innovation and efficiency and giving customers the same choice over their water retailer as they currently have for their energy and other essential services.

Defra has worked with partners Ofwat, which will regulate the new market, and Market Operator Services Ltd (MOSL), which will operate the market on behalf of its water company members, to ensure there is a smooth transition for customers.

Ofwat Chief Executive Cathryn Ross said:

Business customers have been crying out for choice over their provider of water and waste water services for years. From today businesses, charities and public sector organisations in England will be able to choose their retailer to get a better deal.

The opening of the business retail market takes us into new territory. It is the single biggest change to the water sector since privatisation and I am hugely optimistic about the changes that lay ahead and the benefits they will bring to customers.

But it is important that we at Ofwat maintain effective oversight of how the new market is working and what customers are experiencing. This will mean that we can step in if we need to, to

make sure customers are protected.

MOSL Chief Executive Ben Jeffs said:

This launch marks the successful delivery of the largest and most complicated transformation programmes undertaken by the water sector since privatisation. Delivering a programme of this scale and complexity has involved a huge team effort across Government, Ofwat and the entire industry.

Competition not only offers non-household customers the prospect of a better price for a better service, it will create new opportunities and challenges for the sector as a whole. The level of engagement we have had to date has been exemplary and, as the market operator, we look forward to working with companies to ensure the new market delivers on its promise to customers.

The new market in England now becomes the biggest of its kind in the world and Defra will continue to support the water sector as the market develops.

Scotland is the only other country with a competitive water market for businesses and this government has been working closely with its Scottish partners in the lead-up to the opening to draw from their learnings and expertise.

Businesses, charities or public sector organisations interested in changing their water retailer should shop around. There is more information available about available water retail suppliers on the [Open Water website](#).