

Speech: Lord Chancellor speech at launch of TheCityUK's legal services report 2017

It's a pleasure to be here today at the launch of TheCityUK's Legal Services report for 2017, and can I add my thanks also James to you and Herbert Smith Freehills for hosting this event.

Every year, your report holds a mirror up to our legal services sector. In doing so, it allows us to reflect upon the strengths and successes of this country's formidable and world-leading legal services.

This year I think the findings of the report should serve as a source of great pride and satisfaction for those who work in our legal services. It is also an important reminder to all of us, of the enormous contribution legal services make – not just to London, but to all the nations and regions of the United Kingdom – and I welcome in particular the focus of the report on the wider contribution the sector makes to the country. It's particularly apposite given that the new Lord Mayor in his speech to the Guildhall last week part of his role should be to promote the City.

We can look at the contribution of the sector in a number of ways:

- to jobs: legal services employ over 300,000 people across the country, two thirds of these outside London. James mentioned Belfast but he could just as readily have mentioned Edinburgh, Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool.
- to the economy: directly contributing around £24 billion last year with a trade surplus of £4 billion, and more broadly, underpinning the wider business and financial sectors.
- but I don't think either we should neglect what I would term the contribution to the UK's soft power, our global reputation: our legal services market is one of the top, most admired and respected anywhere in the world.

Legal services and EU exit

Now for the government, we are committed to protecting and promoting the legal services sector – the benefits that its energy and vibrancy bring to the economy and the country.

The report rightly raises the potential impact of EU exit on our legal services. I understand there is a real appetite from the sector for the government to make more announcements about where we are in the negotiations. I get that from your clients' perspective, one of the biggest deciding factors on whether to use English law to govern their contracts is the enforceability of decisions.

I'll say now what I said when I spoke at TheCityUK Advisory Council earlier this month, the government is committed to securing continuity and certainty for business as part of the exit negotiations. And that includes taking seriously, and giving a high priority to securing, market access for the legal services sector, and ensuring we have ongoing civil judicial co-operation after we leave the European Union – something that I believe is profoundly in the interests of families and individuals in this country but to the corporate sector and tens of thousands of families in the EU too.

I recognise that, as in any negotiation, there is uncertainty about the precise outcome that will be secured, but I want to reiterate the government's commitment to ensuring that we have an outcome that protects and promotes our legal services. In particular, that means seeking an outcome that replicates the existing principles with the European Union, for example by incorporating the Rome I and Rome II regulations into domestic law and by continuing our participation in the Hague and Lugano conventions.

And I am highlighting to my counterparts across the EU27 – and shall do so again at the Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting in early December – how vital this is for individuals, families and businesses across Europe.

Legal services are built on firm foundations

As we go through these negotiations, we should not lose sight of the fact that our legal services in the United Kingdom are built on strong and deep foundations. They are underpinned by a strong commitment to the Rule of Law, by the certainty and clarity of Common Law in England that has evolved over centuries and by an independent, impartial and incorruptible judiciary that is recognised and respected across the world. These strengths make the United Kingdom a hugely attractive destination for litigants and legal service providers alike, now and in the future.

'Legal Services are GREAT'

But in a globally competitive marketplace, where I'm all too conscious that other countries and other jurisdictions are contending for legal business, we must ensure that the United Kingdom's legal heritage, expertise, innovation and prowess in legal services and the benefits of having disputes settled here is plain for potential clients to see.

That is why, in October, we launched our international 'Legal Services are GREAT' campaign. Now the 'GREAT' campaign has an interesting history. It was devised by David Cameron to take advantage of the spotlight on this country as a result of the Olympics and Paralympics being held here. It will showcase the expertise of our legal services, the integrity and experience of our judiciary and the benefits of using English Common Law to a global audience that will help us build stronger links with both established but also emerging markets.

The message of the campaign is simple: the United Kingdom is home to the best legal services in the world. Whether that's London as a global centre for dispute resolution, or Scotland and Northern Ireland as world-leading centres

in their own specific areas of distinct legal expertise.

As the 2017 report makes clear, technology and innovation in legal services will be key to ensuring the United Kingdom stands out. That's why the government, building on the success seen in the Fintech sector, is ensuring that new and innovative legal technologies are embraced and supported. These have the potential to drive down costs, improve quality and fundamentally transform how services are used.

One such example is smart contracts, which are expected to increase trust and certainty, and reduce friction in the performance of business and other contractual agreements. Smart contracts will have a profound impact on the delivery of legal services and the government is exploring how we can use these new technologies to ensure that English law and UK courts remain a competitive choice worldwide.

The data and insights that are included within TheCityUK's legal services reports are vital tools in our promotion of these messages and in determining our global standing and I'd like to thank TheCityUK for all of the work that has gone into this year's report.

UK legal services and future trade

The 'Legal Services are GREAT' campaign is an important part of our global message about the incredible assets and services that the United Kingdom offers. It's a message, too, about our future trading ambitions. It's about ensuring our legal services can both take advantage of and support our future trade arrangements beyond EU exit.

The government is taking a significant step in preparing to leave the European Union by making arrangements for our future independent trade policy, and legislation will be introduced and debated in Parliament in the next 12 months to ensure the necessary statutory underpinning of that trade policy.

Trade is a key driver of growth and prosperity. International trade is linked to many jobs; it leads to higher wages and contributes to a growing economy.

That's why we are committed to ensuring that our world-class legal services serve as catalyst for future trade, and that the crucial role they play in underpinning the growth of wider business is maintained and understood.

Conclusion

So I welcome TheCityUK's work on this with its own vision for a transformed, world-leading legal services industry.

That vision sees the United Kingdom continuing to offer a clear and consistent system of law, with a sector that is highly digitalised and innovative...one where London continues to be an international hub for finance and legal services, but where there are also regional centres that serve as specialist hubs.

I have no doubt that the strong and deep foundations on which our legal services are built, combined with the innovation and vision within the sector to embrace new opportunities and new technologies, mean that we will see our legal services not just lead the world, but continue to be the envy of the world. Thank you very much.

[News story: Culture Secretary reaffirms UK commitment to strong Italian cultural relationship](#)

Karen Bradley has met senior Italian politicians to celebrate the special cultural relationship between our two countries and commit to building new creative partnerships in the coming years.

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport visited Venice and Rome to support the UK-Italy Partners for Culture 2017 programme, celebrating arts, science, education and creative industries, which was established following the G7 Ministerial meeting on culture in Florence that she attended in March.

During her meeting with Italian Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism Dario Franceschini, the Culture Secretary championed the commitment of Italy and the UK to the protection of cultural heritage in areas of armed conflict.

The UK recently [ratified the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property](#) in the Event of Armed Conflict and acceded to its two Protocols. These will come into force in the UK on 12 December.

As a result, the Ministry of Defence is establishing an armed forces cultural property protection group and has recently met Italy's dedicated Carabinieri cultural protection unit, which has been deployed to both Iraq and Kosovo.

The UK Armed Forces is set to build on the relationship through joint training, exchanges, and potential joint overseas training missions and disaster relief.

Karen Bradley, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

Italy and the UK are world leaders in international cultural protection and the ongoing cooperation between our two nations in this area is a perfect example of the depth of our ties.

We have a strong connection too through art, culture and sport, all of which is deeply ingrained in both our countries and we are committed to strengthening our relationship further with Italy in the years ahead.

The Culture Secretary visited the Venice Biennale – one of the world’s foremost arts festivals – where she viewed the work of British artists at the British and Diaspora Pavilions.

The British Council has managed the UK’s participation in the Biennale since 1938, showcasing British artistic talent to the world and building new international creative partnerships.

In Rome she joined Sir Ciarán Devane, Maria Balshaw, director of Tate, and Giovanna Melandri, President of MAXXI Foundation and others in a discussion on women, leadership and the creative industries.

[News story: Slough people smuggler jailed](#)

On 12 February, Border Force officers at the UK inward tourist controls at the Channel Tunnel in Coquelles, France stopped a hired British-registered Ford Luton van. They questioned the driver of the vehicle, Harbans Lal Doll, 61, who said he had left the UK the previous day to go to Calais to collect some furniture. He had stayed overnight before collecting the furniture that morning.

When officers asked to examine the load they found the van 3 quarters full of beanbags and chairs with a double mattress stood upright part way inside the van. Hiding behind the mattress the officers found 16 people, including 5 minors.

Dave Smith, Deputy Director of Border Force South East and Europe, said:

Border Force officers are on the frontline keeping our borders safe and secure. We will continue to work with law enforcement colleagues to ensure that people smugglers and traffickers, whose actions often put the lives of others at risk, face the consequences of their crimes.

Doll was arrested and the investigation passed to Immigration Enforcement Criminal and Financial Investigation (CFI) officers. He was subsequently charged with assisting unlawful immigration into the UK.

Doll pleaded guilty yesterday (23 November) on the first day of his trial at Canterbury Crown Court and was sentenced there immediately.

Assistant Director David Fairclough, from the CFI team, said:

Although Doll offered no explanation for his behaviour, the Judge considered in his sentencing that the motivation was financial. Offences like this, where individuals take advantage of the desperation of others for personal gain, are among the worst that we deal with in CFI.

We work closely with Border Force colleagues to rigorously investigate allegations of immigration related criminality and this case should serve as a warning to anyone tempted to get involved with this kind of offending. We will catch you, and put you before the courts.

The 16 people, 14 Iraqi nationals – comprising 3 families – and 2 women from Albania, were passed to the French Police Aux Frontières.

Anyone with information about suspected immigration abuse can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 anonymously or visit their [website](#).

[Press release: Youngsters help give fishery a boost](#)

The Environment Agency has released 1,500 fish into a recently re-established fishery this week to give stocks a pre-Christmas boost and encourage angling.

Lockwood Beck reservoir, south of Guisborough, opened earlier this year to coarse anglers and they've since been catching fish such as roach and perch.

Now the Environment Agency has stocked bream, tench and crucian carp to provide more variety for anglers and encourage participation at the fishery.

The fish have all been bred at the Environment Agency's fish farm near Calverton, which is solely funded by rod licence money.

The Environment Agency's Phil Rippon with Ali Jamaliour and John Speight.

Young anglers help stocking

To mark the fish stocking on Tuesday a group of young anglers from Eastern Ravens Trust in Stockton-on-Tees received expert angling tuition from the Angling Trust and had the opportunity to see the new fish being released into

the reservoir.

Eastern Ravens Trust is a registered charity based in the Community Zone, North Shore Academy, which provides open access youth activities to young people aged 10-18 in the most deprived ward in the borough alongside supporting isolated and disadvantaged children, young people and families.

The owners of the reservoir, Northumbrian Water Ltd, provided support on the day and are committed to providing the venue in the future for organised coaching events for anglers aged under 16.

Jack Canham with the fish he caught during the event.

Happy with the development

Phil Rippon, Fisheries Technical Specialist from the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

We are happy to help with the development of Lockwood Beck fishery, working with the Angling Trust and Northumbrian Water to encourage more participation in angling.

The reservoir is an excellent venue for future coaching events as well as providing a resource for local anglers. The fish provided by us will help to support the fish stocks and provide a more interesting variety of species.

The Angling Trust's David Munt with Amie James.

Great news for fishing

Don Coe, Leisure Operations Manager at Northumbrian Water, added:

This is a fantastic way to get young people interested in fishing and we're very pleased to be supporting the Angling Trust with their activity.

Also, the stocking carried out by the Environment Agency will also enhance the appeal of Lockwood Beck for anglers of all ages and experience, so this is great news for fishing in the area.

Angling is a great way for everyone to keep healthy and enjoy the natural environment. All rod licence income is used to find work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries.

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a rod licence. A full annual licence costs £30 (short term and some concessionary licences are also available) and are available online at <https://www.gov.uk/fishing-licences/buy-a-fishing-licence>

News story: Defence Secretary announces £250M investment in new homes for service families

The significant investment will see nearly 1000 new homes built in three locations across Salisbury Plain, the British Army's largest training area in the UK. The locations for the new housing are Bulford, Larkhill and Ludgershall.

The new homes, which will be built by British construction company Lovell, will offer modern three and four bedroom accommodation, as well as a number of bungalows and adapted homes for families with specific needs, such as wheelchair access. Work on the new homes, which are being built under the Army Basing Programme (ABP), is expected to be completed in May 2020.

The new homes will support Service personnel and their families relocating from Germany in 2019 and also units moving within the UK.

Pre-construction work on the project has already begun, including off-site highways to facilitate access to the new homes. The returning troops can expect modern accommodation, as well as access to catering, retail and leisure facilities.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This considerable investment in nearly 1,000 new homes is a reflection of our commitment to supporting Armed Forces families. Service families make an immense contribution to our country and I'm delighted to announce this £250 million funding for new homes to welcome our troops relocating from Germany.

The £250 million investment comes alongside a further £90 million in road and utility improvements in support of the three developments. £1.1 billion has already pledged to the Salisbury Plain area for living and working accommodation 'behind the wire' including 2,500 bed spaces for single soldiers and the construction, conversion or refurbishment of nearly 250 other buildings such as offices, garages, workshops and mess facilities.

The Army is also working closely with Wiltshire Council to ensure that the soldiers and their families have access to all of the services they need, including education and health facilities. Wiltshire Council is spending over

£20 million of the MOD's contribution towards local community services in support of education provision across all age ranges.

Defence Minister Tobias Ellwood said:

Investing not only in new homes but in all the things that help to make a place feel like home, such as education, infrastructure and leisure facilities, will make a big difference for those returning to the UK after being posted abroad. This boost to the area will provide a close-knit community for Armed Forces and their families for years to come.

The Army Basing Programme has also recently completed building and refurbishment of accommodation at a number of other sites across the country in support of Troops relocating from Germany and within the UK. The ABP has also invested in new facilities in Kinloss, Leuchars, Catterick, South Cerney and North Luffenham, and significant refurbishments have taken place at a number of other MOD sites including York, Aldershot and Thorney Island.