

News story: Defence Secretary meets with counterparts at Singapore's Shangri-la Dialogue

At the conference, Secretary Williamson held a number of bilateral meetings with his counterparts from the region including Vietnam, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, Philippines, Sri Lanka, New Zealand and Singapore.

During his meeting with Singapore Defence Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen, Secretary Williamson signed a Memorandum of Understanding that aimed to strengthen the deep and broad defence and security relationship the two countries enjoyed. Secretary Williamson also delivered an address at the plenary session of the conference entitled 'Raising the bar for regional security cooperation' where he emphasised the UK's commitment to regional security cooperation and its robust support of a rules based international order.

To conclude his visit to Singapore, Secretary Williamson hosted Singaporean and international media representatives on-board the Royal Navy's HMS Sutherland where he spoke about the UK's commitment to enforcing international sanctions against North Korea; the Five Power Defence Arrangements and to ensuring free navigation in international waters.



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Reference:

- About [the International Institute of Strategic Studies](#)
 - About [the Shangri-La Dialogue](#)
 - [Speeches delivered at the Shangri-La Dialogue](#)
 - [Defence Secretary outlines plans for Indo-Pacific security at global summit](#)
 - About [HMS Sutherland](#)
 - Secretary Williamson's plenary session speech:
 - [Secretary Williamson's plenary session speech \(Video\)](#)
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Press release: Independent review of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) launches call for evidence

The independent review of the Financial Reporting Council has today (6 June 2018) launched a [call for evidence](#).

The review, led by Sir John Kingman, is keen to hear from stakeholders on a range of themes including its:

- role and purpose
- effectiveness and its powers
- potential role in preventing corporate failure
- legal status and relationship with the Government
- governance and leadership.

Sir John Kingman said:

The FRC's work is critical to financial markets, the economy and public confidence. Trust, quality and credibility are the questions at the heart of today's consultation.

The review wants to hear the widest possible range of views on how the regulatory system can best deliver for the future.

The call for evidence builds on the framework set out by [the review's terms of reference](#), and the consultation period closes on 6 August 2018.

[Respond to the Call for Evidence](#)

The review by Sir John is supported by an advisory group, announced on 18 May 2018, which is responsible for scrutinising and challenging the review's findings and recommendations, as well as advising on the direction of the review and its sources of evidence.

News story: Transport Secretary and Rail Minister meet MPs from across country to tackle rail disruption

- tackling unacceptable rail timetable issues and improving services top priority for Transport Secretary
- passengers to be compensated for disruption
- full independent inquiry into train companies' preparation for timetable change to begin

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling and Rail Minister Jo Johnson met with more than 50 MPs yesterday (5 June 2018) to hear about the serious issues faced by passengers affected by disruption following the introduction of new rail timetables.

Ministers met with every MP who requested a meeting to discuss the difficulties faced by their constituents on routes operated by Northern Rail and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR).

The Transport Secretary made clear that the rail industry had collectively failed the passengers it serves and that train companies had not raised any warning that they were not properly prepared for the timetable change. Mr Grayling also set out plans for the rail industry to compensate people who have been affected.

Ministers took immediate action on this issue once problems became clear as the timetable came into effect on 20 May 2018. The Transport Secretary announced that Northern were implementing a recovery plan, including extra services and increased driver training, on Wednesday 23 May before leading discussions the following day with northern leaders including Transport for the North, who jointly oversee the Northern franchise through the Rail North Partnership.

The Rail Minister met with Network Rail in Milton Keynes on Monday 4 June to discuss progress on improving services following the introduction of emergency timetables that day. However, it will take time to recover as there are a number of issues to be worked through by train companies and Network Rail.

Transport ministers continue to hold regular discussions with the leaders of Network Rail, Northern and GTR to drive improvements and those organisations will be meeting with MPs this week to discuss the issue.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

My absolute priority is ensuring the unacceptable service levels on Northern and GTR are put right, and that people whose lives are being seriously impacted see the urgent improvements they deserve.

I have listened to MPs and share their concerns that the industry has badly failed its passengers. As I made clear, I will not hesitate to take serious action if operators are found to be in breach of their franchise agreement.

The experiences and frustrations of passengers will be front and centre of my daily discussions with the industry, and we are committed to ensuring they are rightly compensated for the disruption they have experienced.

Details on compensation for passengers will be set out by the industry soon. Work has also begun to establish an independently chaired inquiry into the handling of the timetable implementation by the train operating companies. The Department for Transport will also assess whether GTR and Northern met their contractual obligations during this process.

The Secretary of State has been clear that should the inquiry find evidence of negligent behaviour he will not hesitate in taking action – which could include stripping operators of the franchise.

Rail media enquiries

Media enquiries
020 7944 3021

Out of hours media enquiries
020 7944 4292

Switchboard
0300 330 3000

[News story: All Change: Where next for](#)

Apprenticeships

Learning and Work Institute (L&W) have published a collection of essays contributing to the apprenticeships debate – including a winning essay from digital marketing apprentice Dexter Hutchings, from the Edge Foundation, amongst those being published.

Dexter, a member of the Young Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network (YAAN) in the South East wrote one of six essays submitted by apprentices, and his winning essay was shared at an event held yesterday (4 June), bringing together the thoughts of leading thinkers and organisations on how the quality of apprenticeships and widening access to them.

Titled 'All Change: Where next for Apprenticeships', the collection includes contributions from authors, including Jo Maher, Principal and Chief Executive at Boston College; Annie Peate, Education and Skills Policy Advisor at the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB); Jeremy Crook, Chief Executive at the Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG) and Jan Tregelles, Chief Executive of Mencap, amongst others.

Authors recognise the generational challenge to grow prosperity and make sure everyone has the chance to make the most of their talents; highlighting how apprenticeships have the potential to make a real difference, whilst harnessing the enthusiasm for apprenticeships from employers, providers and individuals.

Dexter's winning essay features in the apprentice voice section – with content from other apprentices from a cross section of industry, outlining their individual journeys, the impact of recent reforms and their views on what they've gone through during their apprenticeship.

Keith Smith, Director, Apprenticeships Group, ESFA said:

I read with interest the views of authors contributing to this piece of research and having their support is important so that we can continue to convey the positive messaging around apprenticeships and their impact on individuals and employers alike. It is great to hear the views and thinking of an apprentice. Congratulations to Dexter on having a winning essay he clearly understands the apprenticeship journey and it is great that he has got involved and shared his experiences.

We are striving to achieve excellence in apprenticeships and through reforms, including the introduction of the apprenticeship levy. We are putting apprenticeships in the hands of employers – giving them the opportunity to shape the skills they need, not only for their own business but for local, regional and national skills needs – making more of them available to individuals such as

Dexter.

The Learning and Work Institute have launched this essay collection at yesterday's event, hosted by Robert Halfon MP, where he also introduced contributions from Gordon Marsden MP, Shadow Skills Minister, and a number of other essay authors. The essay collection is available to view on the [L&W website](#).

News story: Joint Ministerial Council (Gibraltar EU Negotiations) 5 June 2018

The UK and Gibraltar have confirmed their commitment to continue to work together to achieve a Brexit deal that fully recognises the priorities of the Rock.

At the latest Joint Ministerial Council (Gibraltar EU Negotiations) in London today, which was chaired by Minister at the Department for Exiting the EU, Robin Walker, and attended by the Chief Minister for Gibraltar Fabian Picardo and his team, Ministers agreed to continue to fully involve Gibraltar in the UK's negotiations with the EU.

They discussed the practical implications of our EU Withdrawal for Gibraltar. Officials from across Government provided an update on developments in the reciprocal package announced at the 8 March JMC, including on the issue of access to higher education and on further building on existing health cooperation.

Following the meeting, Minister Robin Walker said:

It was a pleasure meeting with Chief Minister Fabian Picardo and his team today for the seventh JMC GEN.

We spoke at length about the key issues facing both the UK and Gibraltar as we leave the EU and reaffirmed the continued commitment of the UK Government to represent the best interests of the entire UK family, including our friends in Gibraltar.

We look forward to continuing our constructive partnership over the coming months, years and beyond.

Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo said:

It is a genuine pleasure to continue working with Robin Walker on the Brexit issues that he has responsibility for at the Department for Exiting the European Union and which are relevant to Gibraltar. Through DExEU we are engaging with the whole of Whitehall on matters which will have a positive impact in Gibraltar in coming years and which affect all parts of our economic activity as we prepare to leave the European Union with the United Kingdom next March.