

Speech: Michael Ellis' speech at Theatres Trust: Theatres at Risk event

I am delighted to be here with you all today.

Thank you for inviting me to speak at this important launch. Let me first take the opportunity to thank the Theatres Trust for your contribution to arts and culture. You have continuously campaigned to ensure that theatre buildings, many of them with historical and cultural significance, are protected for generations to come.

It is vital that we continue to invest in arts and culture. This investment can help develop lifelong passions and create new opportunities for work.

Creativity, arts and heritage make our communities better places to live and theatres are an incredibly important part of that.

We know that British theatre is respected for its high-quality output and the skilled professionals, both on and off the stage, who keep the industry running. Theatre in England is vibrant and thriving, with a diverse range of artists and companies producing exciting and varied work.

A theatre can be a challenging but exciting place to work and I believe there are some great opportunities in the industry.

Not just for the highly-skilled and the longstanding practitioners of their craft, but for young people just starting out who can bring a fresh perspectives and hone their expertise.

Like you, this Government and I, are fully committed to ensuring that arts and culture are accessible to everyone.

To that end, theatres as physical buildings and the institutions that support them, take a central role when it comes to accessibility.

I am sure everyone here today is in agreement that anyone should be able to experience the magic of theatre. That audience members feel part of the work.

This is why the work of the Theatres Trust and their annual Theatres at Risk register plays such a significant role in ensuring we are all aware of some of these important cultural institutions which are at threat.

It is of great credit to the hard work of the Trust and the sector that two theatres that were on last years' list have returned to live performance use – including the one where we are today – and two others are no longer at risk.

This is great news, thank you for work and your commitment to the industry.

It is also very pleasing to see that a number of other theatres, such as the

Burnley Empire and the Bradford Odeon, amongst others have been making progress in securing their futures. I very much hope that this progress continues.

We know many of the Theatres on the list are experiencing financial problems.

We also know that the cultural and creative industries make a vast contribution to our economy, accounting for over 5% of UK GVA, and the Government is committed to supporting their growth.

Culture also has a significant role to play in place-shaping, as it has important social benefits in terms of health, education, community cohesion and wellbeing. Opportunities to engage in culture – be it arts, heritage, museums or film – can have a significant impact on our lives and create places where people want to live, work and do business.

This is where the theatre, as a physical building, can play a central role in making places better areas to live, and instill a sense of community. And it may be that placemaking that can help to protect some of these cultural assets.

Evidence from the UK and other countries shows a link between cultural investment in towns and cities and economic growth. Culture, sport and heritage assets create thriving, interesting areas where people want to live, work and set-up businesses.

Creative businesses particularly benefit from clustering around cultural assets.

The impact of place-based investment in arts and culture on the attractiveness of a city or town as a place to live in and invest can also be seen in the transformative effect of Hull's highly successful year as UK City of Culture 2017.

Since 2013, investment in Hull has amounted to £3.3 billion and the city's employment rate and number of businesses are at the highest ever recorded rate, including over 550 new cultural jobs.

This is why it is so encouraging to see more and more theatres working outside their own walls and using their programmes to engage the communities that surround them.

It is my hope that by continuing with such innovative, entertaining and relevant programming, public interest in our theatres can only increase.

As announced by the Chancellor in the 2018 Budget Statement, DCMS will be providing £55 million as part of the Future High Streets fund, dedicated to supporting the regeneration of high street heritage assets. Those much loved historic buildings that provide a sense of place, community identity and connectedness.

£40 million of this fund will be delivered through my Department's Arms Length Body and statutory advisor Historic England to support a high street

focused version of their successful Heritage Action Zones scheme, and £15 million will be delivered through the Architectural Heritage Fund to support community groups to take ownership of heritage assets.

This programme will aim to support the economic growth and regeneration of towns and high streets across England by improving their physical and economic condition as well as increasing community and investor confidence, social cohesion and pride in our places.

The programme will help to bring about the regeneration of high streets and town centres by identifying, targeting and de-risking heritage assets as well as diversifying and optimising their uses to meet a range of community needs.

As I have set out, Government believes that place-based cultural investments should be a key part of the local growth strategy for all towns and cities in England.

This is why we have recently introduced the Cultural Development Fund, a fund for towns and cities that want to transform their urban areas through culture-led strategies. We received many strong bids from towns across England, and as some of you will know, the Secretary of State announced the winning bids on Friday last week.

Going forward, there are great opportunities for theatres to play a central role in our vision, and I am sure that with the support of Government, organisations like the Theatres Trust and Local Authorities, we can all work together to ensure that our much loved theatres can continue to thrive across the country.

I would like to thank Theatres Trust again for inviting me along today to speak to you all, and thank you all for the outstanding contributions you continue to make to our nation's theatre.

[Press release: Bridgend burglar has sentence increased](#)

A man with a history of dwelling house burglaries has today had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred it for being too low.

Damien Davies, 39, burgled a Bridgend home while the owners were sleeping. He stole £1,300 in cash as well as a purse containing a passport and 2 bank cards, one of which he used to make a number of contactless purchases the next day. When he was arrested, Davies was also found to be in possession of a small quantity of a class A drug.

Davies was originally sentenced in October 2018 to 2 years 4 months and 26 days in prison at Cardiff Crown Court. The Court of Appeal has today increased his sentence to 3 years and 4 months in prison.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

“Having your home burgled is not only a crime against property, but a crime against the person. I hope that Davies will spend the extra time in prison reflecting on the actions he took and the impact they had on his victims.”

[Press release: British Bike exports soar as the UK's best head for Manchester](#)

As Britain's best cyclists head for the National Track Cycling Championships in Manchester later this week, an analysis of recent data from HMRC reveals that exports of bicycles made in Britain are at a record high.

Asia accounts for some of the fastest growing demand, with figures showing that in the year to November 2018, bicycle exports to China rose by 109%, to Taiwan by 200% and to Malaysia by an incredible 724%. In total, bicycle exports to Asia and Oceania rose to a value of £10.8m in the same period.

The United States also remains a core market for the two wheeled goods. Exports in the year to November 2018 were worth £5.1m, a 7.8% increase since the same period 5 years ago.

Minister of State at the Department for International Trade, Baroness Fairhead, said:

It's fantastic to see that recent successes for British cycling on the road and track are translating into economic benefits, as we export both our passion for cycling and our manufacturing excellence overseas.

The world increasingly looks to Britain for expertise in the cycling industry, whether in competitive racing, recreational pursuits or the daily commute to work. These latest figures show how high-quality British manufacturing is in demand, not just in traditional markets, but further afield in the likes of China, Taiwan and Malaysia.

One British manufacturer leading the pack is Pashley, who have been crafting bespoke hand-made bicycles from their factory in Stratford-upon-Avon since 1926. Pashley now exports to over 45 countries, and here in the UK provides the renowned city hire bikes in London and Edinburgh.

The company recently took their brand to a truly global audience when they supplied the production company for Disney's Mary Poppins Returns with 36 of their black Roadster bicycles, which are ridden by lamplighters, who take the place of the dancing chimney sweeps in the original movie.

Adrian Williams, Managing Director at Pashley, said demand for his company's bikes was growing around the world:

Despite great changes in the bicycle manufacturing industry since Pashley's inception, we have continued to focus on doing what we do best – designing and making quality hand-built bicycles for business and consumer use.

Our product is design led, hand-built and authentically British, making it particularly attractive to a growing overseas market. We currently provide cycles for both business and consumer markets in over 45 countries worldwide, including New Zealand, China, Finland and Denmark.

Global demand for UK goods and services continues to grow, with exports in the year to November 2018 increasing to £630 billion. The number of exporting businesses is also rising, with a 1.5% increase to 110,000 in the third quarter of 2018 compared to the same quarter in the previous year.

The Department for International Trade estimates that 400,000 businesses believe they could export but don't, while demand for British expertise and goods overseas is only growing.

In 2018, the UK Government launched its Export Strategy, an ambitious plan developed in collaboration with UK businesses, to set a new ambition to increase exports as a proportion of UK GDP to 35%.

[News story: Office for Product Safety and Standards marks first anniversary](#)

OPSS has grown rapidly, creating dedicated national capacity for product safety while taking forward work on supporting small business growth and implementing the Industrial Strategy vision of simplifying regulation.

Its Local Regulatory Delivery team has been busy driving Better Business for All, which brings together businesses and regulators, creating partnerships to identify issues facing local businesses and find ways to support them. A good example of how business is benefiting is Lynher Dairies Cheese Company in Cornwall, which received support to pass food inspections by US regulators to be able to export to the USA.

In March 2018, OPSS made the Code of Practice on Product Recalls (PAS 7100) developed by BSI, the UK's National Standards Body, freely available to Trading Standards officers. Since then it has trained 300 trading standards officers on implementing the code and held regional workshops for business.

Its Intelligence unit is now fully operational and on track to publish the first national Strategic Assessment for Product Safety by March 2019. It is sharing data and intelligence with partners including local authority trading standards, National Trading Standards, Citizens Advice and the Intellectual Property Office.

There are now 73,000 businesses in Primary Authority, a flagship programme to support businesses in regulatory compliance. The new Supporting Regulator offer supports local regulators in primary authorities with technical and scientific expertise, interpretation of generic guidance tailored to business, for example to take account of innovation, and access to broader sources of data and intelligence.

In August, the UK's first national product safety strategy – 'Strengthening National Capacity for Product Safety' – was published, along with the Strategic Research Programme, which will produce high quality strategic science-based research to strengthen the evidence base for the development of product regulation policy, delivery and enforcement.

In October, OPSS delivered its fourth international Inspection Reform Conference, the largest to date, attracting 350 delegates from 70 countries, and showcasing how the UK can lead in the field of making regulation work.

The autumn also saw the launch of our first consumer safety awareness campaigns. Two million people saw information about fancy dress at Halloween, fireworks, product safety online and laser pointers, with the campaign running right through to Christmas with toy safety.

Ahead of EU Exit, OPSS is working with Trading Standards at key entry points to strengthen the UK's ability to stop unsafe products at the border. It has made additional investment this year to support local authority led teams at points of entry in the UK, through National Trading Standards.

You can contact OPSS by emailing opss.enquiries@beis.gov.uk or follow it on Twitter @OfficeforSandS #OPSSoneyearon

News story: Surveillance Camera Commissioner's annual report, 2017 to 2018 published



In his [report](#) the commissioner highlights:

- his extensive survey of all police forces in England and Wales to understand their surveillance camera 'footprint' and how they are complying with legal requirements under the Protection of Freedoms Act (PoFA) and the surveillance camera code. All forces now have a Senior Responsible Officer responsible for force compliance with the PoFA
- building momentum behind the National Surveillance Camera Strategy for England and Wales to deliver:
 - the first Question Time style event to enable serious debate on how surveillance cameras and associated technology impact on citizens
 - a series of national workshops aimed at local authorities to advise them how to comply with the 12 guiding principles in the surveillance camera code
 - the first horizon-scanning report to enable us to peer into the future at how surveillance cameras may develop
 - cybersecurity considerations across all strands of the strategy from standards to training
 - developing a new 'Buyers' Toolkit' – an easy-to-follow guide for non-experts (aimed at small to medium enterprises) that are thinking about buying a surveillance camera system, and want to ensure that they buy an effective system that does what they want it to do
- formulation and first meetings of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition Independent Advisory Group, chaired by the commissioner, to scrutinise the deployment and operation of automatic number plate recognition as a surveillance tool
- the emergence of automatic facial recognition as a viable technology used by both state and private organisations.

Surveillance Camera Commissioner Tony Porter said:

Yet again it's been an incredibly busy and challenging year. I've

continued to see lots of great examples of good practice from relevant authorities and those who fall outside the scope of this definition. Equally there is room for improvement and I am working with the strand leads on the National Surveillance Camera Strategy to raise standards.

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