

Press release: UK Energy Minister hails soaring success of Scottish renewables

- Renewable energy adding further security to our energy supplies and moving away from reliance on fossil fuels
- Minister meets Scottish energy pioneers who have moved away from dirty fuels of the industrial revolution into clean green energy

The growing success of the Scottish renewable industry in meeting the UK's climate targets will be praised today by Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry in a keynote speech to the All-Energy conference in Glasgow today (3 May 2018). The Scottish renewable industry is delivering an impressive 25% of the UK's total renewable generation capacity. The Minister will also point to the huge potential for Scottish enterprise in delivering clean growth as part of the government's modern [Industrial Strategy Clean Growth Grand Challenge](#) – with 24,000 people already working in the Low Carbon sector.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry will say:

From James Watt's steam engine kicking off the industrial revolution and the opening of the first coal mine, through to offshore wind and marine energy powering homes and businesses in the present day, Scotland has always been at the cutting edge of progress.

The renewables industry has a central role in our modern Industrial Strategy with the global shift towards clean growth providing one of the greatest economic opportunities of our time.

Scotland is home to a future potential of over 4GW of offshore wind across 10 offshore wind farms, with the opportunity to power millions of homes. The world's first floating offshore windfarm has been developed in Scotland, at Hywind in Aberdeenshire.

Renewable contributions to the UK energy supply have soared in recent months thanks to long term government investment with electricity from clean wind power increasing by 43% between December 2017 and February 2018.

Since 1990, the UK has cut its emissions by over 40% while growing the economy by more than two thirds. Whilst the achievements have been an effort from across the British Isles – Scotland has consistently outpaced the rest of the UK in reducing its emissions.

Energy consumers are benefiting too as prices for producing clean energy such as offshore wind continue to drop. Moray East Windfarm in Scotland will

deliver power at £57.50 per megawatt hour – a fall of more than half since 2015. The Beatrice offshore wind project is also one of Scotland's largest private infrastructure projects and will be one of the world's largest windfarms once it is completed.

These projects are driving a whole new supply chain in Scotland with now 24,000 jobs in the low carbon sector with businesses such as Wick Harbour Trust and Buckie Harbour Trust providing operation and maintenance port facilities to Beatrice project. Petrofac, a British oil and gas services company, providing a range of training services to the Hywind and Dudgeon offshore wind farms and Mariner field in the North Sea.

Event Director, Jonathan Heastie of Reed Exhibitions who own and organise the annual All Energy conference said:

We are delighted to be welcoming the Minister to All-Energy. We are very much looking forward to hearing what Claire Perry will say for, looking to the future, the show aims to reflect both UK and Scottish policy and strategies.

The Minister will also today meet the Scottish Energy Minister Paul Wheelhouse MSP to discuss UK energy policy and also meet renewable energy businesses as she visits stalls at the All Energy Conference.

The UK's modern Industrial Strategy is a long-term plan to build a Britain fit for the future through a stronger, fairer economy. Through this we will help businesses to create better, higher-paying jobs – setting a path for Britain to lead in the high-tech, highly-skilled industries of the future.

As part of this, the Modern Industrial Strategy sets out four Grand Challenges, including Clean Growth – Ensuring the UK is at the forefront of innovation and maximising the advantages for UK industry in the global shift to clean growth.

Press release: Welsh Secretary: Wales is a prime location for manufacturing investment

- Smurfit Kappa strengthens commitment to Wales with multi-million-pound investment in Abercarn site
- Welsh Secretary will highlight strong International – UK trade relationship with visit to Olympus Surgical Technologies Europe

Global employers Smurfit Kappa and Olympus are leading the way in

demonstrating why Wales is a prime location to invest and do business, Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said ahead of a visit to south Wales today (3 May).

Alun Cairns will visit global packaging company Smurfit Kappa's Abercarn factory to mark the company's £2.8 million investment.

He will also highlight Wales' reputation as an investment destination for Japanese companies with a visit to Olympus Surgical Technologies Europe.

Leading today's positive news was confirmation from Smurfit Kappa that it has made a £2.8 million investment to purchase their Abercarn site and buildings. The announcement is being hailed as a signal of the company's continued commitment to their operations and to their staff in Wales.

Smurfit Kappa are world-leading providers of paper-based packaging solutions, with around 45,000 employees in approximately 370 production sites across 35 countries. They have an unrivalled portfolio of paper-packaging solutions, which is constantly updated with market-leading innovations.

With sustainability at the forefront of their company ethos, the Secretary of State will hear how the company's design innovations are helping the UK Government to achieve its 25 Year environment plan.

Marking the announcement during the visit to the Abercarn site, Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said:

Smurfit Kappa is one of south Wales' great manufacturing success stories. Their continued commitment to their operation in Wales is a clear demonstration of the faith in our nation a prime investment destination.

Their investment in their south Wales operation are sure signs that these are exciting times for Smurfit Kappa. Their continued growth has been a strong driver for the overall strength of the private sector here in Wales.

The UK Government will do all it can to support the sector as we aim to establish ourselves as a world class hub of manufacturing excellence and leading experts in the development of sustainable and environmentally friendly lifestyle solutions.

We are pleased to welcome the Secretary of State for Wales, to recognise the investment we have made at our Abercarn plant. This investment highlights our commitment to the future of our business at Abercarn and our support to the Welsh economy.

The Secretary of State will also visit Olympus Surgical Technologies Europe – a company that designs, develops and manufactures medical devices from its world class facility in Cardiff.

The company employs 270 people at its St Mellons site. Founded as Gyrus, in 1989, the company grew into a successful FTSE company before it was acquired by the Japanese Olympus Corporation in 2008.

Alun Cairns visited Japan last year with the aim of giving maximum certainty and security to international businesses based in Wales as the UK prepares to leave the European Union.

The company is now playing a pivotal role in Wales' growing reputation as a world leader in life sciences expertise.

Alun Cairns will be welcomed to Olympus by its Managing Director Simon Edwards.

Looking ahead to the visit, Mr Edwards said:

Our facility in Cardiff is playing an important role as we strive for further sustainable growth by making people's lives healthier, safer and more fulfilling.

Life sciences is one of Wales' fastest growing sectors. It has a turnover of around £2 billion and employs around 11,000 people in over 350 companies.

The UK's strengths in science, research and innovation are also a major focus of the government's industrial strategy.

Alun Cairns added:

Smurfit Kappa and Olympus are important investors in Wales.

As we prepare to leave the EU, the UK Government is committed through our Industrial Strategy to ensuring the UK remains one of the best places in the world to do business. Our aim is to create a strong and vibrant economy in Wales and the manufacturing and life sciences sectors are central to this vision.

[News story: Sam Gyimah hosts free speech summit](#)

Free speech on campus should be encouraged and those attempting to shut it down must have nowhere to hide, the Universities Minister will make clear to sector leaders at a free speech summit he is chairing today (Thursday 3 May).

Sam Gyimah will call on higher education organisations to stamp out the 'institutional hostility' to unfashionable views that have emerged in some student societies and will urge them to work with the government following recent reports of a rise in so-called 'safe spaces' and 'no-platform' policies that have appeared on campuses.

He will say that the current landscape is "murky", with numerous pieces of disjointed sector guidance out there, creating a web of complexity which risks being exploited by those wishing to stifle free speech.

The Universities Minister will demand further action is taken to protect lawful free speech on campus and will offer to work with the sector to create new guidance that will for the first time provide clarity of the rules for both students and universities – making this the first government intervention of its kind since the free speech duty was introduced in 1986.

The guidance signals a new chapter for free speech on campus, ensuring future generations of students get exposure to stimulating debates and the diversity of viewpoints that lie at the very core of the university experience.

Universities Minister Sam Gyimah said:

A society in which people feel they have a legitimate right to stop someone expressing their views on campus simply because they are unfashionable or unpopular is rather chilling.

There is a risk that overzealous interpretation of a dizzying variety of rules is acting as a brake on legal free speech on campus.

That is why I am bringing together leaders from across the higher education sector to clarify the rules and regulations around speakers and events to prevent bureaucrats or wreckers on campus from exploiting gaps for their own ends.

The free speech summit will be hosted in London and brings together a wide range of influential organisations, including those that have existing guidance in this area, such as the Charity Commission, UUK and EHRC.

The Office for Students, which came into force on April 1, will act to protect free speech and can use its powers to name, shame or even fine institutions for not upholding the principle of free speech.

Sir Michael Barber, Chair of the Office for Students, said:

Our universities are places where free speech should always be promoted and fostered. That includes the ability for everyone to share views which may be challenging or unpopular, even if that makes some people feel uncomfortable. This is what Timothy Garton-Ash calls 'robust civility'. The Office for Students will always

encourage freedom of speech within the law. We will never intervene to restrict it.

Alistair Jarvis, Universities UK Chief Executive, said:

Universities are committed to promoting and protecting free speech within the law. Tens of thousands of speaking events are put on every year across the country, the majority pass without incident. A small number of flash points do occasionally occur, on contentious or controversial issues, but universities do all they can to protect free speech so events continue.

As the Joint Committee on Human Rights recently found, there is no systematic problem with free speech in universities, but current advice can be strengthened. We welcome discussions with government and the National Union of Students on how this can be done.

Notes to Editors:

The Joint Committee on Human Rights launched an inquiry on freedom of speech on 22nd November and issued its report on 25th March. A Government response will follow.

The roundtable attendee include:

- Home Office – Matt Collins, Director of Prevent
- Office for Students (OfS) – Yvonne Hawkins, Director of Universities and Colleges
- Charity Commission – Helen Stephenson, Chief Executive
- NUS – Amatey Doku, Vice President
- EHRC – Rebecca Thomas, Principal, Programmes
- Universities UK (UUK) – Chris Hale, Director of Policy
- iHE – Alex Proudfoot, Chief Executive
- GuildHE – Alex Bols, Deputy CEO

[News story: LLWR chooses new charity of the year](#)

The LLWR workforce has chosen Give Us A Break 2010 as its new charity of the year.

The west Cumbrian charity proved a popular winner in a vote from a shortlist of four worthy local organisations.

Give Us A Break 2010 was formed to improve the quality of life for disabled children by providing a much needed short break centre in the community.

Cath Giel, LLWR's Head of Public Affairs, said: "We raised a record £8,000 for our chosen charity last year, Macmillan Cancer Support, and this year we want to build on the amazing generosity of our people by asking them to help in kind, as well as in cash.

"We will still be holding fundraising events but we are also keen to establish a relationship with the organisation and work on joint initiatives to help them achieve their objectives.

"This might involve offering expert advice or simply bending our backs and getting involved in some heavy lifting work. There are many possibilities.

"We look forward to chatting to Give Us A Break 2010 to explore the opportunities."

Youngsters with a variety of conditions such as autism, cerebral palsy and Down syndrome will be eligible to visit the centre to pursue a string of activities in a safe and stimulating environment, whilst giving families and carers a much needed rest.

The charity was formed by Dawn Raynor, mum of twins Callan & Ethan, who suffer with Tuberous Sclerosis, a rare genetic disorder that causes intractable epilepsy.

[Speech: Trade policy townhall](#)

Thank you.

We're on the cusp of a profound moment for British trade. It's almost exactly 13 months since Article 50, so it's now 11 months until we leave the European Union.

As has often been said, nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. But based on that text that was agreed last month, that means we're 11 months from being able to negotiate and sign trade agreements – a power we haven't had for 45 years.

That really does matter: it's a time of great opportunity, but also great responsibility.

The vitalness of stakeholder engagement

And if nothing else that reminds us – especially sitting here, in the world's greatest scientific society – of the need for a good evidence base.

Trade policy can be complex, after all. So I'd like to thank you all for coming – it really is important for us to hear what you have to say, and for you to contribute your expertise.

That's why we genuinely put a lot of stock on stakeholder engagement – and thank you to everyone who responded to the Trade White Paper.

Many of you here are from business, or representing businesses. As I often say: businesses trade, not the government – we're just here to help them trade.

Trade agreements are important, but ultimately they are simply there to facilitate you to do the actual trading.

They only have value insofar as they're of value to individuals and to businesses.

The first thing that businesses normally raise with me is their need for certainty, so that's the first thing I'm going to address: how our trade policy is designed to deliver certainty and continuity, whilst also taking advantage of the opportunities that lie outside the Customs Union.

Business after Brexit: certainty and continuity

The agreed text provides for an implementation period until the end of 2020, during which business will have access to the single market on the same terms they do now, giving more certainty for the near future and more time for firms to adjust.

And for 2021 onwards, the Prime Minister has said that she wants a deep, comprehensive and unique free trade agreement with the EU, so our businesses can have the best possible market access.

And, turning to my area of responsibility as Minister for Trade Policy, we are looking to transition the EU's 40-or-so existing third-party free trade agreements, to give our businesses continued access to those markets on current terms.

We're also supporting the EU in its ongoing negotiations elsewhere. The Commission is currently prioritising new agreements with Singapore and Vietnam and we are strong supporters of these: we're full members of the EU until we leave, and we're going to play a constructive role in the meantime.

And we're working to take up our independent position at the World Trade Organization, too. We're already a member in our own right, but we're currently covered by the EU's commitments, so we need to negotiate schedules in our own right.

This is not a cliff edge – the EU's schedules haven't been up to date in years.

Nonetheless, it is important that we do update them. In order to deliver

maximum certainty and continuity for businesses, we will be replicating the EU's existing schedules.

Together, these will give a great deal of certainty: certainty of continued access to the EU market in the near-term; certainty of deep and comprehensive access in the long-term; certainty of continued access to the EU's free trade agreements; and the certainty of the WTO's global rules.

And that certainty is certainly achievable.

Achieving continuity: trade bill, FTAs, the WTO

On the free trade agreement, it's in the strong interests of both sides to agree thoroughgoing access to each other's markets.

The EU27's exports to the UK were nearly £320 billion last year, making us their second-largest trading partner after the US. This trade is worth more to the UK in relative terms, true, but it's not a zero-sum game.

And this is the only agreement in history where both sides start from a position of regulatory alignment.

Domestically, as Minister for Trade Policy I'm currently taking the [Trade Bill](#) through the House of Commons.

That will give the government the domestic powers we need to roll over existing EU free trade agreements, and to sign up the World Trade Organization's [Government Procurement Agreement](#), so that UK companies can maintain their access to a global public procurement market £1.3 trillion – and so our public services get the best value possible, on passports or anything else.

The opportunities from Brexit

So that's our approach for the near term, for continuity, for certainty. But what of the opportunities?

The first thing to say is that this isn't all about trade agreements: the government is not solely concentrating on Brexit. To give one example, DIT is currently designing a new Export Strategy.

That will boost our exports – whether they're going to the EU or the rest of the world.

As for our future trade regime – any future trade regime must benefit the poorest among us. That's really important.

The [Taxation \(Cross-Border Trade\) Bill](#) will let us set up our own trade preferences regime, to give developing countries preferential access to the UK market – again, we will deliver maximum certainty.

As a minimum, we will provide the same access as the EU, whilst leaving

ourselves room to explore options to make our preferences even more generous and easy to use in the future.

And any future regime must work for consumers, as well as businesses.

We're absolutely committed to upholding and strengthening our already high standards – so that consumers know they're getting products that are safe to use, of good quality, and friendly to the environment.

As a country, our comparative advantage is in quality, not price: we want to see a global race to the top, not a race to the bottom.

Why we should leave the Customs Union

As for the Customs Union. The Prime Minister has been very clear that leaving the EU means leaving the Customs Union, and the UK will be leaving the Customs Union. That position was restated only this week.

Recently there's been a lot of talk about this, and whether the UK would be better off leaving the EU but staying in a Customs Union.

So I'd like to talk through the reasoning behind this decision, and why it's the right one.

If we are in a Customs Union, we would be unable to negotiate new agreements with countries outside the EU. And that's where the real opportunities will lie: according to the IMF, 90% of global growth will be outside the EU over the next decade or so.

While Europe quibbles over tenths of percents, China, for example, is adding an economy the size of Norway to its GDP every 7 months – and that's not even at purchasing power parity.

A Customs Union would leave us with the worst of both worlds. Remember that we cannot stay in the Customs Union, as we will not be a member state – legally it would only ever be a Customs Union.

If you look at Turkey's Customs Union, whenever the EU signs a trade agreement with a third country, Turkey has to open up its markets to imports from that country. But Turkey's exporters don't get access to the third country's markets in return – that's reserved for EU exporters.

Turkey has to sign its own trade agreements with the third countries. But that's very difficult, because Turkey isn't allowed to offer those third countries anything in return, because it's in a Customs Union.

So we should not be staying in the Customs Union. We should aim for an agreement that gives us the best of both worlds and there's no reason why we can't achieve that.

Trade with the EU and trade with the rest of the world – it doesn't need to be an either/or choice.

For the reasons I set out earlier, it's in both sides strong interests to sign a good EU-UK free trade agreement.

And we are also looking to sign new trade agreements abroad. Whilst in the EU we are still bound by the duty of sincere cooperation, so cannot sign or negotiate new agreements.

But we are preparing the ground. We have set up trade working groups covering 21 countries, including the world's largest economies. Myself and other DIT ministers have made over 160 overseas visits.

Only last week I was in Singapore, talking to representatives of the ASEAN nations – it was fascinating to see the dynamism and optimism on show, and that's something we should be taking advantage of.

But we can only fully take advantage with your expertise, so thank you all again for coming today.

Thank you.