Press release: Leicester and Loughborough Enterprise Zone will rev up the Midlands Engine

The Midlands Engine is going interstellar thanks to plans for a new Enterprise Zone to support the UK's space science industry, Local Government Minister Marcus Jones has confirmed.

The new Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone will cover 3 sites across Leicester and Loughborough, and aims to deliver 6,500 new jobs by building on the local area's expertise in the sector.

Leicester is already home to the National Space Centre and the new Zone is now hoping to attract space-age businesses to the area with the offer of specialist research and development facilities to bring innovative ideas and products to market.

New and expanded businesses located there are set to benefit from business rate reliefs worth tens of thousands of pounds each year, an incentive set to pull in more investment into the region and boost the local economy.

The new Enterprise Zone will cover 160 hectares at Loughborough Science and Energy Park, Charnwood Campus and Leicester Waterside. It forms a key part of the government's efforts to fire up the Midlands Engine, and create an economy that works for everyone in all parts of the country.

Visiting Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park, Local Government Minister Marcus Jones said:

> Leicester and Loughborough have a strong track record in the science and innovation industries, so we're determined to support the area by attracting new businesses.
>
> This new Enterprise Zone will help secure as many as 6,500 jobs for people right at the heart of the Midlands Engine and the site has real potential to rocket to the top of the space science field.
>
> I've seen first hand the new zone's ambitious plans to boost local growth, which forms an essential part of the government's commitment to create an economy that works for everyone.

Nick Pulley, Chair of the Leicester and Loughborough Enterprise Partnership, said:

> Confirmation of this second Enterprise Zone will make Leicester and Leicestershire extremely attractive to science, innovation and hi-

> tech manufacturing companies looking for research facilities and industrial and office space to base and expand their businesses.
>
> We have already seen this model working brilliantly at MIRA Technology Park in the automotive sector and we will look to replicate this in the science, innovation and hi-tech manufacturing sectors.
>
> Together, the Enterprise Zones give us 4 specialist commercial sites that really enable us to cement our distinctive place as the research and development capital of the Midlands. I hope that the government now backs our Growth Deal bid and provides the funding needed to invest in the infrastructure to accelerate development on these sites.

Sir Peter Soulsby, Leicester City Mayor said:

> This is fantastic news and will provide great incentives for businesses to invest in our city and county.
>
> It will of course help to deliver our ambitious plans for the Waterside area in the city and strengthen the University of Leicester's proposed National Space Park at Pioneer Park, which will give Leicester an even greater prominence on a global scale.
>
> It is critical now that Growth Deal funding is forthcoming to support the delivery of these sites.

Support for growing business in the Midlands Engine

Enterprise Zones are central to the government's Industrial Strategy, to help businesses up and down the country seize the opportunities presented by leaving the European Union.

Each Enterprise Zone is unique, looking to build on the strengths of each area, and support some of the country's most vital industries including manufacturing, technology and renewable energy.

For example, the East Midlands are already home to an Enterprise Zone at the MIRA technology plant, which is developing future technology for the transport sector. Since its creation in 2012, MIRA has secured £9.5 million for the creation of an engineering skills training centre and attracted a number of high-profile international businesses, such as Bosch Engineering and Aston Martin.

When the Leicester and Loughborough zone launches in April, it will be one of 48 zones across the country and will build on the success of the Midlands' existing zones. Since their launch in 2012, the 6 zones in the Midlands have attracted 9,000 jobs, 120 companies and secured £1.1 billion private sector investment.

Further information

First established in 2012, Enterprise Zones have attracted more than £2.6 billion of private investment and more than 700 new businesses – attracting more than 29,000 jobs across a range of key industries.

In addition to business rates discounts worth up to £275,000, 100% of business rates growth on the new zone will be retained by local authorities and the local enterprise partnership for 25 years to reinvest in local economic growth.

The Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Zone will be established from the start of April 2017.

Press release: Registration open for online apprenticeship service

The Department for Education and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) are from today (13 February 2017) encouraging large employers to sign up and register for the apprenticeship service, in readiness for the launch of the apprenticeship levy on 6 April 2017.

The apprenticeship service is an online digital system (similar to online banking) that has been set up to support the apprenticeship levy.

The levy will require employers, with a wage bill of over £3 million a year, to pay 0.5% of their wage bill into the apprenticeship service, to encourage them to invest into apprentices.

The online service then allows those employers to financially manage their apprenticeship programme and help them to estimate their financial spend and recruit apprentices through their training providers. It will help employers:

- focus on their business priorities
- address skills shortages head on
- invest in the skills and training to help their organisations succeed

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Robert Halfon said:

> Our funding reforms are essential to ensuring that this country works to build a highly skilled workforce for the future.
>
> Nobody understands the skills employers need better than the employers themselves and that is why we are placing them in the driving seat, to ensure they get the talent they need to grow.

> I have tried the new service myself and am impressed with how easy to use it is. All you need to do is set up an account, so I encourage employers to do it now so they can be ready for the levy coming later in this year.

Sue Husband, director of the National Apprenticeship Service said:

> The apprenticeship levy will come into effect in April 2017 to put apprenticeship funding on a sustainable footing and fund growth in the apprenticeship programme.
>
> Employers have told us that they want to be in control of their apprenticeship programme and funding. They want to manage it quickly and easily, so we have designed the apprenticeship service to do just that.
>
> It’s really quick to set up an account, and employers that have already registered during our testing phase have told us how easy they found it.

To register, levy-paying employers should have:

- their Government Gateway login details for PAYE schemes they want to include
- the details for each organisation that will be making an agreement with a training provider for apprenticeship training, including Companies House or charity number

The register to manage your apprenticeship funds page provides more guidance.

The apprenticeship levy

Over the last few years the government has embarked on a large-scale programme to reform the way apprenticeships are delivered and funded in England. The reformed apprenticeships are:

- more rigorous
- better structured
- independently assessed
- more clearly aligned to the needs of employers

In spring 2017, the way the government funds apprenticeships in England is changing. Some employers will be required to contribute to a new apprenticeship levy, and there will be changes to the funding for apprenticeship training for all employers. The apprenticeship levy begins on 6 April 2017.

The levy requires all employers operating in the UK, with a pay bill of over £3 million each year, to invest in apprenticeships.

Employers won't be able to pay for apprenticeships until they have started paying the levy (from May onwards).

Read more at [Apprenticeship funding: how it will work].

The apprenticeship service

Through the apprenticeship service, all levy-paying employers can:

All levy-paying and non-levy paying employers can:

- find – '[find apprenticeship training]' gives employers easy-to-digest information on the choices available to them – employers can search for and find an appropriate standard or framework, a quality-assured training provider, and compare one provider with another
- recruit – through the [recruit an apprentice] service, training providers can post vacancies for apprenticeships and traineeships on behalf of employers – this will be opened up to employers at a later date

Skills Funding Agency (SFA)

The SFA funds skills training for further education (FE) in England. We support over 1,000 colleges, private training organisations, and employers with £3.2 billion of funding each year.

The SFA is an executive agency, sponsored by the Department for Education.

News story: DExEU Minister visits Welsh companies to discuss Brexit

The Minister visited AMSS in Bridgend, which produces ground support equipment for the aerospace sector, and Boom Cymru, a production company based in the Glowork facility in Cardiff Bay.

He heard from both companies about the possible opportunities and implications of the UK leaving the European Union for their sectors.

As a priority Britain is now pursuing a bold and ambitious Free Trade Agreement with the European Union, which should allow for the freest possible trade in goods and services between Britain and the EU's member states.

During his visit to the Welsh capital, Minister David Jones also addressed the Welsh Assembly's external affairs committee, where he updated them on the progress of the Department for Exiting the European Union.

Minister David Jones said:

> The creative industries and aerospace sector are both hugely important for the Welsh and UK economies, and I was pleased to meet AMSS and Boom to discuss both the implications and opportunities of Brexit.
>
> As we negotiate our exit from the EU, we will get the best possible deal for the whole of the UK – one that will allow Welsh businesses to continue access skilled labour, and trade abroad.

The Minister's visit was the latest in a series of meeting with business leaders from more than 50 sectors, to hear their priorities and concerns before the Prime Minister triggers Article 50 and starts negotiations to leave the EU.

The UK is a world leader in the civil aerospace sector, second only to the US globally, and the industry has an annual turnover of £30bn.

The creative industries sector, meanwhile has expanded by 34% since 2010, accounting for almost 2 million jobs in the UK.

Scott Barber, Managing Director of AMSS, said:

> We are proud of our 38 years in this industry and welcomed the opportunity to share our vision for the company as the UK prepares to leave the European Union.
>
> In the aviation sector we have a proven track record in creating bespoke solutions for a range of ground support requirements not just here in Wales, but on a global scale with countries across Europe, Asia and as far afield as New Zealand.
>
> In the coming years we want to build on our success and support Wales in becoming a centre of engineering excellence that attracts new talent motivated to develop innovative solutions for what is a highly competitive industry.

Press release: New budgeting support for Universal Credit claimants

Money Advice Service's Online Money Manager is an interactive tool that offers personalised advice, on making the most of your money while you're on Universal Credit. It offers help and advice on a range of money topics, including opening a bank account, keeping on top of bills and dealing with debt.

Universal Credit is built to mirror the world of work to make the transition much easier for claimants and so there is always an incentive to work. New claimants receive monthly benefit payments, just like a pay cheque, and some may need extra help to manage this change.

Employment Minister Damian Hinds said:

> Universal Credit gives people back control of their own lives and finances, and makes the transition into work much smoother. We know that this can be a big change. Our work coaches offer budgeting support to all new claimants and this new tool will help more people get all the skills they need to manage their money.

Caroline Rookes, Chief Executive for the Money Advice Service, said:

> The Online Money Manager is an essential tool that will help people to plan and budget for this new way of receiving their money and paying their bills. They will be able to find personalised information about bank accounts, help with setting up direct payments to landlords, budgeting and saving money on regular bills, as well as where to go for additional support if they are struggling with financial commitments.
>
> We are pleased to be working closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to bring this tool to the people who can benefit the most.

Online Money Manager

The online service includes:

- step by step questions that signpost users to financial guidance and support relevant to their personal circumstances
- hints and tips for managing money and paying bills from a monthly payment.
- signposting to further support, such as advance payments and free debt advice

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment which replaces 6 benefits. It is simpler for claimants, and adjusts automatically when someone moves into work. It is designed to mirror the world of work and the monthly payments reflect the way many people’s wages are paid. Money for housing costs also goes to the claimant, rather than direct to a landlord, giving people control over their own finances.

Jobcentre Plus work coaches:

- give people the support they need to prepare for, move into and stay in work – including help with job searching and signposting to relevant

training and interview advice
- can provide budgeting advice for those that need it

Budgeting tips from the Money Advice Service

List all your income and outgoings

Keep track of how much money you have coming in and how much you need to spend on essentials. You can use the Online Money Manager to help.

Divide your spending into essential and non-essential items

Take a look at your spending and create 2 lists: one for things you really need, and another for things you could live without.

Sort out your rent or mortgage payments

Make sure you keep your rent or mortgage money separate from your everyday spending money. Think about setting up a direct debit or standing order to pay your landlord or lender directly each month after you get your first Universal Credit payment.

Think about how you'll manage a monthly payment

Universal Credit is paid monthly so if you're used to working out your spending weekly or fortnightly, you'll need to start managing your money across the whole month.

Work out how you'll cover your essential outgoings

These include rent or mortgage, Council Tax, utility bills, and repayments on loans, credit cards or store cards. If there's a risk you'll fall behind with payments, don't bury your head in the sand. Lenders, councils and landlords can work with you to manage repayments if you tell them as soon as there's a problem.

Get better deals on regular bills

With essential bills, like your gas, electricity or phone, you could save up to £200 a year if you switch to a better deal. Even making a single call to your current provider to ask about cheaper tariffs could make you better off.

Check for insurance policies and make a claim

If you've taken out any income or payment protection policies you might find the insurance company will cover loan repayments if you're not working. Check your policy paperwork if you're not sure.

Think before you borrow

If you're tempted to borrow, think carefully about how you will keep up with repayments. Stay away from high-cost borrowing like payday or doorstep lenders. If you must borrow, credit unions can offer cheaper loans and will work with you to set affordable repayments.

Prioritise debts – and get help if you’re struggling

Your rent or mortgage, Council Tax and gas or electricity bills are priority bills. If you’re struggling to pay them, get free, confidential debt advice as soon as you can. A debt adviser can help you manage your debts even if you think you have no spare money to deal with them. The Debt Advice Locator Tool will help you find free advice in your area.

About the Money Advice Service

The Money Advice Service is an independent organisation. It gives free, unbiased money guidance online at moneyadviceservice.org.uk or via free phone on 0800 138 7777. Debt advice is also provided through a variety of partners across the UK.

The service was set up by the government and is paid for by a statutory levy on the financial services industry, raised through the Financial Conduct Authority. Its statutory objectives are to enhance the understanding and knowledge of members of the public about financial matters (including the UK financial system) and to enhance the ability of members of the public to manage their own financial affairs.

For more information about the Online Money Manager for Universal Credit claimants contact pressoffice@moneyadviceservice.org.uk or call 0207 943 0593.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0203 267 5111

Follow DWP on:

Speech: “The spirit of 21st century Britain is not to oppose change, but to drive it”, says Chief Secretary, David Gauke

The topic I want to focus on is a broad one, and one that governments and societies across the world ignore at their peril.

And that’s how we prepare for the future.

Now there are clearly a lot of angles to that question.

And I am not going to attempt to provide a comprehensive answer.

At the moment, of course, most reports, discussions and column inches are looking at the question in terms of the future partnership between the UK and the EU.

And understandably so.

For both the UK and the other EU member states, this is an unprecedented question.

That’s why a huge amount of research and planning is already underway in governments, businesses and 3rd sector organisations across Europe, as well as the wider world.

But I’d like to use this opportunity today to look even further ahead.

To look beyond the negotiations to come.

In fact, to look beyond the scope of this Parliament, or the one to follow.

And instead, to consider how we can make the UK a success throughout the 21st century.

So I want to focus on three interconnected aspects of how we are considering that question in government.

You won’t be surprised to hear that for a Treasury minister, that starts with thinking about the future of our public finances.

But it also means thinking about the future of our public services.

As well as the impact of tomorrow’s technologies.

Plenty, I think, for us to discuss in the time we’ve got.

Public finances

So let me start with that most Treasury of preoccupations – the health of the public purse.

And I think the main questions on this come in two forms.

First, how do we address the immediate and medium-term challenges in respect of the deficit and debt? And second, what is our response to the longer term fiscal challenges faced by advanced economies across the globe?

Dealing with the deficit

Two big questions, so I’ll take each in turn.

First – the fact that we are in a historically difficult financial position.

I won’t downplay the challenges we face. Whatever your views on the causes that brought us here – whether that be the loose fiscal policies of the 2000s whilst overly relying on volatile sources of tax revenue, or the international financial crisis – the fact is that when we came to government in 2010, the public finances required serious remedy. The deficit the country was running was at its highest point since the Second World War.

And in consequence, the trajectory of our national debt was inevitably moving in the wrong direction – and fast. Even with the difficult decisions we have taken over the last seven years – which mean that instead of borrowing one in four pounds, it's now one in 10 – next year debt will stand at about 90% of our GDP.

To put that in perspective, that's its highest in half a century.

So those who argue that spending control and deficit reduction are yesterday's issues could not be more wrong. For all the progress we have made, we are not yet out of the woods by any stretch.

And unless you're prepared to leave the country vulnerable to future economic shocks, and create even tougher fiscal choices in the future, it is an absolute necessity to get on top of this legacy of debt and deficit. That is why we'll be continuing our work to do so and get the structural deficit to below 2% of our GDP this Parliament, and put ourselves on course to returning to balance as soon as possible in the next Parliament.

Dealing with our debt

But there is a bigger fiscal challenge at play too.

We're seeing seismic changes to our societies which will present long-term economic challenges for governments the whole world over.

For a start, we're getting older.

If I look just at the period of my own life time, when I was born in 1971, the global life expectancy at birth was 59 years. That's now increased to over 71 years. And it's not a trend confined to developing countries. In the UK too, we saw a similar rise in that period from 72 years to over 81.

And one in three of all babies born here today can now expect a message from the Palace on their hundredth birthday, compared to the one in every hundred people born over a century ago.

So as people live longer and longer, public services have to meet the needs, first, of a larger older population, but second, of a more expensive one – with people nearing the end of their lives requiring much more support.

But our ageing population is just one challenge.

Consider too the increasing identification of long-term illnesses – for the young and old alike.

Research from the King's Fund, for example, suggests that the cost to the NHS of mental health disorders and dementia will increase by half between 2007 and 2026. We can also expect increasing rates of obesity to raise the number of people with conditions like cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

And the rise in the identification of illnesses carries a corresponding rise in costs. Not just in terms of what we spend on health care, but on social security too.

Look at how our spend on Disability Living Allowance has almost doubled as a share of GDP over the past 20 years – the largest rise associated with the increase in identifying mental health issues.

Then there is the fact that research shows people have increasingly high expectations concerning their standards of care, their engagement with medical professionals and their access to the very latest treatments.

And all those cutting edge treatments, those new drugs, complex procedures, and advanced pieces of equipment – they all come with a much higher price tag.

So there are a wide range of pressures that are driving up costs to the public purse.

An illustration of which can be seen in the fact that over the last 60 years, there's been a huge change in how much we are spending on the NHS as a proportion of government spending as a whole – from around 8% in 1955. To nearly 18% in 2015. So the implications of all of these pressures are far-reaching.

The recent report from the OBR, for example, gave a blunt assessment of what they could mean for UK public finances.

It projected that without mitigating action, in 50 years time, our debt would stand at 234% of GDP.

To put it another way, the kind of factors I have outlined are set to add to government debt by more than either of the World Wars did.

But without the prospect of spending pressures relenting once the war was won.

The UK is not, of course, unique in facing such challenges.

The reality is that responsible governments across the world will have to take steps to prevent such a fate.

Even if that means short-term unpopularity.

So it is in the context of this looming and growing challenge, that our determination to deal with the deficit and restore public finances to balance is hardened still further.

Public services

That brings me to my second point – the future of government services.

And so often, political debate on this subject is reduced to sheer weight of numbers.

Are we spending more than we did before?

Are we spending more than the opposition are saying they would spend?

Are we spending more than other countries are spending?

But the answers to any of these questions will only take you so far. The question we should also ask is not just how much, but how well we are spending that money.

It is in that spirit that I am leading a government-wide drive to make our public services more productive – quite simply, to get more for less.

That might sound idealistic.

Even simplistic.

But unless you think government services are already running like clockwork, and offering our taxpayers perfect value, I think you will agree that there is plenty of scope for us to improve how we operate.

And I'm not someone who subscribes to the view that the only way you can do so, is to throw money at the problems.

That's not how businesses operate, and it shouldn't be how governments operate either.

Instead, we should make a relentless effort to become ever smarter, ever more productive, and ever more efficient in the future.

That's why I'm working with all my Cabinet colleagues to look at how we do so – and we've set ourselves a target of saving the taxpayer £3.5 billion by the end of this Parliament.

It can certainly be done. Just look at the gains to be made in our Health Service alone – the Carter review has identified that by working more efficiently we can save £5 billion pounds a year by 2021.

A recent Radio 4 documentary highlighted how we are raising productivity in the NHS. It gave a good insight into just how much room for improvement there is – for both the patient, and the taxpayer.

One example came courtesy of orthopaedic surgeon, Professor Tim Briggs, who is also the National Director for Clinical Quality and Efficiency in NHS Improvements. Just looking at hip and knee replacements, he found standards varied wildly across the NHS – whether that was in how much any given hospital spent buying the joint replacements, the different rates of infection or the varying patient outcomes and costs of mistakes and litigation. By making changes to share best practice, whether in treatment or procurement, he showed we could not only raise care, but reduce costs – freeing up of millions of pounds to be used elsewhere.

In fact, he reckoned the money saved just from getting infection rates down to the level of the best performers, would be enough to pay for around 50-60,000 more such knee or hip operations – for the same amount of money. That's a staggering figure and I'm pleased to say he's now looking at what we can do in 30 other specialities, including diabetes and heart surgery.

This is exactly the kind of approach we can and should be taking across our public sector as a whole. Improving productivity and efficiency must become embedded in the culture of our public services if we are to meet rising expectations and cope with the long-term fiscal pressures.

And that's why I'm inviting experts from across our society – from within the public sector, from academia, 3rd sector organisations, and businesses – to look at how we can reform the ways in which we work, put our workforce to best use and invest in the technology and systems that will raise our productivity to another level.

Tomorrow's technology

And that brings me to my third and final point today – which is to consider the implications of the rapid technological advances of our age.

Because change is happening at an astonishing pace.

We're seeing artificial intelligence that can pass the Turing test.

Cars that can drive themselves.

Houses that can be printed out.

Hotels run by robots – and indeed robots that can care for the elderly, perform heart and brain surgery, or explore outer space.

And we shouldn't regard such advances with the hostility of 21st century luddites.

Nor should we seek to stifle them in a misguided attempt to protect jobs – don't expect to hear the Chancellor announce a new 'tax on robots' any time soon.

Because we take the view that the role ofgGovernment is to back and enable the science, research and innovation of the next generation.

This brings benefits both to our society, and our economy.

I saw an example of this last week, when I went to Oxford to celebrate investment from Novo Nordisk, a multinational Danish pharmaceutical company, in a brand new research facility.

Drawn by such a world-leading university, they recognised that the UK was the best place in the world to research how we address diabetes.

We have the talent, the expertise, and the culture of academic excellence to help advance global scientific understanding.

And in doing so, we can bring new jobs and foreign investment to British shores.

So we’re putting science and research at the very centre of our industrial policy.

You’ll have heard us announce £4.7 billion pounds of public R&D spending at last year’s Autumn Statement – the largest increase in any Parliament since the 70s.

That’s in addition to our commitment to protect science funding – to the tune of over £24 billion up to 2020. But beyond supporting our world-class research base, there’s much more we’re doing to embrace the future. We’re modernising the way we provide public services through technology – such as the investment we’re making so that people can complete their tax returns online.

The UN have already ranked us the most digitally advanced government in the world, with the UK coming out on top in their E-Government survey.

And today, Cabinet Office Minister, Ben Gummer, launched a new strategy to see us build on that further. We’re also putting in place the digital infrastructure we will rely on – we already have one of the fastest 4G rollouts in Europe, and we announced in November a £1 billion investment in broadband, to spread fibre networks and 5G across Britain.

And just look at the advances we’re making in the future of how we will travel.

Like investing millions in the world’s first large-scale live testing system for connected and autonomous vehicles. Or supporting tests of driverless cars, using smart motorways to trial connected vehicle technology, or expanding the infrastructure for ultra-low emission vehicles.

Just this morning, in fact, the Science Minister, Jo Johnson, launched a competition to fund proposals that will establish the UK’s first spaceport by 2020, and keep us at the forefront of commercial spaceflight. But beyond the investments we are making as a government, we’re also backing our businesses to innovate, with a low and competitive tax environment and support for R&D.

So across the spectrum, we’re encouraging new technology and embracing the benefits it can bring to our society, and to our economy.

And that’s why the World Economic Forum has already ranked us in the top three countries worldwide for our technological readiness.

But we must also recognise that these waves of change will fundamentally alter our society in ways we must manage.

Whether that’s the changing face of crime, with the dramatic rise in cyber offences.

Or the big changes technological advances will mean to the way we work, and the jobs that we do. According to some predictions, for instance, almost two thirds of children entering primary schools today will work in roles that don’t currently exist.

And alongside that, one study estimates that over a third of all jobs in the UK are at high risk of replacement by tech in the next one to two decades, as AI and advanced robotics develop further. So we must be able to adapt.

To connect more people to the opportunities to up- and re-skill throughout their working lives.

To address the digital divide and help people adjust and take part.

And to give our young people the skills they will need to get ahead in tomorrow’s world. Whether that’s in terms of what they learn at school – and indeed, we were one of the first countries in the world to put computer coding on the national curriculum. The quality of technical skills they can develop. Or the way we help millions of people get on in their careers by doing apprenticeships that are really focused on the modern needs of our industries.

Conclusion

So in looking at just the three aspects of the UK’s future I have focused on today, what we can see is that there are some very real challenges ahead of us.

The hard work isn’t over when it comes to rectifying the UK’s public finances.

And on top of that, governments the world over will need to get to grips with some difficult long-term spending pressures, as well as handle widespread changes to the very fabric of our societies.

But just as we should be frank and realistic in facing up to these challenges…

…we should also be positive and optimistic about the opportunities we will seize to meet them.

Britain is a nation of shopkeepers and scientists. Coders and creators. Problem-solvers and innovators.

The spirit of 21st century Britain is not to oppose change, but to drive it. And it is by shaping and embracing the technological advances of our age, that we will set our course towards better public services, higher national productivity, and a wealthier, healthier, more prosperous society.

Thank you for listening and I look forward to hearing your questions.