

News story: UK and Scottish Government ministers to speak at the first Borderlands Conference

The conference will bring together the Borderlands Partnership, stakeholders and local and national politicians in a bid to enhance the proposals that will be made to both the UK and Scottish governments later this year.

Keynote speakers at the conference will include David Mundell MP, Secretary of State for Scotland, and Keith Brown MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work. Other keynote speakers still to be announced.

David Mundell MP, Secretary of State for Scotland said:

The Borderlands Growth Deal is a genuinely innovative initiative and has the potential to transform the economy of the whole region, both in the South of Scotland and across the border, creating jobs and increasing prosperity. It aims to build on the successes of city and growth deals across Scotland that are already delivering benefits for people and businesses. I have been impressed with proposals put forward by partners and look forward to continuing fruitful discussions as we work towards a deal.

Keith Brown MP, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work said:

We have made clear our commitment to a deal for the Borderlands that will drive inclusive growth across the area. Indeed, we want to see every part of Scotland benefit from this sort of focussed, transformational investment.

We want to ensure that the Borderlands deal complements the Scottish Government's commitment to establishing a new enterprise agency for the South of Scotland, and have been running a series of events across the South of Scotland to hear what the people who live and work in the area want. I look forward to the event in June as an opportunity to hear from stakeholders across the Borderlands – their aims, aspirations and ambitions for the deal and how we can work together to make them happen.

Carlisle MP John Stevenson was confirmed as the Borderlands Champion for England in the UK Prime Minister's Questions on 2 May 2018.

John Stevenson, MP for Carlisle, added:

Borderlands is a unique opportunity for our region. The work which the five Councils have already done is very encouraging. I am delighted, as the Prime Minister's Champion for the Borderlands, to support the Conference. It will offer participants a chance to hear what work has been done as well as have the opportunity to influence the proposals.

The conference will take place between 9am and 3.30pm. Places can be booked via <http://www.borderlandsgrowth.com/get-involved>

The conference will enable stakeholders to hear about the work to date, the ambition for the Borderlands region and give them the opportunity to provide their input through workshop sessions.

The proposed Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal is unique and is a partnership that brings together the five cross-border local authorities of Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland County Council and Scottish Borders Council to promote the economic growth and competitiveness of the area that straddles the Scotland-England border.

A Borderlands Partnership spokesperson said:

Our first conference is a fantastic opportunity for key stakeholders from right across the area to hear about the work of the Partnership so far and the very positive support we've had from both governments to date. Later this year we will submit further propositions regarding potential programmes and projects that could be developed under the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal to the two governments. The conference workshops will give the many stakeholders the chance to discuss these at an early stage and provide their feedback and input and their support will help strengthen our case.

The partners are working on a collective ambition to unlock the potential for sustainable and inclusive economic growth across the south of Scotland and north of England.

The themed topics that the Borderlands Partnership has been working on are: Energy; Digital; Transport Connections; Business; Destination Borderlands; Quality of Place; Rural Productivity; and Skills and Innovation. The Borderlands partners continue to meet key stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

If you would like to discuss opportunities, ideas and possible working relationships, or would just like more information, visit the Partnership website <http://www.BorderlandsGrowth.com> or email info@borderlandsgrowth.com.

[News story: Qioptiq opens £3.7 million warehouse to support armed forces](#)

Optical and photonics business [Qioptiq](#) has opened a new £3.7 million warehouse in St Asaph, North Wales, that will support an £83 million contract with the [Ministry of Defence](#).

The six-year contract saves the MoD £47 million and means Qioptiq will ensure vital night vision equipment is available to UK armed forces around the globe.

The company's success came after it realised it needed to take a more collaborative approach to its work and gain outside expertise on reducing costs through a leaner supply chain.

It entered into a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Cardiff Business School and KTP associate Thanos Goltos.

[Find out more about how Knowledge Transfer Partnerships work.](#)

Expertise helped Qioptiq win major contract

Thanos worked for Qioptiq under the supervision of business school academics. His expertise in inventory forecasting showed how the business could reduce its inventory by 25%.

Peter White, managing director of Qioptiq, said:

The KTP has produced outstanding results. Historically, we operated a complex supply chain, but Thanos's expertise has developed a toolset we could use to support our integrated logistics supply operations.

For this opportunity we acknowledged we needed to take a more collaborative approach to external funders and expertise. The partnership has helped secure a major contract from the MoD to support equipment vital to the safety of our soldiers in frontline operations.

Qioptiq designs and manufactures photonics products for a range of markets including medicine, life science, defence, manufacturing and aerospace. It is part of the US corporation Excelitas Technologies, which employs more than

500 people in North Wales.

Thanos said:

It was a great opportunity for me to put my expertise to good use under supervision from two highly experienced academics. It's been a tough, enjoyable journey, and the results have been well worth the effort.

The KTP was co-funded by the [Welsh Government](#), the [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council](#) and Innovate UK. The Welsh Government also invested in the new warehouse at St Asaph.

[Apply for innovation funding.](#)

[News story: Education Secretary marks Mental Health Awareness Week in Hastings](#)

Young people and parents are set to benefit from extended mental health services in Hastings, backed by a £600,000 annual investment from the government's Opportunity Area programme.

The funding will develop the advice and support services available for young people in Hastings to improve their emotional wellbeing at home, school or further education, the Education Secretary Damian Hinds announced during a visit to Sussex Coast College in Hastings yesterday (17 May) to mark Mental Health Awareness Week.

Hastings is one of 12 Opportunity Areas identified as social mobility 'coldspots' which are receiving a share of £72million to raise aspirations and opportunities for the young people who live there.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Young people in Hastings have told us mental health is one of their big concerns, and we know that it can have a real impact on their lives – that's why the Opportunity Area programme is spending over £600,000 a year to improve training for school staff, increase access to local services and strengthen family relationships to boost wellbeing at home.

During Mental Health Awareness Week, it's important to hear first-hand from the people running these important projects in Hastings and from the young people who benefit. The more we can improve the support that is in place for them, the more likely it is that they will grow up feeling confident and positive about their future.

The mental health investment includes:

- £100,000 per year to expand Hastings' award-winning i-Rock service to five days a week from three as of September 2018. i-Rock offers a drop-in service for young people aged 14 to 25-years-old providing them with advice on emotional and mental wellbeing, employment, education and housing;
- Around £250,000 per year to develop an emotional wellbeing service for schoolchildren aged nine to 14 that will offer training and expert clinical advice to clusters of schools, as well as supporting groups or individual children who are suffering from anxiety, depression, anger issues or those that are at risk of self-harm or eating disorders;
- More than £250,000 per year to expand support for parents and carers in Hastings, including 'Triple P – Positive Parenting Programme', which aims to encourage parents to seek support where they need it and offers practical strategies to help foster healthy family relationships, preventing problems developing at home; and
- Working with schools and colleges to identify the best approaches being used to supporting their students' mental health and resilience, to share locally for the maximum benefit.

Chief Executive of Triple P UK, Matt Buttery, said:

The Secretary of State is absolutely right to prioritise social mobility, and Opportunity Areas have real potential to transform life chances for children and young people. Triple P is an evidence-based parenting programme that delivers real and long-lasting benefits for children and families, and is a vital part of the jigsaw.

Triple P is working with a number of partners in the Hastings Opportunity Area to help families build healthy relationships and prevent problems developing, including in mental health. We look forward to continuing our work and expanding our offer so that all young people in the area, and indeed across the country, can achieve their full potential.

Confirming the funding during Mental Health Awareness Week, the Education Secretary was joined by Amber Rudd, MP for Hastings and Rye and met with young people who have benefitted from the i-Rock project, as well as school and college leaders and members of the Hastings Opportunity Area independent board to discuss the programme's wider work.

The programme has been developed in partnership with local organisations and the additional funding builds on existing investment from Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group and East Sussex County Council.

Hastings Opportunity Area will focus on four strands of work: improving literacy, raising attainment in maths, broadening young people's horizons and preparing them for the work, and improving mental health and resilience.

[News story: Programme: EU-UK Article 50 negotiations Brussels, 22-24 May 2018](#)

Tuesday, 22 May 2018

- Withdrawal Agreement – remaining issues
- Future relationship

Wednesday, 23 May 2018

- Withdrawal Agreement – remaining issues
- Northern Ireland/Ireland
- Future relationship

Thursday, 24 May 2018

- Withdrawal Agreement – remaining issues
- Future relationship

[News story: New Chief Executive for defence Non-Departmental Public Body](#)

Neil Swift has been appointed as the Chief Executive of the SSR0, after a

rigorous external selection process and agreement by the SSR0 Board. He is currently the Interim Chief Executive of the SSR0. He joined the SSR0 in April 2015 and was previously Chief Operating Officer.

The Chairman of the SSR0, George Jenkins OBE, said that:

This is a vital appointment for the SSR0. The new Chief Executive will drive forward our positive momentum, focusing on the delivery of our statutory functions and ensuring our independence, while engaging meaningfully with all our stakeholders. The Board and Neil share the same vision, and he demonstrated against tough competition that he meets the skills, knowledge and experience criteria we need. I would like to thank my fellow panel members for their significant contribution to the recruitment process, and for arriving at the best decision for the SSR0.

The shortlisting and interview panel comprised: George Jenkins OBE as the SSR0 Chairman; Catherine Little, DG Finance at the Ministry of Defence; Paul Everitt, Chief Executive of ADS; and Marta Phillips, a non-executive Board member at the SSR0. Interviews were held at the SSR0 offices on 1 May 2018 and the panel determined its recommended candidate at that time. The recruitment was undertaken by the SSR0, in conjunction with Odgers Berndtson, which approached potential applicants regarding the role and coordinated the exercise.

The SSR0 was founded under the Defence Reform Act in 2014. It is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Ministry of Defence.

Neil Swift said:

It is a privilege to be appointed Chief Executive, and I am grateful to the panel and Board for considering my application. The SSR0 plays a key role in the regulation of non-competitive defence contracts, providing independent, objective and evidence-based advice, guidance and support. Working with and listening to its stakeholders the SSR0 is well placed to support improvements in defence procurement. I intend to build on the foundations that have been established as the regime further matures – ensuring the SSR0 does its job and does it well.

For further information contact the SSR0 on enquiries@ssro.gov.uk, or by telephone at 0203771 4777.