

# Press release: Industrial Strategy on the agenda at latest Business Advisory Group

Today's session is the latest in a series of meetings that aim to provide a mechanism for businesses to engage with UK Government on a range of strategic economic issues and to provide UK Government with high level advice on critical business and economic issues facing Northern Ireland.

This afternoon's meeting was an opportunity for Minister Hopkins to encourage discussion on areas of particular resonance to Northern Ireland in relation to pillars one and four of the Industrial Strategy – investing in science, research and innovation and supporting businesses to start and grow – and to encourage the business groups present to respond to the consultation. It also allowed the minister to provide assurance that the Government is committed to political stability and urge members to use their influence to encourage political parties to deliver a functioning and effective Executive post-election.

Speaking after the meeting, Kris Hopkins MP said:

The Industrial Strategy is a vital part of this Government's plan to drive growth across the whole United Kingdom and create more high skilled, high paid jobs and opportunities. New Sector Deals and investment in research and development will support the industries of the future where the UK – and Northern Ireland in particular – has the potential to lead the world.

Both the Secretary of State and I will continue to explore how to maximise the positive impact that this Strategy can have in Northern Ireland, particularly in exploring Sector Deals, removing barriers to innovation and growth and developing new trade and investment deals to increase exports.

Today's session also provided an opportunity to stress the need for political stability as a fundamental basis for industrial success. Securing strong, stable devolved institutions in Northern Ireland that will provide leadership, support innovation and boost skills will be vital to delivering on Northern Ireland's potential as a place to invest and do business as we continue to build an economy that works for everyone.

Today's meeting was attended by the following:

John Cunningham, Camlin Group  
Peter Cunningham, Camlin Group  
Linda Brown, Institute of Directors  
Ian Sheppard, Institute of Directors/Bank of Ireland  
Wilfred Mitchell, Federation of Small Businesses  
Roger Pollen, Federation of Small Businesses  
John Friel, Federation of Small Businesses  
Angela McGowan, Confederation of British Industry  
Nick Coburn, Northern Ireland Chamber  
Chris Morrow, Northern Ireland Chamber  
Professor Paddy Johnston, QUB Vice-Chancellor  
Professor Paddy Nixon, UU Vice-Chancellor  
Liam Nagle, Norbrook  
Nick Wheelan, Dale Farm  
Shaun McAnee, Danske Bank  
Lynsey Cunningham, Ulster Bank  
Joanne Stuart, Catalyst NI

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## **Scottish Natural Heritage offer amazing opportunity for SRUC Students**

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) are offering student placement opportunities on some of Scotland's top National Nature Reserves.

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# Speech: British High Commissioner welcomes returning Chevening scholars

Speaking at the event, which was also attended by the Zambian Minister of Higher Education Prof. Nkandu Luo, Mr Cochrane-Dyett said:

I am delighted to be hosting this event to welcome the 17 Zambians who went to study at prestigious British universities. I also welcome the Chevening alumni who are already making a difference in Zambia through their respective positions and activities they are carrying out in their communities.

I am always interested when meeting Zambians who have studied and lived in the UK to find out how they coped with the cultural differences. Take British understatement, for example, and irony. Anyone going to Britain for the first time needs to know that when they hear someone preface a remark with “With the greatest respect” they do not mean “I think highly of you”, not at all, what they really mean is “I think you are completely wrong.” Or someone might respond to an observation you make by saying “how very interesting”. Do they really mean that they have been inspired by your sparkling intellect or do they actually mean that they think you have been talking nonsense? And if you hear a British person say “I agree with you up to a point”, be in no doubt that an accurate translation would be “I am too polite to say so but I think you might be mad”.

For many years now, the UK has been working alongside Zambia to develop young leaders and support the self-development of individuals who want to make positive change in their communities, workplaces and their country. The British High Commission aims to build lasting relationships between people in the UK and Zambia, and increase the appreciation of what the UK has to offer and what we have achieved – together.

Chevening and its predecessor schemes have been operating in Zambia since 1985. To date, over 230 Zambians have studied in the UK under it. Chevening is the UK’s flagship scholarship scheme administered in Zambia by the Association of Commonwealth Universities on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. I hope to see more Zambians study in the UK, now that we have expanded our Chevening Scholarship scheme here from two places in 2015 to 17 in 2016. We are in the process of organising interviews for the scores of Zambians who have applied for Chevening scholarships in various fields of study for the 2017/2018 academic year. I wish them luck.

Chevening Scholarships are an important element of the British Government’s programme to promote greater capacity for the next generation of Zambian leaders and to further develop the excellent relationship between Zambia and the UK. Improved relations are in the interests of all of us. At the risk of flattering many of you, these Scholarships are for talented people who have

been identified as potential future leaders across a wide range of fields, including politics, business, the media, civil society, religion, and academia.

Let me tell you a fact. Did you know that of all the kings and queens, presidents and prime ministers across the world, all those currently serving, one-in-seven of them have studied in the UK? Britain continues to offer among the best educational institutions in the world – schools as well as universities. And many influential Zambians have benefited from that experience. The idea of the Chevening scheme is to expand that further, two examples being Justice Florence Lengalenga, High Court Judge, and Chibamba Kanyama, former Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation Director General and now working for the International Monetary Fund.

I am certain that the 17 returning students will join the list of Zambian Chevening Alumni who are using their skills and knowledge to contribute significantly to Zambia's development.

I am glad that the Alumni are doing some good works already. For instance, they contributed to Zambia's elections last year by hosting a public debate for candidates who were vying for the Mayoral seat in Lusaka. Candidates, who included the current Mayor, Mr Wilson Kalumba, had the opportunity to sell themselves to the electorate. The Alumni also participated in the inaugural "Race to Beat Cancer" which was organised by PricewaterhouseCoopers Limited Zambia to raise awareness about the disease. You Alumni have helped to mentor and encourage potential candidates to apply for Chevening scholarships. You have also assisted with interviews for Chevening applicants. I look forward to seeing more of such activities, and would like to hear your ideas.

Finally, being educated at a British university can have unexpected rewards. I speak from experience. In 1983 I matriculated at Jesus College, Oxford University, but chose to leave after an unhappy affair of the heart. I went travelling instead, worked at a school in Kenya, and decided that I wanted to devote my life to working with Africa and Africans.

Subsequently, I returned to my studies at Durham University. However, after my unhappy experiences at Oxford, I chose an all-male college so that I could avoid women for a while and thus avoid romantic entanglements. What I did not know was that after I had been accepted, the college deviously decided to introduce women for the first time with an initial intake of twenty young ladies. Arriving at the college on that sunny October morning nearly 33 years ago, the first other student that I saw was an attractive girl in a blue beret. Ladies and gentlemen, that student's name was Susie, and she became my wife shortly afterwards. An unexpected benefit from my university education.

Thank you for listening.

I would now like to conclude by presenting certificates to the returning scholars.

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## [China to improve gov't service in townships](#)

The central authorities have issued a document calling for improved public services at the township level.

The document was issued by the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council.

Township governments should provide quality education in rural areas with suitable teaching environments, safe campuses and support for under privileged students, according to the document.

It called on township governments to offer better training and vocational opportunities to rural residents, and ensure basic social services for special groups including the disabled, migrant workers, and children living in poverty.

Governments at the township level should implement national insurance policies and improve public health services, said the document.

It stressed that ancient villages of great historical and cultural value should be properly protected and developed, adding that township governments should also improve their service in areas such as environmental protection, food safety and juvenile protection.

The document urged governments of county-level and above to provide financial support for infrastructure, public services and other social undertakings in townships, and to encourage loans and investment to small towns and villages.

Township government budgets and spending should be strictly regulated to fend off local debt risks and guarantee fiscal balance, it said.

The document also called for preferential policies for township officials, such as easier promotions and subsidies, to attract talent to work in townships.

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## [The underinvestment in infrastructure spending in the north is totally](#)

# unacceptable – Andy McDonald

**Andy**

**McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Transport**, commenting on an IPPR report which shows underinvestment in transport in the north, said:

“The underinvestment in infrastructure spending in the north is totally unacceptable. We need to ensure economic growth is spread beyond just London and the South East. Having a balanced economy is good for the UK as a whole but the Government seem determined to invest in London at the expense of the rest of country.

“It's short-term thinking that means our regions are starved of investment when they have so much potential for growth, and it shines a light on the Government's self-defeating economic strategy which says that meeting the transport needs of London should come at the expense of our regions.

“Labour would make sure that the transport needs of the South-East are met whilst rebalancing the economy and making the necessary investment in transport infrastructure right across the UK, including prioritising a CrossRail for the North to improve connectivity between our Northern cities.”