

# Press release: International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox convenes a new Board of Trade to ensure the benefits of free trade are spread throughout the UK

- President of the Board of Trade Dr Liam Fox convenes the new Board of Trade today in Bristol
- first meeting attended by leaders from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- advisers from across the United Kingdom present, providing local expertise to guide the Board on trade and investment matters

Today (12 October), International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox convened a new Board of Trade to help boost exports, attract inward investors and ensure the benefits of free trade are spread equally across the country.

The new Board of Trade will bring together prominent figures from business and politics from each part of the UK, including representatives from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Advisers include Collette Roche, Chief of Staff at Manchester Airport, former President of the Board of Trade, Patricia Hewitt and Ian Curle CEO of the Edrington Group, one of Scotland's leading premium spirits companies and produces of The Famous Grouse whisky.

Latest statistics show over the last 12 months the UK secured more foreign direct investment projects than ever before, UK exports have increased 13.1% on the previous 12 months in the year to August 2017 and the current account deficit narrowed to £101.3 billion in the year to 2017 Q2, from £113.8 billion in the year to 2016 Q2.

President of the Board of Trade, Dr Liam Fox said:

There is a world of opportunity out there for UK businesses and the Board of Trade will help identify and unlock new export markets and encourage further inward investment.

The advisers on the Board will act as the 'eyes and ears' of the modern businesses community to ensure the benefits of free trade are spread equally across the country.

The meeting will be held today at Bristol Robotics Lab, a collaborative partnership between the University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) and the University of Bristol. The lab, which brings together over 200 academics,

researchers and industry practitioners, is the most comprehensive academic centre for multi-disciplinary robotics research in the UK, and is spearheading Britain's efforts to become a world leader in modern advanced robotics.

President of the Board of Trade Dr Fox has also invited advisers from across the United Kingdom to provide local expertise and guide the Board on trade and investment matters.

The agenda of the meeting will include a Bristol Airport presentation on regional transport access, an area that will be key in the promotion of future UK exports for the whole of the UK.

The President will also invite a discussion on how the Board will promote a culture of exporting and investing across the whole of the UK and celebrate the very best of British business, already creating jobs and driving prosperity through their international outlook.

The Board of Trade will meet 4 times a year with meetings rotated around the UK guaranteeing all parts of the union have a chance to raise the issues most important to them. To ensure all voices are heard representatives from each region will be invited to the meetings.

## **Case Studies**

### **England**

- Cheltenham-based fragrance house Marmalade of London is celebrated success in Canada following 2 orders over the summer and anticipated sales of almost £1.4 million over the next 5 years
- murder mystery company Red Herring Games of Grimsby is opening previously unreachable markets, with Amazon US predicting orders totalling £200,000 for the next 5 years

### **Scotland**

- Livingston-based company Highlander Outdoor secured a significant contract win with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva, providing reflective foam sleeping mats for humanitarian response efforts
- Glasgow-based luxury knitwear company Green Thomas recently securing export wins in Japan, totalling 70% of the company's order book

### **Wales**

- Cardiff and Vale College (CAVC), one of the largest colleges in the UK, is exploring plans to open its second International Centre of Education in Hefei, China
- Welsh business Concrete Canvas is celebrating another record breaking year of exports, with 85% of turnover directly resulting from overseas sales

## **Northern Ireland**

- Northern Ireland manufacturer, BlueMAC, has seen their annual turnover increase by 50% since embarking on their exporting journey 3 years ago, going on to secure export wins in the UAE, Australia, France and China

## **Further information**

Membership of the Board of Trade is restricted to Privy Councillors.

The only member is:

(i) Secretary of State for Department of International Trade and President of the Board of Trade (Chair)

## **Advisers to the Board**

- (i) Secretary of State for Scotland
- (ii) Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
- (iii) Secretary of State for Wales

## **England (6)**

- (i) Patricia Hewitt – outgoing Chair of UK India Business Council
- (ii) Andrew Mills – CEO Virtualstock
- (iii) Collette Roche – Chief of Staff, Manchester Airport
- (iv) Marnie Millard – CEO Nichols PLC
- (v) Iqbal Ahmed – Chairman, Chief Executive and Founder of Seamark Group
- (vi) Edward Timpson – former Minister of State for Children and Families

## **Scotland (2)**

- (vii) Brian Wilson – former Trade Minister
- (viii) Ian Curle – CEO of Edrington Group

## **Wales (2)**

- (ix) Lord Rowe-Beddoe – former Chair of Welsh Development Agency
- (x) Heather Stevens – Chair and founding member of The Waterloo Foundation

## **Northern Ireland (1)**

- (i) Mark Nodder (CEO of Wrights Group)

## Further information

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