

News story: The Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster to visit China in a 'Golden Era' for the two countries

David Lidington, the Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, will make a three-day visit to China this week, building on the announcement of a new chapter in the 'Golden Era' between the UK and China during the Prime Minister's visit earlier this year.

Mr Lidington will lead the UK's 10th UK-China Senior Leadership Forum to the country. The Leadership Forum is a unique partnership that brings together British Parliamentarians and senior members of the Communist Party of China for frank discussions, debates and collaboration.

The theme of the 10th Leadership Forum this year is 'Partners for Progress: Strengthening the UK-China relationship in the Golden Era' and will focus on practical cooperation between the UK and China in light of Brexit. Other prominent figures who are members of the Forum are former Cabinet Office Minister Oliver Letwin, Lord Mandelson and Lord Sassoon.

The Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster will give the keynote speech at the Forum's meeting in the International Department of the Communist Party of China. He is expected to discuss the importance of the relationship between Britain and China and opportunities for further cooperation on trade and other issues that will arise following Brexit. He will also give a speech about Brexit to Chevening alumni which will include members of the Chinese Government.

This will be the first Ministerial visit since the PM visited in January and comes at an important juncture in Chinese politics – straight after the National People's Congress and at the start of Xi Jinping's second Presidential term.

Mr Lidington will be meeting a number of officials from the Chinese Government, including the newly appointed Vice President, Wang Qishan. He will be the first British politician to meet Vice President Wang, who previously served as President Xi's anti-corruption tsar.

Speaking ahead of the visit, David Lidington, the Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, said,

I am delighted to be returning to China at a moment of renewed strength between our two countries. Our relationship with China is, and will remain, a clear priority for the UK Government.

As the UK prepares to leave the European Union, I am confident that we can deliver on our bold vision for a Britain outside the EU that remains open for business and is the same outward-looking, globally

minded country that we always have been.

That is why I believe we are now entering a new chapter in the 'Golden Era' of UK-China relations, in which co-operation between us is stronger than ever before, and in which we can tackle mutual threats together, and take advantage of the exciting new opportunities that await us both.