Statement to parliament: EU Transport Council 6 June 2019

The Transport Council took place in Luxembourg on Thursday 6 June. This was the only Transport Council under the Romanian Presidency (the Presidency). The UK was represented by the UK's Deputy Permanent Representative to the EU, Katrina Williams.

The Council reached general approach on the third tranche of the 'mobility package' for a legal framework for the electronic communication of freight transport information. The UK welcomed the work that the Presidency had done to achieve compromises on this text, as did a number of other member states.

The Presidency gave a progress report on the proposal from the third tranche of the 'mobility package' to streamline planning and approval processes for projects on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T). Some delegations took the opportunity to flag outstanding concerns including scope, the role of the single competent authority and the duration of the permit granting process.

There was also a progress report on the proposal from the first tranche of the 'mobility package' hired vehicles directive, although discussion illustrated that there are still outstanding issues to be resolved.

The Council was also given a progress report on the proposal from the first tranche of the 'mobility package' to revise the current directive on Eurovignette (road charging). The UK intervened to highlight the need for flexibility in determining national charging schemes, a view shared by a number of other member states.

Over lunch, ministers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine along with representatives from the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development participated in a joint discussion with the Council and Commissioners Bulc and Hahn on the progress made by the Eastern Area Partnership (EaP) in developing the external dimension of the TEN-T policy. Welcoming the progress made in relation to road safety, TEN-T connectivity and planning for future investment in transport infrastructure, the Council endorsed the joint EU–EaP declaration as a road map for future cooperation.

Later, the Council was given a further progress report on negotiations on the proposals to revise the regulation on rail passengers' rights and obligations.

Finally, there were several information points from member states, the Presidency and Commissioner Bulc under any other business. Several member states supported Luxembourg's call for consideration of aviation taxation as an additional means to tackle emissions reduction. The Presidency gave information on discussions in other Councils on 'A clean planet for all', the

Commission’s long-term climate strategy. On addressing airspace capacity, Commissioner Bulc noted the recent publications of the airspace architecture study and the Wise Person’s report on the future of air traffic management. The Commission noted the first findings of its study on sustainable transport infrastructure charging and the internalisation of transport externalities, which was published on the day of the Council , and updated the Council on the connectivity outcomes of the EU-China summit. The Presidency provided an update on current legislative proposals and the Polish delegation provided information on the Conference on ‘Benefits for regions resulting from the implementation of the route Via Carpatia’. Finally, Finland presented transport plans for its forthcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Press release: Farming robots and eco-buildings the future as research kick-starts new innovations

- New research will look at how robots can help boost English farms productivity and produce more food through the world’s first farming robotics centre.
- Industrial Strategy Projects will look at challenges of the future, including the UK’s transition to a net-zero economy.
- The £76 million government investment is part of the modern Industrial Strategy – boosting research that will keep the UK a world leader in science, research and innovation.

Farming robots could help tend and quality control high-value crops in the world’s first ever agri-robotics centre at The University of Lincoln.

The research centre will be one of 13 government backed projects to benefit from a share of £76 million to work on ground-breaking research. Bringing experts together, the programme will tackle a broad range of research challenges, from speeding up crop production, to creating environmentally-friendly offices and homes, and how engineering enzymes could break down common single-use plastics.

Announcing the 13 projects, Universities and Science Minister Chris Skidmore said:

> Pushing the boundaries of knowledge and conquering new innovations are what our universities are known for the world over.
>
> The Expanding Excellence in England Fund will support projects

> throughout England to master new and developing areas of research and industry.
>
> Made possible through our record R&D spend delivered by our modern Industrial Strategy, the investment will support researchers to develop solutions and opportunities for UK researchers and businesses.

The projects, based at universities in England, have received shares of £76 million which will see their work develop over three years. The investment could further existing projects, or support a new area of research, all with the view to improve people's lives using the benefits of technology.

The investment, through the modern Industrial Strategy, contributes to the government's commitment to raise public and private sector R&D spend to 2.4% of GDP by 2027. The funding announced today is initial funding, with the option for teams to build collaborative relationships with business and attract investment.

The research units are being funded through the Expanding Excellence in Research Fund, administered by Research England, part of UK Research and Innovation. The units are either physical hubs or teams of researchers.

UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive, Professor Sir Mark Walport, said:

> The Expanding Excellence in England Fund reflects UKRI's vision to enhance academic excellence, foster collaboration and increase access to new technologies.
>
> The first research units awarded this funding demonstrate the breadth and diversity of talent in UKRI's portfolio, from astrobiology through to forensic linguistics and climate change, and our commitment to tackling important research questions in a changing world.

1. Aston University 'Aston Institute for Forensic Linguistics' will analyse text and the use of linguistics in legal contexts, such as in court, ultimately resulting in a databank of research that could be instrumental in legal cases where forensic speech science is used to build a case against an individual. This project will be receiving £5,434,597.
2. University of Portsmouth 'Centre for Enzyme Innovation' will look at how engineering enzymes could break down common single-use plastics which will contribute to a circular economy. This project will be receiving £5,828,000.
3. Open University 'Astrobiology Research Unit' will seek to answer questions in space exploration and boost understanding of extra-terrestrial environments and potential life, and consider how the private sector and smaller nations can address space governance through ensuring environmental sustainability of missions, for example. This

project will be receiving £6,737,350.

4. University of Greenwich ‘Natural Resources Institute’ will address food and nutrition security in less developed countries, particularly in Africa. The project will adopt a food systems approach and will focus on climate change, sustainable agriculture, food loss and waste and nutrition. This project will be receiving £7,495,984.
5. University of Lincoln ‘Lincoln Agri Robotics’ will create the world’s first centre of excellence in Agri-Robotics that will look at how robots can tend, harvest and quality control high-value crops with minimum human intervention. This project will be receiving £6,344,000.
6. Loughborough University ‘Centre for Mathematical Cognition’ will study mathematic learning processes and use resulting insights to evaluate what educational interventions could boost student success at mathematics and address the STEM skills gap. By working with schools and colleges, the team will ensure the work addresses classroom priorities. This project will be receiving £6,594,814.
7. University of Lancaster ‘ImaginationLancaster’ will research how factors in society – such as academia, society and policy – could lead to new innovations to address challenges of tomorrow and create new products and services, with a focus on the design and how these can best support people. This project will be receiving £7,636,606.
8. Sheffield Hallam University ‘Lab4Living’ will focus on enabling older people to live longer and more productive lives by considering societal and economic barriers that could prevent people living to 100 years old. This project will be receiving £4,027,482.
9. University of Newcastle (with Northumbria University) ‘Hub for Biotechnology in the Built Environment’ will look to create a new generation of buildings – from offices to homes – that are responsive to the environment, consume their own waste and benefit human health. This project will be receiving £8,000,000.
10. University of the West of England ‘Centre for Fine Print Research’ will boost its knowledge of 19th century printing and fabrication to develop new products such as prototypes of ancient artefacts using 3D printing. The work will enable more research to be conducted due to making replicas of ancient artefacts available. This project will be receiving £7,718,713.
11. University of Surrey ‘Centre for Translation Studies’ will seek to establish a centre enabling automation to respond to different spoken languages, enabling a responsible integration of human and machine translation as automation continues to spread in industries across the economy. This project will be receiving £3,564,000.
12. Royal Northern College of Music ‘Practice and Research in Science and Music’ will seek to bring musicians and technology experts together to consider the role AI and big data could play in musical performances, enhancing the experience of the audience and leading to new innovations that could be used in countries around the world. This project will be receiving £914,000.
13. University of Exeter ‘Diabetes Research Unit/Aetiological Insights’ will boost diabetes research by combining it with new technology approaches including artificial intelligence and data science. This project will be receiving £5,984,000.

Press release: Bio-tech gets boost with new Local Industrial Strategy for Greater Manchester

- new biomanufacturing hub opened at University of Manchester to further develop biotechnologies and drive clean growth with £10 million government support
- hub will be a key part of new Local Industrial Strategy launched today setting out long-term vision for Greater Manchester
- Greater Manchester's ambition to become the UK's first city-region to achieve carbon neutral living by 2038

A new facility to transform manufacturing processes and make them more environmentally friendly, has opened today (13 June 2019), as part of a new Local Industrial Strategy for Greater Manchester.

Based at the Manchester Institute of Biotechnology, the new Future Biomanufacturing Research Hub is backed by £10 million in government investment to develop new technologies to transform the manufacturing processes of chemicals, using plants, algae, fungi, marine life and micro-organisms – both driving clean growth and making it more commercially viable. The institute will also work alongside universities including Imperial College London, the University of Nottingham and the University College London.

This Manchester facility will be 1 of 3 – with the Universities of Swansea and Sheffield also set to host similar hubs, each also benefiting from £10 million government investment.

The strategy will build on Manchester's worldwide reputation and unique strengths to ensure it is at the centre of the industries and jobs of the future. Ensuring local and national government works together to deliver high-quality and skilled jobs for the city region. The Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy puts clean growth at its heart with plans for the city-region to cut its carbon emissions, take advantage of the global shift to clean growth and the UK's transition to net-zero.

The strategy unveils plans for Greater Manchester to become the UK's first city-region to achieve carbon neutral living by 2038 as well as plans to further develop the region's leading position in the manufacturing of advanced materials such as graphene, health innovation, and digital and creative sectors that have fuelled growth in the region.

Greater Manchester is a trailblazer and one of the first to agree a Local Industrial Strategy, a key part of the government's modern Industrial

Strategy for the UK, driving growth, productivity and boosting earning power across the region.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

> Greater Manchester has a strong and proud manufacturing heritage and this new Local Industrial Strategy, developed in partnership between government and local leaders across the city-region, will ensure its world leading position in this field is secured and built on for the next generation.
>
> At the heart of this strategy is clean growth and Manchester's determination reap the rewards of the UK's transition to a net-zero economy reinforced by the city region's ambition to be the first carbon neutral city in the UK by 2038.
>
> That's why I'm also pleased that the University of Manchester will be home to the new biomanufacturing hub, backed by £10 million government investment, putting the city at the forefront of exciting new developments to drive clean growth – a prime example of our modern Industrial Strategy in action.

Northern Powerhouse Minister Jake Berry MP said:

> We are determined to create an economy that works for everyone and the Northern Powerhouse's first ambitious Local Industrial Strategy will build on the strengths of people across Greater Manchester so their communities can prosper for years to come.
>
> It demonstrates the power of local people and the government working together to create good jobs, boost productivity and increase people's earning power.
>
> Our refreshed Northern Powerhouse strategy will complement this approach, and other Local Industrial Strategies across the north, so people have the opportunities to reach their full potential no matter where they live.

Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham said:

> This bold and innovative joint plan between Greater Manchester and the government puts Greater Manchester back as an industrial and social pioneer. This is a plan focussed on people and ensuring we have the good quality jobs to ensure people can succeed now and in to the future. In Greater Manchester, we led the first industrial revolution and are now in a position to lead the fourth.
>
> We want to be the UK's leading green city-region, which is why our

> ambition to achieve carbon neutral living in by 2038 is right at the heart of these plans. We will show that these plans are not just the right thing for people and the environment but also right for our economy.
>
> We're also setting out how advanced manufacturing along with the digital and creative sectors will now help to grow our economy and help us become a wholly digitally-enabled city-region. The Local Industrial Strategy will enable us to drive our productivity and prosperity as we create the good, green jobs and skilled workforce that will power this thriving city-region's economy into the future.
>
> This comprehensive strategy is yet another step on our devolution journey and will help Greater Manchester to become one of the best places in the world to live, work and invest in.
>
> And we are putting together the pieces of the jigsaw to reveal the big picture – a Greater Manchester where prosperity, opportunity, health, hope and happiness are widely and fairly shared across all our people and places.

This new strategy – designed in partnership with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership and developed in collaboration with hundreds of businesses, public partners and civil society – sets out how the city region will work with government to:

- launch the first city-region mission to achieve carbon neutral living, government welcomes this locally led mission, which will support the delivery of the government's Clean Growth Grand Challenge
- set Greater Manchester up to be a global leader on health and care innovation – creating new industries and jobs, improving population health and extending healthy life expectancy
- position Greater Manchester to be a world-leading region for innovative firms to experiment with, develop and adopt advanced materials and Made Smarter technologies in manufacturing, facilitating the design of new products and processes; it will support other national centres to build the UK's leadership in tomorrow's technologies
- build on Greater Manchester's position as a leading European digital city-region, with the infrastructure, skills, and networks needed to digitalise all sectors, and internationally significant clusters in broadcasting, content creation and media, and cyber security
- enable the digitalisation of all sectors; and capitalise on the links between digital and creative industries that feed internationally significant clusters in broadcasting, content creation and media
- ensure that the education, skills and employment system allow everyone to reach their potential and employers have access to the skills required to deliver the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy

Greater Manchester and government are further supporting economic growth and boosting local businesses through investments including:

- state-of-the-art facilities for advanced materials development, including £38 million for the National Graphene Institute, £25 million for the Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre, and £235 million of funding for the Sir Henry Royce Institute BP
- providing £23.8 million in digital infrastructure investment, bringing forward private investment of up to £200 million
- devolving £6 billion for health and social care and £92 million per year for adult education through the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership
- providing £663 million of Local Growth Funding and £312.5 million through the Industrial Strategy's Transforming Cities Fund to fund local priorities, including Metrolink and the Bee Network – a cycling and walking network

Work across the UK to illustrate the modern Industrial Strategy in action can be viewed in an interactive map, developed by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The Future Biomanufacturing Research Hub is part of the £30 million government investment into the UK's research and manufacturing sector. It will be 1 of 3 manufacturing hubs that, in total, bring together 67 partners from industry, the public sector and seven universities from across the country.

Press release: Welsh projects given the green light to develop the latest battery technology for electric vehicles

In the latest round of grants to be announced through the UK Government's Faraday Battery Challenge, Deregallera Ltd and Tri-Wall Europe Limited have been allocated a share of £1.4 million to develop the latest battery technologies.

This new allocation will enable the creation of more highly-skilled, well-paid jobs across the country, boosting the economy and cementing Wales' reputation for innovation excellence.

The fund forms part of the UK Government's drive to maintain Britain's place at the forefront of new technologies and emerging markets, through its modern Industrial Strategy.

Bringing together world-leading academia and businesses to accelerate the research needed to develop the latest electric car battery technologies, the

Faraday Battery Challenge is a crucial part of the UK's move towards a net zero emissions economy.

Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns said:

> The Industrial Strategy is a vital part of the UK Government's plan to support sustainable green growth, creating opportunities and jobs in every corner of the UK.
>
> This latest round of funding allocated to Wales in the Faraday Battery Challenge demonstrates the UK Government's commitment to driving forward Welsh innovation and research. Investing in a greener future is a top priority for the UK Government and I look forward to seeing how the selected recipients maximise on the £1.4 million to put Wales at the forefront of green innovation.

The £23 million announced by Business Secretary Greg Clark forms part of the total £274 million that will be awarded to consortia across the UK through the Faraday Battery Challenge.

UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive, Professor Sir Mark Walport, said:

> The Faraday Battery Challenge brings together the UK's world-class expertise across research and industry to deliver battery technologies that will power the vehicles of the future.
>
> The projects announced today emphasise how this collective expertise is being brought to bear on the biggest challenges facing the development of next-generation electric car batteries, from their power source and performance to safety and manufacturing.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Caerphilly-based Deregallera is developing a new hybrid energy storage system to extend the life of an electric vehicle battery by 50%.
- Tri-Wall Europe is based in Monmouth.
- Other projects that were granted funding are listed.
- The ISCF is delivered by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). UKRI is a new body which works in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities, and government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish.
- The Faraday Battery Challenge is a £274 million government investment into battery technology through the Industrial Strategy. It will develop safe, cost effective, durable, lighter weight, higher performing and recyclable batteries in the UK which will power the next generation of electric vehicles.

- As a key part of the UK government's modern Industrial Strategy, the Future of Mobility Grand Challenge was announced in 2017 to encourage and support extraordinary innovation in UK engineering and technology, making the UK a world leader within the transport industries.
- This includes facilitating profound changes in transport technologies and business models, to make the movement of people, goods and services across the nation greener, safer, easier and more reliable.

News story: £7.8 million to drive forward innovative ideas to transform railways

- drones to inspect tracks, a sound-bending wall to cut noise pollution and plans for the first testing of a hydrogen-powered train are among 24 schemes awarded funding
- projects will receive a share of up to £7.8 million in government funding for use on the rail network
- innovative ideas are set to make the UK rail network more efficient, greener and cleaner

Drones capable of inspecting railway infrastructure, hydrogen train trials and a sound-bending wall to cut noise pollution are among 24 winning projects in the third round of the First of a Kind (FOAK) competition, unveiled by the Department for Transport today (13 June 2019).

Run by Innovate UK and funded by the DfT to support research, development and innovation in the UK rail industry, the competition seeks innovative ideas that can be adapted to transform rail travel.

Strengthening resilience of railway infrastructure and operations, enhancing rail freight services, and reducing environmental and noise impacts were the themes for this round. Each of the winning schemes will receive between £250,000 and £350,000.

Rail Minister Andrew Jones said:

> The First of a Kind competition has consistently produced truly innovative projects developed for the benefit of passengers, helping to drive forward a greener, cleaner and more efficient rail network.
>
> This round has been the biggest yet and I am excited to see how our funding will bring these ambitious ideas to fruition.

> This government is also investing £48 billion to modernise our rail network over the next 5 years, ensuring people have the safe, frequent and punctual journeys they deserve.

Among the successful projects is 4Silence’s plan to develop a noise-reducing wall that works by diffracting sound waves from passing trains upwards. This makes it as effective as a barrier 3 times its height.

Another scheme being supported is Amey VTOL’s development of a drone system that could carry out track inspections from the skies. This would avoid the need for people to set foot on railway infrastructure.

The University of Birmingham’s Centre for Railway Research is also receiving funds for its plans to undertake the first mainline testing of a hydrogen-fuelled train in the UK.

Simon Edmonds, Deputy Executive Chair and Chief Business Officer, Innovate UK said:

> The UK’s rail network delivers significant economic benefits to the nation, providing an environmentally-friendly transport system for the movement of both passengers and freight. Yet there is more we can do to boost the reliability of the network, to make it more attractive to freight users, and to make it even greener.

> The pioneering projects for which we have announced funding today can increase reliability, to keep services running, with real benefits to freight operators and the environment. The programme will also help innovative companies succeed, both here and in export markets.

The first round of First of a Kind was launched in 2017 and saw 10 projects win a share of £3.5 million to develop ideas to improve passenger experience and demonstrate tomorrow’s trains.

The second round focused on schemes aimed at cutting the carbon footprint on the UK’s railways and enhancing stations for passengers. This saw another 10 projects offered a share of £3.5 million.