

Speech: PM tech reception: “We all have our part to play – let’s work together to achieve it.”

Thank you very much for coming here and it’s a great pleasure to welcome you all to No 10 Downing Street this evening to celebrate the tech sector – and the huge contribution you make to our economy, our society and our country.

You are creating and developing the new technologies which are changing the world and improving lives and what you achieve is truly remarkable and inspiring.

Just some raw numbers speak for themselves: £6.8 billion of inward investment last year alone, and £4.6 billion raised in funding outside London.

In Britain, we have a long history of achievement in technology – and our country has been the home of the great innovators in this field.

Charles Babbage – who designed the first general purpose computer in the 1830s.

Ada Lovelace – whose portrait hangs in this very room, and whose ground-breaking work on algorithms made her the world’s first computer programmer.

And of course, Alan Turing, the visionary mathematician who contributed so much to the development of artificial intelligence.

What defines the tech sector today – your energy, your dynamism and your creativity – are in the finest traditions of those illustrious figures of the past.

Your continuing success will be essential to our country’s success in the future.

The people gathered in this room amply demonstrate the tremendous achievement and potential to be found in the tech sector today, right across the country.

We have with us successful businesses from Belfast and Bristol, Cardiff and Cambridge, Manchester and Leeds. And next year, when Liverpool hosts the UK’s third International Business Festival, firms from across the UK will showcase their innovations to the world.

The great city of Liverpool, which has always been a gateway for global trade and which today is integral to our vision of a thriving Northern Powerhouse, will play host to hundreds of delegations from right around the globe. I am delighted that Max Steinburg who I met earlier and Ian McCarthy have joined us today.

There is so much to be proud of – and so much success to celebrate.

Here today we have Oxbotica, who are developing systems to power the autonomous vehicles of the future and change the way we travel.

We have Babylon, who are working with the NHS to deliver 21st century digital healthcare and help people live healthier lives.

And we have Raspberry Pi, who are helping thousands of children learn to code and develop the skills to succeed in the economy of the future.

But as we celebrate this success, we cannot take anything for granted. I know that Government has an important role to play in supporting you. And our industrial strategy is based on the belief that our economy does best when government and industry work together as partners.

And that's why we committed in our election manifesto to developing a Digital Charter – with a vision to make Britain the very best place in the world to start and run a digital business.

I'm pleased that we have colleagues here tonight from across Government – Greg Clark who is responsible for the Industrial Strategy at BEIS, Liz Truss from the Treasury, Karen Bradley and Matthew Hancock from our department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and others – who share my determination to make that vision a reality.

We're already investing in infrastructure and skills, with £1 billion of investment in next-generation broadband and mobile networks, new digital apprenticeship standards, and new technical education qualifications in digital. And the announcements we've made today build on that: more visas for the best and brightest, more investment to support digital clusters outside London, and a new approach to getting innovative technology into the public sector.

But this is just the start.

The economy fit for the future which we will build as we leave the European Union, and forge a new role for ourselves in the world, must be one which leads the world in innovation and emerging technologies. We have all the ingredients of success: immense human talent, world-leading universities, and a thriving ecosystem of start-ups.

We have serious, experienced investors. We have regulators who understand how to work with innovative companies. And the world's largest technology companies are putting their faith in Britain: investing here, experimenting here, opening new offices, hiring more staff.

So, we are going from strength to strength. Let's build on that success together in the years ahead. Let's work as partners – businesses, educators, innovators and government – to do all we can to make Britain the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business.

Let's make sure that when people look back on this time of great innovation and change, they see in Britain a country which seized the opportunities that were within its grasp.

A country which, inspired by its illustrious past, resolved to achieve even greater things in the future.

We all have our part to play – let's work together to achieve it.