

Speech: PM speech at London Fashion Week reception: 18 September 2018

Thank you Stephanie and welcome everyone. I am truly delighted to be hosting this reception to celebrate London Fashion Week.

I want to thank Stephanie Phair, Caroline Rush – and everyone at the British Fashion Council – for their fantastic work in championing British fashion and London Fashion Week. And of course the designers, the models, the assistants, the set designers and all those without whom it would not be such a success.

For years – London Fashion Week has showcased not just the big well-known names in British fashion, but also the – often brilliant – up and coming talent.

That is what has always made London stand out. That is what has always given this city's fashion business the leading edge.

And I am delighted that this year we have designers such as Malene Oddershede Bach and Victoria Beckham showing in London for the first time.

British fashion, as Stephanie just said, is serious business. Some of our biggest names are known the world over – Stella McCartney, Burberry, Mulberry. The industry as a whole contributes £32 billion to our economy, employs over 890,000 people, and totals billions of pounds worth of exports.

But if I am honest, we have all got a job to do, which is about getting that message out to people – about how valuable fashion is to the British economy as a whole, about how many jobs are involved in the British fashion industry and what it means to our economy.

We are home to some of the world's finest fashion colleges. Our designers sit at the helm of global brands. And we lead the world in design and digital innovation – with names such as MatchesFashion, Net-a-Porter, ASOS and Farfetch launched in the UK.

And of course – this year there was the live streaming of London Fashion Week shows to millions of fashion watchers in China.

But it is also London's reputation as a thriving, diverse city that makes this such a great place to do business. And I am delighted to hear that Chanel – one of the grand dames in the fashion business – has announced it is relocating its global headquarters here to London.

I want to see us continue this success – I want Britain to continue being a place where talent is nurtured and supported, and where fashion can thrive and do business.

And as we look to build a new future for a global Britain, as an open, outward-facing country outside of the EU – I want to ensure that our fashion

industry – an industry in which we have so much pride – can build upon its success. That is why our exceptional talent visa will ensure that the world's leading fashion designers can live and work here. It is why we are backing the industries of the future through our modern Industrial Strategy – supporting innovation, technology and encouraging jobs and growth in every part of the country.

And it is why through the Creative Industries Sector Deal we – along with industry – are investing £150 million in creative businesses, including design and fashion.

But today – as London Fashion Week draws to a close – let me congratulate you all once again.

As I say, let's work together to make sure everybody realises what an important part London fashion does and British fashion plays in our economy and employing people up and down our country. Let's get the message out there of the fantastic talent we've got – not just the big names but all the people who are behind those big names and every aspect of the industry which leads to its enormous success.

And I wish you all every success for the season ahead. Thank you.