

News story: The UK Government delivers for Scottish businesses

The Scottish Business Taskforce of economic and business leaders came together today, Friday 27 April, to discuss ways to support some of Scotland's most important sectors.

The taskforce, announced by Scottish Secretary David Mundell last year, aims to exert a positive influence on the development of UK Government policy and in turn, advance Scotland's interests.

Today the panel, chaired by former UK Government Minister Andrew Dunlop, met in Edinburgh and discussed ways to unlock the provision of long term finance to grow innovative firms. The participants provided expert insight on how the British Business Bank might work in Scotland to maximise its economic impact.

Also on the agenda was a discussion of priorities for the UK Government's export strategy and opportunities for women in leadership positions, including a proposal to establish a National Women's Business Centre of Excellence in Scotland.

Taskforce chairman, Andrew Dunlop, said: "We know that Scotland's economic performance lags behind the rest of UK, and we need to close that gap. These meetings are crucial for gathering expert advice and guidance as to how best to improve Scottish productivity, performance and promote strong economic growth.

"As we prepare to leave the EU, the conversations on helping innovative firms grow, boosting trade and promoting women in leadership positions are timely and valuable. The UK Government is working hard to release Scotland's full potential through the ambitious Industrial Strategy and the insight of the taskforce will help to ensure policymakers deliver for Scottish businesses."

The next meeting of the taskforce will take place in July 2018.

The taskforce comprises:

- Marc Crothall CEO – Scottish Tourism Alliance
- Prof Susan Deacon – Assistant Principal External Relations, University of Edinburgh and Chair, IoD Scotland
- Jayne-Anne Gadhia – Chief Executive, Virgin Money
- Jo Macsween – Vistage Group Chair and ex MD Macsween of Edinburgh
- Prof. Graeme Roy – Director, Fraser of Allander, University of Strathclyde
- Louise Smith – HMT Fintech envoy Scotland and Head of Design, Personal and Business Banking RBS
- Douglas Smith – Chairman – Scotland, CBRE
- Neil Sims – VP, Expro – North Sea

- Chris Van der Kuyl – Chairman, 4J Studios
- Ellis Watson – Executive Chairman DC Thomson Media
- Will Whitehorn – Chair, Scottish Exhibition Centre and Clyde Space
- Brian Wilson – Chair, Harris Tweed Hebrides