

Press release: CPTPP will be a 'force for good' in promoting free trade

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox welcomed the introduction of Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), saying that the alliance will be 'force for good' in providing economic opportunities for hundreds of millions of people.

The Pacific has been the focus of increased trade tensions and the introduction of protectionist measures, by both China and the US who have a major influence in the region.

87% of Chinese exports are subject to distorted trade measures in the US market and 92% of US exports are subject to distorted trade measures in the Chinese market.

CPTPP will eliminate 95% of tariffs on goods trade between 11 countries around the Pacific rim, including Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Its members currently account for 13% of global GDP and £95bn worth of the UK's trade. Many more countries are expected to join the agreement in the future and the UK will potentially join after we leave the European Union.

The UK is considering seeking accession to the agreement and the Department for International Trade is currently analysing responses to its 14-week public consultation on potential accession to CPTPP.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

Joining CPTPP would cement our strong economic ties with old friends, like Canada and Japan, as well as establishing new links with some of the world's fastest growing economies.

We know from our recent public consultation that UK businesses want to join CPTPP as it would help them to expand into new markets and capitalise on the growing demand for quality British goods and services.

This agreement will also help to promote free trade against a backdrop of heightened tensions in the global trade system. It is in all of our interests to ensure an open and rules-based trading system wins out and that a trade war in the Pacific does not hit British households in the pocket.

DIT's consultation on CPTPP included 12 events throughout the UK, which confirmed that there is demand from businesses to join CPTPP. It also revealed that there are many businesses that are unaware of the opportunities

on offer but would benefit with support from DIT trade advisers.

DIT has already engaged with all 11 members of CPTPP and there is support for UK membership. In October the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said that the UK would be welcomed into the agreement 'with open arms' and the Australian PM has said 'the British would be pushing at an open door'.

The agreement is widely recognised as one of the most progressive free trade agreements, with provisions for digital trade, e-commerce, trade in services and protection of intellectual property. It also sets new standards in agreements for sustainability, anti-corruption and improving workers' rights.

If the UK joined, we would be able to benefit from the opportunities of membership and we would be able to shape the future rules of the agreement.

Many British businesses could benefit from the UK's potential accession to the CPTPP including Dudley-based technology company Simworx who are a world leading supplier of 4D effects cinemas and motion simulation attractions for entertainment, education and corporate markets worldwide.

The Asia-Pacific is an important market for the company and they have recently secured a contract worth £46 million to provide rides for four major theme parks across China.

Joining CPTPP could make it easier for Simworx to secure more contracts in rapidly growing Asia-Pacific countries and it could make their services more competitively priced.

CEO of Simworx Limited Terry Monkton said:

As a small and growing business, emerging markets in Asia and Latin America represent excellent opportunities to grow Simworx.

Our products are already sought after in Vietnam and Mexico and that's helped Simworx treble its turnover and employ over 50 people in the UK.

But businesses like mine face particular barriers when we look to export, particularly import duties, and agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership would make it simpler for me to reach new customers.

- The 11 members of CPTPP are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.
 - CPTPP comes into effect today for the seven countries that have ratified it: Australia, Canada, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore and Vietnam.
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News story: Communities to have greater say in protecting local trees

Environment Secretary Michael Gove today announced plans to create greater protections for trees in urban areas.

The proposals would ensure councils can't cut down street trees without first consulting communities.

The measures reflect the important role trees in towns and cities play in improving our health and wellbeing, as well as providing crucial environmental benefits.

Launching a [consultation on a raft of new forestry measures](#), the Secretary of State unveiled proposals designed to ensure local people have a bigger say over what happens to the trees in their communities.

The proposals include:

- Making sure communities have their say on whether street trees should be felled with requirements for councils to consult local residents;
- Responsibilities on councils to report on tree felling and replanting to make sure we can safeguard our environment for future generations;
- Giving the Forestry Commission more powers to tackle illegal tree felling and strengthen protection of wooded landscapes.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

It's right that the views of local people are at the heart of any decision that affects their community – and the futures of the trees that line their streets are no different. Trees have often been rooted in our towns and cities for many years, and are undoubtedly part of our local heritage.

These measures will enhance the protection given to urban trees, ensuring residents are properly consulted before trees are felled and safeguarding our urban environment for future generations.

The government's Tree Champion Sir William Worsley said:

Urban trees are an amazingly valuable natural resource, and with this consultation I hope we can take further steps towards strong and robust protections to ensure their futures.

By planting the right trees in the right place we can ensure that they continue to improve health and wellbeing and encourage people to enjoy the outdoors.

Forestry Commission Director of Forest Services Richard Greenhous said:

The Forestry Commission recognises that our trees and woodlands are under increasing pressure, especially in and around urban areas. With this consultation we hope to be able to better protect more of our cherished woodlands from illegal felling.

This consultation forms part of the government's ongoing work to protect and promote our precious trees, including our commitment to plant one million trees in our towns and cities in addition to eleven million trees nationwide over the course of this parliament.

Protecting and planting more trees is a key part of our ambitious [25-Year Environment Plan](#), which will ensure we leave this environment in a better state for the next generation.

[News story: A CNC police officer is to be awarded an MBE](#)

Chief Superintendent Duncan Worsell who has worked for the Constabulary for over 25 years has been awarded the MBE for his services to policing.

Chief Constable Mike Griffiths said: "I am delighted to hear that Duncan is to receive this prestigious award and would like to congratulate him and his family. This achievement is a true recognition of his hard work, dedication and achievements both as a police officer and to the local community he serves.

"Duncan's personal leadership, compassion and extraordinary commitment is a consistent thread throughout many of the major changes the Civil Nuclear Constabulary has gone through in its history. He is an example to us all.

"I am sure many people will want to congratulate Duncan individually but, I offer him many congratulations on behalf of the Constabulary."

On hearing the news, Duncan said: "I am both humbled and honoured to receive this award, it means the world to me. I take enormous pride in the Constabulary, and the great privilege of being one of its leaders, it is without doubt the most brilliant thing that I have done with my working life.

"I am incredibly fortunate to work with the most fantastic people, helping me achieve my aspirations, and supporting others to meet theirs, and many of them have been working hard through this Christmas period, protecting our country and its people. I sincerely believe that the honour which has been bestowed upon me is as much representative of them and their efforts as it is

of my own.”

Duncan is a highly regarded police officer and a servant to all of the communities he serves. Since the age of 17 his working life has been public service, firstly in the Royal Navy and for the last 26 years as an officer within the Civil Nuclear Constabulary, rising to the rank of Chief Superintendent.

For the last five years he has been responsible for a complex operational division including Sellafield and Dounraey and four EDF sites, with an operational staff of over 800.

Press release: Out of this world innovations forge ahead in 2018 thanks to Local Growth Fund

- Multi-billion-pound Local Growth Fund backs world-leading programmes as the government builds a Britain fit for the future
- Goonhilly Space Exploration Station in Cornwall and the National Graphene Innovation Centre in Manchester among winners of grants in 2018

A cancer research laboratory in Southampton, a Centre of Excellence for degree apprenticeships in Sheffield and the roll out of superfast broadband to Cumbria are several innovative projects across the country which have received backing from the government’s £9.1 billion Local Growth Fund (LGF) in 2018.

Communities across Britain are benefitting from large, pioneering programmes made possible from the LGF and are defending Britain’s place as a world leader for innovation.

Managed by Local Enterprise Partnerships, LGF-backed projects, like a new aerodynamic vehicle testing hub in Northamptonshire, are not only putting communities on the map but also creating high skilled jobs and paving the way for further investment into their areas.

The Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine are the greatest beneficiaries of LGF grants with £3.4 billion being invested across the North and £1.9 billion supporting a wide range of projects in the Midlands, respectively.

Minister for the Northern Powerhouse and Local Growth, Jake Berry MP, said:

When we say we are building a country that works for everyone, we mean it. Over the course of this year I have been privileged to

visit many of the projects supported by the Local Growth Fund.

I've seen first-hand how our modern Industrial Strategy is making a difference to local communities, businesses and people's daily lives.

From supporting world-leading manufacturing in the Northern Powerhouse and training engineers of the future in the Midlands Engine to investing in future space missions and pioneering cancer research in the South of England, the Local Growth Fund shows the government's commitment to boost economic growth and build an economy which is fit for the future.

Some of the most pioneering projects the LGF has supported this year include:

Goonhilly Earth Station for deep space missions

In February, [Goonhilly Earth Station](#) in Cornwall received a £8.5 million LGF investment to help create the world's first commercial deep-space communications station. It will be capable of tracking future missions to the Moon and Mars. Once the upgrade work is complete, Goonhilly will have the ability to track and control forthcoming robotic and human missions to the Moon and Mars – making a significant technical and economic contribution to European efforts in global space exploration.

The Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre, Manchester

Manchester University's [Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre \(GEIC\)](#) has received £5 million from the LGF to support the opening of their new centre for exploiting the potential of graphene advanced materials. The world-class multi-million-pound centre will help to accelerate the commercial impact of graphene, which is the strongest material ever created.

Liverpool City Centre Connectivity Scheme

A £38.4 million LGF investment is supporting the Liverpool City Centre Connectivity Scheme, which aims to reduce congestion and create a new gateway to Liverpool's historic Lime Street. This is part of a wider £45 million programme to improve connectivity around Liverpool City Centre – by foot, bike, car, coach and bus.

Boeing, Sheffield

A total of £4 million from the LGF scheme supported the new [Boeing Fabrication Factory](#) in Sheffield, which opened in October. The new facility, spanning just over 6,000 square meters, makes components for the 737 and 767 passenger jets from raw materials sourced in the UK. It employs 52 people including 25 high-valued apprentices. The number of jobs and apprenticeships is set to grow over the coming year.

National Centre of Excellence for Degree Apprenticeships

Approximately £500,000 from the LGF supported the opening of Sheffield Hallam University's brand new [National Centre of Excellence for Degree Apprenticeships](#). It is providing a bespoke teaching space and IT equipment for hundreds of learners seeking degree apprenticeships.

Connecting Cumbria project

The LGF contributed £3.6 million to extend the availability of superfast broadband across Cumbria through the [Connecting Cumbria project](#). It will extend broadband coverage to approximately 95%, and encourage more rapid business growth and more job opportunities in rural areas.

Kenilworth Railway Station project

In April, [Kenilworth train station](#) was re-opened after 50 years thanks to a combination of £3.49 million from the LGF, funding from Warwickshire County Council and the Department for Transport's New Stations Fund. This is part of a major rail investment scheme to boost economic regeneration between Nuneaton and Leamington Spa and support sustainable travel, including more reliable signalling between Coventry and Nuneaton, and new stations at Bermuda Park and Coventry Arena.

Northampton College Advanced Engineering Centre

An investment of £2.25 million from the LGF has supported the construction of an [Advanced Construction Engineering Centre](#) in Northampton which is due to be completed in the summer of 2019. The state-of-the-art facility will support learners to develop the skills needed for the most up-to-date construction and engineering technologies.

Catesby Aerodynamic Research Facility

A £4.2 million LGF investment helped build an [aerodynamic testing facility](#) in a disused Victorian railway tunnel in Northamptonshire. The project to convert the 1.7 mile long tunnel into an indoor, fully controllable vehicle testing facility to include wind and simulated weather impact, aerodynamics and emissions enhancing the capability of the UK vehicle industry and leading to the creation of a 4.5 acre science park with offices, workshops and a research facility as well as creating new jobs.

Centre for Cancer Immunology

A Local Growth Fund investment of £4.5 million supported the opening a world-leading [centre for Cancer Immunology](#) at University Hospital Southampton. The development of the UK's first dedicated Centre for Cancer Immunology will place the Solent firmly on the map as a global centre of excellence for the development and delivery of new therapies to cure cancer.

The government has committed £9.1 billion of the Local Growth Fund to Local Enterprise Partnerships through 3 rounds of competitive Growth Deals.

This investment consists of £3.4 billion for the Northern Powerhouse, £1.9 billion for the Midlands, £700 million for the East of England, £2.1 billion for London and the South East, and £970 million for the South West.

The rest of the £12 billion Local Growth Fund is allocated separately from Growth Deals, with the most significant other streams consisting of the £2 billion Home Building Fund and £475 million Local Transport Majors.

[News story: Commuting by bike to become easier in new year following funding boost](#)

Commuting by bike is set to become easier in 2019 as new facilities are set up at stations across the country.

In the latest in a series of funding boosts, £1.6 million of government investment will help people make cycling a seamless part of their daily journey, Cycling and Walking Minister Jesse Norman announced today (29 December 2018).

The Cycle Rail Programme – which has already been backed by almost £36 million from the Department for Transport – is allowing cyclists to make their journeys to work as joined up and sustainable as possible.

Now this further funding will extend the benefits, enabling more people to cycle directly to their station and lock up their bike securely.

Cycling and Walking Minister Jesse Norman said:

Improving cycling access to railway stations is good for cyclists and good for rail users, whether they're commuters or tourists – and it has terrific knock-on benefits, by improving air quality, reducing obesity and increasing economic productivity.

That's the purpose of the government's Cycle Rail Programme. Some £36 million has been invested to date, and I'm delighted we can now raise this by another £1.6 million.

The programme has already improved access to stations for cyclists through a number of initiatives, including cycle hire schemes, brand new footpaths and safe and secure cycle parking.

It has also led to considerable improvements to infrastructure for cyclists in and around railway stations – for example a new cycle path in

Buckinghamshire, which links Aylesbury Station and the National Trust's Waddesdon Manor

The programme has already tripled the number of cycle parking spaces at over 500 stations across the country, bringing the total to over 80,000. This includes the creation of Dutch-style cycle parking hubs at major centres – for example, over 1,100 spaces in St Albans and almost 3,000 spaces at Cambridge station.

The funding is available to Train Operating Companies and the Department for Transport will be writing to them in the near future to outline the application process.

Commenting on behalf of the Walking and Cycling Alliance, Xavier Brice, CEO of Sustrans, said:

Everyone should be able to easily access their railway station by bicycle or on foot. This helps people make a healthy start to their journey while reducing local road congestion and car emissions.

The increased funding is very much welcome as it will help integrate more train journeys with cycling by improving cycle parking and contributing to safe routes for all to use.

The programme is in support of a 2017 manifesto commitment to upgrade facilities for cyclists at railway stations. It is just one of a number of ongoing government measures designed to encourage safe cycling and walking among all age groups.

This includes the announcement last month of a number of ground-breaking road safety initiatives as part of the government's new 2 year action plan to improve cycling and walking safety.

The £1.6 million in funding will top up the £4.08 million that has already been made available for the programme in this financial year.