

# Alister Jack calls on all Scottish MPs to back UK-EU trade deal

News story

Scottish Secretary says people of Scotland will expect their MPs to do the right thing and vote for the deal.



Today [27 December 2020] Secretary of State for Scotland, Alister Jack, called on all Scottish MPs to support the UK's historic Free Trade Agreement with the EU when Parliament votes on it this week. He said:

We have secured a historic Free Trade deal with the EU that delivers for Scotland and the whole of the UK. This is a deep and wide-ranging deal, covering trade, security, travel, transport, energy, health and social security.

As Parliament prepares to vote on the deal this week, I urge all Scottish MPs to give it their wholehearted support.

Outside the EU, the UK can sign our own trade deals around the world, bringing new opportunities for exporters and some of Scotland's most iconic products.

For our farmers, the deal avoids tariffs on their world-beating Scotch lamb and beef.

For our fishermen and coastal communities, the deal delivers what we promised.

We are regaining control of our waters, we are restoring our status as an independent coastal state and, even during the five year adjustment period, there will be a big overall increase in our share of the catch in our waters.

As we leave the Common Fisheries Policy, our fishermen will also enjoy near-exclusive access to inshore waters up to the historic 12

mile limit.

The deal is good news for Scotland and I believe it is now time to move on from the Brexit debate and join forces in embracing our exciting future. Whether Leaver or Remainer in 2016 we need to come to together to make the most of our new opportunities.

The people of Scotland will expect their MPs to do the right thing on Wednesday and vote for the deal. They will not easily forgive those who reject this Free Trade Agreement or throw their weight behind a no deal Brexit.

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## **New Turing scheme to support thousands of students to study and work abroad**

Thousands of students will be able to study and do work placements across the world through a brand new scheme that replaces the UK's participation in Erasmus+.

The Turing scheme will be backed by over £100 million, providing funding for around 35,000 students in universities, colleges and schools to go on placements and exchanges overseas, starting in September 2021.

The new scheme will also target students from disadvantaged backgrounds and areas which did not previously have many students benefiting from Erasmus+, making life-changing opportunities accessible to everyone across the country.

The programme will provide similar opportunities for students to study and work abroad as the Erasmus+ programme but it will include countries across the world and aims to deliver greater value for money to taxpayers.

The UK will reap the rewards from the investment, by boosting students' skills and prospects, benefitting UK employers, and supporting Global Britain's ties with international partners.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We now have the chance to expand opportunities to study abroad and see more students from all backgrounds benefit from the experience.

We have designed a truly international scheme which is focused on our priorities, delivers real value for money and forms an

important part of our promise to level up the United Kingdom.

These opportunities will benefit both our students and our employers, as well as strengthening our ties with partners across the world.

UK organisations will be invited to bid into the scheme in early 2021. Successful applications will receive funding for administering the scheme and students taking part will receive grants to help them with the costs of their international experience.

The benefits of the exchanges to schools and colleges will be assessed and the learnings used to build on future schemes. Funding decisions for subsequent years will be subject to future spending reviews.

To meet delivery timescales, universities, colleges and schools are encouraged to begin preparation with international partners as soon as possible.

Universities UK International Director, Vivienne Stern, said:

Evidence shows that students who have international experience tend to do better academically and in employment, and the benefits are greatest for those who are least advantaged.

The new Turing scheme is a fantastic development and will provide global opportunities for up to 35,000 UK students to study and work abroad.

International Education Champion, Sir Steve Smith, said:

As the International Education Champion, I'm pleased to see that the govt is committed to international exchanges. So much of what makes education so rewarding for all is the chance for students and learners in schools, colleges and universities experience new cultures and, by doing so, develop new skills.

This scheme represents a sizeable investment from the Government and I look forward to working with the Government to develop a scheme that will make real our commitment to Global Britain.

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# £830 million funding boost for high streets

- The government will invest up to £830 million from the Future High Streets Fund
- Investment will support areas to recover from the pandemic and help transform underused town centres into vibrant places to live, work and shop
- Ambitious plans will help protect and create thousands of jobs as part of the levelling up agenda

In a major boost for local high streets, up to £830 million from the Future High Streets Fund will be invested in 72 areas across England, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick announced today (26 December 2020).

The funding will help these areas transform their high streets into vibrant hubs for future generations and to protect and create thousands of jobs.

In a key milestone for the government's levelling up agenda, this investment will help areas to recover from the pandemic while also driving long term growth.

It will enable the delivery of ambitious regeneration plans, drawn up by places, and fund new local projects such as improvements to transport infrastructure, new homes and the transformation of underused spaces.

The funding will also help to protect and create thousands of jobs in a range of industries, delivering opportunities and prosperity to communities across England. Confirmed plans include:

- £24.6 million to support the delivery of 186 new homes, road safety improvements and a permanent new space for the historic market in Birkenhead.
- £17.9 million to boost Worcester town centre by renovating the Scala Theatre and Corn Exchange, transforming underused space to create new homes for first time buyers and improving connectivity.
- £25 million for Swindon's plans to modernise its town centre, including a new public transport hub and improved cycle and pedestrian routes.

This funding is part of wider support we're providing to communities and businesses, to protect jobs, support the most vulnerable and ensure no one is left behind as we tackle the COVID-19 pandemic head on.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

The year ahead will be a big one for the high street as it seeks to recover, adapt and evolve as a result of the pandemic. Today's £830 million investment from the Future High Streets Fund is one of many

ways the government is working to help our much-loved town centres get through this and prosper into the future.

The role of high street has always evolved. We want to support that change and make sure that they are the beating heart of their local community – with high quality housing and leisure in addition to shops and restaurants.

This investment will help us build back better and make town centres a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

We are supporting our high streets to get through this pandemic through business grants, paying people's wages and tax deferrals.

The Future High Streets Fund will help areas bounce back through regeneration projects that level up opportunities and create jobs right across the country.

The Future High Streets Fund was launched in December 2018 and is a key part of this government's plan to renew and reshape town centres – making them a more attractive place to live, work and visit. £107 million of the Future High Streets Fund has been allocated to DCMS to support the regeneration of heritage high streets.

The Future High Streets Fund is just one of the ways the government is supporting the retail and hospitality sector. During the pandemic, we made it easier for areas to adapt to the challenges they faced.

This included making it easier to demolish and rebuild unused buildings to create homes with our High Street Homes Permitted Development Rights; providing restaurants, pubs and cafes with the freedom to offer takeaway services; and making it easier for businesses and communities to host markets and stalls so customers can be served safely.

In May we launched a fund to help councils reopen high streets safely and we recently announced that retailers will be able to extend their opening hours over the festive period to help keep shoppers and staff safe.

This month we extended protections from the threat of eviction for businesses unable to pay their rent until March 2021, taking the duration of these measures to one year.

Our recent proposals for the new Parking Code of Practice will support shoppers visiting their local high street by introducing a tiered approach to private car parking fines and ensuring a fair appeals process.

We are also reviewing the provision of public toilets to ensure that there are appropriate facilities for visitors to town centres.

Fifteen areas across England have been awarded a confirmed £255 million from the Future High Streets Fund. A further 57 areas have received a provisional funding offers totalling up to £576 million and we will be working with them to finalise their proposals.

The 15 places who are receiving full funding are:

1. Tamworth Town Centre – Tamworth, £21,652,555
2. Sunderland City Centre – Sunderland, £25,000,000
3. Sutton – Sutton, £11,346,704
4. Bishop Auckland – Durham, £19,856,853
5. Blyth Town Centre – Northumberland, £11,121,059
6. Kidderminster – Wyre Forest, £20,510,598
7. Old Kent Road – Southwark, £9,605,854
8. Swindon – Swindon, £25,000,000
9. Stockport – Stockport, £14,500,000
10. Winsford – Cheshire West and Chester, £9,980,000
11. Sheffield High Street – Sheffield, £15,817,001
12. Blackfriars, Northern City Centre – Worcester, £17,939,000
13. Birkenhead – Wirral, £24,581,011
14. Brierley Hill High Town Centre – Dudley, £9,985,689
15. Stretford – Trafford, £17,605,674

The 57 places receiving provisional funding offers are:

1. Leamington Town Spa, Warwick (Warwickshire) – £10,015,121
2. Nuneaton Town Centre, Nuneaton and Bedworth (Warwickshire) – £13,362,736
3. Wolverhampton City Centre – £15,760,196
4. Walsall – £11,439,967
5. Newcastle-Under-Lyme – £11,048,260
6. Stafford – £14,377,723
7. Tottenham, Haringey – £10,019,648
8. Woolwich Town Centre, Greenwich – £17,150,964
9. Wealdstone, Harrow – £7,448,583
10. Putney Town Centre, Wandsworth – £1,058,706
11. Elland Town Centre, Calderdale (West Yorkshire) – £6,310,812
12. Northallerton, Hambleton (North Yorkshire) – £6,085,013
13. Rotherham – £12,660,708
14. Halifax – £11,762,823
15. Barnsley Towns Centre – £15,624,456
16. Scunthorpe – £10,675,323
17. New Ferry, Wirral – £3,213,523
18. Wigan – £16,633,691
19. Crewe – £14,148,128
20. Rochdale (Greater Manchester) – £17,080,458
21. Farnworth, Bolton (Greater Manchester) – £13,306,817
22. Oldham – £10,750,237
23. Kirkham Town Centre, Fylde – £6,290,831
24. Maryport Town Centre, Allerdale – £11,527,839
25. Carlisle City Centre – £9,129,874
26. Plymouth City Centre – £12,046,873
27. Barnstable, North Devon – £6,548,876

28. Newton Abbot, Teignbridge – £9,199,364
29. Paignton, Torbay – £13,363,248
30. Kingswood, South Gloucestershire – £12,555,464
31. Salisbury City Centre – £9,355,731
32. Penzance, Cornwall – £10,403, 112
33. Trowbridge, Wiltshire – £16,347,056
34. Yeovil – £9,756,897
35. Taunton, Somerset – £13,962,981
36. Loftus, Redcar and Cleveland – £5,833,628
37. Middlesbrough Centre – £14,170,352
38. Stockton – £16,543,812
39. South Shields – £5,959,187
40. Derby City Centre, St Peters Cross – £15,034,398
41. Sutton-in-Ashfield (Nottinghamshire) – £6,279,872
42. Grantham, South Kesteven (Lincolnshire) – £5,558,818
43. Grimsby (North East Lincolnshire) – £17,280,917
44. Nottingham City Centre, West End Point – £12,523,981
45. Heanor, Amber Valley – £8,592,837
46. Northampton – £8,442,730
47. Buxton, High Peak – £6,608,223
48. Dover Town Centre and Waterfront – £3,202,226
49. Newhaven, Lewes – £5,004,939
50. Chatham Town Centre, Medway – £9,497,720
51. Ramsgate, Thanet – £2,704,213
52. Commercial Road, Portsmouth (Hampshire) – £3,122,375
53. Fratton, Portsmouth – £3,858,489
54. High Wycombe – £11,886,876
55. St Neots, Huntingdonshire – £3,748,815
56. March High Street, Fenland – £6,447,129
57. Great Yarmouth – £13,774,430

The outputs listed are locally reported and will undergo further quality assurance before being finalised and confirmed in grant offer letters.

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## [Home Secretary hails security agreement with EU](#)

Home Secretary Priti Patel has hailed the UK's new comprehensive security agreement with the EU that will see the UK continuing to be one of the safest countries in the world.

A range of fast and effective security capabilities were agreed with the EU, which will help bear down on criminals and bring them to justice.

Measures agreed include:

- streamlined extradition arrangements;
- an arrangement enabling the fast and effective exchange of national DNA, fingerprint and vehicle registration data via the Prüm system to aid law enforcement agencies in investigating crime and terrorism;
- continued operational co-operation with Europol and Eurojust that reflect the scale of our contribution to these agencies;
- arrangements enabling the fast and effective exchange of criminal records data via shared technical infrastructure; and
- arrangements providing for continued transfers of Passenger Name Record data to protect the public from serious crime and terrorism.

It is the first time the EU has agreed such a comprehensive agreement with a third country in this area. It ensures the UK can work with counterparts across Europe to tackle serious crime and terrorism, protecting the public and bringing criminals to justice.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The safety and security of UK citizens is the Government's top priority and the UK will continue to be one of the safest countries in the world.

I'm immensely proud of the comprehensive package of capabilities we've agreed with the EU. It means both sides have effective tools to tackle serious crime and terrorism, protecting the public and bringing criminals to justice.

But we will also seize this historic opportunity to make the UK safer and more secure through firmer and fairer border controls.

The UK is a leader in global security and will continue to play its part on the international stage to keep people safe. In addition to the deal, work such as the UK's 2025 Border Strategy and co-operation with international partners, will ensure we tackle threats as varied as terrorism, organised crime and illegal migration.

From 1 January 2021, free movement will end and tougher border rules for EU criminals will come into force. Under these changes, foreign criminals sentenced to more than a year in jail will be banned from entering the UK.

The UK will also make it harder for criminals to operate and smuggle illicit commodities such as guns and drugs into the country. From July 2021, the UK will start receiving advance data on all goods coming from the EU into Great

Britain, something which has not previously been possible under EU rules.

The UK is also phasing out the use of insecure identity documents used to enter the UK. From 1 October 2021, the UK will refuse to recognise EEA and Swiss national identity cards which are some of the most insecure and abused document seen at the border and often used by organised crime groups.

The Government is also providing the police with more powers to protect the public. From 1 January 2021, the police will have the power to detain fugitives wanted by close partner countries immediately without having to apply for a UK arrest warrant first. This means that criminals will be brought to justice faster.

Further details on the security arrangement can be found on the [UK-EU Trade and co-operation agreement summary](#).

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## **River levels remain exceptionally high across England**

Flooding remains a risk to some areas in England, particularly the North West and West Midlands. This follows heavy rain from Storm Christoph that fell on already saturated ground, which has led to exceptionally high river levels in recent days.

Very sadly, around 500 properties have been flooded so far and the Environment Agency's officers are working hard with partners to help reduce the risk, including up to 30 properties in Bewdley in Worcestershire. However, 35,000 properties across the country have already been protected from flooding and teams are operating flood defences, flood storage reservoirs and putting up temporary barriers where needed to help protect communities.

At 12.15pm on 23 January, 1 severe flood warning currently remains in place, where flooding poses a significant risk to life or significant disruption to communities, there are 95 flood warnings, meaning that flooding is expected, and 95 flood alerts, meaning that flooding is possible.

People living in northern and central parts of England, especially around Ironbridge and Bewdley and further down the river Severn where river levels remain high, are being urged to prepare for the risk of flooding over the weekend. The public should sign up to flood warnings and check the latest safety advice.

Dan Bond, Flood Duty Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

Our thoughts are with anyone who has been affected by Storm Christoph, especially those whose homes or businesses have been flooded. Environment Agency officers are out today across the country assessing defences and operating flood barriers, and so far 35,000 properties have been protected.

As river levels react to recent heavy rainfall from Storm Christoph this could bring flooding to some areas, particularly along parts of the River Severn today and into Sunday, with a risk of damage to buildings in some communities. There is also a chance of localised flooding of land and roads across parts of the North West of England on Tuesday due to further rain.

We urge people to keep away from swollen rivers and not to drive through flood water – it is often deeper than it looks and just 30cm of flowing water is enough to float your car.

People should check their flood risk, sign up for free flood warnings and keep up to date with the latest situation at via [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) or follow @EnvAgency on Twitter for the latest flood updates.

Storm Christoph brought some heavy, and at times record breaking, rain to parts of England. Provisional figures show Honister, in Cumbria, received 123.8 mm of rainfall on Tuesday 19 January, a new daily rainfall record for this winter and 2021. Figures also show parts of Cleveland, in North Yorkshire, received more than their average January rainfall in just a 48 hour period. Tuesday 19 January was the wettest January day for Rochdale (46.8mm), Preston (43.6 mm) and Stonyhurst, Lancashire (43.8mm) since 1954.

Evacuating people from their homes is a multi-agency decision where all risks are considered. Preparations for evacuations and to create Covid-secure rest centres will have been made by the relevant agencies as a precautionary measure. We would urge anyone advised to evacuate to follow the advice of the emergency services at the time.

Find out if you're at risk of flooding in [England](#)

Sign up for flood [warnings](#)

Get help during a [flood](#)

What to do after a [flood](#)