

[Press release: Foreign & Commonwealth Office Minister meets next generation of leaders at Asia-Europe Foundation summit](#)

During a 2-day visit to Brussels, Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field has today (18 October) met youth participants from the UK and the 10 ASEAN countries to explore the deep relationship between the UK and South East Asia.

Their session covered a wide range of topics including the youth summit's theme 'Ethical Leadership', EU Exit and the UK's relationship with Asia in areas of close cooperation such as education.

The Minister took part in the event as part of his participation at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit with the Prime Minister, where across 2 days he will meet with leaders and ministers from across Asia, including from China, Thailand, the Republic of Korea and Singapore.

Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific, Mark Field said:

These young people will be the leaders of tomorrow, so it's encouraging that events like the Young Leaders' Summit are held right alongside the ASEM Summit where so many leaders are meeting today.

It is incredibly heartening to see the younger generation coming together from across these two great continents, to think not only about how to become leaders themselves, but how to become responsible the leaders we will need to face the challenges of the future.

The AEF Young Leaders Summit (AEFYLS3) is taking place for the third year, in conjunction with the 12th ASEM Summit. Its focus was on ethical leadership, with participants analysing the concept of what it means to be a responsible leader.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Mark Field [@MarkFieldUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)

- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Media enquiries

For journalists

Email

newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Newsdesk

020 7008 3100

[Press release: Arsonist jailed following Solicitor General's referral](#)

A man who set fire to his neighbour's front door has been jailed after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred his sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Lee Batchelor, 40, used a bottle of white spirit to start a fire outside his neighbour's flat after growing upset with the noise coming from the property. Fortunately, the building's fire alarm alerted the victim to the incident, and she was able to help her friends escape through the window before putting out the fire.

Batchelor was originally sentenced at Lewes Crown Court in August, where he was given 2 years imprisonment suspended for 2 years. He was also ordered to complete a rehabilitation activity and unpaid work, and pay £500 compensation to the Housing Association. Today, after the Solicitor General's referral, the Court of Appeal increased his sentence to 3 years 2 months immediate imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

"This was a serious act of reckless arson, which could have been life-threatening for not only those targeted but others living the building. It is important that Batchelor's sentence reflects this."

Press release: Government to toughen rules banning sex offenders from councils

Rules to prevent people found guilty of serious crimes from serving on local councils will be strengthened, Local Government Minister Rishi Sunak MP announced today (18 October 2018).

The new rules will mean any person who is subject to an Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction, a Criminal Behaviour Order, a Sexual Risk Order or who is on the Sex Offenders' Register, will no longer be able to stand for elected office in their community.

Current conditions make clear that anyone convicted of an offence carrying a prison sentence of more than 3 months is banned from serving as a local councillor.

The new measures will strengthen this further by bringing disqualification rules in line with modern sentencing to include the alternatives to a prison sentence as a barrier to becoming a councillor.

These changes to the rules for who can stand for election, or hold a post as a councillor, will make sure those who represent their communities are accountable and held to the highest possible standards.

Local Government Minister Rishi Sunak MP said:

Elected members play a crucial role in town halls across the country, and are the foundations of local democracy. They are community champions, and have a leading role to play in building a better society for everyone.

With such an important role comes great responsibility, and these changes will protect residents while upholding the values and high standards of behaviour we all expect.

Anyone convicted of a serious offence that results in a sentence covered under the new disqualification criteria will be banned from standing for election, or would be forced to step down if they were convicted whilst in post.

The changes will better reflect rules governing standards of MPs, where members face suspension from the House for anything that contravenes the parliamentary code of conduct.

Futher information

Government will look to identify a suitable legislative opportunity to bring the changes into law. It will require changes to primary legislation, in particular the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, and the Greater London Authority Act 2009.

Once the rules are implemented, councils across England will have the power to prevent individuals from standing as a councillor or mayor at the point they trigger the revised disqualification criteria. These proposals will not apply retrospectively.

This consultation was open to everyone between 18 September 2017 and 8 December 2017. We particularly sought the views of individual members of the public, prospective and current councillors and those bodies that represent the interests of local authorities and councillors at all levels.

A [summary of consultation responses and the government response](#) has been published today.

Office address and general enquiries

2 Marsham Street

London
SW1P 4DF

Contact form

<http://forms.communiti...>

General enquiries: please use this number if you are a member of the public
030 3444 0000

Media enquiries

Email

newsdesk@communities.gov.uk

Please use this number if you are a journalist wishing to speak to Press Office
0303 444 1209

Social media – MHCLG

Twitter – <https://twitter.com/mhclg>

Flickr – <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mhclg>

[Press release: ‘Forgotten lands’ to receive forestry boost](#)

A new project to help landowners create vital new woodland and unlock the economic benefits of forestry has been launched in Cumbria’s ‘forgotten lands’.

The government’s Tree Champion Sir William Worsley today visited forestry project Snowdon Close in the area to launch the pilot Forestry Investment Zone.

The government will trial a new approach in Cumbria’s ‘forgotten lands’ and work to encourage investment in the zone through measures such as the existing Countryside Stewardship and Woodland Carbon Fund grant schemes. A Forestry Investment Zone officer will also offer tailored support to businesses.

Government will also work nationally with the forestry and timber processing industry to accelerate planting as new approaches to rural funding and payment for public goods are developed.

The pilot launch comes during Green GB Week, an annual week dedicated to highlighting the opportunities clean growth offers the UK – and raise understanding of how business and the public can contribute to tackling climate change.

Forestry Minister David Rutley said:

Planting more trees is central to our ambition to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

This innovative new pilot project will not only help landowners realise the benefits of woodland creation, but also drive forward our commitment to plant 11 million trees.

The Cumbria pilot is the first of its kind, with the ‘forgotten lands’ being the perfect place to establish large-scale forestry projects in order to bring economic and environmental benefits to the area. The project will focus on productive forestry, landscape enhancement, farming and local employment.

During his visit, Tree Champion Sir William Worsley said:

It is wonderful to be in Cumbria today to see this exciting new pilot kick off and to witness what will hopefully be the beginning of widespread investment in the forestry sector.

By making it easier for this area to be used for woodland creation we are not only helping the environment, but also giving the region a valuable economic boost.

The Cumbria Forestry Investment Zone pilot is scheduled to run for two years, and will be used as a test-case for rolling out the initiative more widely around the country.

Press release: Tilbury Port to capitalise on opportunities to boost trade

Tilbury Port and the people that work there will play a major role in helping the UK to increase international trade after we leave the European Union.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox visited Tilbury Port today (Thursday 18 October) to meet with port workers and management, as well as members of the Tilbury on the Thames Trust.

Tilbury is the fastest growing port in the UK and a £1 billion investment programme will see the port employing 9,000 people by 2020, 3 times more than it did in 2012. One in 5 of the employed people in the local area of Thurrock will work at the port.

This investment will see the amount of trade passing through the port reach 32 million tonnes each year, equivalent to more than 1 tonne every second.

Dr Fox praised Tilbury for leading the way in delivering year-on-year growth that creates jobs in the local area and helps to deliver prosperity across the UK.

He met with staff to hear about plans to capitalise on opportunities to increase international trade with the rest of the world, which could help to create even more jobs at Tilbury.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

Tilbury Port has a strategic position on the Thames estuary, a skilled maritime workforce and a long history of international trade. Together with the developments at Thamesport, we are seeing

great improvements in the capacity of the Thames as a gateway for international trade for the future.

We are now forging our own independent trade policy for the first time in more than 40 years and Tilbury and other ports will play a major role in helping the whole of the UK to capitalise on the opportunities to increase our trade with the rest of the world.

I applaud and respect the hard work of the port's workers who are helping to ensure that Britain remains a great exporting, maritime nation.

Robin Mortimer, Port of London Authority (PLA) chief executive said:

The substantially increased freight on the river in 2017 is tangible evidence of the success of the Thames in attracting investment and, through it, new trades. It's work that is underpinned by our Investment Strategy to enhance commercial infrastructure up and down the river.

Dr Fox saw Jaguars and Land Rovers ready to be shipped to West Africa and South America, as well as paper imported from Finland and Sweden, and grain that is traded with North America and Europe.

Our ports are fundamental to our global trading success as an island nation. They have a vital economic role in handling 95% of our imports and exports and they support 100,000 people around the country.

Ports directly generate £1.7 billion of trade every year, however their true value to the UK economy is worth more than three times that figure (£5.4 billion) when you include indirect impacts such as the port industry's spending on vehicles, construction and business services.