Press release: Aberdeen has a bright future post-Brexit, ministers tell industry leaders

Businesses in Aberdeen have today been reassured by ministers that they have the full support and backing of the Government as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Robert Jenrick, and Brexit Minister, Robin Walker, visited the 'Granite City' to meet local businesses and leaders from the oil and gas, and fishing industries. They listened to local concerns and underlined the UK government's determination to get the best Brexit deal for people living and working in Aberdeen.

The ministers were in town to host the Oil and Gas forum with senior representatives from energy companies, such as BP and Shell, as well as supply chain companies and the Oil & Gas Authority.

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Robert Jenrick said:

"For the first time in many years the Government is holding its oil and gas summit here in Aberdeen, to listen to the sector and the wider business community.

"We are supporting the oil and gas industry making it more competitive and innovative, and securing a strong future for it and for Aberdeen.

"We want to see Aberdeen's economy continue to thrive and are pleased to be meeting businesses and entrepreneurs across the city and county."

Brexit Minister, Robin Walker, said:

"Aberdeen's vibrant, diverse industries – from oil and gas to fishing – are renowned the world over. As we leave the EU, we're committed to enabling these great Scottish businesses to go from strength to strength.

"That's why I was pleased to talk to Scottish industries today about our ongoing negotiations with the EU. The implementation period we agreed in March will provide the certainty they've rightly been asking for, as well as give us the opportunity to go out into the world and negotiate new trade deals for the first time in 40 years.

"Our future outside the EU is a bright one for Scottish business as part of a global UK."

Discussions at the oil and gas forum focussed on the opportunities and challenges posed to the sector by Brexit, as well as how government support and the multi-billion package of generous tax cuts has provided greater stability for the industry – protecting jobs and driving innovation.

The Exchequer Secretary saw this innovation first hand on a subsequent visit to the ASET International Oil & Gas Training Academy, where engineers tasked with fixing oil rigs and emergency responders are trained for a career in the North Sea.

The ministers also attended a business event with the Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce. There, they met with up to 80 local entrepreneurs to hear their priorities for Brexit and answer their questions.

Brexit Minister, Robin Walker, also met the Scottish Seafood Association to discuss our desire to build a new economic partnership with the EU that secures the freest and most frictionless trade possible in fish products between the UK and the EU, alongside the opportunities coming to the wider UK fishing community. From December 2020 we will be negotiating fishing opportunities as an independent coastal state, deciding who can access our waters and on what terms for the first time in 40 years.

Notes to editors:

Since 2014, the UK government has supported the Oil and Gas industry with:

- Significant cuts to tax rates: permanently reducing Petroleum Revenue Tax from 50% to 0%, and cutting Supplementary Charge from 32% to 10%;

- The introduction of a new basin-wide Investment Allowance, reducing the effective rate of tax for companies who are investing in new developments;

- £40 million of funding for seismic surveys, to support activity in under-explored parts of the UK Continental Shelf, plus a further £5 million to support exploration projects in 2018-19;

- Jointly investing up to £250m with the Scottish Government through the Aberdeen City Region Deal, which includes support for the Oil & Gas Technology Centre; and

- Announcing a transferable tax history to support transactions of late life oil and gas fields, available for deals from 1 November 2018.