

Press release: Government announces champion for UK's 'Silicon Valley'

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid today (22 December 2017) announced a new champion for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor – an area of the country that has the potential to become the UK's Silicon Valley.

Iain Stewart MP, who represents Milton Keynes South, will take on the role of standard-bearer for this important economic area working with partners to help it fulfil its potential.

As part of the [Budget](#), the Chancellor set out an ambitious locally-led development programme for the area covering infrastructure, housing and business investment. This includes a housing deal with Oxfordshire for 100,000 homes by 2031 and investment in transport infrastructure.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid, said:

We know that this corridor has the potential to transform into globally significant economy, we must grasp this once-in-a-generation opportunity to unlock growth.

We have a bold vision for the region and want to attract the brightest and the best. The appointment of Iain Stewart as a dedicated champion will help us work in partnership with communities and secure the corridor's position as a world class economic area, and a key driver of UK prosperity.

As part of the role Mr Stewart will:

- champion a vision for the corridor with stakeholders including local authorities, local councillors and MPs on a cross-party basis, local enterprise partnerships and local businesses
- gather intelligence on local issues and update government to help deliver this vision in a way that is locally informed
- attend events and meetings, along with local stakeholders and ministers as appropriate, to promote the corridor, for example to promote trade and investment
- carry out media engagements to promote the corridor

Iain Stewart MP said:

As someone who has lived and worked in the region for many years, I'm delighted to be given the opportunity to champion the government's vision for the corridor.

It's vital that government and communities work hand in hand to deliver economic growth, and I look forward to bringing together stakeholders and working to transform the corridor into the UK's answer to Silicon Valley.

At the Budget, the government [published a vision document](#) for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor.

This role will not have decision-making power. Decisions will still be locally-led.

In November, the National Infrastructure Commission [published its final report into the area](#).

Press release: Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson press statement in Moscow

"We have to work hard to address those difficulties. We have to find a way forward." Boris Johnson tells media in Moscow

It is very good to be here in Moscow. I think I am the first British Foreign Secretary to be here in about five-and-a-half years. But, of course, this is a very old diplomatic relationship that is 450 years old and dates from the time when Queen Elizabeth sent an envoy to Ivan the Terrible or Ivan the Fourth, as Sergei [Lavrov] has said he was called.

The reason for the length of my absence is that this is a difficult time in the relations between UK and Russia, as Sergei himself has just said. We can't ignore those difficulties, we can't pretend that they don't exist, and we don't share a common perspective on events in Ukraine or the Western Balkans or, as the Prime Minister Theresa May has said, on the Russian activities in cyberspace.

We speak up for the LGBT community in Chechnya, and elsewhere, as people would expect from us. But they would also expect that Britain and Russia, as two P5 countries, should be able, where possible, to coordinate and to work together on the issues that matter to our voters on the issues, that matter to people of the world. I believe that having talked many times to Sergei, and particularly after our conversations today, that there are things that we can do together as P5 member across the range of dossiers, as Sergei Lavrov

has just said.

We may not have an identical point of view for instance about North Korea, but we share the same objective to make sure that there is peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and indeed that it is a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. Neither of us want to see North Korea armed with a nuclear ICBM, and that is very clear. We want to see progress in Syria on the basis, as Sergei has said, of Resolution 2254 – peace and progress for the people of Syria. That is something that unites us and I was very pleased, Sergei, in conclusion to hear what you had to say about our bilateral cultural, artistic, and scientific agenda.

In times of difficulty, this is always an area where we can do more together and it's great that there was a Shakespeare logo train on the Moscow metro. We reciprocated. It took a while to get a Russia emblazoned train on TFL but I think it happened eventually. There are things we can do together on scientific collaboration, space research.

There is plenty of opportunity for academic, cultural exchanges and 2019 is the year of music and we intend to make the most of it. I'm delighted that trade, in spite of the difficulties, in spite of the sanctions regime, trade is increasing and we certainly want to see more of that. Exports, as I said, are I think around £5 billion worth to Russia at the moment. It is good news that Russian customers are buying loads more British things from kettle crisps to Bentleys. I would in no way discourage that.

I would just make one point very fervently. I am a Russophile, a committed Russophile. I took the trouble before becoming Foreign Secretary to station my ancestors around the world. I have them in Germany, in France, all over the place, America, and of course here in Moscow as well. I am certain that I am the first that the Foreign Secretary in the history of my office to be called Boris – probably the last for some time, I would think. Be in no doubt that I want to see an improvement in the relations between our peoples.

That in no way diminishes the difficulties that we currently have in our relationship at the moment. We have to work hard to address those difficulties. We have to find a way forward. We have to find a way forward and in the meantime what we want to do, as the UK and Russia, is to cooperate in those areas where we can to build that future. So thank you very much Sergei for generosity and your hospitality and for welcoming me and my team today."

Press release: Welsh troops send their loved ones messages for Christmas

Servicemen and women deployed abroad have sent Christmas messages to their

families and friends. Thousands of UK Armed Forces personnel, many of them Welsh, are working across the globe this Christmas to help keep Britain safe at home and abroad.

Hundreds of soldiers from 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh will be spending Christmas in Estonia where they're currently renewing the UK's commitment to our NATO allies in Europe and standing ready to defend in the face of any potential aggression.

The Royal Welsh currently lead the 800 strong multinational Enhanced Forward Presence battlegroup, supported by other British Army units.

For them Christmas will involve a physical training session, a religious service and a Christmas lunch which will provide the opportunity to share a familiar tradition with NATO partners and Estonian guests.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Christmas can be a difficult time for our Armed Forces personnel working on important operations around the globe, when separation from their families, loved ones and friends is felt most acutely.

Wales' military footprint can be seen all over the world, and for them duty never stops. I want to extend my very best wishes to you all this Christmas and New Year and say that we in Wales are ever-thankful for the sacrifices you make – not just during the festive season but every day of the year.

Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Owain Luke said:

While Christmas is normally a time to spend with family, the soldiers of the eFP Battlegroup understand that they have a crucial role to play in helping to defend Estonia. I am very proud of how well they have performed so far and we will make a special effort to ensure that as many as possible of the usual Christmas traditions are enjoyed over the next few days. The Estonians have already helped here, with the staff in the Ministry of Defence buying two Christmas trees for the Battlegroup, for which we are immensely grateful.

In total UK troops are involved in 25 operations in more than 30 countries. Currently around 1,000 people are working to fight Daesh and train the local security forces from locations in Iraq and the wider Middle East as well as from RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus. In the Caribbean, RFA Mounts Bay joins other Royal Navy vessels also deployed over the festive period.

Since 1969 the UK has had a submarine on patrol for every minute of every day, providing the UK's nuclear deterrent and this Christmas is no different. In the South Atlantic, around 1,000 personnel are stationed in the Falkland

Islands. In Afghanistan, troops from the Army and other Services are training Afghan National Security Forces.

In total over 5,000 sailors, marines, soldiers, airmen and airwomen are serving on operations across the globe in locations ranging from South Sudan and Somalia where they're undertaking vital engineering work, to places like Poland and Estonia where they're providing reassurance to NATO allies.

Fusilier Ryan Jenkins, 26, Lincolnshire, Royal Welsh,

Although it has been hard work over here in Estonia, especially when working out how to cope with a new environment, it has been an enjoyable challenge. Whilst it is never nice being away from my family (especially at Christmas), there are a good bunch of people here and I'm making the most of being in a new country.

Fusilier David Hagart, 18, Abergavenny, Royal Welsh,

Being in Estonia is my first deployment whilst serving in the army, it is a new experience and my first Christmas away from my home and family. I miss them loads, and I look forward to seeing them in February when I get back.

Lance Corporal Sheldon, Royal Welsh added (Welsh language):

Nadolig lawen a Blwyddyn Newydd da i chi gyd – tadcu, teulu a ffrindiau. Dw i'n edrych ymlaen at weld chi dros cyfnod y Nadolig – yn yfed ac yn bwyta pethau melys!

Dw i wedi mwynhau fy amser allan yn Estonia, yn dysgu a'n cymysgu gyda pobol lleuol. Dw i'n dod nol am dair mis i wneud cwrs ond byddai nol yn Estonia ym mis Ebrill i ddal lan gyda gwaith. Hwyl am y tro.

ENDS

**[Press release: 13 year
disqualification for director over](#)**

company's VAT evasion

Mr Shakoor's disqualification follows an investigation by the Insolvency Service into the liquidation of Raptor Commerce Ltd.

Between 5 December 2005 and 31 May 2006, Mr Shakoor caused or allowed Raptor to participate in transactions which were connected with the fraudulent evasion of VAT, which Mr Shakoor either knew or should have known about.

Mr Shakoor caused Raptor to make a wrongful claim of a VAT repayment for the period ending May 2006 totalling £1,224,134.

Tony Hannon, the Official Receiver in the Public Interest Unit South, part of the Insolvency Service said:

The Insolvency Service will take firm action when we find misconduct and wrongdoing in the operation of companies by directors.

The Insolvency Service is committed to protecting the integrity and confidence in the market both by consumers and business people alike.

Mr Naeem Shakoor, is of Glasgow and his date of birth is January 1972.

Raptor Commerce Ltd (Company Reg no. 04489352) was incorporated on 18 July 2002 and ordered into compulsory liquidation on 9 September 2013.

The order was pronounced by Mr Registrar Jones and the Secretary of State was represented by Camilla Chorfi of Selborne Chambers and the defendant was not present or represented.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

The Insolvency Service, an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), administers the insolvency regime, and aims to deliver and promote a range of investigation and enforcement activities both civil and criminal in nature, to support fair and open markets. We do this by effectively enforcing the statutory company and insolvency regimes, maintaining public confidence in those regimes and reducing the harm caused to victims of fraudulent activity and to the business community, including dealing with the disqualification of directors in corporate failures.

BEIS' mission is to build a dynamic and competitive UK economy that works for all, in particular by creating the conditions for business success and promoting an open global economy. The Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions team contributes to this aim by taking action to deter fraud and to regulate the market. They investigate and prosecute a range of offences, primarily relating to personal or company insolvencies.

The agency also authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Press release: International Development Minister praises British humanitarian heroes at Kemble disaster aid hub](#)

Brave humanitarian workers based in Kemble, Gloucestershire, are the unsung heroes of 2017 for the role they played in Britain's rapid responses to three major humanitarian catastrophes this year, the Minister for International Development Alistair Burt has said.

At Britain's aid distribution hub at Cotswold Airport in Kemble, the Minister thanked staff for their tireless work delivering life-saving UK aid in response to the devastating Caribbean hurricanes, the ongoing Rohingya crisis and to prevent a famine in Somalia this year.

The facility in Kemble is one of two major global stockpiles where the

Department for International Development stores life-saving equipment and supplies for crises – and is the only one based in Britain.

This year, emergency UK aid from emergency stockpiles, such as in Kemble, has provided:

- 827 tonnes of supplies in response to hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean, including 6,000 hygiene kits, 5,050 solar lanterns, 4,710 shelter kits, 5,140 water purification cubes and 16,000 buckets;
- 10,000 shelter kits, 20,000 blankets and 10,500 sleeping mats in response to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh; and
- 20,000 shelter kits and peg and pole sets to prevent the humanitarian situation in Somalia deteriorating further.

Speaking at the disaster aid hub in Kemble, International Development Minister Alistair Burt said:

UK aid has saved countless lives this year by responding rapidly to disasters around the world and our aid distribution hub in Kemble is crucial to getting emergency support to those that so urgently need it.

These brave humanitarian workers are the unsung heroes of 2017.

They have played a vital role getting life-saving food, water and shelter to people struck by hurricanes in the Caribbean, innocent families driven from their homes in Burma and people starving because of the food crisis in East Africa.

The UK prides itself on not only delivering aid quickly, but also making sure our products are the best possible quality.

I am proud that we are driving innovation and the hub in Kemble is filled to the rafters with durable products that people in emergency situations can rely on in the toughest situations imaginable.

By maintaining its own supplies at Cotswold Airport, the Department for International Development (DFID) is able to fly emergency aid to people in disaster situations as quickly as possible.

The UK's emergency response capacity has been increased this year and DFID is able to respond to six humanitarian emergencies a year, delivering life-saving supplies to 25,000 people in a disaster.

Staff are on alert 24 hours a day and are ready to respond to disasters that

could strike at anytime, anywhere in the world.

Staff are busy restocking the aid distribution hub, which remains ready to respond to any emergencies and is expected to be fully stocked by Christmas Day.

Notes to Editors

1. DFID's aid distribution hub in Kemble has been in operation for more than 8 years.
2. It currently stores solar lanterns, kitchen sets, shelter kits, water purification kits, armoured vehicles, a field hospital, a boat module, an office and life support module and part of an airfield module.
3. The site has 22,000 square foot of storage, which means DFID can respond to six crises a year. The supplies held in Kemble alone could deliver life-saving supplies to 25,000 people in a disaster situation.
4. The facility in Kemble is one of two major global stockpiles where the Department for International Development stores life-saving equipment and supplies for crises – the other stockpile is in Dubai.