Trade Secretary’s speech at the Green Trade & Investment Expo

Welcome to the Green Trade and Investment Expo.

Let’s talk about Blyth. Blyth is a coastal town 16 miles from here. Coal mining was its lifeblood.

But when Blyth’s last colliery closed three decades ago, around 1,700 jobs disappeared. Some people thought that the town would be left behind.

It is true that the past years have been difficult and challenges still exist.

Yesterday I took some of you to see how the town is becoming one of the country’s most important bases for clean energy.

It’s home to the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult, where the biggest turbine blades in the world are put through their paces.

Another company called JDR is transforming the site of Blyth’s old coal fired power station into a next generation offshore cable factory.

So, a town once powered by coal is now powered by wind. And all this is creating hundreds of jobs.

Blyth illustrates the promise of the clean energy revolution.

And the Government want to see this story of opportunity, growth and revitalised communities replicated across the UK, because at the end of he day what we are about is helping people live better lives.

That’s where my department comes in. We believe that green trade and investment will be the future-proofing force that will help us create a better tomorrow, and I’ll give you three reasons why:

First, we know that growing our green industries is crucial to reaching net zero.

Some people raise awareness of climate change by throwing soup at paintings in museums or gluing themselves to the road. That’s not really my style.

We in this room know that we can only tackle climate change by using free trade and investment to accelerate green technological progress. And we must do this in a way that does not impoverish the UK.

Second, to protect our energy security we need to grow our own industries.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has made it quite clear that relying on authoritarian regimes can make it tougher to heat our homes.

Our trade relationships will help secure our energy supply. But it’s long-term investment in nuclear and renewables that will reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and keep down consumer costs.

And third, as we are seeing in Blyth, green trade and investment acts as a future-proof by creating those jobs of tomorrow.

The jobs that will drive economic growth and keep communities alive.

And this economic angle is the subject I want to focus on today.

Like many governments around the world, we’re dealing with low growth. We need to find our way through it. Because we owe it to our children and grandchildren to build a better, more prosperous future.

A lot of this growth will come from the ideas being developed by green industries. We know firms that innovate, expand faster than those that don’t. And the UK is quickly becoming the green creativity capital of the world.

Let me give you some examples:

Imagine being suspended on ropes 40 metres above the North Sea, balanced on wind turbine blade. That’s not just nerve-wracking, it’s also risky. But until recently that was the only way for wind power firms to identify and fix a technical fault.

That’s now changing after an engineer called Chris Cieslak first designed a robot in his garage.

His invention, BladeBUG, means a person no longer always has to climb onto the blade to identify a fault. And in some cases, BladeBUG can fix the fault too. This improves safety and boosts efficiency by keeping turbines turning. That’s an idea that could not only benefit our own wind energy industry but those of other countries too.

Steamology is a company developing zero-emission hydrogen steam engines from its workshop in Salisbury. An innovation that will prevent rail and lorry operators having to scrap valuable existing vehicles if they decarbonise – saving them money and avoiding waste.

And it’s becoming safer for people to work in our offshore energy industry, thanks to innovations from Zelim, a company based in Edinburgh.

When someone falls into the sea, every second counts, and Zelim’s AI-powered technology spots and tracks people in the water, and then its unmanned boat rescues them.

All these businesses have been supported by our Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult in Blyth.

There are so many other brilliant ideas like ones you’ve just heard about.

The challenge now is how to capitalise on them.

And we'll do that through attracting the investment that will get these innovations off the ground and help businesses to export. Because this is a virtuous circle: Innovation needs investment to flourish, investment leads to exports, exports create growth and new jobs, and more innovation.

And if we get our strategy right, the impact could be transformational on places like Blyth and the rest of the country.

Our analysis shows that by the end of this decade, our green industries could create up to £170 billion of export sales.

And according to figures from the Office for National Statistics, by 2050 we could generate 1.4 million green jobs across the UK. That's one for every person in Birmingham.

As the Prime Minister said last week, green jobs are the jobs of the future.

But if we get our strategy wrong, we risk being left on the backfoot as other countries seize the advantage.

So we need to act now and act fast. Here's how:

First, we're focused on building our green industrial base.

Right now, we're creating a pipeline of brilliant opportunities for investors. In our British Energy Security and Net Zero Strategies we set out plans to drive £100 billion worth of private sector investment into green industries, including offshore wind by 2030.

As you've already heard this morning, we've given ourselves an ambition of up to 50GW of offshore wind capacity by that same date – more than enough to power every home in the UK.

Those of you who visited Teesside yesterday will see how we're supporting development of technology like carbon capture and storage, as well as low-carbon hydrogen. And we're doing some pioneering work in nuclear.

But it's not enough to create these opportunities, we need to tell investors about them too.

So last year we launched our Investment Atlas, which showcases all the UK has to offer…

From supporting North East Scotland to becoming a global centre for low carbon hydrogen, to building an electric vehicle charging network powered by solar energy.

We're bringing together people, businesses and ideas at events like this and at the Global Investment Summit we held last year.

The Office of Investment, run by my department, has also helped to land

billions of investment in clean technology.

It’s also recently supported the Qatar Investment Authority to inject £85 million into Rolls Royce’s Small Modular Nuclear Reactors – each of which could power a city the size of Leeds.

And the UK’s Freeports, which I know are of particular interest to many of you here today, are fast becoming hubs for trade, investment and innovation.

We’re also building a pro ambition, pro enterprise environment in this country – a place where businesses can thrive and enjoy the stability and certainty for which we’re known around the world.

With every idea, with every ambitious plan and with every transformed town, we are proving to global investors that the path to a green and prosperous future starts here in the UK.

I’m proud that my department is helping the world wake up to that message.

In just two years, DIT has helped to secure nearly £20 billion of green investment globally, creating 11,300 jobs.

And businesses here today, from Spain to South Korea, like SeAH Wind, JDR, Smulders and Siemens Gamesa, are among those backing Britain and changing lives.

Apart from growing our green industrial base, we also want to grow our exports.

There are some fantastic businesses in this room that are already selling to the world, and I know there are more who want to join them.

One of my biggest priorities as Secretary of State is to help you do that, so my department has set itself a goal of accelerating towards a trillion pounds worth of exports a year earlier than forecast.

We know that many businesses that could export don’t, so our Export Strategy sets out our roadmap for getting you there.

We’re also very aware that firms need money to grow. And my colleagues at UK Export Finance will help you get the loans and guarantees you need.

Outside this building you’ll see the first hydrogen-powered double decker bus in the world, manufactured by Wrightbus, a company from Ballymena in Northern Ireland.

Thanks to a guarantee from UK Export Finance, Wrightbus has been able to access a £26 million facility from Barclays bank.

This will mean it can export its vehicles around the world, while supporting green jobs at home. And I was very impressed when I spoke to the team today – I hope to see more of this around the country.

So we're sitting at what was two centuries ago the epicentre of the industrial revolution.

Just a mile from here Robert and George Stephenson built some of the world's first locomotives from their workshop on South Street – the SpaceX of the 1820s. I hear it's now a gig venue for those of you who like that sort of thing – it's not really me, but what you will see here today is that the talent for finding innovative solutions is very much alive and kicking in the North East as it was then, and not just the North East, but the UK.

So, I hope the investors among you will learn what this country's green industries have to offer. And the businesses will discover how my department can open new markets for you. I look forward to working with you all.

Thank you.

Sellafield site emergency exercise – Wednesday 2 November 2022

News story

An emergency exercise will be taking place at the Sellafield site tomorrow

Emergency exercise planned at Sellafield

An emergency exercise will take place during normal business hours at Sellafield on Wednesday 2 November, and may involve the sounding of the site siren which can be heard off-site.

Access to and from the site will be as normal up until approximately 08:30 on the morning of the exercise.

People who live close to Sellafield and have signed up to receive automated SMS text, email, and telephone warnings from Sellafield, may be contacted.

If you are a local resident and haven't yet signed up to receive automated alerts, but would like to, follow the instructions here.

Emergency exercises are held regularly at all nuclear licensed sites to test their readiness in the event of an emergency.

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Successful trial for autonomous vehicle with sensor technology

The use of autonomous uncrewed systems for the recce and survey of areas for chemical and radiological material is a step closer to becoming a reality.

The successful Hybrid Area Reconnaissance and Survey (HARS) field trial has taken place to demonstrate the concept of this cutting-edge research.

The technology concept could help keep troops safe, improve efficiency and give the UK armed forces an operational advantage in the future.

HARS trial

This project is a collaboration between the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), the wider Ministry of Defence (MOD) and industry.

Dstl's HARS Trial Lead Scientist Andy Martin said:

> This trial aimed to test the feasibility of the concept and the maturity of the technology. This technology offers an innovative approach, which could significantly change the military's capabilities in the future by reducing the hazard to soldiers and acting as a force multiplier. That is quite an exciting thing to be involved in.
>
> Some of the key challenges associated with the system are reducing the cognitive burden for personnel and using sensors, which are designed to be manually operated by personnel, applying sufficient automation in the system to allow that to be done remotely and autonomously.

Dstl Lead Operational Analyst Emma said:

> We know autonomy could be useful to do those repetitive jobs where people are at risk and we can take them away from that risk.
>
> It has been nice to see it actually in practice, moving around out in the field and demonstrating that this is somewhere that, if we continue to put some work into it, we could make some real progress and do things very differently to the way they're done now.

The platform used in the trial was the recently developed concept demonstrator which consisted of an uncrewed ground vehicle (Viking) with a chemical and radiological sensor payload:

- 2 mass spectrometers to identify deposited chemicals on the ground
- 2 vapour sensors to detect volatile chemicals
- a gamma radiation spectrometer to detect and identify radiological hazards

Adding this sensor technology to a modular 'pallet' means it is more scalable and cost-effective, as it could then be mounted onto the appropriate platform as and when required.

The trial took place over 5 weeks on Salisbury Plain, working with soldiers from FALCON Squadron, 28 Engineer Regiment (C-CBRN) doing back-to-back trials to compare the concept against the performance of a crewed system.

14 Troop Leader, FALCON Squadron, Sebastian, said:

> This trial is important because it is working with future technologies so hopefully we will be able to have more time on target, less risk to personnel and better capability to detect whatever is there.

HORIBA MIRA Chief Engineer Andy Maloney said:

> This has been a great example of MOD, industry, and end users working together with the expertise from Dstl and the stakeholders able to influence the systems we're developing. The adaptability of the Viking UGV provides an excellent basis for development of new payloads and novel autonomous behaviours.

Find out more about Dstl's work including our autonomy and robotics capability and how to work with us.

Bankrupt jailed for hiding property from trustees

Sukhi Sanghera appeared at Warwick Crown Court on Thursday 27 October 2022, where he was sentenced before HHJ Berlin after he was charged with 4 counts of bankruptcy offences.

The court heard that Sukhi Sanghera (50) was made bankrupt in August 2017 by order of the County Court in Warwick, with debts of over £140,000. The Official Receiver was appointed trustee before other trustees were appointed to administer Sukhi Sanghera's affairs.

As part of his bankruptcy, Sukhi Sanghera, also known as Sukhwinderjit Singh Sanghera or Sukhwinder Singh Sanghera, was obliged to disclose all his assets to the Official Receiver and his trustees, including property.

Sukhi Sanghera, however, failed to disclose to either set of trustees that he was the sole owner of a rental property in Coventry which yielded a monthly rental income of £1,900.

Due to the risk he posed to creditors, the Official Receiver previously sought further bankruptcy restrictions against Sukhi Sanghera.

In August 2019, the Secretary of State accepted a 10-year bankruptcy restrictions undertaking from Sukhi Sanghera after he did not dispute that he failed to disclose the property to the Official Receiver.

Upon sentence, the judge commented that Sukhi Sanghera was a "profoundly flawed and dishonest man….who showed a flagrant disregard for the law and authorities."

Sukhi Sanghera received 8-month sentences on all 4 bankruptcy offences contrary to the Insolvency Act 1986 and will serve them concurrently.

Glenn Wicks, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

> At multiple points Sukhi Sanghera had the opportunity to be honest and disclose to his trustees that he benefited from a rental property. Instead, Sukhi Sanghera went to great lengths to conceal the property in Coventry through fraud and deception to avoid paying his creditors what they were owed.
>
> The courts have recognised the severity of Sukhi Sanghera's actions and his custodial sentence demonstrates the risks people take if they don't declare all their assets when in a bankruptcy process.

Sukhi Sanghera, also known as Sukhwinderjit Singh Sanghera or Sukhwinder Singh Sanghera, is of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. His date of birth is May

1969.

Details of Sukhi Sanghera's Bankruptcy Restrictions Undertaking are available on the Individual Insolvency Register

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is available.

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

Bregulation: rethinking regulation after Brexit

Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth. And in my experience everyone dislikes regulation until they need it, and then they want even more of it than we regulators can supply. All the politicians I meet, all the media that scrutinise us, and all the local communities in which we operate want more not less regulatory action from the Environment Agency (EA) to tackle things like waste dumps, smelly factories, dirty rivers and so on.

It's a good problem to have. And a reminder that the answer you get to any question often depends on how you ask it. Does any of us want red tape and bureaucracy? No. Do we want clean water, air that's safe to breathe, a green country, jobs and growth? Yes – and those are some of the things you get from regulation when it's done right.

My pitch to you today is this: good regulation is essential for most of the things we all want. The report we are launching today "Regulating for people, the environment and growth" – the clue is in the title – sets out what the EA does to support those things.

But no regulatory system is perfect, including ours. Brexit is a massive opportunity to rethink how we do regulation in this country. The government has embarked on that process, and we welcome the debate. Today I want to suggest some pointers about where that debate might usefully take us and the key principles that I think should guide it.

Regulation works

Let me start with an important fact: regulation works. Examples:

Water security: the EA regulates the abstraction of water in this country. If you want to take more than 20 cubic meters a day out of a river or the ground, you need an EA licence. The EA has been reviewing, changing and in some cases revoking these licences to bring them into line with what is sustainable. That has removed the risk of the abstraction of some 1.7

trillion litres of water. That’s enough water to supply London for two years. Nature, wildlife and all of us are better off as a result.

Water quality: in 2021, due to the EA’s regulation of water companies, a record 99% of bathing waters around England’s coasts met or exceeded the minimum quality standard. That is the highest level it has been since new tougher standards were introduced in 2015. Thirty years ago most of our bathing waters would have failed to meet even the minimum standards we have now. Regulation did that.

Air quality: since 2010, emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from the industrial sites we regulate have decreased by 72%, sulphur oxides (SOx) by 90%, and small particulate matter (PM10) by 52%. So our air is cleaner than it was, and cleaner air means people live longer and healthier lives. Regulation did that too.

Waste: I have called waste crime “the new narcotics”: it harms people, places and the economy, including by undercutting the legitimate waste industry. Our regulation of the sector ensures waste is managed safely and our fight against the criminals helps the economy: every £1 we spend on it brings at least £4 of benefit to the economy. The right regulation helps deliver growth.

Climate: in 2021 the climate change emissions trading and energy efficiency schemes that the EA manages delivered a nine million tonne reduction of CO2 compared to 2020. And since 2010, emissions of greenhouse gases from the sites we regulate have decreased by 50%. The planet is better off as a result. Regulation works.

Rethinking regulation

But no regulatory system is perfect. Both the regulations themselves and how regulators behave need to move with the times. They need to reflect changes in technology, in the needs of business, in the risks we are trying to manage, in public demand, in government policy and the law, and in the wider world around us.

Brexit is a massive opportunity to rethink how we do regulation in this country.

The government has embarked on an exercise to remove, revise or retain the body of EU-derived law currently in force, much of which is the basis for most environmental regulation in this country. We welcome that. We think it is a great opportunity to deliver better regulation and better outcomes – for people, for business and for nature.

There is already a big debate as to what pieces of legislation should be retained, what should be reformed and what should be repealed. And there should be a debate, because this really matters and because if we make the right calls we can do what the Environment Agency exists to do: create a better place.

There will be examples of laws we find we don’t really need. There will be

examples where changing the law will allow us to achieve better outcomes for the environment and nature and support economic growth. And there will be some laws that it will make eminent sense to keep.

Let me give you a real-life example of each. These are my personal views, not those of the EA or the government, but the point I want to illustrate is that we should not regard the current body of laws as sacrosanct.

I would repeal the Floods Directive. This requires EU member states to carry out flood risk assessments, create maps of flood risk and flood risk management plans. That is all very sensible, which is why the UK was already doing those things before the Directive arrived and why the EA will carry on doing them now, because they are good practice and policy. But the purpose of the Directive was to drive cooperation between continental EU member states that share river basins – clearly we are not in that category.

I would reform the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in order to drive better environmental outcomes. Each time I say this I get flak from everyone, so let me say again for the avoidance of doubt, I'd reform it in order to enhance water quality and restore nature, not degrade them. The WFD rightly sets high standards for water quality in rivers, lakes, estuaries and groundwater. But the way it requires us to categorise the status of those waters is complex, and can be misleading about the real state of those waters, both for better and for worse. And because the Directive stipulates that waters can only get "good" status if they tick all of several different boxes, it can force regulators to focus time and resources on indicators that may not make much difference to the actual water quality, taking focus away from things that would. I wouldn't repeal the WFD. But I would reform it, to ensure it drives action that will deliver the clean and plentiful water we all want.

I would keep the Bathing Waters Directive, which protects public health and the environment by keeping coastal waters free from pollution. It has done exactly that, driving the water companies, the regulators, the local authorities and local communities to make huge improvements in water quality at most of our beaches. High quality bathing water benefits health and wellbeing as well as boosting local economies. According to Visit Britain, the 135 million day visits taken to the seaside in England in 2019 were worth £4.4 billion to the economy. A great example of good law and good regulation producing better outcomes for nature, people and the economy.

Principles of good regulation

As we have this debate about what kind of regulation we want for the future, let's be guided by a few principles. Mine would be:

- Reframe how we think: good regulation is not red tape. It's what gets you green growth and a blue planet.
- Focus on outcomes. Start and finish with the ones we want: safe and healthy people, nature restored (not just protected or its degradation slowed), sustainable and inclusive growth.
- Believe in better. The test for any regulatory change should be whether it will produce better outcomes.

- Less is more: have fewer regulations, better targeted. Regulate only the things that need regulating.
- Do it right: when you do have to regulate, do it well. Good regulation is proportionate, risk-based, evidence-driven, outcome focused, and (provided businesses do the right things) business-friendly.
- Strong regulation needs strong regulators: if regulators are going to do their jobs they need the right powers, the right resources, the right laws and the right support.

Conclusion

Ronald Reagan said that Government's traditional view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: "If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidise it". He was, it is pretty safe to say, not a natural fan of regulation or indeed of government. But he also said: "Government exists to protect us from each other. Where government has gone beyond its limits is in deciding to protect us from ourselves."

That's a good distinction. Regulation doesn't exist to protect us from ourselves. It exists to protect the things we value – people, nature, our economy – that would otherwise be harmed. So let's have no more regulation than we need, and let's have the right kind. But when we need it, let's make sure we have it.