

Press release: Business Advisory Group: political stability vital for strong economy

The Secretary of State restated the Government's commitment to returning devolved power-sharing government to Northern Ireland as soon as possible, providing attendees with an update on the current political situation; and discussed the UK Government's Industrial Strategy.

The session was the latest in a series of meetings to help businesses engage with UK Government and provide input on a range of strategic economic and business critical issues facing Northern Ireland, including developing skills, upgrading infrastructure, improving procurement and delivering affordable energy and clean growth. Mr Brokenshire also led members in a discussion on the opportunities presented by leaving the EU.

The meeting followed another round-table on the Industrial Strategy yesterday, chaired by Lord Dunlop and BEIS Minister, Lord Prior, in London, which focused on trade and inward investment, cultivating world leading sectors, driving growth across the whole country and creating the right institutions to bring together sectors and places.

Speaking after the meeting, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Political stability is a fundamental basis for industrial success. Securing strong, stable devolved institutions in Northern Ireland that will provide leadership, support innovation and boost skills will be integral to delivering on Northern Ireland's potential as a place to invest and do business.

It is, therefore, vital that devolved government is returned to Northern Ireland as soon as possible and the Government's clear focus is on achieving that.

The Industrial Strategy is a key part of this Government's plan to drive growth across the whole United Kingdom and create more highly-skilled, highly-paid jobs and opportunities. A strong skills system will drive increases in productivity and improvements in social mobility, putting in place enduring reforms so that everyone has a chance to achieve their full potential in the workplace.

I urged members to use their influence to encourage political

parties to deliver a functioning and effective Executive so we can continue to build an economy that works for everyone.

The Secretary of State and his Ministers have now engaged with local businesses on all ten pillars of the Industrial Strategy and will be reflecting the Northern Ireland views to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy when the formal consultation closes in a little under two weeks.