

Letter to the Grenfell Recovery Taskforce: 17 July 2019

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PM speech on the state of politics

This will most likely be the last time I will speak at length as Prime Minister and I would like today to share some personal reflections on the state of politics in our country and around the world.

I have lived politics for half a century. From stuffing envelopes for my local party in my school years to serving as a local councillor, fighting a by-election, winning a seat, to serving for 12 years on the opposition front bench, and for nine years in the Cabinet as Home Secretary and Prime Minister.

Throughout that time, in every job I have done, I have been inspired by the enormous potential that working in politics and taking part in public life holds.

The potential to serve your country, to improve peoples' lives, and – in however big or small a way – to make the world a better place.

Looking at our own country and the world of which we form a part, and there is great deal to feel optimistic about.

Globally, over the last 30 years extreme poverty and child mortality have both been halved.

Hundreds of millions of people are today living longer, happier and healthier lives than their grandparents could even have dreamed of.

As a world, we have never cared more deeply about the ecology of our planet's environment.

From treating the earth as a collection of resources to be plundered, we have within a generation come to understand its fragile diversity and taken concerted action to conserve it.

The UK is leading the way in that effort with our commitment to net zero emissions.

Social attitudes in our country and many other western countries have transformed in recent decades.

There are more women in senior positions today than at any time in history.

When I was born, it was a crime to be a gay man, legal to discriminate on the basis of sex or race, and casual bigotry was a socially acceptable fact of daily life.

All that has changed – and greatly for the better.

There remains a long, long way to go to achieve what we should rightly seek – an economy, a society and a world that truly works for all of its people.

Where everyone has the security of a safe home and enough to eat; the opportunity to get a good education and a satisfying job to support their family; and the freedom of thought, speech and action to do and be everything their talents and hard work fit them for.

The generation of young people growing up today – in the UK and around the world – have it within their grasp to achieve more in the decades ahead than we today can imagine.

They will have the chance to harness the great drivers of change in the world today – from artificial intelligence and the data economy; cleaner forms of energy and more efficient modes of transport; to the technological and medical advances that will extend and improve our quality of life.

The twenty-first century has the potential to be a pivotal point in human history – when economic, social and technological progress reach a combined apogee with the benefits multiplied and with everyone enjoying a share.

It will not come about without effort.

We will all have to work hard – individually and collectively to reach that better future.

Crucially, the full power and potential of a small, but strong and strategic state must be brought to bear in that effort, establishing and maintaining the legal and economic structures that allow a regulated free market to flourish.

Co-ordinating its own interventions to maximum effect – supporting science and innovation, supplying crucial public services and infrastructure, leading and responding to social progress.

At our best, that has been the story of the democratic century that we celebrated last year when we marked the first votes for women and working men in 1918.

It has been democratic politics, an open market economy and the enduring values of free speech, the rule of law and a system of government founded on the concept of inviolable human rights that has provided the nexus of that progress in the past.

And a healthy body politic will be essential to consolidating and extending that progress in the future.

It is on that score that today we do have grounds for serious concern. Both domestically and internationally, in substance and in tone, I am worried about the state of politics.

That worry stems from a conviction that the values on which all of our successes have been founded cannot be taken for granted.

They may look to us as old as the hills, we might think that they will always be there, but establishing the superiority of those values over the alternatives was the hard work of centuries of sacrifice.

And to ensure that liberal inheritance can endure for generations to come, we today have a responsibility to be active in conserving it.

If we do not, we will all pay the price – rich and poor, strong and weak, powerful and powerless.

As a politician, my decisions and actions have always been guided by that conviction.

It used to be asked of applicants at Conservative candidate selection meetings, 'are you a conviction politician or are you a pragmatist'?

I have never accepted the distinction.

Politics is the business of turning your convictions into reality to improve the lives of the people you serve.

As a Conservative, I have never had any doubt about what I believe in – security, freedom and opportunity. Decency, moderation, patriotism. Conserving what is of value, but never shying away from change. Indeed, recognising that often change is the way to conserve. Believing in business but holding businesses to account if they break the rules. Backing ambition, aspiration and hard work. Protecting our Union of nations – and being prepared to act in its interest even if that means steering a difficult political course.

And remaining always firmly rooted in the common ground of politics – where all great political parties should be.

I didn't write about those convictions in pamphlets or make many theoretical

speeches about them.

I have sought to put them into action.

And actually getting things done rather than simply getting them said requires some qualities that have become unfashionable of late.

One of them is a willingness to compromise. That does not mean compromising your values.

It does not mean accepting the lowest common denominator or clinging to outmoded ideas out of apathy or fear.

It means being driven by, and when necessary standing up for, your values and convictions.

But doing so in the real world – in the arena of public life – where others are making their own case, pursuing their own interests.

And where persuasion, teamwork and a willingness to make mutual concessions are needed to achieve an optimal outcome.

That is politics at its best.

The alternative is a politics of winners and losers, of absolutes and of perpetual strife – and that threatens us all.

Today an inability to combine principles with pragmatism and make a compromise when required seems to have driven our whole political discourse down the wrong path.

It has led to what is in effect a form of “absolutism” – one which believes that if you simply assert your view loud enough and long enough you will get your way in the end. Or that mobilising your own faction is more important than bringing others with you.

This is coarsening our public debate. Some are losing the ability to disagree without demeaning the views of others.

Online, technology allows people to express their anger and anxiety without filter or accountability. Aggressive assertions are made without regard to the facts or the complexities of an issue, in an environment where the most extreme views tend to be the most noticed.

This descent of our debate into rancour and tribal bitterness – and in some cases even vile abuse at a criminal level – is corrosive for the democratic values which we should all be seeking to uphold. It risks closing down the space for reasoned debate and subverting the principle of freedom of speech.

And this does not just create an unpleasant environment. Words have consequences – and ill words that go unchallenged are the first step on a continuum towards ill deeds – towards a much darker place where hatred and prejudice drive not only what people say but also what they do.

This absolutism is not confined to British politics. It festers in politics all across the world. We see it in the rise of political parties on the far left and far right in Europe and beyond. And we see it in the increasingly adversarial nature of international relations, which some view as a zero sum game where one country can only gain if others lose. And where power, unconstrained by rules, is the only currency of value.

This absolutism at home and abroad is the opposite of politics at its best. It refuses to accept that other points of view are reasonable. It ascribes bad motives to those taking those different views.

And it views anything less than 100 per cent of what you want all the time as evidence of failure, when success in fact means achieving the optimum outcome in any given circumstance.

The sustainability of modern politics derives not from an uncompromising absolutism but rather through the painstaking marking out of a common ground.

That doesn't mean abandoning our principles – far from it. It means delivering on them with the consent of people on all sides of the debate, so they can ultimately accept the legitimacy of what is being done, even if it may not be the outcome they would initially have preferred.

That is how social progress and international agreement was forged in the years after the Second World War – both at home with the establishment of an enduring National Health Service and, internationally, with the creation of an international order based on agreed rules and multilateral institutions.

Consider, for example, the story of the NHS. The Beveridge Report was commissioned by a Coalition Government.

The Health Minister who published the first White Paper outlining the principles of a comprehensive and free health service was a Conservative.

A Labour Government then created the NHS – engaging in fierce controversy both with the doctors who would work for the NHS, and with a Conservative opposition in the House of Commons which supported the principles of an NHS, but disagreed with the methods.

But the story does not end there. Just three years after the NHS was founded, Churchill's newly elected Conservative Government was faced with a choice, a choice between going back over old arguments or accepting the legitimacy of what had been done and building on it.

They chose to build on what had been established.

Today, because people were willing to compromise, we have an NHS to be proud of – an institution which unites our country.

Similarly, on the international stage, many of the agreements that underpinned the establishment of the rules-based international order in the aftermath of the Second World War were reached by pragmatism and compromise.

The San Francisco Conference, which adopted the United Nations Charter – the cornerstone of international law – almost broke down over Soviet insistence that the Security Council veto should apply not just to Council resolutions and decisions, but even to whether the Council should discuss a matter.

It was only a personal mission to Stalin in Moscow from US President Truman's envoy Harry Hopkins that persuaded the Soviets to back down.

Many States who were not Permanent Members of the Security Council did not want the veto to exist at all. But they compromised and signed the Charter because of the bigger prize it represented – a global system which enfranchised the people of the world with new rights, until then only recognisable to citizens in countries like ours.

It's easy now to assume that these landmark agreements which helped created the international order will always hold – that they are as permanent as the hills.

But turning ideals into practical agreements was hard fought. And we cannot be complacent about ensuring that they endure.

Indeed, the current failure to combine principles with pragmatism and compromise inevitably risks undermining them.

We are living through a period of profound change and insecurity. The forces of globalisation and the pursuit of free markets have brought unprecedented levels of wealth and opportunity for the country and for the world at large. But not everyone is reaping the benefits.

The march of technology is expanding the possibilities for humanity in ways that once could never have been conceived. But it is changing the nature of the workplace and the types of jobs that people will do. More and more working people are feeling anxious over whether they and their children and grandchildren will have the skills and the opportunities to get on.

And although the problems were building before the financial crisis, that event brought years of hardship from which we are only now emerging.

Populist movements have seized the opportunity to capitalise on that vacuum. They have embraced the politics of division; identifying the enemies to blame for our problems and offering apparently easy answers.

In doing so, they promote a polarised politics which views the world through the prism of "us" and "them" – a prism of winners and losers, which views compromise and cooperation through international institutions as signs of weakness not strength.

President Putin expressed this sentiment clearly on the eve of the G20 summit in Japan, when he said that the "liberal idea has become obsolete"...because it has "come into conflict with the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population."

This is a cynical falsehood. No one comparing the quality of life or economic

success of liberal democracies like the UK, France and Germany to that of the Russian Federation would conclude that our system is obsolete. But the fact that he feels emboldened to utter it today indicates the challenge we face as we seek to defend our values.

So if we are to stand up for these values that are fundamental to our way of life, we need to rebuild support for them by addressing people's legitimate concerns through actual solutions that can command public consent, rather than populist promises that in the end are not solutions at all.

In doing so, we need to show that, from the local to the global, a politics of pragmatic conviction that is unafraid of compromise and co-operation is the best way in which politics can sustainably meet the challenges we face.

Take the example of how we address some of the concerns and fears over globalisation.

[Political content removed].

But we know it is free and competitive markets that drive the innovation, creativity and risk-taking that have enabled so many of the great advances of our time. We know it is business that pioneers the industries of the future, secures the investment on which that future depends, and creates jobs and livelihoods for families up and down our country.

And we know that free enterprise can also play a crucial role in helping to meet some of the greatest social challenges of our time – from contributing to the sustainability of our planet to generating new growth and new hope in areas of our country that have been left behind for too long.

But you do not protect the concept of free market capitalism by failing to respond to the legitimate concerns of those who are not feeling its full benefits. You protect free market capitalism and all the benefits it can bring by reforming it so that it works for everyone.

That is why I have introduced reforms to working practice and workers' rights to reflect the changes in our economy. It is why I launched the Taylor Review into modern forms of employment like the gig economy – and why we are delivering the biggest improvements in UK workers' rights for twenty years in response to it.

It is why I have advanced changes in corporate governance – because business must not only be about commercial success but about bringing wider benefits to the whole of our society too.

And it is why we have put in place a Modern Industrial Strategy – a strategic partnership between business and government to make the long-term decisions that will ensure the success of our economy. But crucially, a strategy to ensure that as we develop the industries of the future, so the benefits of the trade and growth they will give rise to will reach working people – not just in some parts of the country, but in every part of our country.

These are steps rooted in my Conservative political convictions. They are not

a rejection of free enterprise. But rather they are the very way to restore the popular legitimacy of free enterprise and make it work for everyone.

I believe that taking such an approach is also how we resolve the Brexit impasse.

The only way to do so is to deliver on the outcome of the vote in 2016. And there is no greater regret for me than that I could not do so.

But whatever path we take must be sustainable for the long-term – so that delivering Brexit brings our country back together.

That has to mean some kind of compromise.

Some argue I should have taken the United Kingdom out of the European Union with no deal on 29th March. Some wanted a purer version of Brexit. Others to find a way of stopping it altogether.

But most people across our country had a preference for getting it done with a deal. And I believe the strength of the deal I negotiated was that it delivered on the vote of the referendum to leave the European Union, while also responding to the concerns of those who had voted to remain.

The problem was that when it came time for Parliament to ratify the deal, our politics retreated back into its binary pre-referendum positions – a winner takes all approach to leaving or remaining.

And when opinions have become polarised – and driven by ideology – it becomes incredibly hard for a compromise to become a rallying point.

The spirit of compromise in the common interest is also crucial in meeting some of the greatest global challenges of our time – from responsibly harnessing the huge potential of digital technology to tackling climate change; and from preventing the further proliferation of nuclear weapons to upholding and strengthening international rules in the face of hostile states.

During my premiership, the UK has led the way both domestically and internationally in seeking a new settlement which ensures the internet remains a driver of growth and opportunity – but also that internet companies respond more comprehensively to reasonable and legitimate demands that they take their wider responsibilities to society more seriously.

That is why we are legislating in the UK to create a legal duty of care on internet companies, backed up by an independent regulator with the power to enforce its decisions.

We are the first country to put forward such a comprehensive approach, but it is not enough to act alone.

Ultimately we need a realistic global approach that achieves the right balance between protecting the individual freedoms of those using the internet – while also keeping them safe from harm.

That also holds the key to further progress in the fight to protect our planet.

Here in the UK we have recently built on the 2008 Climate Change Act by becoming the first major economy to agree a landmark net zero target that will end our contribution to climate change by 2050.

Of course, there were some who wanted us not just to make that net zero commitment but to bring it forward even earlier. And there are others who still question the science of climate change or the economic costs of tackling it.

But we were able to come together to agree a target that is supported across the political spectrum, across business and civil society – and which is both ambitious and also deliverable.

Just as the nations of the world were able to come together and agree the historic Paris Agreement of 2015, a settlement which if unravelled would damage us all and our planet.

And just as we seek to protect the hard fought Paris Climate Agreement, so I also believe we must protect the similarly hard fought JCPOA – the nuclear deal with Iran, whatever its challenges.

Once again it took painstaking pragmatism and compromise to strike that deal.

Of course, there are those who fear a reduction in sanctions on a country that continues to pursue destabilising activity across the region, and we should address that activity head on.

But whether we like it or not a compromise deal remains the best way to get the outcome we all still ultimately seek – to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and to preserve the stability of the region.

Being prepared to compromise also means knowing when not to compromise – and when our values are under threat we must always be willing to stand firm. Just as we did when Russia deployed a deadly nerve agent on the streets of Salisbury, and I led international action across the world to expel more than 100 Russian intelligence officers – the largest collective expulsion of Russian intelligence officers in history.

We are here today at St James' Square – the location from which Dwight Eisenhower led the planning for D-Day. And it was standing on the beaches of Normandy with other world leaders last month – remembering together all that was given in defence of our liberty and our values – that most inspired me to come here today to give this speech.

Eisenhower once wrote: "People talk about the middle of the road as though it were unacceptable...Things are not all black and white. There have to be compromises. The middle of the road is all of the usable surface. The extremes, right and left, are in the gutters."

I believe that seeking the common ground and being prepared to make

compromises in order to make progress does not entail a rejection of our values and convictions by one iota, rather it is precisely the way to defend them.

Not by making promises you cannot keep, or by just telling people what you think they want to hear. But by addressing the concerns people genuinely hold and showing that co-operation not absolutism is the only way to deliver for everyone.

For the future, if we can recapture the spirit of common purpose – as I believe we must – then we can be optimistic about what together we can achieve.

We can find the common ground that will enable us to forge new, innovative global agreements on the most crucial challenges of our time – from protecting our planet to harnessing the power of technology for good.

We can renew popular support for liberal democratic values and international co-operation.

And in so doing, we can secure our freedom, our prosperity and our ability to live together peacefully now and for generations to come.

Supporting international criminal justice

Thank you Mr President. I would like to thank the President of the International Residual Mechanism for International Tribunals, Judge Carmel Agius, and the Prosecutor, Mr Serge Brammertz, for their briefings to the Security Council today.

Mr President, at the outset, as this is the first meeting of the Council which Judge Agius has attended as President of the Mechanism, I would like to congratulate him formally on behalf of the United Kingdom on his appointment. We commend the priorities he has identified for his Presidency and welcome the opportunity to work constructively with him, just as we did with his predecessor, Judge Theodor Meron, whose significant contribution as President we recognise.

Today, as has been noted, we mark the Day of International Criminal Justice. Support for international criminal justice and international humanitarian law is a fundamental element of UK foreign policy. We believe that justice and accountability for the most serious crimes of international concern are crucial for building lasting peace and security and for ensuring protection of human rights for all.

In January 2018, the Residual Mechanism assumed fully its responsibilities for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), alongside its responsibilities for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Since then, the Mechanism has continued to achieve commendable progress in carrying out its mandate. It has delivered continuity in a wide range of functions including the trial of the most senior fugitives from justice, enforcement of sentences of those convicted – and in this respect, the UK was very pleased voluntarily to assist the Mechanism by enforcing one of these sentences- the protection of victims and the preservation of archives. In doing so, it has guaranteed the legacy of ICTY and the ICTR.

Yet, the Mechanism continues to operate under its revised and significantly reduced budget for the 2018 to 2019 biennium. As has been highlighted previously, this has led to reduced staff numbers and resources, and utility and service cuts. The Mechanism has been determined to continue to fulfil its mandate effectively and efficiently, however, and we are pleased that it continues to take the necessary steps to make this possible.

We would recall the introduction of the Mechanism's "Expenditure Reduction Plan" and "Downsizing Policy" both of which the Registry is continuing to develop and implement to ensure that the Mechanism remains on track to deliver its mandate in a fiscally responsible way in the face of budgetary constraints. However, we do need to remind ourselves of the breadth of the functions the Mechanism properly carries out. Along with its judicial functions, the importance of its other functions must be recognised, and we need therefore to be mindful of the need to balance cost-savings with effectiveness.

The UK remains committed to supporting the Mechanism for the remainder of its mandate and calls on others to continue to provide the support the Mechanism needs, whether financially, logistically or politically.

Mr President, we are following the developments in the Arusha branch with interest, including the ongoing contempt case of Turinabo et al, as well as awaiting the outcome in the Ngirabatware review. We note that a number of Rwandan fugitives are still at large, and we call on all States to cooperate with the Prosecutor in his bid to have these fugitives transferred to the Mechanism. We also hope that States will assist with a solution to the problem of relocating the nine released and acquitted persons in Arusha.

Turning to The Hague, we welcome the outcome of the Karadzic appeal earlier this year. The increase in Karadzic's sentence for crimes, including genocide, from 40 years to life in prison, sends a powerful message that those who carry out such atrocities will be held accountable for their actions and will be sentenced accordingly. We also note the progress made in the Mladic and Stanisic and Simatovic cases and are pleased that these are due to conclude by the end of next year.

Mr President, while some progress has been made, the limited regional judicial co-operation between the countries of the former Yugoslavia still thwarts access to justice for many victims. The Mechanism can only completely fulfil its mandate and deliver justice to victims through the collective

efforts of those countries. The Joint Declaration on War Crimes signed at Prime Ministerial level at the London Western Balkans Summit last year underlined the importance of supporting, and removing impediments to, effective regional cooperation, while strengthening cooperation with and seeking the assistance of the Residual Mechanism. We urge the countries concerned to work closely with each other and the Mechanism, in particular the Office of the Prosecutor, to ensure accountability through effective co-operation. The UK is proud to support that objective with projects in the region.

Mr President, lastly, but perhaps most importantly, April this year marked the 25th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide and next year will see the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide. The anniversaries of these two devastating atrocities should lead us to reflect on the great contribution of the ICTY and the ICTR, and now the Mechanism, to ensuring that the perpetrators and instigators are held to account.

Whilst completing these trials will not bring back the thousands who were killed, nor erase the grief of their families, it sends a clear message that there will be no impunity for those who commit such crimes.

Twenty five years on, however, genocide denial for both atrocities continues. This is unconscionable and reprehensible. It is a direct threat to maintaining stability in both regions. We therefore hope that Council members and Member States will join the UK in supporting the Mechanism's measures to fight genocide ideology and its zero-tolerance approach to genocide denial in all its forms.

I thank you, Mr President.

UK aid helps world's poorest access better mobile phone technologies

Millions of Nigerians are set to benefit from innovative global mobile technology that helps to provide access to vital services for the poorest communities, the Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin announced during a two day visit to Nigeria.

Mobile phones are an effective tool that can help lift people out of poverty and keep them safe by having greater access to healthcare such as lifesaving maternal and newborn child health and nutrition information. However, it's estimated that 2.5 billion people in developing countries are still without mobile internet, which is challenging for communities who need access to a range of essential services such as clean energy, water and sanitation as well as government services such as birth registration.

Visiting Abuja and Lagos, Minister Baldwin announced a £38 million partnership to support mobile technology trade body, the GSMA, improve access to essential digital services to over 26 million people around the world over the next 3.5 years.

In Nigeria alone, the Mobile for Development partnership, has supported mobile-enabled solar technology to help keep families in rural areas safe by allowing off-grid homes to have access to electricity. The lack of clean affordable power limits development, so UK aid has supported the development of a ready-pay power system which can be paid in instalments using mobile phones.

Energy company Lumos, working in partnership with Nigerian telecoms provider MTN, created and manufactured a solar power system that allows the 40% of Nigerians without access to electricity, to get access and pay via their mobile. Between December 2013 and June 2018, this has supported more than 1,000,000 people and is now expanding to the Côte d'Ivoire.

Minister for Africa, Harriett Baldwin said:

It was great to return to Nigeria. It is a country of tremendous opportunity, but I know it has significant challenges. The UK is working as Nigeria's longest partner and friend to overcome those challenges and deliver for its citizens.

From providing lifesaving humanitarian assistance to those caught in the North East conflict, cracking down on corruption and money-laundering, to harnessing the power of innovation and technology, the UK is helping ensure Nigeria has a bright, stable and prosperous future because when Nigeria prospers, Africa, the UK and the world prosper.

Technology and business innovations have the potential to create quality jobs needed to absorb the over 2 million young Nigerians joining the labour market every year.

The partnership with GSMA builds on UK aid programmes to boost digital and financial inclusion for women. A programme in Swahili has led to the development of Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby, which is a free text message service for pregnant women, mothers with newborns and their supporters. Subscribers receive messages covering topics from prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS, family planning, malaria prevention and postpartum care.

During the visit, Minister Baldwin also met female entrepreneurs improving the livelihoods of some of the most vulnerable families in Nigeria, from very small-scale rural farmers from the North, to heads of industry in Lagos.

Nigeria is Africa's biggest country by population and its largest economy. While visiting a UK aid supported ENGINE II school in Abuja, Minister Baldwin also heard how girls are being given the opportunity to develop life skills

and empower them as future leaders.

She also visited the Cassa Nova's Factory which exports its cassava crisps around the world – including the UK where they are stocked in some Sainsbury's supermarkets. Bilateral trade between Nigeria and the UK reached £5.5 billion in 2018 and has potential to grow significantly.

She also met with the Nigerian Vice President Yemi Osinbajo and Lagos State Deputy-Governor to discuss improving trade and investment links, fighting poverty and a shared interest in developing a prosperous Nigeria.

Notes to editors

- The Mobile for Development partnership programme identifies and invests in mobile-enabled innovations and business models which can drive inclusion at scale. Further details can be found here: <https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/>
- The programme will also lead to enhanced digital inclusion for women and people with disabilities, extended mobile connectivity across rural Africa and deliver mobile-based tools for climate resilience, whilst increasing youth employment opportunities.
- UK aid is also boosting digital and financial inclusion for women. A UK aid programme in Swahili is forging stronger links between the mobile and healthcare industries. Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby is a free text message service for pregnant women, mothers with newborns up to 16 weeks old, as well as supporters of pregnant women and new mothers. Subscribers register for the text messaging service and the messages cover a broad range of topics from prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS, family planning, malaria prevention and postpartum care.
- The GSMA, which works with local network operators, start-ups and governments, estimate that by 2025 there will be nine billion mobile connections globally, with 75 per cent coming through on smartphones. GSMA Mobile for Development also contributes to all 17 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, uniting more than 750 operators with almost 400 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset and device makers, software companies, equipment providers and internet companies, as well as organisations in adjacent industry sectors.

Home Office funds innovative policing technology to prevent crime

The Home Office has pledged £5 million to support the development of innovative technology to help police forces prevent crime.

West Midlands Police will receive the grant to conduct further testing on a data analysis system that analyses large volumes of police-held data to assess the risk of someone committing a crime or becoming a victim.

The programme is designed to support police officers and does not replace their decision making.

During the first year of testing, the National Data Analytics Solution (NDAS) used police data on knife and gun offences and on those who have previously committed them to identify patterns and common traits among perpetrators.

The programme has also drawn on information held in crime reports and intelligence logs on instances of modern slavery to identify common indicators of victims and the networks that help enable this type of crime.

The funding comes from the Home Office's Police Transformation Fund and follows a £4.5 million grant awarded in 2018 to 2019.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I fully support the police embracing innovative new technology in the fight against crime and to protect the most vulnerable victims.

Anything we can do to stay one step ahead of the criminals should be welcomed – providing it is rigorously tested and ethically sound.

I look forward to seeing the results of this West Midlands trial.

Once fully tested, it is hoped NDAS would be made available to forces in England and Wales who want to use it to improve their performance and to protect the public.

West Midlands Police are working with experts and organisations to ensure robust ethical oversight as the technology develops.

Superintendent Nick Dale, who leads on NDAS for West Midlands Police, said:

This technology has the potential to help us understand modern

slavery networks – the hidden crime within our communities – so much better, as well as the problems that lead to serious violence that blights communities and affects the lives of victims and perpetrators.

We are still at an early stage in identifying how best machine learning technology can be used, but it is really important that our work is scrutinised independently from an ethical point of view, and that technology will never replace professional judgement or affect the police's accountability for our actions.

NDAS is just one programme to benefit from a total Police Transformation Fund pot of £175 million for 2019 to 2020, announced as part of the police funding settlement in December 2018.

Overseen by the Police Reform and Transformation Board (PRTB), other beneficiaries include:

- a project transforming domestic abuse services run by Northumbria Police
- the National Enabling Programme to help forces share data more readily across force boundaries, led by City of London Police