

Security Minister speech to the Royal United Services Institute

Thank you for the kind introduction.

It is a huge privilege to speak at RUSI again – albeit this time not in your wonderful library – but rather from the more functional backdrop of my Home Office office – although that in itself may well be a first!

I have always valued the research, analysis and unique insights which RUSI provides and I could not think of a more appropriate place to make my first speech having returned to the role of Security Minister after a 5-year gap.

In doing so, it provides me with perhaps a unique opportunity to reflect on what's changed in the threats we face and how we have adapted and adjusted our strategies and our response to meet the challenges from the changing face of terrorism.

Sadly, what hasn't changed is the enduring threat it continues to pose.

We have felt the impact of terrorism in this country on several occasions in recent years, such as the attacks in London and Manchester in 2017, and more recently Fishmongers' Hall, HMP Whitemoor, and Streatham. The attacks in France and Austria in the last few weeks underline the sickening and lethal intent from those intent on using violence and intimidation who want to change our very way of life and the values we hold as liberal, democratic societies.

Earlier this month, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre independently raised the UK national terrorism threat level from substantial to severe. This means that a terrorist attack in the UK is now highly likely.

I should stress that this change should not be a cause for immediate alarm. It is a precautionary measure and is not based on any specific threat.

JTAC keep the threat level under constant review based on the very latest intelligence and analysis of both internal and external factors such as terrorist capability, intent and timescales.

Our resolve to combat and confront these threats remains utterly steadfast and national security rightly remains at the centre of all that we do.

We have also remained alive to any impact from the coronavirus outbreak.

And we continue to work closely with our operational partners to ensure vital national security activities are maintained.

I pay tribute to the outstanding work of our police, security agencies and officials for all that they are doing and they have our full support in keeping our country safe.

We will always take the strongest possible action to protect our national security and be clear about the threat that we face from terrorism.

Undoubtedly, the threat landscape has become more diverse and challenging.

When I was last in post our focus was on combatting the directed threat from structured terrorist groups with a clear command and control, tasking out operatives to commit atrocities.

With Daesh having been driven from all territory in Iraq and Syria and the senior leadership of Al Qa'ida diminished, the Jihadist threat has changed – with terrorists advancing less sophisticated but still lethal attacks off their own initiative. Now, strangers are radicalised rather than subordinates.

This makes the task of spotting and disrupting these plots that much harder – and I will come back to this a little later when discussing how we are changing our approach to counter the threat from those who take the path to terrorism with a simple 'just do it' type mentality.

Equally, the balance of the threat picture has altered.

When I reflect back on my previous time in the role it was dominated by Jihadist-inspired plots.

Now as I've said, it is much more diverse – much more complicated.

For two decades, Islamist extremist terrorism has been the greatest terrorist threat to the UK. It remains relentless, and by a long way the most common type of investigation managed by our security services.

As the Director General of MI5 set out last month, tens of thousands of individuals are committed to this ideology – meaning there is a need to constantly scan this larger group for the smaller numbers who could be mobilising towards attacks.

The atrocities in France and Austria have, once more, underlined the enduring danger from Islamist terrorism – and our continuing need to challenge, counter and disrupt it at every turn.

But as I look at my weekly security briefings, the threats now come from a more varied range of directions.

Not only the threats from Daesh or Al Qai'da inspired groups and individuals but the growing threat from right wing terrorism, as well as risks from the far left and single-issue extremists.

And as a former Northern Ireland Secretary, I remain incredibly conscious of the risk from terrorism by Dissident Republican groups, notwithstanding recent important disruptions by our security agencies.

Our priority is to keep people safe and secure right across the United Kingdom.

This diversity of terrorist threat also needs to be seen within the context of the broader national security and homeland resilience landscape:

- of malign external activities by other States seeking to amplify disinformation and division
- of cyber-security and organised crime seeking to exploit our weaknesses and exploit the vulnerable *and how COVID-19 pandemic has changed the landscape further and undoubtedly will continue to do so

As Government we must adapt to this internal and external threat environment – and that is precisely what we are doing.

This week, this government announced the launch of the Counter-Terrorism Operations Centre. The new centre will be truly collaborative, and will unite partners from Counter-Terrorism Policing, the intelligence agencies, and the criminal justice system, coordinating their expertise, resource, and intelligence.

The centre will be fully delivered and operational within the next 5 years, with the first parts of the building complete and operational as early as next year. It will enable the UK to respond more quickly and effectively to help tackle terrorism and play a key role in tackling other threats including hostile state activity and organised crime.

Last Thursday saw the official launch of the National Cyber Force to further extend the reach of our cyber capabilities to provide greater resilience and to combat the growing threats we face. The NCF will deliver cyber operations to support the UK's national security priorities as a responsible world leading cyber power, from supporting military operations to countering serious crime to combatting terrorism.

Building on the success of the National Offensive Cyber Programme, the NCF will transform capacity and capability under a unified command.

As set out in the Spending Review yesterday, we are maintaining the budget for counter-terrorism policing in England and Wales, including continuing the additional £70 million provided for 2020-21 in 2021-22. And we will ensure that our domestic nuclear security capabilities are even more robust than they are already.

On the issue of hostile activities by foreign states, we will have more on this to say very shortly on the actions we intend to take to strengthen our laws to make them even more resilient to the risks posed by the potential impact of malign external influences.

I also want to say to those concerned about our security position as we come to the end of the EU transition period: the safety and security of our citizens is our top priority, and the UK will continue to be a global leader on security and one of the safest countries in the world.

We are focused on reaching an agreement with the EU and there is a good degree of convergence in what the UK and EU are seeking to negotiate in terms of operational capabilities. In the event that it is not possible to reach an

agreement, we have well-developed alternative plans in place. We will also continue our cooperation and information exchange through existing, non-EU channels, such as the Counter-Terrorism Group of European countries and INTERPOL.

On the central theme though, of our work to combat terrorism, it is worth underlining the significant actions which have been taken to respond to the challenges we face.

We have introduced the Prevent duty, an essential tool for safeguarding individuals that are vulnerable to radicalisation, ensuring they get support as early as possible.

The Operational Improvement Review, overseen by Lord Anderson of Ipswich in the wake of the series of attacks in 2017, set out a wide-ranging improvement plan for operational partners.

The strengthened counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST, outlined a multi-agency response to all forms of terrorism, regardless of ideology.

And this year, we have taken further steps to ensure our outstanding police and security services have the necessary powers and tools to keep us safe.

In response to the shocking attacks at Fishmongers' Hall, HMP Whitemoor and Streatham last winter, we acted swiftly to pass emergency legislation to end the automatic release of terrorist and terrorism-related offenders.

And we have brought forward the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill, which strengthens every stage in the process of dealing with terrorist offenders.

The Bill introduces new tough sentences, increases existing maximum penalties, extends licence periods and strengthens the tools available to operational partners.

But we continue to challenge ourselves as to what more we need to do.

This includes responding to the findings of the Public Inquiry into the attack on the Manchester Arena.

I recognise that this will be a painful time for many as the Inquiry continues to take its detailed evidence from the events of that appalling night.

It is vital that those who survived or lost loved ones get the answers they need and that we learn the lessons whatever they may be.

In the light of the horrific attacks in France and Austria, the Home Secretary and I have also tasked officials to review existing and proposed powers to consider what more may be required.

We will be introducing legislation early next year that will extend the tools available to Counter Terrorism Policing as part of the Government's response to Jonathan Hall QC's independent review of multi-agency public protection

arrangements.

This will include new powers of premises and personal search and a new urgent arrest power.

Earlier this year, I announced our plans to consult on introducing a legal 'Protect Duty'.

This will require certain owners and operators of premise to consider their preparedness for, and protection from, a terrorist attack and apply certain minimum standards.

This government supports the Martyn's Law campaign that seeks to improve protective security arrangements at publicly accessible locations. COVID has regrettably meant that progress has been slower than any of us had hoped or anticipated.

It has made consultation with industry and other partners more challenging and changed the nature of the locations the duty was intended to be focussed on.

But I want to be clear that our determination to deliver remains undiminished and we will follow through in bringing the Protect Duty into effect.

It also reminds us that the task of combatting terrorism extends beyond government, law enforcement and our security services.

It must also include the private and wider public sector.

In fact, everyone has a role to play in tackling terrorism.

In the evolving threat landscape which I have highlighted, one of the most fundamental shifts we have seen in recent years has been the prominence of what is often referred to as the 'lone actor' threat.

Not so long ago, we were mostly occupied with the risk posed by individuals or groups who were trained by terrorist organisations, provided with funds or weapons, and directed to carry out specific attacks.

Now, the primary threat is posed by those who mobilise to violence independently.

Technological changes, permissive online spaces and low sophistication attack methods have lowered the bar to entry into terrorism.

While this shift has been well-documented in recent years, I want to set out why it is essential that we think extremely carefully about the language we use when discussing it.

Specifically, the term 'lone actor'.

It implies that these individuals are isolated from society.

That they never tell anyone else about their views or ambitions.

That they have no interconnections with friends, family or others around them.

And that, as a result, they cannot be stopped from taking the path to terrorism.

Yet this paints a false picture.

In fact, we know research demonstrates that in many cases, there is communication with others.

There is research. There is planning. And there is preparation.

These individuals, or small groups of two or three, can be spotted.

They are not alone. They talk.

We must be careful not to minimise the complexities: the formal and informal networks, the online radicalisation, by labelling a spectrum of terrorists with a term that accurately describes none of them.

This isn't some pedantic tautological point.

The language we use, in communities of experts like this and with the public, helps cement a viewpoint and an approach to dealing with the threat. The language we use matters. These terrorists can be spotted. They can be stopped.

For those working in frontline services, and the wider public, it is crucial to have absolute clarity about the reality of the threat, and the role they can all play in helping counter it.

Now, more than ever, the authorities need communities and families to come forward if they have concerns that someone they know is at risk of being drawn into terrorist activity.

Of course, investigations by the police and security services are central to the counter-terrorism effort.

But a friend, a relative or a colleague will often be best placed to spot some of these warning signs and vulnerabilities at an early stage.

We also expect social media companies to play a role in identifying and flagging both illegal glorification content and the potential terrorist grooming of vulnerable individuals.

That is why we are so concerned when companies like Facebook take a unilateral decision to apply end-to-end encryption in a way that wholly precludes any access to the content of users' messages.

These companies must continue to take responsibility in tackling illegal behaviour. And we remain committed to working with them to ensure we continue to protect the public, without compromising user privacy.

And the threat from the far right provides further significance to the need to be vigilant to the ways in which the online space can be misused for radicalisation.

As a politician reflecting back on the things you've said in the past isn't always the most encouraging or comfortable of exercises and normally a past-time reserved for your opponents looking for ways of catching you out.

But in preparing for today, I did look back on a speech I gave in March 2013 to the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation at King's College London.

It was the first time a government minister had spoken about the worrying growth in right wing extremism and the ways in which we had adjusted our CONTEST counter terrorism strategy to adapt to all forms of terrorism – including from the far right.

In the speech I said:

The far right is not as widespread or systematic as the Al Qa'ida inspired threat – and operationally there are vast differences.

But we also notice at the same time, at its core, the far right appeals to people who share many of the same vulnerabilities as those exploited by Al Qa'ida inspired extremism.

It feeds off the same sense of alienation and questions around identity.

And it has the same ambition to reshape the world in an impossible way.

Now 7 years on a lot of what I said holds true – but what has undoubtedly changed and increased the challenge is the way in which social media and other communication platforms have influenced our cultural reference points, our social interactions, indeed the way we live our lives, and COVID has accelerated those trends.

It has provided a means for extremists – including those from the far right extremists – to challenge mainstream messaging and promulgate twisted perversions of the truth.

To amplify conspiracy theories and spread sickening and divisive images, messages and themes intended to stoke anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred, and racism as well as distrust in systems of government and governance.

Terrorism, in whatever form, seeks to divide us and undermine our shared values.

But that is not to say our response can be exactly the same.

We need to ensure that the powers and capabilities developed to counter other forms of terrorism are fit for purpose for the way that far right terrorists radicalise, recruit, mobilise and target.

Of the 27 plots foiled by UK police and security services since March 2017, 8 were motivated by far right extremist ideologies.

We have already taken several steps to combat far right terrorism.

In 2016, we proscribed the first far right terrorist group, National Action, following their appalling glorification of the murder of Jo Cox.

In 2017, we proscribed Scottish Dawn and NS131, as aliases of National Action.

Earlier this year, we proscribed Sonnenkrieg Division and Feuerkrieg Division and added System Resistance Network as a further alias of National Action.

As a result, being a member, or inviting support for these organisations is a criminal offence, carrying a sentence of up to 10 years' imprisonment.

Proscription has led to members of these terrorist groups being sentenced and taken off our streets. It has also supported the take down of material associated with these groups from online spaces.

It's another important step but we are doing more, as part of this, earlier this year MI5 became the lead UK agency for detecting and countering far right terrorism, bringing parity to our investigative approach to all forms of terrorism.

This threat is also transnational.

So, we are working with international partners to share best practice with the aim of reducing the risk far right terrorism poses to the UK and UK interests.

Some of the poisonous ideas promoted by far right extremists can manifest in involvement in terrorism, but in some instances it can take other forms – including hate crime.

We have a strong legal framework in place, with criminal penalties, for hate crime offences, including incitement to racial or religious hatred.

We support victims and engage with networks of organisations working to tackle hatred in communities.

All forms of hatred are unacceptable and will be tackled.

And preventing hatred and extremism from taking root remain an essential part of our strategy.

On this theme of prevention I was reminded of one of the conclusions in former FBI agent Ali Soufan's instructive book 'The Black Banners' about the

rise of Al Qa'ida.

In it he says:

To ever fully defeat Al-Qa'ida, or the subsequent new groups that emerge, we need to realise that military operations, interrogations and intelligence successes are only half the battle.

The other half is in the arena of ideas – countering the narratives and recruitment methods that extremists use.

We can keep killing and arresting terrorists, but if new ones keep joining, our war will never end.

That is why for me Prevent is such an important and essential strand to the work we do, and one that I want to see greater emphasis given to.

It is about intervening early, before someone goes down the path to terrorism.

It's about defending our freedoms; to enable communities to live without fear and for freedom of speech for all – even when it is unpopular and uncomfortable for some. This is the only way we will win the battle of ideas.

It is about challenging the twisted ideologies that provide the underpinning of the violent actions which are triggered.

But at its heart, it is about supporting vulnerable individuals, steering them away from terrorism, and protecting our communities.

The work done through the programme is complex and varied and rightly tackles all forms of terrorism including Islamist and far right terrorism.

And the value of this work has been underlined again today with the publication of the latest Prevent statistics.

Since the introduction of the Prevent duty five years ago, 2,352 referrals have resulted in individuals identified as vulnerable to radicalisation receiving support to turn them away from a dangerous path.

The statistics demonstrate a continued increase in those referred for right-wing radicalisation concerns receiving support, and we are determined to continue supporting communities and vulnerable individuals to reject these hateful narratives.

It is important to note that these latest statistics cover a period before coronavirus fully took hold in the UK.

However, over the last few months we have seen how opportunistic extremists have exploited the pandemic to promote their hateful propaganda and attempt to recruit people to their causes.

With children and young people spending more time online, there is a risk they will be targeted and groomed by these extremists.

This government is committed to making the UK the safest place to be online.

Through the introduction of new legislation, we will establish a legal duty of care on companies towards their users overseen by an independent regulator.

Shortly, we will be publishing the full government response to the Online Harms White Paper detailing our plans for this new legislative framework.

At the same time, we will also publish interim codes of practice setting out our expectations of what companies should be doing now to address child sexual exploitation and abuse as well as terrorist content and activity.

Separate work continues to be led by the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport to tackle misinformation and disinformation.

Last week Counter-Terrorism Policing launched Act Early – a new website and advice line for anyone concerned that someone they know is at risk of being radicalised by terrorists or extremist content online.

Access to that help, support and expertise is more important than ever before.

Like other efforts in the safeguarding space, the coronavirus emergency has meant Prevent has had to adapt.

But thanks to the excellent work of our dedicated local networks and partners, the programme continues to operate.

The priority remains to ensure that vulnerable people get the tailored support that they need.

Of course, we are always looking at ways we can make the programme more effective, and the government is fully committed to the Independent Review of Prevent.

Since I took up my ministerial post earlier this year, the world has changed in ways that we could scarcely have imagined.

However, one thing that has remained constant is the professionalism and determination shown by our world-leading police, intelligence services and security officials.

They work around the clock to keep us safe and I am immensely proud of their contribution.

The challenge to be one step ahead of those who seek to do us harm is an immense one.

It is one that we do not underestimate.

But it is one that we are confronting with all the determination, focus and expertise that the public would expect.

Whatever their ideology or motivation, terrorists seek to threaten our very way of life.

But our message is clear: we will never compromise on those values that they hate.

We will never be cowed by their attempts to sow fear and division.

And we will never waver in our commitment to tackling terrorism in all its forms.

Record numbers of doctors and 14,813 more nurses working in the NHS

The number of nurses in the NHS in England increased by 14,813 compared to last year, and the number of doctors rose by 6,257 to a record 121,726, figures published today up until the end of August show.

Quarterly vacancy statistics also published today show the number of overall NHS vacancies has decreased since last year by over 18,500 (17.5%), with the number of nursing and midwifery vacancies falling by over 15%.

Responding to today's NHS workforce statistics, Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Not only do we have record numbers of doctors and over 14,800 more nurses working in our NHS than last year, but our pipeline of future talent in nursing, medicine and general practice is now at record levels.

We are well on our way to deliver on our manifesto commitment of 50,000 more nurses in the NHS. I'm deeply grateful for the continued hard work of all our NHS staff throughout this pandemic.

In addition, recent figures for this year show the highest ever number of GPs entering training with 3,793 posts accepted, exceeding the mandated target of 3,250. Health Education England has increased GP trainee acceptances year on year for the last 7 years.

The latest UCAS figures show there are record numbers of people accepting a place to study nursing in England, with a 23% increase on the same time last year, or 5,000 more student nurses. A record number of people have also

applied to study medicine next year.

Over the summer, the [NHS People Plan](#) set out how the NHS will put staff wellbeing at its heart with a new recruitment, retention and support package. It sets out practical support for wellbeing such as safe spaces to rest and recuperate, wellbeing guardians and support to keep staff physically safe and healthy.

The NHS recently announced £15 million to strengthen mental health support for nurses, paramedics, therapists, pharmacists and support staff. Staff will get rapid access to expanded mental health services that are being rolled out across the country as part of efforts to deal with the second wave of coronavirus.

Today, NHS Digital published their monthly [NHS workforce data for August 2020](#):

- over the last year (August 2019 to August 2020) the number of FTE nurses has gone up by 14,813, from 280,599 to 295,412
- over the last year (August 2019 to August 2020) the number of FTE doctors has gone up by 6,257, from 115,469 to 121,726

England	August 2020 FTE	Annual FTE Change	Annual % Change
All staff	1,161,858	61,585	5.6%
Professionally qualified	612,087	29,420	5.0%
Doctors	121,726	6,257	5.4%
Nurses	295,412	14,813	5.3%

[The obstacles of women representation in the Guatemalan judiciary](#)

World news story

The British Embassy organised a Great Talk as part of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.



The Law Society of England and Wales, UN Women Guatemala and the law firms Denton's Muñoz, BLP, Aguilar Castillo Love took part in the discussions.

The purpose of the activity was to encourage the legal profession in Guatemala to take stronger leadership in tackling gender inequalities in the judicial sector.

The discussion began with an introduction to the transforming the future of the legal profession through gender equality in the context of Latin America and Central America by Lizzette R. de Howarth, from the Law Society and Adriana Quiñonez, UN Women country representative.

The second part of the discussion gave Conchita Mazariegos, former president of the Constitutional Court and María Mercedes Castro, in-house lawyer for Chiquita Banana the space to share their experiences, challenges and obstacles in the judiciary.

Finally, Alejandra Colom moderated an exchange around the importance of readdressing gender inequalities in the legal sector among legal academics, legal practitioners, in-house counsels, law firms, and relevant civil society organisations.

During the activity, a medium-term project was presented by the Law Society, which aims to build an evidence-based business case for women in the legal profession.

Barbara Amono-Oceng, Deputy Chief of Mission said:

The UK is working with international partners to ensure that gender equality is a central theme. We are conscious that we cannot build a future without gender equality or without empowering women and girls.

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Plans to improve flood defences in York's Museum Gardens approved

A scheme which will better protect properties in the Marygate area by improving defences in Museum Gardens has been approved by City of York Council planning officers today (Thursday 26 November).

Due to the impact of climate change there is a need to raise the existing flood defences between Scarborough Bridge and Lendal Bridge and provide an improved continuous line of defence.

This scheme will better protect 42 homes and 15 businesses within the Marygate community of York.

The Museum Gardens embankment is within an area designated as Scheduled Monument and a Grade II listed park and garden and next to one of the rarest trees in the country. It is also within an area of archaeological importance. Improvements to the embankment are part of the wider Marygate flood scheme, which also includes other works that do not need planning permission.

Emma Beever, project manager from the Environment Agency, said:

We are delighted to have been given planning approval to take us a step closer to constructing this section of the York Flood Alleviation Scheme, which will protect 2,000 properties in the city.

By strengthening and raising existing flood defences in the area we can make York more resilient to climate change.

We have worked closely with York Museum Trust, City of York Council and Historic England to come up with a design that not only acts as a viable flood defence, but also fits in with this much used and well-loved public space in the heart of our City. We have also been able to protect the true service tree, which is very rare and was a key concern for local people.

Work in the Museum Gardens will start next August when the weather is more likely to be dry to minimise its impact. The Gardens will stay open throughout the four month project, but access will be restricted near the embankment and the footpaths behind the Hospitium will be closed.

The project team has been working with partners to develop a design which minimises the impact on the gardens and Hospitium. The construction area in

the gardens will be as small as possible within safety limits. The site compound located at Marygate and the work to raise the defences from Scarborough Bridge to Marygate is expected to start prior to the works in Museum Gardens.

A virtual public event was held in July to outline the design of the flood defence improvements and the realignment of the embankment to protect one of rarest trees in the country following feedback from the community.

The project includes:-

- raising the flood wall from Scarborough Bridge to Earlsborough Terrace and replace the existing flood gate with a taller one which will be altered to improve access for cyclists .
- raising existing defences on Earlsborough Terrace by 40cm by installing glass panels on top of the existing brick walls and replacing the 10 existing flood gates. This will help the community adapt to climate change while maintaining their connection with the river.
- raising and extending the existing flood embankment in Museum Gardens between 30 and 60cm. The design of the embankment has been developed to not only act as a viable flood defence, but to also to fit in with this much used and well loved public space.
- raising the existing flood wall from Earlsborough Terrace to Marygate by 45cm and the existing flood gate on Marygate.

To allow the embankment to be raised, its footprint will need to be increased so up to 15 trees will have to be removed. For every tree removed, five will be replanted and where possible this will be in Museum Gardens.

This work forms part of £45 million York Flood Alleviation Scheme, which will better protect 2,000 homes in the city from flooding.

Since 2015, the Government has invested £496m on flood defences in Yorkshire – more than any other region – better protecting more than 66,000 properties. Across the country Environment Agency flood schemes protected almost 130,000 properties during the winter 2019/20 flooding.

If you would like to sign up for digital newsletters about our scheme email:yorkfloodplan@environment-agency.gov.uk

For more information on the York Flood Alleviation Scheme [go to](#)

Or follow EnvAgencyYNE on Twitter, York Flood Alleviation Scheme on Facebook or YorkFloodPlan on Instagram.

[Reconnecting the railways: communities awarded funding to restore Beeching](#)

[rail links and forgotten stations](#)

- 15 rail schemes awarded up to £50,000 to accelerate plans that could restore lines and stations to communities, including those closed during the Beeching cuts
- government investing £32 million to develop and construct new stations in England and Wales
- part of wider £500 million [Restoring Your Railway Fund](#) to develop proposals that level up transport links across the country

Towns and villages across England, which were left isolated when their railways were closed, are one step closer to having their connections restored and transformed, as 15 projects are awarded up to £50,000 each to progress plans to reinstate historic stations and restore passenger services, as announced in the [Spending Review](#).

More than 50 years since the railways were radically reshaped, including thousands of lines and stations closed during the infamous Beeching cuts of the 1960s, this latest investment will kick-start work on schemes that reconnect previously cut-off communities, with the potential to reinvigorate local economies and level up opportunity across the country.

[Restoring our railway](#)

Schemes awarded funding include:

- restoring Ferryhill station in Sedgefield, demolished alongside Mainsforth Colliery in 1969
- returning services to Consett in the North East
- bringing back a station close to the medieval Beeston Castle in Cheshire
- reinstating services for communities around Ashfield on the Maid Marian Line

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

For towns and villages left isolated and forgotten by Beeching cuts, restoring a rail line or a station has the potential to revitalise a community. It breathes new life into our high streets, drives investment in businesses and housing, and opens new opportunities for work and education.

By building back with a real focus on better connections and supporting left-behind communities, we're delivering our promise to level up this country.

These latest projects to receive a share of the second round of the Restoring Your Railway 'Ideas Fund' will progress plans to deliver new routes and improved connectivity, as well as developing plans for new stations to areas

poorly served by public transport.

Entries have been specifically judged on their ability to deliver real economic benefits and support left-behind communities, with investment targeted at regenerating local economies by:

- supporting new house developments
- opening up access to jobs and education
- boosting tourism

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said:

From restoring historic stations at Ferryhill and Langport, to reinstating passenger services on the Maid Marian Line and transforming rail connections around Bolton, Bury and Consett, our investment will provide the vital links that people depend on.

Among the winning bids is a scheme to reinstate passenger services from Bolton to Manchester through Radcliffe with a radial Metrolink – running through some of the most economically deprived parts of the UK.

A proposal for a Mid-Cornwall Metro has also been awarded development funding which would create a coast to coast through-service connecting the biggest towns in Cornwall – Newquay, Par, St Austell, Truro, Penryn and Falmouth – reducing journey times and easing road congestion.

Today's news comes as the government provides £32 million of funding to deliver 3 new stations in England and Wales, including Edginswell in Torquay, Thanet Parkway in Kent and St Clears in Carmarthenshire, with additional funding being invested to develop a further 2 in Haxby and Deeside.

The Beeching cuts saw tracks ripped up or grassed over, iconic viaducts and bridges left without a purpose and communities set adrift. Initially proposed by British Rail chief Dr Richard Beeching in 1963, passenger services were ended on around a third of the rail network, with more than 2,300 stations closed and up to 5,000 miles of track axed across the UK.

Over the summer, proposals from MPs and local authorities for the second round of the 'Ideas Fund' were considered by an expert panel, including Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris and Network Rail Chair Sir Peter Hendy, after 51 bids were received earlier this year.

A further 28 bids will receive further guidance to help develop and refine their ideas for assessment in future funding rounds.