

Key city centre sites to be transformed by government investment

- Developments in Birmingham and Peterborough will provide city centre bases for thousands of civil servants in a boost to local businesses
- Scheme is part of Government's Hubs programme which promotes regional growth and saves taxpayers' money
- Birmingham site to save taxpayers annual £6m while Fletton Quays in Peterborough is at heart of £120m regeneration project

Two key city-centre sites are to be regenerated as part of a government programme designed to boost regional growth and save taxpayers' money.

The Government Hubs programme has so far seen the development of 14 office hubs around the country, providing civil servants with state-of-the-art working environments designed to boost efficiency and drive savings through increased efficiency.

Government Hubs bring together different departments under one roof – moving civil servants to inner-city sites located close to public transport connections, local amenities and shops.

The new hubs in Peterborough and Birmingham will be a massive boost to local businesses who can look forward to increased footfall and a combined 2,700 civil servants using the local amenities. The Birmingham hub alone is set to save taxpayers an annual £6m annually through improved efficiency.

The Minister for Implementation at the Cabinet Office, Simon Hart, said:

The opening of these new hubs is great news for local businesses in Birmingham and Peterborough.

Developing Government Hubs helps to bring forward vital regeneration projects across the country and boost local economies.

It also makes sure government workers have the best possible facilities and saves taxpayers' money by replacing outdated office blocks which are expensive to maintain with more modern facilities.

The new hub in Birmingham will be based at Platform 21, which is inside the former Woolworths building in the New Street Conservation area. The hub will be developed by LaSalle Investment Management working with development

manager Evenacre and from 2021 will be home to about 1,700 civil servants.

The development is the second hub to be announced in Birmingham, following 3 Arena Central which will house a further 3,600 civil servants when it opens in 2021.

The Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, said:

I am delighted to see the Platform 21 development in Birmingham has been chosen as the location for a Government Hub.

Simon and his team have recognised the city's great transport links and infrastructure, and the fact the city, and indeed the wider region, has so much to offer.

The West Midlands is going from strength to strength and I am delighted that the Government continues to support us.

In Peterborough, a development on the Fletton Quays site, close to the city centre, will provide space for about 1,000 government employees who will move into the building in 2021.

The development is part of a £120m regeneration of the Fletton Quays site led by Peterborough Investment Partnership and site developer Bride Hall.

Councillor John Holdich, leader of Peterborough City Council, said:

To have key government organisations secure a space at Fletton Quays is good news, both for the development and the city as a whole.

Fletton Quays represents a new age of growth and regeneration for Peterborough. These key additions to the site will bring footfall, recruitment and investment, as well as opening up the prospect of attracting additional Government jobs to Peterborough in the future.

As well as helping with the regeneration of key sites in Birmingham and Peterborough, the developments will free-up a number of government buildings in the area, releasing them for other uses.

Steven Boyd, the Chief Executive of the Government Property Agency, which is responsible for the hubs programme, said:

The Government Property Agency is at the heart of creating great places to work for civil servants. Our announcement today marks the start of a new phase in the Government Hubs programme and demonstrates real progress in delivering the commitments set out in the Government Estate Strategy.

The programme creates strong regional centres where civil servants can build their careers in state-of-the-art shared workspaces, enabling efficient, collaborative and flexible working, driving engagement and improving staff productivity and wellbeing.

This will reduce operating costs for the Government as we dispose of unnecessary office space and streamline our estate.

UK pet food chomps Asia and Middle East markets

With a significant rise in the number of pet-owners in recent years there has been a growing demand for pet food across the globe, presenting the perfect opportunity for UK businesses to capitalise.

British manufacturers are already finding success overseas as the UK exported £343.1 million worth of pet food around the world in 2018, which is a 5.6% increase on 2017.

Swindon-based Pet's Kitchen is a pet food business and vet clinic that only started exporting its premium pet food in Autumn last year, and in just 10 months has secured wins in 10 new countries including markets across Asia and the Middle East.

Founded in 2005, Pet's Kitchen has two business areas – Vet's Klinik, a state-of-the-art veterinary practice which has a progressive approach to treatment and sees over 130 pets a day, and Vet's Kitchen, a pet food brand that combines natural UK-sourced ingredients and veterinary expertise.

With support from the Department for International Trade (DIT) the company generated over £100,000 of revenue in the first six months of exporting. This year the company is expected to generate over £500,000 and within three years it is forecast to generate over £1million from international sales alone.

Ben Hutton, Sales Director at Pet's Kitchen said:

Exporting can be quite challenging but it is also very rewarding. The trends of humanisation, premiumisation, and health and wellness are prevalent now the world over.

Getting insights about your brand from potential new partners in Asia and the Middle East especially can lead to new challenges but also new opportunities. You see your brand from a brand-new perspective, with each country having a unique list of requirements

and preferences and it's important to listen.

What works in one market may not work in another, for example fish recipes in the UK don't sell so well but in Asia where fish is prevalent in the local cuisine, fish recipes are very popular.

DIT has been instrumental in helping us navigate various markets, from providing reference for potential new partners to exporting advice. I would encourage other UK companies that are considering exporting to contact DIT and see how they can help.

In South Korea, which is one of the fastest growing pet food markets in the world, the company secured a deal with a new distributor, Top Pet, which will see the Vet's Kitchen brand sold across speciality pet channels in the region. Similarly, a deal with FairPrice, the largest grocery chain in Singapore, will see the premium pet food brand sold in 40 stores across the country.

The company also secured an export deal with a pet food distributor in Hong Kong, and although a very small market for the company, it can be used to test the Chinese market for bigger opportunities. The revenue from each of these export wins totalled over £100,000 and is expected to double over the next 12 months.

The Middle East is also a developing market for the company, as it has started trading with three new partners in the region – The Petshop LLC in the United Arab Emirates, which claims to be the largest pet store in the Middle East, a grocery chain called LuLu's which has 174 outlets across the Gulf regions, and Alosra which has a chain of nine supermarkets in Bahrain. The wins for this region are expected to increase by 200% over the next three years.

In 2020, Vet's Kitchen will be focussing on expanding its exports to target markets including Saudi Arabia, China, Thailand and Japan – which is the biggest pet food market in the world after the United States and the UK. Europe is also on the agenda and the brand has just reached an agreement with the largest grocery chain in the Republic of Ireland, Dunnes Stores.

Paul Shand, DIT's Head of Trade in the South West, said:

It is exciting to see just how much Pet's Kitchen has achieved internationally in such a short space of time, highlighting the growing global demand for pet food overseas.

In markets like the Middle East and Asia, British-made products are synonymous with quality which presents a golden opportunity for UK businesses to explore these international opportunities.

DIT has a network of expert International Trade Advisers on hand, and a team of specialists in over 100 markets, to help more businesses respond to this demand and navigate the entire exporting

journey.

Vet's Kitchen is one of the fastest growing pet food brands in the UK according to Kantar, with a current annual turnover of £5 million.

The business currently employs 36 members of staff in Swindon, 25 of which are in Vet's Klinik. All are dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of pets.

[UK boosts trade and investment partnership with Ghana](#)

International Development Minister Baroness Sugg visited Ghana last week to strengthen trade and investment ties ahead of the UK-Africa Investment Summit in 2020.

Co-hosting the UK-Ghana Business Council alongside the Ghanaian Vice-President Mahamudu Bawumia, Baroness Sugg discussed how UK aid and investment can help Ghana move beyond aid by creating jobs, boosting growth and driving its huge economic potential.

During her visit, Baroness Sugg launched a new partnership between the London Stock Exchange and the Ghana Stock Exchange, which will see the UK share its world-class City of London expertise to help Ghana become a regional hub for financial services.

She also championed the use of UK aid to help businesses in Ghana in a range of sectors. This includes helping garment companies scale up their exports globally and supporting agri-businesses become more productive, competitive and attractive for investors.

International Development Minister Baroness Sugg said:

Ghana is set to be one of the world's fastest-growing economies this year and our flourishing partnership is helping to create jobs, improve access to basic services and boost economic growth, all of which are vital to ending poverty.

Building strong African markets will help attract quality investment from around the world and encourage more trade in the future. The UK-Africa Investment Summit in London next year will help further unlock the potential of African nations.

The UK and Ghana already enjoy strong economic ties: UK imports of goods from

Ghana increased by 143.7% in the year to April 2018.

Africa is home to some of the fastest emerging economies in the world and the UK-Africa Investment Summit 2020 will provide a platform to promote the breadth and quality of investment opportunities across Africa.

The Summit will bring together businesses, governments and international institutions and will be a key milestone towards achieving the UK's objective of becoming the largest G7 investor in Africa.

The UK will host the UK-Africa Investment Summit in London on 20 January 2020.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The UK-Ghana Business Council meeting was co-chaired by International Development Minister Baroness Sugg and the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency Alhaji Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia and attended by key Cabinet ministers.
- Baroness Sugg attended the third meeting of the UK-Ghana Business Council which builds on previous agreements to focus on six priority sectors: agri-processing, financial services, textiles and garments, pharma, digital and extractives.

Environment Agency sets net zero emissions aim

The Environment Agency has today (10 October) set itself the aim of becoming a net zero organisation by 2030 – ensuring that its own activities and its supply chain are taking as much carbon out of the atmosphere as it is putting into it.

Meeting this goal, which is based on the internationally-recognised Science Based Target Initiative methodology, would see the Environment Agency go beyond what was set out in the Paris Climate Change Agreement. It will seek to meet the goal by reducing the emissions of its own activities and supply chain by 45%, with the remaining emissions addressed through tree planting or other measures.

The Environment Agency will also explore whether it could become an absolute zero organisation – eliminating all carbon emissions from its own activities and its supply chain – by 2050.

This will put the organisation at the forefront of tackling the climate emergency through eliminating its own emissions while continuing to protect

communities and create more climate resilient places.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

“Tackling the climate emergency is the biggest challenge facing humankind, and every day our organisation has to deal with its effects. Alongside working with communities to plan and adapt for the unavoidable impacts of climate change, we must also take action as an organisation to reduce our own contribution to this existential threat.

“We are under no illusion about the scale of the challenge that we have set ourselves, but action is needed if we are to preserve our planet for future generations.”

Gareth Redmond-King, Head of Climate Change at WWF-UK, said:

“In the face of a climate and nature crisis, it is encouraging to see a public sector organisation leading by example. The science is clear – we are at a critical crossroads and the time for bold and immediate action to fight climate change is now.

“Next year, the UK will host a global climate summit giving us a major opportunity to show international leadership in tackling this planetary emergency. But we must demonstrate we’re walking the talk at home by taking rapid and ambitious action to reduce our emissions in a way that also helps people and communities.”

The Environment Agency already has a successful track record in reducing its own carbon footprint, giving confidence that this ambitious goal can be achieved. By last year it had achieved a 48% reduction in operational carbon emissions compared with 2006/7 – going further and faster than its March 2020 target of a 45% reduction.

These carbon reductions have been delivered at the same time as the agency has worked to protect 300,000 homes from the effects of flooding and continued to protect communities, and made huge progress to improve water quality – bringing rivers which were biologically dead back to life and giving our coasts the cleanest bathing waters since records began.

The Environment Agency will also be working to ensure that adapting to the future challenges of climate change is a part of every major decision the organisation makes. The flood and coastal strategy will help the country plan and adapt to threats of climate change up to 2100 and create climate resilient places, but now every major decision will be made on the basis of how these core responsibilities can be delivered and how it can help tackle the climate emergency.

Chris Stark, Chief Executive of the Committee on Climate Change, the government’s independent advisor on climate change, said:

“Achieving net zero in the UK by 2050 will require ambition from government, industry and individuals alike. Bold steps are needed and the Environment Agency is demonstrating real leadership by making this important commitment.”

Nick Molho, Executive Director of the Aldersgate Group, an alliance of major businesses, academic institutions and NGOs committed to decarbonising the UK economy, said:

“Dealing with climate change creates a twin challenge. On the one hand, we have to invest significantly to make our homes and critical infrastructure more resilient to increasingly frequent extreme weather events such as intense floods and droughts. But there’s only so much climate change we can adapt to and we need public sector bodies and businesses to urgently and drastically reduce their emissions to limit climate change impacts.

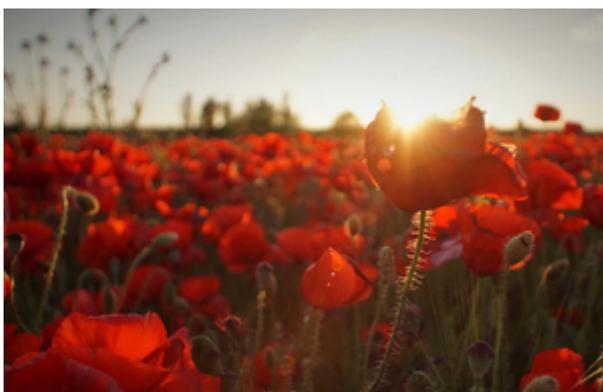
“Today’s announcement by the Environment Agency is a great example of commitments that need to be taken on economy-wide and shows how quickly large organisations can deliver meaningful emission cuts with the right leadership, strategy and support in place.”

While the work to protect people and the environment will not change, delivering the scale of reduction emissions necessary will require changes in how the Environment Agency delivers its vital work.

In order to approach the challenge of net zero, each and every part of the Environment Agency will produce a carbon reduction plan. However, recognising that these issues cannot be tackled alone, the organisation will also be working with suppliers and other stakeholders to explore how they can reduce their carbon footprint, and harness the technological innovation of the future to reach these ambitious goals.

Through this collaborative approach to carbon reduction, the Environment Agency will not only aim to become a net zero organisation by 2030, but suppliers, stakeholders, and businesses and organisations in other sectors will also be encouraged to take similar journeys to tackle the climate emergency.

[Remembrance Day in Thailand: Sunday 10 November 2019](#)



Sunday 10th November 2019 – Bangkok

The annual Remembrance Day Service organised by the British Embassy in Bangkok will be held in its new venue at The British Club Bangkok commencing at 10.50 hrs on Sunday 10th November. The event will not only commemorate British, Commonwealth, and allied personnel, but all those who have been affected in all conflicts. It serves as a reminder that nations who fought so bitterly against each other can come together to promote peace and stability in the modern world.

Wreaths will be laid at the re-located War Memorial by Ambassadors or their representatives, by War Veterans' organisations and by representatives from associations and societies in Bangkok. Those attending the service on 10 November are asked to gather from 10.20 hrs.

Please reply to remembrance.bangkok@fco.gov.uk if you would like to attend and complete the response form. If you wish to lay a wreath, they are available from the British Embassy for a donation of 1500 THB each. Please indicate on your response form if you require one. All funds raised will go to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

General parking is available at the Narai Hotel.

Please enter the British Club only through Silom Road, Soi 18.

Following the service, light refreshments will be served on the back lawn. The British Club has kindly offered to extend their facilities to anyone who would like to stay for a curry buffet lunch from 12:30 hrs onwards, on a self-funded basis. Numbers are limited, so those wishing to book for this event should e-mail info@britishclubbangkok.org directly.

Monday 11th November 2019 – Kanchanaburi

As the Custodians of Remembrance within the UK, the Royal British Legion Thailand will also be holding a Service of Remembrance at Don Rak Cemetery, Kanchanaburi commencing at 10.50 hrs on the 11th November 2019. If you wish to attend, please inform the Royal British Legion Thailand by e-mailing chonburi.vicechairman@rbl.community

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1. 11 October 2019 We have added/changed the format file for 2019 SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE SCHEDULE to pdf file.
2. 11 October 2019 we have added the new attachment file for Remembrance Service Schedule 2019
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