

News story: Government puts consumers at heart of the aviation industry

- greater focus on passengers, to improve their experience throughout their journey
- creating an ever cleaner, greener sector which prioritises sustainable growth
- building a global and connected Britain with more trade opportunities

The government will today (7 April 2018) set out its plans to make the country's aviation sector world-leading in prioritising passengers, fostering sustainable growth and promoting trade.

The [aviation strategy next steps document](#) outlines proposals which will build on the aviation industry's work to improve the flying experience for passengers at every stage of their journey.

This will include new measures to help passengers make a more informed choice about their flight including providing more transparency on additional costs.

The document also outlines how the government will work with industry to ensure all passengers have a dignified and comfortable travelling experience, including ways to improve accessibility at airports and on aircraft and tackling the issue of disruptive passengers.

Work will be carried out to improve the compensation scheme for consumers, ensuring passengers are properly informed about their rights to claim when things go wrong and exploring greater powers to enforce regulations.

Baroness Sugg, Aviation Minister, said:

Our world class aviation industry has a proud and accomplished history, from pioneering the first international routes to championing consumer choice.

Working with industry, we want to improve the flying experience from booking to arrival, ensuring passengers are truly at the heart of the aviation sector.

This demonstrates our commitment to creating a transport system which works for passengers as we build a Britain fit for the future.

[How will a new aviation strategy help the industry and the UK?](#)

The government is also providing more details about its ambitious plan to make Britain's aviation sector the world's greenest, including proposals to tackle issues around noise, greenhouse gas emissions and airspace congestion.

Environmental proposals include the introduction of new noise targets, strengthened noise controls at airports and improved compensation for people living near airports. The government will work with industry to reduce the usage of single use plastics and improve recycling rates.

The government will also explore measures with industry to support the use of quieter and more fuel efficient aircraft, as well as the emergence of electric and hybrid technology.

The 'next steps' document makes clear the government's commitment to ensuring the aviation sector continues to grow.

The sector already contributes at least £22 billion to the UK economy each year and the strategy will examine what can be done to help it develop even further.

The strategy will examine the agreements UK has with other countries to operate flights, identify opportunities to improve connectivity and open up new routes for overseas investment.

Other proposals include reviewing the allocation of airport landing slots to ensure the process is fair, transparent and fosters a competitive marketplace which benefits consumers by offering more choice.

An [initial call for evidence for the aviation strategy](#) was launched in July of last year, receiving almost 380 responses. The proposals being outlined in the 'next steps' document will be consulted on further in the autumn, with the final strategy due for publication in early 2019.

The aviation strategy is designed to achieve a safe, secure and sustainable aviation sector that meets the needs of consumers and of a global, outward-looking Britain. It will look to:

- help the aviation industry work for its customers
- ensure a safe and secure way to travel
- build a global and connected Britain
- encourage competitive markets
- support growth while tackling environmental impacts
- develop innovation, technology and skill

[News story: Prince Harry and Meghan Markle meet Invictus Games UK Team hopefuls](#)

HRH Prince Harry and Ms Meghan Markle watching UK Team hopefuls competing.

His Royal Highness Prince Harry and Ms Meghan Markle met Invictus Games hopefuls today at the University of Bath Sports Training Village, ahead of the fourth Invictus Games being held down under in Sydney, Australia this October.

The Invictus Games, which have previously been held in London, Orlando and Toronto, set out to harness the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding and respect for our wounded, injured and sick servicemen and women.

Defence Minister, Tobias Ellwood, also met 2018 hopefuls today to see how they are using sport as part of their recovery journey.

Across the weekend, 5 – 8 April, hopefuls who have suffered a life-changing injury or illness will trial in nine different sports including Athletics, Archery, Wheelchair Basketball, Road Cycling, Powerlifting, Indoor Rowing, Wheelchair Rugby, Swimming and Sitting Volleyball. Last week (28-29 March), hopefuls also trialled in a new sport for the 2018 games; Sailing.

More hopefuls than ever before (451) have applied to take part in the 2018 Invictus Games and all hope to be selected as part of the 72-strong UK team that will head to Sydney. The UK team will be selected based on the benefit the Invictus Games will give an individual as part of their recovery, combined with performance and commitment to training.

The UK delegation to the 2018 Invictus Games is once again being delivered by a partnership comprising the Ministry of Defence, Help for Heroes and The Royal British Legion.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I wish all our serving troops and veterans taking part in this year's trials the best of luck. The Invictus Games demonstrate the positive impact of sport in the recovery process, and provide inspiration and opportunity to those that have suffered life changing injuries and illnesses whilst serving their country and keeping Britain safe.

The MOD is a partner in the [Defence Recovery Capability](#), a programme which helps wounded, injured and sick Service personnel either return to duty from injury or provides a mechanism to help them back into civilian life – link. A key activity of the Defence Recovery Capability is the Battle Back programme, an MOD initiative that delivers an adaptive sport and adventurous training programme.

The [Invictus Games Sydney 2018](#) will take place from 20 – 27 October.

Press release: Wickham man fined £3,000 for allowing the dumping of waste at Firgrove Lane

Some of the waste deposited illegally at the site on Firgrove Lane, Wickham, Hants

Joe Keet of Firgrove Lane, Wickham, Hants, has been fined £3,000 for knowingly permitting the deposit of controlled waste at Firgrove Lane, following a trial at Portsmouth Magistrates Court.

Jasper Smith and Phillip Jenkins, who brought some of the waste to the site, also pleaded guilty at Portsmouth Magistrates Court on 18 December 2017, where Mr Smith was fined £333 and Mr Jenkins £121, and they shared the £300 costs.

Joe Keet was fined £3,000 with a £170 victim surcharge and £1,904.75 costs after being found guilty by magistrates of knowingly allowing the deposit of controlled waste without the correct permit. This included construction and demolition waste, household clearance and commercial waste, waste wood, furniture, grab bags, black sacks of domestic waste, underlay and insulation.

Mike O'Neil, Environment Manager said:

Joe Keet's actions showed a blatant disregard for the environment. In cases like this, where the actions of individuals threaten to undermine legitimate businesses, we have no hesitation in prosecuting those involved. We, in fact, previously prosecuted Mr Keet in May 2016.

To ensure that the right waste gets to the right place, we encourage the public and businesses to check that their waste carrier is registered on Gov.UK and to ask to see a copy of the waste transfer note for the waste. If possible take a photo of the note on your phone.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

Mr Keets was prosecuted under Section 33(1)(a) and (6) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended)

Mr Smith and Mr Jenkins were prosecuted under section 34(1) and 34(6) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

All media enquiries: 0800 141 2743 Please ask for the duty press officer Or email us at southeastpressofficer@environment-agency.gov.uk Follow us on Twitter at EnvAgencySE

Press release: Top British official visits South Sudan

Matthew Rycroft, Permanent Secretary of the UK Department for International Development (DFID), visited South Sudan on 5-6 April to see how UKAid is saving lives in one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises. This was the first time that Mr. Rycroft, formerly the British Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has visited the country.

The ongoing conflict in South Sudan has led to a man-made humanitarian catastrophe, with 4m people having fled their homes and half of the population severely food insecure. The UK is the forefront of the international response to the crisis. Last year, the UK reached over 500,000 people with food assistance, over 300,000 people with safe drinking water, and supported around 5 million health consultations to children under 5. The UK is also leading the effort to promote girls' education, supporting 3,600 schools across the country and helping to keep a quarter of a million girls in class. But the ultimate solution to the crisis is peace, and the UK strongly supports the regionally-led peace process, the High Level Revitalisation Forum (HLRF), and is putting pressure on all sides to constructively engage.

Mr. Rycroft met with senior South Sudanese Ministers including Minister for Education, Deng Deng Hok Yai, and Dr. Riek Gai Kok, Minister of Health. In each of these meetings, he emphasised the need for the government to engage meaningfully in the peace process and underlined the vital and urgent importance of ensuring complete and unhindered access for humanitarian and development assistance. In a radio interview following his visit, he said:

UKAid is saving lives in South Sudan. But it is the Government of South Sudan that has the responsibility to stop the suffering of its people. They and other parties to the conflict must engage constructively with the next round of peace talks, which represent a crucial opportunity for peace, and end the appalling human rights abuses we have seen. They must also permit free and unhindered humanitarian access.

During his 2 day visit, Mr Rycroft met with a range of organisations that work with DFID to deliver UKAid, and some of those South Sudanese people directly benefitting. He visited El Sabah children's hospital in the

country's capital, Juba, which is supported by UKAid in providing essential health, nutrition and vaccination services. Mr Rycroft also visited Juba Day Secondary School, supported by DFID's girls' education programme supported by UKAid, where he heard directly from girls who have been helped to stay in education. He met Akuja de Garang, MBE, who leads a team of 300 national and international professionals working nationwide to tackle barriers to girls' education and to help brighten the future of a generation of children in South Sudan. During his visit, Matthew said:

It is vitally important that girls are able to remain in school and complete their education. Not only will this empower them to reach their full potential, by enhancing their economic and social opportunities, but it also lays the foundation for a peaceful and prosperous future for South Sudan. I have been inspired by the girls, women and educators that I have met today and commend their efforts to ensure that education is not lost to an entire generation.

Mr Rycroft also met with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, David Shearer. The UK fully supports the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and has deployed nearly 400 peacekeepers to provide vital engineering and medical assistance. Matthew welcomed the close relationship between the UK and UNMISS, and re-iterated the UK's full support for the UN Secretary-General's 'zero tolerance' policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

[News story: Forensics network develops better detection methods](#)

A seized tusk is examined. Photo credit: Traffic

A government-funded project which is helping to bring an end to the illegal wildlife trade has secured an injection of cash to help African countries crack down on illicit traders and poachers.

The African Wildlife Forensics Network started in 2015 with support from Defra's [Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund](#), and delivers improved evidence gathering and analysis to support prosecutions and clamp down on the illegal wildlife trade.

Led by the [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime \(UNODC\)](#) with [TRACE Wildlife Forensics Network \(TRACE\)](#) and [TRAFFIC](#), the initial Defra-funded project has secured a legacy for wildlife officials in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe as they will receive specialist training for carrying out wildlife

forensic investigations thanks to the support of [£400,000 over two years from players of the People's Postcode Lottery](#).

Eight African countries have taken part in this project and it is delivering wildlife forensic capacity through training and equipment and developing national and regional level plans for further development and coordination of wildlife forensic services.

Jorge Rios, Chief of UNODC's Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime said:

We are working with countries to improve the knowledge and skills of actors from the crime scene to the court room to respond to wildlife crime. Forensic evidence is key to strengthening the investigation and prosecution of wildlife crime.

UNODC is grateful to the UK for its continued funding to fight international wildlife crime.

Another of the highlights from across Africa involving the African Wildlife Forensics Network has been the significant progress seen in Zambia. Recent changes to the national Wildlife Act have markedly increased penalties for wildlife crime, resulting in fewer guilty pleas and a greater requirement for robust evidence to support prosecutions.

Following completion of the Zambia wildlife forensics needs assessment, and the subsequent participation of the [Zambian Department of National Parks and Wildlife \(DNPW\)](#) at the AWFN workshop in Gaborone, Botswana, in May 2016, the Project Team worked with DNPW to plan how forensic science could best support national wildlife law enforcement.

In Botswana, specific training was provided to the Botswana Police Service's Forensic Science Service (BPS-FSS) in the area of DNA species identification. UK scientists worked with the [Botswana Department Wildlife and National Parks](#) who hosted one of the regional project workshops.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

We must protect wildlife around the world from habitat loss, poaching and illegal trade. Killing elephants for their tusks is shameful and inhumane and we will bring an end to this abhorrent practice.

That's why we've outlined plans to ban ivory sales, and we are investing £26m to tackle illegal wildlife trade and driving global action on conserving endangered species.

Rob Ogden, co-Director of TRACE said:

All too often, the criminals poaching Africa's wildlife are walking free because it is proving impossible to bring them to book successfully,

But now, thanks to the fantastic support from players of [People's Postcode Lottery](#), wildlife officers in the region will have the means to gather the evidence that will help put these criminals where they belong—behind bars.

Environment Minister, Thérèse Coffey this week visited Kenya (3 – 4 April) to discuss efforts to tackle the illegal trade in wildlife and to see projects directly making an impact in the conviction and jailing of criminals involved in these crimes.

Kenya is the fourth biggest recipient of Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund money with more than £1.9 million committed through eight IWT Challenge Fund projects that involve Kenya.

The Minister visited the [Kenya Wildlife Service](#) where she saw fingerprinting technology developed in the UK to trace ivory poachers.

This technology has already been used to arrest 15 poachers in Kenya.