

Prime Minister launches new Growth Deals funding as he kicks off Union visits in Scotland

- Today, the Prime Minister will go to Scotland to announce new funding for local communities
- The Prime Minister is also planning a trip to Wales to meet members of the local farming community
- He will also go to Northern Ireland to discuss the ongoing talks to restore devolution with the political parties

The Prime Minister will make his first official visit to Scotland today (Monday 29th July), where he will announce the expansion of Growth Deals across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, backed by £300 million of new funding.

Making the announcement when he visits a military base in Scotland, Boris Johnson will set out how this new pot of money will help communities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland thrive and ensure no corner of the United Kingdom is left behind.

The Prime Minister also plans to go to Wales to meet members of its farming community as well as Northern Ireland to discuss ongoing talks to restore the Executive with the political party leaders.

Ahead of the visit, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Our Union is the most successful political and economic union in history. We are a global brand and together we are safer, stronger and more prosperous.

So as we prepare for our bright future after Brexit, it's vital we renew the ties that bind our United Kingdom.

I'm proud to be in Scotland today to make clear that I am a passionate believer in our great Union, and I look forward to visiting Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure that every decision I make as Prime Minister promotes and strengthens our Union.

As he pledges the new funding, Boris Johnson will also commit to working closely with the Devolved Administrations to roll the Growth Deals out to

every region of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

First launched in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2014, the UK Government has already committed £2.78 billion for these deals. Supported by funding from the Devolved Administrations, local authorities and the private sector, the deals provide significant investment for local businesses and projects such as the Northern Innovation Hub in Inverness and the Highlands and the Oil and Gas Technology Centre in Aberdeen.

Through this new funding, we will begin new deals in Falkirk, the Islands, Argyll & Bute, Mid South West Northern Ireland and Causeway Coast and Glens. We will also complete deals already in negotiation in North Wales, Mid Wales, Derry-Londonderry and Moray.

On the support for Growth Deals, Prime Minister Boris Johnson added:

As I said when I stood on the steps of Downing Street last week, it is time that we unleashed the productive power not just of London and the South East but of every corner of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Important projects like government's Growth Deals – today backed with £300m new funding – will open up opportunities across our Union so people in every corner of the United Kingdom can realise their potential.

The Growth Deals pledge follows the Prime Minister's announcement over the weekend for a £3.6 billion Towns Fund supporting an initial 100 towns in England. Today, the Prime Minister also reaffirmed his commitment to begin discussions with the Devolved Administrations around how we can better support towns in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and make sure areas throughout the United Kingdom can thrive and enjoy a prosperous future outside of the EU.

Welcoming the announcement, Northern Ireland Secretary Julian Smith said:

The Prime Minister's announcement of £300 million Growth Deals to level up the support we give to our towns and cities is great news for Northern Ireland.

I am looking forward to working with our partners in Northern Ireland – in particular, I hope very soon, a restored Executive – on how we make the most of this, building on the success we have had agreeing a City Deal for Belfast and the progress we have made on a deal for Derry and Strabane.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

It's really great news that the Prime Minister is committed to ensuring that every part of Scotland benefits from UK Government Growth Deals.

This investment will enable us to build on the success of our existing Growth Deals, which are helping to create jobs and boost local economies right across Scotland.

I have been closely involved with the new Borderlands Growth Deal, which is a fantastic example of the UK Government working with partners to address local needs.

The UK Government has already committed more than £1.39 billion to City Region and Growth deals in Scotland. Eight are already in place and work to finalise a ninth in Moray is underway.

Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said:

Wales is the only nation of the UK where Growth Deals have already been announced to cover all of our communities and the Prime Minister and I are committed to building on the successes of our existing collaborative achievements in both south and north Wales.

For the Mid Wales Growth Deal, I am keen for us all to be as ambitious as possible in driving forward the development of projects, so that they can deliver enduring benefits to businesses and people right across the region.

[Russia: FC0 spokesperson statement in response to Moscow arrests](#)

An FC0 Spokesperson said:

We are concerned by the detention on 27 July of over a thousand protestors, including journalists and prominent opposition figures, a significant use of force during a peaceful demonstration in Moscow.

The Russian Government continues to disregard the rights of its people to freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

We call for the Russian Government to comply with its international commitments on human rights in the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

HMS DUNCAN arrives in the Gulf

Freedom of navigation is crucial for the global trading system and world economy, and the Government has committed to doing all it can to defend it. Last week the Government confirmed that the Royal Navy has been tasked to accompany British-flagged ships through the Strait, to provide reassurance to the shipping industry.

The Type 45 Destroyer, HMS DUNCAN, will work with the Type 23 Frigate HMS MONTROSE until she comes off duty in late August, ensuring the continuous availability of ships to accompany merchant vessels.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Freedom of Navigation in the Strait of Hormuz is vital not just to the UK, but also our international partners and allies. Merchant ships must be free to travel lawfully and trade safely, anywhere in the world. I'm pleased that HMS DUNCAN will continue HMS MONTROSE'S fine work in helping to secure this essential route.

While we continue to push for a diplomatic resolution that will make this possible again without military accompaniment, the Royal Navy will continue to provide a safeguard for UK vessels until this is the reality.

Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps said:

The security of British-flagged ships is our priority, and we continue to work to de-escalate the situation with Iran following the unacceptable and illegal seizure of the Stena Impero.

Freedom of navigation is in the interest of every nation, which is why we have advised British-flagged ships that they will be provided with a military accompaniment to ensure the safety of trade in the region.

HMS MONTROSE covers an operating area of some 19,000 nautical miles. She has so far accompanied 35 merchant vessels through the Strait during 20 separate transits, travelling 6,200 nautical miles in the process.

Commander Tom Trent, the Commanding Officer of HMS DUNCAN, said:

HMS DUNCAN has arrived in the Strait of Hormuz to continue the outstanding work to protect British maritime interests conducted by HMS MONTROSE and the United Kingdom Maritime Component Commander's staff in Bahrain. HMS DUNCAN has shown the true flexibility of the Royal Navy by moving at pace to this area of operations.

We have relocated from an intense deployment in the Mediterranean and Black Sea, which included support to the French carrier strike group with live operations in Syria. The Royal Navy continues to deliver consistent, enduring and world-class capability in the region – HMS DUNCAN is proud to support this vital operation and ready to play her part.

Later in the year, another Type 23 Frigate, HMS KENT, will take over this tasking from HMS DUNCAN. HMS MONTROSE will remain stationed in the Middle East until 2022 as part of the Royal Navy's permanent presence in the Middle East.

Operation KIPION, the operational name for UK forces in the region, is our commitment to promoting peace and stability as well as ensuring the safe flow of trade, and countering narcotics and piracy. The UK has a long-standing maritime presence in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. For almost 40 years, units of both the Royal Navy and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary have maintained a constant presence in the Gulf.

[No-deal is a very real prospect. We must ensure we are ready: article by Michael Gove](#)

Last week, I was honoured to be asked by our new prime minister to lead on this government's No 1 priority – preparing the country to leave the EU, come what may, on October 31. Three years after an historic and decisive referendum vote by the British people, the United Kingdom is finally on the cusp of leaving the European Union.

With a new prime minister, a new government, and a new clarity of mission, we will exit the EU on October 31. No ifs. No buts. No more delay. Brexit is happening.

It's our aim to ensure we can leave with a deal. We want to continue with warm and close relations with our friends, allies and neighbours in the EU.

We will do everything in our power to conclude a good agreement that honours the referendum result and secures a brighter future for us outside the single market and the customs union.

What we can't do, however, is simply present parliament once again with the same withdrawal agreement it's already rejected three times. You can't just reheat the dish that's been sent back and expect that will make it more palatable.

So we need a new approach and a different relationship. Critically, we need to abolish the backstop and ensure we find a different way to handle trade, and other important relations, on the island of Ireland.

In the days and weeks ahead the prime minister and his team will undertake intensive efforts, talking to the EU's leaders, to secure a path to a better outcome for us all.

But while we are optimistic about the future, we are realistic about the need to plan for every eventuality. The EU's leaders have, so far, said they will not change their approach – it's the unreformed withdrawal agreement, take it or leave it.

We still hope they will change their minds, but we must operate on the assumption that they will not. The prime minister has been crystal clear that means we must prepare to leave the EU without a deal on October 31, and I fully support this approach.

No deal is now a very real prospect, and we must make sure that we are ready. A lot has already been done. Thanks to hard work by ministers past and present, and outstanding efforts by the civil service, we have made significant progress.

We have negotiated trade agreements with partners around the world, worth more than £70bn. We have signed continuity agreements with key allies in order to secure our borders and nuclear defences.

We have provided guidance to businesses, redeployed gifted public servants to new frontline roles, developed new IT systems, passed necessary legislation and supported those government departments with the biggest responsibilities in managing this transition with new resources.

But there still remains much more to do. Planning for no deal is now this government's No 1 priority – and that is why we have, since Wednesday, been accelerating preparations.

First, all the necessary funding is now being put in place. You cannot properly prepare for a change of this magnitude without the money to make it happen. And the chancellor has agreed every penny needed for no deal preparation will be made available.

Second, the government machine is being retooled for the task. I am an unabashed admirer of the many brilliant people in our civil service. I have worked with them in four departments as they have risen to huge challenges

and driven change. They now know, along with every minister in the government, that delivering Brexit on time is the most pressing task before all of us.

Third, the cabinet secretary has created a new, unified, Whitehall structure to co-ordinate action across departments and accelerate decision-making.

Leaving the EU, and taking back control of our money, laws and trade, inevitably requires us to develop new systems, processes and ways of working. Outside the EU we can develop smarter ways of supporting our farmers, attracting new investment, generating technological breakthroughs and trading globally.

Delivering those new opportunities requires us to reshape government, change what happens at our borders and develop new models of regulation. That work is required whether or not we get the good free trade deal we all want, or have to leave without a deal at the end of October. Much of the work we are accelerating, to prepare for no deal, is work that is vital for any successful future outside the single market and customs union.

But, of course, there is also additional work we have to do to ready the country for the specific circumstances of leaving without a deal this October. Government is preparing, but so must many others. From taking your pet abroad, to ensuring freight can cross the channel smoothly, there will be new approaches required.

That is why we will shortly launch one of the biggest peacetime public information campaigns this country has seen, so that citizens, communities and businesses can prepare for what will happen if there is no deal.

The entire machinery of government will work to help ensure our businesses will be ready, our factories will be ready, our hospitals will be ready – and the British people will be ready.

We will be ready because we are not approaching this task with an attitude of business as usual. We are taking tough decisions and challenging conventional wisdom, so that we can deliver on the will of the British people.

Above all, we have the courage of our convictions and are determined to deliver for our country. Because that is what this new prime minister and new government are all about.

[Originally published in The Times on 28 July 2019](#)

[Lord Ahmad statement on the executions](#)

of three men in Bahrain

Help us improve GOV.UK

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. We'll send you a link to a feedback form. It will take only 2 minutes to fill in. Don't worry we won't send you spam or share your email address with anyone.

Email address

Send me the survey