

UK and Malaysia agree to deepen trading relationship in first Joint Committee

News story

Yesterday (Tuesday 24 November) the UK and Malaysia held the first Joint Committee on Bilateral Trade and Investment Cooperation.



Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific, Natalie Black CBE, co-chaired the meeting alongside Deputy Secretary General (Trade) for the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Mr Hairil Yahri Yaacob.

The Joint Committee will strengthen trade ties between the UK and Malaysia and boost cooperation for future trade and investment.

Today's meeting was the first of its kind between the two countries and brought together government and business representatives, including presentations by the UK-ASEAN Business Council and the SME International Trade Association of Malaysia (SMITA).

The Joint Committee commissioned 6 working groups to develop further bilateral cooperation and improve market access. This includes areas of high interest to the UK such as legal services, wines and spirits, and education.

“I’m delighted that today’s inaugural meeting of the UK-Malaysia Joint Committee on trade and investment has agreed a programme of cooperation in support of our shared ambition to remove barriers to trade and create new opportunities for business.

“The UK and Malaysia enjoy a strong and healthy trade and investment relationship which has the potential for significant further growth contributing to the prosperity of both countries.”

How employers are benefitting from sector-based work academies

Sector-based work academies help prepare those receiving unemployment benefits to apply for jobs in a different area of work. Placements are designed to help meet your immediate and future recruitment needs as well as to recruit a workforce with the right skills to sustain and grow your business.

Fareham College

Fareham College has teamed up with Job Centre Plus (JCP) to establish a bespoke sector-based work academy to offer people the opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge required for pursuing a career in the construction industries.

The college's Civil Engineering Training Centre (CETC) works with JCP to offer individuals seeking employment opportunities relevant skills and experience to enter the construction industry. Potential applicants, including those made redundant and receiving unemployment benefit or out of work for some time, enrol on a four-week training programme at CETC to give them real-world experience in civil engineering.

Every learner is guaranteed a job interview at the end of the programme, they obtain their CSCS Green Card as well as a Level 1 Award in Health and Safety in a Construction Environment and a Level 1 Award in Bricklaying. If required they can gain a functional skills qualification in Maths and English, enabling them to graduate the programme site-ready. Each cohort of learners can then progress straight into work or onto an apprenticeship.

Jordan Pakiry, a learner on the programme, said:

I was made redundant at the end of July. I came to CETC with no experience in bricklaying or the construction industry, but I have had a very positive experience and have learnt the basics in building straight block walls, corner returns and bonding bricks together.

These skills combined with my Level 1 Award in Health and Safety in a Construction Environment plus functional skills in Maths have put me in a great position to look for a job at the end of the programme.

Fellow learner Andrew Stubbs also commented:

I was unemployed for six months, having had a long and successful career in transport services. I want to pursue a work placement with Highways England and return to CETC next year to complete a Level 2 Highway Maintenance Apprenticeship.

The tutors at CETC are amazing. They have up-to-date industry experience and knowledge and the right connections. I have already recommended the programme to family and friends who are looking to change or start a career in civil engineering and groundworks.

Lesley Roberts of Fareham College said:

The programme has already enjoyed success with learners from the first two cohorts progressing into employment and Apprenticeships. We are planning a third cohort to start in January 2021. We hope to see many of our learners go on to have successful careers in the construction industry.

The college now has a full cohort of 20 learners who are looking forward to starting on programme in January 2021.

New careers

Thanks to Jobcentre staff in Manchester and the SWAP programme, Ashley Garrod is on the road to a new career.

After four years in the music industry, performing up and down the country as well as making his own music, Ashley found himself out of work in March 2020. But, through the SWAP programme, designed to connect employers with individuals who want a chance to learn more about a particular sector, Ashley now has qualifications in social care and a new career as a carer.

The hands on experience gained through SWAP helped Ashley decide if the care sector was right for him, and helped him make an informed choice about his future career path.

[Ashley video](#)

British Embassy Costa Rica provides

training for customs officials on UK-Central America Association Agreement

World news story

The British Embassy and the Department for International Trade in Costa Rica organised a workshop for customs officials on the key components of the UK-Central America Association Agreement.



In mid-November, the British Embassy and the Department for International Trade (DIT) in Costa Rica, with the support of Deloitte Costa Rica and the Ministry of Finance, delivered a series of technical workshops for close to 90 customs officials to prepare them for the implementation process of the Association Agreement between the United Kingdom and Central America.

The UK-Central America Association Agreement (UK-CAAA), which is scheduled to come into effect on 1 January 2021, will ensure the continuity of exports and imports between the United Kingdom and the countries of Central America – Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama – once the UK has finalised its departure from the European Union.

The Director for DIT Costa Rica, Luisa Pastor, explained the importance of the agreement, stating that:

The UK-CAAA guarantees, among other things, that Costa Rican products will continue to be distributed in the UK. Similarly, it ensures that British products that are in high demand in the Costa Rican market, like whisky, continue to be consumed, without price variations, thereby benefitting everyone.

Ms. Pastor thanked the government officials who were instrumental in helping make the workshop a reality, underscoring that:

Their willingness is a reflection of the support that we have received from the central government and the Legislative Assembly, who have always championed the signature and later ratification of the agreement.

Costa Rica ratified the UK-Central America Agreement in October 2019. The Customs Department will play a fundamental role in ensuring the success of the agreement's implementation in 2021.

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England Coast Path: Proposals published for Norfolk and Lincolnshire

[Natural England](#) has today (25 November 2020) published its proposals to improve public access to a 33-mile (53-km) stretch of coast between Hunstanton and Sutton Bridge, which extends around The Wash.

There is now a period of eight weeks for legal interests and members of the public to make objections or representations that the Secretary of State must take into account when considering whether to approve the proposals.

Part of England's newest national trail

If approved, this route will become part of the [England Coast Path](#) – a 2,700-mile-long distance-walking route and England's newest National Trail, currently being developed by Natural England.

Never before have people appreciated outdoor spaces so much, and these proposals will enable everyone to make the most of being at the coast and close to nature.

For some, that will mean enjoying family fun on the sandy beaches at Hunstanton, Heacham and Snettisham. For others, visiting sites of cultural

interest such as the atmospheric quays at King's Lynn or enjoying the peace and tranquillity of The Wash with its saltmarsh and mudflats alive with wild birds.

Great for bird-watchers

The whole extent of the proposed trail is located in areas of international wildlife value. Bird watchers will particularly enjoy [The Wash National Nature Reserve](#) and the [RSPB reserve at Snettisham](#).

Natural England's proposals will also create seven miles of new access between the RSPB reserve at Snettisham and King's Lynn. This is an area largely remote from local facilities such as toilets and cafes, where the trail passes between The Wash and arable fields. Walkers will be inspired by the scale of the flat open landscape and huge skies there, which evoke a strong sense of place and tranquillity.

From King's Lynn, the trail uses the existing Peter Scott Way: a local trail which extends into Lincolnshire and was named in honour of Sir Peter Scott, the famous naturalist. The trail also goes past the lighthouse near Sutton Bridge, where he lived.

Route takes in historic sites

This stretch of coast has good public transport links radiating out from King's Lynn, which has direct regular trains to King's Cross. King's Lynn itself is a historic medieval port with a wealth of stunning buildings, heritage museums and attractions to explore.

At Purfleet Quay, walkers can enjoy the fabulous 1683 [Custom House](#), described by historian Pevsner as 'one of the most perfect buildings ever built'. They can also explore the town's fine medieval merchants' houses and the [largest and best-preserved medieval guildhall in England](#).

From King's Lynn, visitors can travel round the Norfolk coast via the [Coastliner bus route](#), which extends to Wells, and then the [Coasthopper bus](#), which goes on to Cromer

33-mile route around The Wash

This is the fourth and final stretch of the England Coast Path to be developed in Norfolk and the third in Lincolnshire.

Hannah Thacker, Natural England's area manager for Norfolk, said:

"Our proposals will increase access via a trail that can be used in conjunction with the existing ferry service across the Great Ouse between King's Lynn and West Lynn. There are also good train and bus links at King's Lynn helping to enable greater car-free leisure. We have gone to considerable trouble to make proposals that achieve this while avoiding damage to the considerable wildlife value of The Wash estuary."

David Parker, Natural England's area manager for Lincolnshire, said:

We have had discussions with landowners and key organisations along the proposed route; their input has been essential and helped shape the proposals. We thank everyone for their time and input so far.

Over the next eight weeks, we are inviting all organisations, farmers, local residents, visitors and businesses to have their say. It's important that all responses are taken into account and we look forward to hearing people's views.

Cllr Andrew Jamieson, [Norfolk County Council's](#) member champion for Cycling and Walking, said:

When this final section of the coast path is in place, we'll have a superb 113-mile trail right around Norfolk's beautiful coast. We want this new section to be a route that people will love to use and will return to again and again, so I shall be making my views known about the route and I'd urge people to take this opportunity to look at the plans and feed back their views.

It's not just about opening-up new access to our coastal areas, it's also likely to bring a much-needed financial boost as we know popular long-distance paths bring a significant benefit to local economies.

In 2018 to 19 we saw 750,000 visits to Norfolk's coast path, so I hope completing the trail will help encourage even more people to experience our wonderful coastline in the future.

Cllr Richard Davies, [Lincolnshire County Council's](#) member for Highways, Transport and IT, said:

Whilst this is only a short stretch of the Lincolnshire coastline, we are pleased that Natural England have been able to publish the proposals for the route of the England Coast Path linking Hunstanton with Sutton Bridge.

Lincolnshire is proud to support this project and we hope that more people than ever will be able to enjoy some of the nation's most precious coastal habitats and striking scenery and that coastal communities such as Sutton Bridge will benefit from the opportunities that the path will bring.

Anyone may make representations to Natural England about the reports during the eight-week period. Owners and occupiers of affected land may make objections about the reports on specified grounds, which will be considered

by a planning inspector before the Secretary of State makes a final decision.

All representations and objections must be received by Natural England no later than midnight on 20 January 2021. The full reports and all the forms and guidance on how to make a representation or objection within the next eight weeks, are available on [GOV.UK](#).

Background information

- The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 places a duty on the Secretary of State and Natural England to secure a long-distance walking trail around the open coast of England, together with public access rights to a wider area of land along the way for people to enjoy.
- Natural England is working on the entire coastal route, with new sections also opened in Cumbria, Norfolk, Dorset, Kent, Somerset, Yorkshire, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, the Tees Valley and Lincolnshire.
- A map showing a timetable for the work is available on [GOV.UK](#).
- The England Coast Path will be the longest, newest and most challenging National Trail, passing through some of the nation's finest countryside and coastal locations. It will secure legal rights of public access for the first time to typical coastal land including foreshore, beaches, dunes and cliffs.
- As well as recommending new sections of route, the proposals outline improvements to existing access to the coastline, including identifying a clear and continuous way-marked walking route along this part of the coast, bringing some sections of the existing coastal footpath closer to the sea and linking some places together for the first time; and allowing the route to 'roll back' if the coastline erodes or slips, solving the long-standing difficulties of maintaining a continuous route along the coast.

Securing stability and prosperity for the people of Iraq

Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing and for highlighting the significant challenges currently facing Iraq.

Indeed, Iraq faces a severe economic crisis and economic reform will be critical to ensuring Iraq's future peace and prosperity and to allowing Iraq to build back stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic. And we took note of the steps described by the SRSG and we underline the need for fast action from the Council of Representatives to ensure that economic reform delivers for

the Iraqi people.

The international community stands alongside Iraq during these difficult times. At Iraq's invitation, the UK hosted the inaugural meeting of the Iraq Economic Contact Group in London earlier this year to deepen support for vital economic reform. And we welcome the fact that the follow-up meeting is going to be taken forward by the EU and Germany.

We also think that regional economic integration is key to economic development and stability. And so we welcome Iraq's commitment to deepen trilateral coordination and cooperation with both Egypt and Jordan.

The UK remains supportive of Prime Minister Khadimi and welcomes his commitment to holding free and fair elections in 2021 with the support of UNAMI. And I think we should consider carefully how the UN can support the Government of Iraq's intention to hold credible elections in order to rebuild public trust and democracy and to promote participation.

Madam President, the UK is encouraged by improvements in the relationship between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, including the agreement for the Sinjar district in Nineveh. This agreement offers the prospect of return for thousands of Yazidis. It is vital that all armed groups cooperate with its implementation and that both the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan region of Iraq help to restore services and economic livelihoods.

We welcome SRSG Hennis-Plasschaert's facilitation of dialogue on the Sinjar agreement, and encourage continued UN support to help normalise the situation there. We urge Baghdad and Erbil to agree a long-term solution on resources and revenue sharing.

Madam President, we remain concerned about the security situation in Iraq. It is clear that Daesh continues to pose a threat to the peace and security of Iraq. The UK, like other members of the Global Coalition, is committed to supporting Iraq and addressing that threat.

We also underline the need for dialogue and cooperation between Iraq and Turkey to combat terrorism and ensure regional security and to protect civilians.

It is unacceptable that militia attacks continue in Iraq, including in Baghdad and in Erbil. These have claimed Iraqi and international lives for too long and continue to be a risk to Iraqis and diplomatic and military personnel. We acknowledge the efforts of Prime Minister Khadimi to strengthen security measures so that Iraqi citizens and foreign personnel can live and work safely, but we urge the Iraqi government to continue to make progress in this area.

We believe this Council is united in our concern over the number of killings of civil society and of political and human rights activists, and we call on the Government of Iraq to do all it can to prevent these killings and to bring those who perpetrate them to justice.

And finally, we commend Prime Minister Khadimi's commitment to compensate the families of the victims of violence against protesters. However, justice for victims is critical. We call on the Government of Iraq to ensure credible investigations into the violence and to ensure that those who are responsible are held to account.

Madam President, we've touched on this today in the SRSG's comments, but the Iraqi Government's commitments to resolve the file on Kuwait and third country nationals pursuant to Security Council resolution 2107 is to be commended. And we note the repatriation of human remains from the Government of Iraq to the Government of Kuwait, which took place on the 16th of September. We welcome the continued bilateral Iraqi-Kuwaiti dialogue and cooperation, and we are grateful to Council members for their cooperation on the press statement that will issue on this today.

Madam President, I believe this Council is united in hoping to see Iraq's political leaders, with the support of UNAMI, take forward significant reforms to address Iraq's challenging economic and security situation; to deliver credible and transparent elections in 2021; and ultimately to secure stability and prosperity for the people of Iraq.

Thank you, Madam President.