

Business Secretary co-chairs third UK Steel Council meeting of 2021: 21 July

As part of the UK government's ongoing engagement with the steel industry on how best to decarbonise, Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng co-chaired the latest UK Steel Council meeting today (21 July), along with the Chair of UK Steel, Luis Sanz. Representatives from the 6 major steel companies in the UK, trade unions and the devolved administrations also attended.

Opening the meeting, the Business Secretary reaffirmed the UK government's support for the steel sector and, in partnership with industry, commitment to helping it modernise, increase competitiveness and transition to a cleaner and profitable future. He reiterated the need for a sustainable industry and discussed the ongoing work to explore an overarching, longer-term approach for the sector.

Following on from the previous meeting, where industry body UK Steel presented its draft roadmap for achieving net zero steel production, the Council discussed progress on the report, including a new section on jobs and the skills needed in a decarbonised industry.

The Business Secretary emphasised that as a national strategic asset, steel will play a critical role in providing the materials necessary to drive the UK's green industrial revolution and that the government would continue to work closely with the sector on its transition to a low carbon future.

Other items raised included electricity prices, the quality and availability of scrap for steel making and what would be required to create a market for low carbon steel. The council also discussed what government support, and on what timescales, might be needed to enable a transition to a competitive low carbon future. The UK government has already announced a £250 million Clean Steel Fund that will help the industry transition to a low carbon future, and, since 2013, it has provided over £600 million in relief to the sector to help with the costs of electricity.

It was agreed the Council would meet again after Summer to discuss progress and that government and industry would continue to work together closely on these areas.

This is in addition to the ongoing meetings of the Steel Procurement Taskforce, chaired by Investment Minister Lord Grimstone, working to address difficulties reported by the sector in competing for and securing major public contractors. The government is also reviewing its public procurement rules to better able to meet the needs of this country now we've left the European Union.

Today's attendees included:

- Business Secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng

- Energy Minister, Anne-Marie Trevelyan
- Minister for Investment, Lord Grimstone
- Wales Secretary, Simon Hart
- Luis Sanz, Chair of UK Steel and CEO, Celsa
- Gareth Stace, Director General UK Steel
- Sandip Biswas, Chairman Tata Steel UK, Executive Director and CFO Tata Steel Europe
- Huiming Li, Chairman, British Steel
- Peter Hogg, Liberty Steel
- Gareth Barker, COO, Sheffield Forgemasters
- David Scaife, Director, Outokumpu
- Roy Rickhuss, Community Union
- Harish Patel, Unite Union
- Ross Murdoch, GMB Union
- Vaughan Gething, Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales, Welsh Government
- Chris McDonald, CEO, Materials Processing Institute