

Business Secretary co-chairs UK Steel Council meeting: 5 March 2021

News story

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng has co-chaired a meeting of the UK Steel Council.



As part of the UK government's regular and ongoing engagement with the steel industry, Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng today re-established and co-chaired the latest UK Steel Council meeting, with representatives from the 6 major steel companies in the UK, as well as UK Steel, the sector's trade association, trade unions and the Devolved Administrations in attendance.

The Business Secretary opened the call reiterating the UK government's commitment to levelling up the country and protecting jobs as we build back better from the pandemic. He noted the newly constituted Steel Council offers the forum for government, industry and trade unions to work in partnership on the shared objective of creating an achievable, long-term plan to support the sector's transition to a competitive, sustainable and low carbon future.

There was acknowledgement of the extraordinary pressures that steel businesses are facing as a result of the global coronavirus pandemic and reaffirmed the government's commitment to support the sector and to help the industry to decarbonise. Kwasi Kwarteng noted, for example, the government has provided more than £500 million in relief to help make electricity costs more competitive and has established a £250 million Clean Steel Fund to support the decarbonisation of the steel sector.

The UK government remains committed to working with the steel industry in partnership to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions, but Mr Kwarteng recognised that it is a huge challenge.

The Business Secretary set out that the forthcoming Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy will not only demonstrate how the manufacturing sector can cut emissions, but also how it can become a thriving industry over the coming decades as it transitions to a low carbon future.

A joint UK Steel and BEIS Procurement Taskforce will also meet for the first time shortly and will be chaired by Lord Grimstone. It will aim to explore any difficulties reported by the sector in competing for and securing major public contractors and what the government can do to address them.

The Steel Council intends to meet regularly over the coming year and today's attendees included:

- Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng
- Lord Grimstone, Minister for Investment
- Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Energy Minister
- Simon Hart, Secretary of State for Wales
- Luis Sanz, Chair of UK Steel and CEO, Celsa
- Gareth Stace, Director General, UK Steel
- Tor Farquhar, HR Director, Tata Steel Europe
- Antonius Deelan, CEO, British Steel
- Jon Ferriman, CEO, Liberty Steel,
- David Bond, Managing Director, Sheffield Forgemasters
- David Scaife, Director, Outokumpu
- Roy Rickhuss, Community Union
- Harish Patel, Unite Union
- Ross Murdoch, GMB Union
- Ken Skates, Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales, Welsh Government
- Jamie Hepburn, Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, Scottish Government
- Chris McDonald, CEO, Materials Processing Institute

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