

[News story: Rory Stewart returns from Zimbabwe](#)

Minister for Africa visited Harare shortly after the resignation of President Mugabe to meet the new President, members of the opposition and civil society

Minister for Africa Rory Stewart has just returned from a visit to Zimbabwe. The visit follows the historic resignation of President Robert Mugabe who had held power for 37 years.

Minister for Africa Rory Stewart said:

We're now at a situation in Zimbabwe where there could be an opportunity for progress so I went to listen and to learn.

This was one of the wealthiest countries in Africa. It has incredible human potential, a very educated population and fantastic natural resources. But it is a country which has suffered terribly.

If we're patient and if we're careful, this can be a moment of change where Zimbabwe becomes the country its people and its many international friends want it to be.

[Minister Stewart](#)

In Harare the Minister called on the Zimbabwean government to use the resignation of President Mugabe to push for a full programme of political and economic reform.

The Minister met with the full spectrum of Zimbabwean political voices including new president Emmerson Mnangagwa and opposition leaders Morgan Tsvangirai and Joice Mujuru. They discussed the need for an all-inclusive political process and elections which meet Zimbabwean and International standards. Economic reform is absolutely crucial and the Minister discussed this with all his Zimbabwean counterparts.

The Minister also met with Zimbabwean civil society and human rights groups. They discussed how human rights and rule of law could be prioritised and protected following the transition.

Also in Zimbabwe, the Minister visited a health and sanitation project funded by UK aid which has reached more than three million people in the last five years, giving them access to clean water and sanitation. The minister was also able to meet with young entrepreneurs who are being supported by DFID to run businesses and find innovative solutions to address issues faced by their communities.

[News story: Universities Minister breaks ground at the Dyson Institute](#)

Today, 28 November, Universities Minister Jo Johnson officially 'cut the turf' for the new undergraduate village at the Dyson Institute of Engineering and Technology.

The student facilities, located in Malmesbury, Wiltshire, will comprise 78 accommodation pods, as well as a library, café, bar, screening room and shop. The village will officially open in September 2018.

Founded by Sir James Dyson, the Institute gives students the opportunity to study for an engineering degree while concurrently working as part of Dyson UK. Over 850 students applied for 25 places in the first year of the course, which started this year.

Universities Minister Jo Johnson said:

The value of a skilled workforce to Britain's future was spelt out in last week's Budget, making clear that better training and skills are key to raising productivity and growth.

The Dyson Institute is a brilliant example of a new, innovative and high-quality provider that has taken advantage of the government's reforms to offer something genuinely exciting. It is giving students the opportunity to get hands-on experience at Dyson while studying for their degree, learning about everything from robotics to software to aerodynamics. It is playing an important role in educating the next generation of much-needed engineers, giving young people the skills they need for the jobs of the future. It has been a pleasure to be here today and see the brilliant work of the Institute in action.

Recent government reforms through the Higher Education and Research Act have made it easier for new providers – like the Dyson Institute – to enter the sector and award degrees, giving students more choice and boosting competition to improve teaching quality.

Sir James Dyson said:

My attitude has always been to take on young people, graduates, and give them immediate responsibility. Dyson takes on hundreds of graduate engineers every year and we mentor them through. If you walk around, you can see that there is already a campus feeling here in Malmesbury – cafes and restaurants full of people working

and learning. It just seemed absolutely natural to take it one stage further by taking on school leavers and giving them a really unique and rigorous engineering education.

Jo Johnson's inspired legislation is enabling us to do something entirely new and very exciting – this is not an easy option for a student to choose but we are developing some truly exceptional engineers who will develop future Dyson technologies.

Today's visit comes the day after the launch of the government's Industrial Strategy, which sets out a vision for Britain to boost people's skills and earning power.

This Thursday, 30 November, the Department for Education is also hosting its own Skills Summit, bringing together education experts and top employers to tackle the nation's skills gap.

[Press release: MHRA reclassifies Viagra Connect tablets to a Pharmacy medicine](#)

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has today announced Viagra Connect (containing sildenafil 50mg) will be [formally classified](#) from a prescription only medicine (POM) to a pharmacy medicine (P). This means it could be available without prescription for use by men over 18 who have erectile dysfunction.

This decision was made following a reassuring assessment of the safety of the Viagra Connect, advice from the Commission on Human Medicines, and a public consultation earlier this year with positive outcome.

If marketed, the medicine will be sold from pharmacies following a discussion with the pharmacist. Pharmacists will be able to determine whether treatment is appropriate for the patient and can give advice on erectile dysfunction, usage of the medicine, potential side effects, and if further consultation with a general practitioner is required.

Viagra Connect will not be sold to those with severe cardiovascular disorders; at high cardiovascular risk; liver failure; severe kidney failure; or taking certain interacting medicines. Use of Viagra Connect in these groups of men must continue to be under the supervision of a doctor.

Making this medication more widely available will help direct men who might not otherwise seek help into the healthcare system and away from the risks

that come with buying medicines from websites operating illegally.

Erectile dysfunction medicines are a popular target for criminals selling unlicensed and counterfeit medicines. Over the past 5 years, investigators from MHRA have seized more than £50 million of unlicensed and counterfeit erectile dysfunction medicines.

Mick Foy, MHRA's Group Manager in Vigilance and Risk Management of Medicines, said:

This decision is good news for men's health. The move to make Viagra Connect more widely accessible will encourage men to seek help within the healthcare system and increase awareness of erectile dysfunction.

Erectile dysfunction can be a debilitating condition, so it's important men feel they have fast access to quality and legitimate care, and do not feel they need to turn to counterfeit online supplies which could have potentially serious side effects.

Press release: People of Mytholmroyd can vote on design of flood wall

People living in Mytholmroyd are being urged to vote on which wall finish they would prefer as part of the new £30m flood alleviation scheme in their village.

Information leaflets about the consultation on the section of wall between Caldene Avenue Bridge and Whitehouses are being delivered to around 2,000 households along with a token they can use to choose which of 2 design options they prefer.

Sample panels of the 2 stone wall finishes have been built by stone masons for residents to view in the carpark outside Mytholmroyd community centre.

Boxes will be placed at the local post office and community centre in the village for people to post their token to indicate their choice.

The 2 alternative finishes were put together following discussions with a landscape group, made up of local residents and interested parties, helping to shape the scheme.

Helen Batt, Environment Agency director for the flood schemes in the Calderdale area, said:

Our project team has worked closely with the landscape stakeholder group and architects to come up with these two designs following feedback that residents would prefer us to use natural, traditional materials which are in keeping with the local environment. We thought it would be good to let the whole village choose between the two options and have a say on the final design.

The consultation will run from Monday 4 December to Sunday 10 December. Three drop-in sessions are being held at Mytholmroyd community centre during the consultation for residents to talk to the project team. The sessions are planned for Monday 4, Wednesday 6 and Thursday 7 December, between 3pm and 8pm.

The final decision will be submitted as part of the planning application for area F of the scheme which stretches from Caldene Bridge to Hawksclough Bridge.

The Environment Agency provides free warning of the risk of flooding from rivers. Sign up for this service, find out if your home is at risk and keep up to date with the latest situation by visiting www.gov.uk/flood or call Floodline on 0345 9881188.

Press release: Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council: 28 November 2017

The Prime Minister welcomed leaders from 10 British Overseas Territories to Downing Street for the start of their annual Joint Ministerial Council meeting. She opened by setting out the Government's desire to cement the enduring partnership that exists between the UK and the Overseas Territories, and the UK's ambition to support their diverse economies and natural heritage.

The PM reiterated the UK's commitment to long-term reconstruction efforts following the devastating consequences of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, and invited Territory leaders of the islands worst affected – including Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos – to speak of their experiences. As part of the UK's continued efforts, the Prime Minister confirmed a new £70 million package of recovery and reconstruction support, supplemented by up to £300 million of UK loan guarantees for territories that need support to access finance. The leaders welcomed the financial commitment, and reiterated their appreciation for the UK's rapid response that offered support within hours of the disaster.

The Prime Minister took the opportunity to update the leaders on the progress of our discussions with the European Union, and invited leaders to express their views so they could be properly reflected in our strategy for Brexit negotiations.

She also raised the issue of financial services, noting the increased focus on taxation and transparency that have come to the fore since the recently leaked Paradise Papers. The PM recognised that a lot of work had been done following the Panama Papers last year. She thanked the Territories for the leadership they have already shown, including steps they have already taken to implement international standards, and asked for similar leadership to show what more can be done to make further progress on the issue.