

# [Press release: UK confirms new support to World Bank after Securing Key reforms](#)

As a result of UK lobbying, the World Bank Group has committed to focus significantly more of its resources on poorer countries, increasing from 63% to 70% by 2030, while ensuring richer countries will pay more to borrow.

The UK is to commit more money, \$547m (approx.) over five years to the World Bank alongside a wider package of agreed reforms. These will include the World Bank Group making efficiency savings of \$1.8bn by 2030, through pay restraints.

Historically, each \$1 shareholders have invested in the World Bank Group has delivered up to \$50 in financing for governments and businesses in developing countries, making it excellent value for money.

The World Bank has a track record of immunising children, getting them fed and educated. Between 2017 and 2020 the World Bank Group is expected to train and recruit 10 million teachers and vaccinate 180 million children.

International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt, the UK Governor to the World Bank, said:

It is in all our interests to make sure the World Bank Group is in the right shape to tackle the global challenges of today and of the future.

This crucial, landmark agreement between the Bank, and the international community, will increase lending to some of the poorest countries in the world to deliver better, sustainable health provision, education and jobs to those who need them most.

## **Notes to editors**

- The UK is to commit more money \$547m (approx.) over five years
- As a result of UK lobbying, the World Bank Group has committed to focus significantly more of its resources on poorer countries, increasing from 63% to 70% by 2030.

## **General media queries**

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## [West End roads and pavements improvements 2018/19](#)



The City Council released information last week about the roads and pavements it intends to resurface over the current financial year.

In the West End, these are as follows :

### **Adopted Footway Programme 2018-19**

**Milnbank Road (Rosefield Street to Easson's Angle, both sides)  
Minto Place (East leg, East & North sides)**

### **Unadopted Footway Programme 2018-19**

**Glamis Drive (West End only)  
Menziesshill Road (South footway)  
Oxford Street (East footway)**

### **Non-Adopted Asset Programme 2018-19**

**Balgay Park (Various footpaths)**  
**Ninewells Avenue (Both paths Perth Road to Ninewells Drive)**  
**Pentland Avenue Steps**

### **Carriageway Programme 2018-19**

#### **Tullideph Road (Lochee Road to Ancrum Road)**

As I indicated in the Courier last week, I welcome any resurfacing or other improvements to our roads and pavements in the city but there has to be a real debate across the council about the long-term as what the council does not say in its publicity about this is that there has been a real terms cut in funding for resurfacing this year.

The adopted carriageway budget has been reduced by 20% from £3.095m (2017/18) to £2.5m (2018/19).

The adopted footway programme is on a second year of budget reduction from £630k (2016/17) to £500k (2018/19).

Councils face significant financial challenges but the bottom line is that there needs to be discussion about reinstating capital programme for roads and pavements in future years if there is not to be deterioration of the roads and footpaths estate as a whole across the city.

I particularly welcome further progress with tackling unadopted footways including parts of Glamis Drive, Menzieshill Road and Oxford Street in the West End but it is vital that roads and pavement programmes as a whole are given sufficient capital investment going forward.

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## **[DGIP visits Middle East to promote Hong Kong's unique business advantages](#)**

The Director-General of Investment Promotion, Mr Stephen Phillips, today (April 22) embarked on a five-day duty visit to the Middle East aimed at engaging with the regional business community and entrepreneurs to keep them abreast of the latest business advantages Hong Kong has to offer.

The visit covers three countries in the region, namely the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, where Mr Phillips will meet with a diverse range of business and government leaders in technology, financial and professional services, banking and retail.

He will also meet with officials of Dubai's government-funded FinTech Hive, a 12-week accelerator programme designed to nurture financial technology start-ups in the region. In Kuwait, Mr Phillips will attend a business event co-organised by Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) and the Kuwait

Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Mr Phillips said, “Hong Kong and the Middle East region have a strong and growing bilateral relationship based on common economic interests. We are exploring opportunities to collaborate across various sectors of mutual interest including new and traditional energy, infrastructure, manufacturing, technology and finance.

“With the accelerated growth of our economies and our common vision for partnership, we see tremendous opportunity in working together to support our development plans and to contribute to the broader global economy.

“Hong Kong is not only a major financial and business hub in Asia with close proximity to the huge Mainland market – new opportunities abound in areas such as innovation and technology, creative industries, smart city, financial technology and biological technology. Hong Kong will offer Middle East companies and entrepreneurs looking to expand in Asia a solid platform to grow their business globally.”

During his visit, Mr Philips will also update the Middle East business community on Hong Kong’s latest tax incentives such as the new two-tier profits tax regime and various concessionary tax rates relating to corporate treasury centres and aircraft leasing.

About InvestHK

Invest Hong Kong is the department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government to attract foreign direct investment and support overseas and Mainland businesses to set up or expand in Hong Kong. It provides free advice and customised services for overseas and Mainland companies enrolled as its clients. For more information, please visit [www.investhk.gov.hk](http://www.investhk.gov.hk).

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## **HK Public Libraries, marking World Book Day, urges public to discover and share the joy of reading (with photos)**

To encourage members of the public to discover and share the joy of reading and to tie in with World Book Day, the Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) held a series of vibrant activities at the Hong Kong Central Library today (April 22). These included the Fun at Central Library fun day as well as the Sign Up Ceremony of Reading Charter cum Prize Presentation Ceremony of 4.23 World Book Day Creative Competition. The HKPL also announced that a short video competition will be launched at the end of April to encourage the public to share their experiences and the joy of reading. These activities are part of

the programmes in a reading-for-all campaign, themed “Discover and Share the Joy of Reading”, jointly launched by the LCSD, the Education Bureau and the Information Services Department.

The first-ever Fun at Central Library fun day marked the start of the series of library activities, enabling members of the public to have a unique and extraordinary library experience. Participants took in a rich array of programmes and the library was filled with fun and joy. Visitors were attracted by the exhibitions “Discovery of Conservation Tools” and “Discover Hong Kong in Miniatures”, and enjoyed musical performances and “music on demand”, storytelling workshops and various games. Display boards featuring a mascot specially designed for the reading-for-all campaign and other photo-taking spots on different floors were also popular with families. Children were eager to colour the mascot on the sheets printed with its image. Other highlights included a thematic storytelling session, book repair workshops, saxophone performances by the Chief Music Officer of the LCSD and a chief librarian, acting as “Auntie Hippo”, reading stories to children.

During the Sign Up Ceremony of Reading Charter cum Prize Presentation Ceremony of 4.23 World Book Day Creative Competition, the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services, Ms Michelle Li, and the Under Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, signed the Reading Charter together with participating guests, school representatives, parents and students – about 300 participants in total – and invited the public to make a pledge on reading. The Reading Charter encourages the public, in particular students, to establish a good habit and enjoy the pleasure of reading by promising to achieve a reading goal. From today to May 8, members of the public can sign the Reading Charter on the HKPL website or via the “My Library” mobile app and receive a souvenir.

Speaking at the ceremony, Ms Li said the theme “My Library” was adopted for this year’s 4.23 World Book Day Creative Competition. While reading and writing for the competition, participants are encouraged to make the best use of the free and highly accessible services of the public libraries to share in the joy of reading. Ms Li noted that the competition received an overwhelming response this year, with over 1 800 entries from more than 200 schools.

She added that to promote reading in the community, the HKPL plans to launch a three-month trial scheme this summer extending the opening hours of three public libraries of different tiers on Sundays and public holidays during which the libraries have higher usage. Public demand during the public libraries’ extended opening hours will be evaluated. After considering factors such as the library usage data, the public demand for services and the availability of ancillary facilities, Ping Shan Tin Shui Wai Public Library in the New Territories, Lai Chi Kok Public Library in Kowloon and Smithfield Public Library on Hong Kong Island were selected for the scheme.

In addition, the LCSD has commissioned a media partner to organise the Reading KOL video competition with the support of the Education Bureau. The competition, opening for application at the end of April, will consist of three categories targeting primary students, secondary students and the

general public. Participants are encouraged to present their experiences and the joy of reading in a creative manner through videos, each within two minutes, with no restrictions on the presentation format.

More interesting activities have been organised by various public libraries to promote reading at the district level, such as the Our Libraries @ Southern District Reading Fun Day held today at the Amphitheatre of Stanley Plaza in Southern District. Other activities, such as thematic storytelling workshops and the “Meet-the-Authors” talk series, welcome public participation. HKPL users who borrow library materials from April 21 to 25 will receive souvenirs on a first come, first served basis while stocks last.

Winning works from the 4.23 World Book Day Creative Competition will be displayed at the Exhibition Gallery of the Hong Kong Central Library from April 28 to May 8, followed by a roving exhibition at 19 public libraries. The winning works will also be uploaded to [www.hkpl.gov.hk/en/extension-activities/event-category/23428/4-23-world-book-day](http://www.hkpl.gov.hk/en/extension-activities/event-category/23428/4-23-world-book-day). This creative competition is part of the ongoing collaboration and exchange programme with the Shenzhen Children’s Library, the Sun Yat-sen Library of Guangdong Province and the Macao Public Library, which have also organised competitions under the same theme. The winning works will be displayed in their respective libraries.

Other guests attending the ceremony today included the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hong Kong Education City Limited, Mr Sunny Lee; the Chairman of the Hong Kong Publishing Federation Limited, Dr Lee Ka-kui; the President of the Hong Kong Teacher-Librarians’ Association, Ms Karen Ip; the President of the Hong Kong Reading Association, Dr Lornita Wong; the Marketing Manager (Exhibitions) of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Ms Winny Siu; and representatives from the Shenzhen Children’s Library.







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## Globalists versus Little Europeans

How many more times do we have to debate staying in the Customs union? The Commons has twice had important lively debates, and has twice voted decisively to leave the Customs Union in accordance with the views of both the Remain and Leave campaigns in the referendum that we would have to or want to. The amendment to the EU Withdrawal Bill in the Commons to keep us in the customs union was defeated by 322 votes to 99. The proposed amendment to the Queen's speech debate along similar lines was rejected by a similar margin. The whole Bill without customs union membership was approved by 324 to 295.

Remain always wanted to make the referendum a debate just about trade. Leave countered that it was a debate about something much bigger. It was a debate about democracy itself, and who is in charge. We voted leave to take back control of our money, our borders, our laws, and yes also our trade policy. In the referendum debates I always stressed both that it was in the EU's interest to accept the UK's likely offer of a free trade deal, and that they might nonetheless decide to self harm. Given the imbalance in trade and the fact that tariffs are only high on agriculture, the UK could do just fine on WTO terms.

The trade debate itself is one between Little Europeans and Globalists. The Remain case was always contradictory. They say that WTO terms on UK/ EU trade would be deeply damaging to the UK, but our bigger trade with the faster growing rest of the world on WTO terms was just fine! Remain decided to grossly exaggerate possible adverse effects of agricultural tariffs on the UK, a net importer, and ignore them on the rest of the EU, the net exporter! During our membership of the CAP and CFP we have lost market share and ended up as heavy importers. Meanwhile we are banned from buying cheaper imports from non EU sources, where they make us impose large tariffs.

We globalists constantly pointed out in the referendum that the EU Customs Union was a nasty set of restrictions on our trade with the rest of the world. They are especially damaging to poorer countries who would like to

sell us their food at good prices but face large tariff walls. The Leave side had its own debate between those who think like me we should bargain away some of these tariffs for free trade deals with many countries, and those who wished unilaterally to sweep away many of the food tariffs and go for cheaper food straight away.

I find it difficult to accept another Groundhog day where the Remain politicians and media wish to relaunch their incoherent Little European approach to trade, and wish to reinforce the EU's aggressive stance against food producing poor countries. Giving a bit more aid is no substitute for trade which could help lift the incomes of poorer countries more quickly.

I am a globalist in this debate. It is better for the emerging countries. It is also better for UK farms and fishermen, who will recapture market share from the continent when we leave properly.