

Only this government's distorted austerity agenda could lead to such contradictory policies – Debbie Abrahams

Debbie Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary,

responding to the Government's announcement of jobcentre closures, said:

"At a time when the Tories are cutting social security and introducing sanctions for low-paid workers, it's reckless at best and perverse at worst for the Government to close so many Jobcentres.

"Only this government's distorted austerity agenda could lead to such contradictory policies.

"This Tory Government's decision to close Jobcentres across the country shows they are not serious about helping people to find decent, secure and well-paid work'.

Press release: UK and Japan strengthen Defence ties

The UK and Japan have today (26 January 2017) signed the Defence Logistics Treaty to make it easier for our Armed Forces to work together on a range of activities, including UN peacekeeping operations and joint humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions.

This agreement follows the success of the first ever joint exercise in Japan between the Royal Air Force and Japanese Air Self-Defense Force during last year's historic Asia-Pacific [tour](#).

This was another example of our ever closer defence cooperation with Japan as the UK's closest security partner in Asia.

The agreement includes practical arrangements that will allow both countries' forces to share equipment, facilities and services in a simpler and more efficient way. It covers the exchange of supplies and services, removing the

need for individual agreements on a case by case basis.

Signing the treaty at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

The UK is working together with Japan as our closest security partner in Asia to promote global security, stability and prosperity. As two leading supporters of the international rules based system, this close collaboration between our forces will help support collective efforts to tackle international and regional challenges and threats.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon welcomed the agreement and said:

Japan is an important British ally and this treaty will enable closer joint work on operations and exercises, including sharing equipment, supplies and services. As Global Britain steps up, we will continue to stand alongside our Japanese friends to meet shared interests and challenges. This agreement underlines our commitment to tackling international threats which makes Britain safer and more secure.

Japan's Ambassador to the UK, Koji Tsuruoka, who signed the treaty on behalf of the Government of Japan, said:

This treaty marks a significant moment in Japan's security and defence relationship with the UK, Japan's close partner that shares fundamental values such as the rule of law and democracy. The two countries will work together on security cooperation, as well as other global issues in this changing world.

Further information

Photographs of the signing are available at [Foreign and Commonwealth Office Flickr](#)

The Defence Logistics Treaty is also referred to as an Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA). It was a commitment of the second 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministers' [meeting](#) in January 2016, when Japan also agreed to host RAF Typhoons in October 2016 in an historic joint air force exercise – the country's first ever with a military partner other than the USA.

UK-Japan defence and security cooperation is going from strength to strength. The UK and Japan continue to develop new defence technologies, with a particular focus on missile technology. 2016 also saw our cooperation in third countries expand from South East Asia to Africa.

As Japan prepares to host the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, our cooperation on cyber security is also expanding. Japan's Olympics Minister, Tamayo Marukawa visited the UK in January to discuss the UK's cyber expertise from London 2012 and the UK's experience of crisis preparedness in managing large sporting events.

Follow the Foreign Secretary on twitter [@BorisJohnson](#)

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News Desk

£85,000 to develop Deeside transport schemes as plans for North Wales Metro gather pace

Flintshire Council has been awarded £85,000 to help it develop bus and active travel projects along the B5129 at Queensferry and to Deeside Industrial Park in order to improve transport links to key employment sites.

Ken Skates said the funding will also help Flintshire to strengthen its transport links in anticipation of the Welsh Government's ambitious North Wales Metro project, which will provide wider integrated transport links across North Wales.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"Our ambitious plans for a Metro scheme in North Wales will require significant investment, with huge potential rewards for the local economy. To this end, the £50 million earmarked in our recent budget will see our plans for the North Wales Metro really take shape.

"In the meantime, I'm delighted that we are able to support local authorities, like Flintshire, in investing in improved bus access, in facilitating active travel and in linking communities with jobs – something which will be key to the success of the wider North Wales Metro."

Councillor Bernie Attridge, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment said

"I am pleased to receive the additional funding to help develop our transport solution to improve all modes of transport into Deeside Industrial Park. Improved transport links will ensure that Deeside continues to be the destination of choice for businesses into the future."

Press release: Secretary of State and Justice Minister briefed on investigation

From:

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Chief Constable briefs Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Justice Minister on attempted murder investigation

The Secretary of State and the Justice Minister met the Chief Constable today to receive a briefing from him and senior police colleagues on the ongoing investigation into the attack by Dissident Republicans on a police officer in North Belfast on Sunday Evening.

The Secretary of State and the Justice Minister repeated their condemnation of the attack and highlighted the public duty and service provided by PSNI officers across all parts of the community in Northern Ireland to keep people safe and secure. They also repeated their appeal for anyone with any information to contact the police.

The Chief Constable will continue to keep both the Secretary of State and the Justice Minister fully informed of the developing investigation.