

Press release: Construction booming in the North West

- Overall construction output in the region up 15%, 10 times the national average
- Total value of construction over the last 3 months is more than £4.6 billion, up more than £600 million when compared to the same 3 months a year ago

The North West has seen construction boom over the last year, according to new figures out today (10 October 2018).

According to the Office of National Statistics, total construction output across the region is up 15% to more than £4.6 billion in the 3 months to August 2018 compared to the same period last year.

Overall construction output in Great Britain for this period is up 1.5% compared to the same period last year meaning the North West's increase is 10 times the national average

The value of construction work on new housing in the North West has increased by £386 million this quarter compared to the same quarter in 2017 and output of new infrastructure projects has also risen during this period.

Northern Powerhouse Minister, Jake Berry MP, said:

It's wonderful to see how the Northern Powerhouse is driving investment in the North West and helping grow the construction industry to the tune of over £600 million.

Anyone visiting the North West can see the huge number of construction projects underway and these figures show just how valuable they are.

This construction boom is helping build new homes, new infrastructure and a stronger economy in the region.

The [Output in the Construction Industry figures for England, Scotland and Wales](#) are released by the Office of National Statistics

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Speech: Cooperation and Lasting Peace in Colombia

Thank you Mr President, and may I also thank the SRSR Arnault for his briefing, which chimes very closely with our own assessment and analysis of developments over the past three months. Thank you. Let me also warmly welcome Foreign Minister Holmes Trujillo to the Security Council for the first time.

The UK welcomes Colombia's continued commitment – clearly set out by President Duque – to implement the Peace Agreement. As we have all said many times in this chamber, that agreement represents an opportunity for lasting peace in Colombia as well as being a positive example to the rest of the world.

And like SRSR Arnault, we also welcome the steps taken by the new government so far, including the commitment to push ahead with effective reintegration of former members of the FARC, as well as the appointment of key positions in important institutions for the peace process. In particular, the CSIVI and

the National Reintegration Council. We share the Secretary-General's hope that that Colombian institutions will continue to pursue the peace process, including security, development and rule of law in conflict zones; an effective justice system and reparations for victims; and the essential commitment to those who have laid down their arms. Recent progress in the investigation of initial cases by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has been a key step in achieving these goals, and we encourage all parties to support the extremely important work of these institutions.

But as the Secretary-General has said, the challenges ahead remain formidable, we are particularly concerned by two important and concerning trends.

First, the departure of several former FARC commanders from some of the territorial areas for training and reintegration has highlighted weaknesses in the reintegration process. We agree with the Secretary-General that economic reintegration activities need to resume on a larger scale and faster than has been the case to date and that the security of FARC members must be assured.

Secondly, we share the Secretary-General's concern about the expansion of illegal economies, competition of criminal groups for territorial control, and the persistence of violence, which is continuing to claim the lives of human rights defenders and social leaders. We welcome President Duque's commitment to tackling these issues and look forward to the signatories to the "Pact for Life and the Protection of Social Leaders and Human Rights Defenders" on 23 August implementing their commitments.

Mr President, with this in mind, we welcome the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. We hope and believe the Verification Mission will continue to play an important role in maintaining confidence and cooperation between the parties, and encouraging them to work together on peace implementation.

For our part, the UK is fully committed to working with the new Colombian government, just as we did with the last, as Colombia works towards securing a lasting and sustained peace.

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Press release: Alexander Dalrymple Award presented to UKHO's Jeff Bryant

Named in honour of the first Hydrographer of the Navy, the Alexander Dalrymple Award has been presented by the UKHO each year since 2006 in recognition of an individual's outstanding contribution to hydrography: the science of surveying and charting our oceans. Mr Bryant is the thirteenth recipient of the award (and the third recipient from the UK) nominated for the global impact he has made within the international hydrographic community.

Over his career spanning 45 years, Mr Bryant has coordinated the training of hundreds of students. This has included securing a long-term partnership with the NIPPON Foundation, under which the UKHO has trained 64 international students in marine cartography.

Presenting the award at this year's World Hydrography Day reception, Rear Admiral Tim Lowe congratulated Mr Bryant on his achievements and his commitment to enhancing the cartographic skills of individuals and nations across the globe. These skills are essential to supporting maritime trade and the safety of ships navigating our oceans.

During his speech at the event, RAdm Tim Lowe also commented on the need to support the use of bathymetry – the study of underwater depths – and wider marine geospatial data in developing sustainable marine economies:

As experts in seabed bathymetry and marine geospatial data leaders, it is incumbent on us to support the data revolution. Whether that is through providing access to vast stores of information, or by promoting the development of skills and expertise to unlock that information's potential, we have the opportunity, as never before, to guide our marine economies into the future.

The Minister of State for Defence, The Rt Hon. the Earl Howe also spoke at the event, addressing the value of this data for sustainability and resilience:

As climate change puts increasing pressure on resources, a full understanding of the marine environment is directly relevant to the sustainable exploitation of the sea – for example, the analysis of marine resources, from the health of coral reefs to fish stocks and mineral reserves. Seabed mapping is a key enabler of sustainable and resilient seas, oceans and coastal communities – and that is as true of the North Atlantic as it is of the Blue Economy of the South-West Pacific.

This year's World Hydrography Day reception was held in October to coincide with the International Hydrographic Organization's annual council meeting, attended by over 30 senior Member State representatives from across the international hydrographic community.

[Press release: Latest ONS figures show rise in exports](#)

UK exports to the world rose by £33bn – an increase of 5.5% compared to the same time last year. Other main points from today's release include:

- The country's renowned service sector continues to grow with exports up 5.3% to a record high of £289bn, increasing the service surplus to £118bn
- Goods exports also increased by 5.6% to £348bn
- On a rolling annual basis, annual exports continue to grow faster than imports for the 13th consecutive month, with the overall trade deficit narrowing by £14bn in the year to August 2018

The news comes after the launch of the government's [Export Strategy](#), which sets out a new ambition to increase exports as a proportion of UK GDP to 35%, making the UK one of the G7's most successful exporters.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

Today's trade figures show demand for UK goods and services continues to grow, as overall exports rose to £637bn – up 5.5% on this time last year – and the trade deficit continued to narrow by £14bn over the last 12 months.

As we prepare to leave the European Union, we're seeing the UK shift towards selling more than we buy, with exports increasing faster than imports. My international economic department will continue to work with companies across the country to ensure they are able to thrive and make the most of global opportunities.

Overall, exports of goods and services to non-EU countries has increased since 2000. The UK also operates a trade surplus of more than £40bn with non-EU countries, with this having been a deficit as recently as 2010.

In 2017, eight of the ten fastest growing markets for UK exports since 2010 were outside of the EU, while exports of services to the key non-EU markets of USA, China and Japan have all increased by more than 85% since 2010.

Notes to editors:

Latest ONS statistics can be found [here](#).

Fastest growing markets only includes countries with more than £1bn in value in 2017 and excludes Crown Dependencies and Gibraltar.