

News story: David Davis' Teesport Speech: Implementation Period – A bridge to the future partnership between the UK & EU

Thank you for that kind introduction.

Welcome everybody to tropical Teesport.

When the Cabinet meets next week and various of my colleagues moan about how cold it was in Davos I'll suggest they try the North Sea in January.

Teesport – this is the export capital of England really.

Teesport handles more than 40 million tonnes of cargo a year, importing and exporting goods that are used in sectors right across the economy. It acts as a gateway to the world for businesses not just in the North East, but also across the UK and Europe.

And as we get on with the job of leaving the European Union – a move backed overwhelmingly by the people of Teesside – there will be new opportunities for ports like this, as you actually outlined in your speech, and for businesses like the ones in this room to cast their sights beyond Europe, to new markets around the whole world.

Today I want to talk specifically about the bridge that we plan to build, to smooth the path to our new relationship with the European Union after Brexit.

A strictly time limited implementation period, which forms a sound basis for the UK's future prosperity.

That allows us to grasp the benefits of Brexit by setting in place the fundamental building blocks for the country as we leave and a bridge that will give more certainty and clarity for ports like this, and businesses right across the United Kingdom and Europe.

Setting the scene

Firstly – let me set the scene.

At the end of last year, we made an important breakthrough in the Brexit negotiations.

It was a landmark of which we can proud.

Giving confidence to more than 4 million citizens across our continent that their rights would be protected and reassurance to the wide range of businesses and institutions that have a vested interest in our discussions.

It also meant that millions of British people, whichever way they voted in the referendum could be reassured that we are one step closer to securing Britain's open, free trading exit from the EU.

Securing our parliamentary independence as we leave and a sensible deal that ensures a smooth exit from the European Union when we leave on the 29th March 2019.

In the coming days and weeks, my officials and I will travel to Brussels to meet with our counterparts, and talk about the next phase.

We will launch exploratory talks about the future relationship.

But our immediate goal, our immediate goal, will be to reach an agreement on the implementation period.

And because our objectives are largely the same, I am confident that political agreement can be reached at the March European Council.

The rationale

Now I know that there are many people who question why we need an implementation period – some of them very strongly and sincerely.

So I want to explain why we need this period, on the terms the Prime Minister set out in Florence.

Fundamentally it is in no one's interest in the United Kingdom or the European Union to see businesses delay decisions about their future, or rush through contingency plans based on guesses about the future deal rather than planning on the basis of knowledge.

Without a bridge to the future – that is exactly what they would have to do.

We would see delayed investment, slowing job creation and a stifling of hard-won economic growth upon which our continent depends.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that similar arguments for this bridge, this implementation period, have been deployed by both sides.

Firstly – it will allow the United Kingdom time to build new infrastructure, and set up new systems, to support our future partnership and allow for as free and frictionless trade as possible.

It will ensure our businesses are ready, and only have to adjust to one set of changes.

Secondly – it will allow European governments to do the same.

Ports like Teesport, like Rotterdam, like Antwerp, will need time to prepare for our new customs arrangements.

As I told business leaders last year, while we're already planning for all

scenarios, many European Union Governments may not put their plans in place until the deal is struck.

Thirdly – and perhaps most importantly – we need to ensure that the move to our future relationship is in keeping with both sides' legal commitments.

As the Prime Minister set out in Florence, the European Union is not legally able to conclude an agreement with the United Kingdom as an external partner while we are still a Member State.

It is only possible for us to sign this agreement when we are outside the European Union.

And such an agreement on the future partnership will require the appropriate legal ratification, which would itself take time.

This will need to happen during the implementation period.

Extending Article 50, staying a member of the European Union for a further few years, would not solve that problem. And it would not solve the problem either of navigating the legal structures of the European Union.

In fact, it would create a new uncertainty about whether and when we would actually leave the Union.

So, it's only by being outside the EU but continuing with the existing structures of rules and regulation that we can meet the requirements for a smooth, orderly and successful exit.

And Britain's argument is reflected in the European Union's stance.

So there's much we agree on.

We agree the implementation period should be delivered as a part of the Withdrawal Agreement, to be adopted under Article 50. That means it can be adopted quickly and efficiently.

That it should see the UK outside of the European Union, no longer a Member State.

We also agree on the need for this period to have a strict time limit, guided by how long it will take us all to prepare and implement the new processes.

And we agree on the need to base this period on the existing structure of rules and regulations.

Including, crucially, on continued access to each other's markets on current terms.

I want to stress – this is not a zero-sum game.

We both stand to benefit.

Which is why Britain and the European Union are on the same page on the need

for this period.

The details

For such a period to work, both sides must continue to follow the same, stable set of laws and rules.

Without compromising the integrity of the single market, and the customs union to which we will maintain access on current terms.

Maintaining the same regulations across all sectors of the economy – from agriculture to aviation, transport to financial services, as part of a new international treaty.

In keeping with the existing structure of EU rules that will allow a strictly time-limited role for the European Court of Justice during that period.

During this implementation period, people will of course be able to travel between the UK and EU to live and work.

And as agreed in December, we will fulfil the financial commitments we have made during the period of our membership.

With Britain upholding its responsibilities during this period, it follows the European Union will need to respect our rights and our interests too.

And this means we must discuss how regulators and agencies can best provide continuity and clarity for businesses during this period in a way that benefits everyone.

Continued cooperation

Of course, we will leave the institutions of the Union next March.

But we will still make our voice heard.

This will be a relationship where respect flows both ways – as we move from being a member of the European Union to its closest partner.

A relationship which will not just be for the short term, but one which will endure to our mutual benefit for decades and indeed generations to come.

And it's in that spirit we should approach the implementation period as the bridge to this new relationship.

That means each side committing to not taking any action that undermines the other.

Because it usually takes around two full years for major legislation to make its way through the European Union system into law – virtually all of the laws that will come into effect during this time will have been drafted while the United Kingdom was a Member State.

However, we will have to agree a way of resolving concerns if laws are deemed to run contrary to our interests and we have not had our say and we will agree an appropriate process for this temporary period.

So that we have the means to remedy any issues, through dialogue, as soon as possible. It's very, very important. If there are new laws that affect us, we have the means to resolve any issues during that period.

International agreements

Now, the implementation period has implications beyond the relationship between the UK and the European Union.

It's also relevant to our relationships with the rest of the world – both our existing international agreements – struck during our membership of the European Union and the new trading relationships the United Kingdom will build on the outside.

The existing international agreements we are party to should continue to apply during this period.

They are an important part of the existing EU structure of rules and regulations, to which we will remain a part during the implementation period.

And they cover a wide range areas from aviation through to security.

They also include the trade agreements the EU has struck while we were a member. So this matters particularly with respect to Teesport.

These trade deals are – by their definition – mutually beneficial.

So whether you're a Dutch manufacturer or a British farmer, it's in the UK and EU's interests that the deals that have already been signed, stand during this period.

That's also in the interests of countries who have signed those trade deals with the European Union.

So since the terms of trade between the UK and EU will not have changed, a simple step forward is for all parties, all parties, to agree that the United Kingdom will continue to be party to these agreements while we continue to work on ensuring they maintain their effects in perpetuity.

And, of course, the biggest international challenge we face is ensuring the security of our continent.

Throughout this period, as in our future partnership, the United Kingdom and European Union will need to work together and respond to the ever changing threats we face in areas from terrorism to cyber crime.

There are both known and unknown threats.

Therefore, there should not be any obstacles, any obstacles all, to us

jointly deciding to take action in the face of these shared challenges during that implementation period.

Our top priority will always be the safety of our citizens.

What will change

While the aim of the implementation period is to provide certainty and continuity, we must keep sight of the fact that this is a bridge to a new future partnership.

Where, crucially, the United Kingdom is outside of the single market, and outside of the customs union.

Where the United Kingdom courts are sovereign once more.

And where the United Kingdom can take advantage of its status as an independent trading nation, forging its own way in the world.

So, during the implementation period, the UK must be able to prepare for this new relationship not just with the European Union, but with the rest of the world too.

The United Kingdom will be able to design a new immigration system, that works in the national interest.

That welcomes talent from around the world, and people who want to come to Britain to work hard and contribute.

During the period, when people from the EU move to the UK freely, we will have a registration system in place.

It will have no bearing on people's ability to work or visit.

But the system will allow us to better plan for our future public services, and prepare for our future immigration system.

And as an independent country, no longer a member of the European Union, the United Kingdom will once again have its own trading policy. This is a vital aspect of this period.

For the first time in more than 40 years, we will be able to step out and sign new trade deals with old friends – and new allies – around the globe.

Increasingly, we are trading with the key emerging markets of the world in Asia and the Americas.

The UK's fastest growing export markets between 2005 and 2014 included countries like China and Brazil.

These are the future.

We will be able to build on this in coming years.

Of course maintaining access to each other's markets on current terms means that we will replicate the effects of the EU customs union during the implementation period including new rights and obligations of trading arrangements entered into by the European Union.

But participating in a customs union should not and will not preclude us from formally negotiating – and indeed signing – independent trade agreements.

Although, of course, they would not enter into force until the implementation period has ended.

Talking to other countries about our future trade will allow businesses – like those in this room – to take action and make decisions based on the new opportunities that will be open to them.

It will also allow us to kick-start a new global race to the top in quality and standards.

Because Britain cannot outcompete emerging economies with cheap labour.

There is no future in us trying to be cheaper than China, or other emerging economies which have enormous low wage cost advantages.

Instead we must work with our international partners to drive up quality and standards.

And with 90% of future global growth expected to happen outside Europe's borders – driven by developments in new technologies and innovations and industries that haven't even yet been invented, the premium for agility in national policy-making has never been higher.

Over the coming years and decades we, as a country, need to be flexible and nimble to take advantages of the changing landscape of the global economy.

We start from an incredibly strong position.

A world leader in engineering, life sciences, medicine, media, commerce, law.

From our skilled workforce to our world-class universities or the simple fact that English is the language of business throughout the entire world, we are well placed to take advantage of these new opportunities.

So getting ready for that is all part of our preparation for when the implementation period is over – and Britain and the European Union are enjoying their new partnership.

Because we want companies to have more confidence, to take investment decisions, to exchange contracts, to employ workers, to make plans.

Conclusion

The value of the implementation period is strongly correlated to the speed at which political agreement is reached.

Many decisions which businesses and governments need to take have long lead times.

From investing in a new office or a factory, to hiring people. Businesses like those represented in this room need to start making these decisions well before they become operational.

Speed is of the essence.

Because the longer we leave talking about the implementation period, the less valuable it becomes to the businesses right across Europe.

The next few months therefore are unprecedented. An unprecedented chance for the United Kingdom and the European Union to work together to build on the progress we have already made and provide that much needed clarity and security.

For our firms.

For our economies.

And for our citizens.

That's what they expect us to do. And that's what we will do.

Thank you.

[News story: New Shetland radar to better protect UK Northern airspace](#)

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, visited the site of the new £10m Remote Radar Head facility, at Saxa Vord, Unst, Shetland, to inspect its progress.

The radar will improve RAF and NATO understanding of the airspace north of Britain and further out across the Norwegian Sea, improving the UK's sovereign capability at a time of heightened Russian military activity. It will see the island return to the role it performed during the 1960s and 70s, when the site was used as an early warning radar on NATO's northern flank.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We will always protect our skies from Russian aggression. This radar is a vital part of the UK's defences as we react to intensifying global threats and reinforce our ability to tackle them. Russia's actions are not limited to Europe's eastern borders -

– the threat to British livelihoods is severe and real.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, Chief of the Air Staff, said:

The radar system at Saxa Vord is an important part of ensuring that the RAF can fully protect both the UK's airspace and that of our NATO allies, in the face of increasing pressure from Russia.

Right at the tip of Shetland, Saxa Vord is a very remote site, so I'm extremely grateful to the team who have been working hard through the cold of winter, with snow and 120 mph gales, to ensure that the construction has remained on schedule.

The Saxa Vord Radar head will provide key information on aircraft movements to the north of the UK and feed the nationwide Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) operation which is responsible for policing international and UK airspace from RAF Lossiemouth in Moray and RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire, as well as supporting civil air traffic control.

During the last five years, the RAF has carried out 69 QRA launches. Just last week (15 Jan), two Typhoon aircraft from RAF Lossiemouth were scrambled to intercept two approaching Russian military aircraft which did not respond to the air traffic control authorities.

The RAF monitored the jets as they passed through international airspace, before escorting the Russian Blackjacks out of the UK's area of interest. At no time did the Russian bombers enter UK sovereign airspace.

Defence, Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation, managed the redevelopment of the site and delivered the new infrastructure and capability for the RAF, commissioning the works through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Services. The Saxa Vord remote radar head will be operated remotely by RAF personnel and contractors will only attend the site for maintenance.

Simon Dakin, Director Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance, for Defence Equipment and Support, said:

The Air Defence and Electronic Warfare Delivery Team has shown outstanding innovation and teamwork to deliver this vital capability ahead of time and within budget.

During his two day visit to Shetland, Sir Stephen Hillier also toured the adjacent Saxa Vord RAF and Exhibition Centre and met representatives from Shetland Islands Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Sullom Voe and Shetland Space Centre Ltd, as well as delivery personnel from FCO Services & ADEWS, Brody-Forbes, 90 SU, Serco, Mobile Met Unit and McDonald Scaffolding.

Scotland is home to more than 10,000 regular and 4,000 reserve armed forces personnel, whilst Scottish industry benefits from defence spending £1.5bn with it each year. This investment supports 9,750 private sector and highly skilled jobs in Scotland.

[News story: Preferred Candidate Selected for Charity Commission Chair](#)

Baroness Stowell of Beeston was Leader of the House of Lords and the Lord Privy Seal until July 2016.

Tina Stowell was made a peer in January 2011 and joined the Government in September the same year. As a junior minister she led the landmark Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act through the House of Lords in 2013 before being promoted to Minister for Communities. She received awards from the Spectator, Stonewall and PinkNews later that year. She was promoted to Leader of the House of Lords and the Lord Privy Seal in 2014 and re-appointed to the same Cabinet post after the 2015 General Election.

Before joining the House of Lords Tina Stowell's career over the previous 25 years crisscrossed government, politics and the media. Until September 2010, she was the BBC's Head of Corporate Affairs. Prior to this, she spent a short spell working for Granada Media, and for David Frost at Paradine, his own independent television and film production company.

She was a civil servant for ten years, working at the Ministry of Defence in London, the British Embassy in Washington and 10 Downing Street from 1991 to 1996. She left the Civil Service at the age of 28 and was awarded the MBE in the 1996 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Baroness Stowell was born and brought up in Beeston, just outside of Nottingham. She attended a local comprehensive and moved to London aged 18 to join the civil service.

In December 2016 she received an Honorary Doctorate from Nottingham University. She is currently a member of the House of Lords Communications Select Committee.

The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities across England and Wales, it maintains the charity register and actively supports our nation's incredible charities to strengthen and grow.

The Select Committee for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport will hold a pre-appointment hearing with Baroness Stowell on 20 February.

The Committee's conclusions will be considered carefully before deciding

whether or not to proceed with the appointment.

Notes to Editors

1. The appointment of the [Charity Commission](#) Chair will be made on merit, and following a fair, open, and transparent competition, regulated by the Commissioner for Public appointments.
2. The appointment will be made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office Governance Code for Public Appointments](#).
3. Under the Charities Act 2011, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport makes the appointment of the Charity Commission Chair.
4. The current Charity Commission Chair, William Shawcross, has agreed to extend his tenure until 23 February 2018 when the new chair will take up post. [Read his biography](#).
5. It is a requirement of the Cabinet Office Governance Code for Public Appointments that the political activity of successful candidates be publicly disclosed. Baroness Stowell has declared that: She was leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Lords from 2014-2016; she has spoken on behalf of the Conservative Party and candidates during elections campaigns; and has canvassed on behalf of the Conservatives during election campaigns.
6. If her appointment as Charity Commission Chair is confirmed following a hearing by the Select Committee on 20th February, though not a statutory requirement, she has decided to resign immediately her party membership, the Conservative Whip in the House of Lords and become an independent, unaffiliated peer.

[Press release: Ministry of Justice launches new facilities management company](#)

The new company will take over the delivery of the prison Facilities Management (FM) services previously provided by Carillion such as cleaning, reactive maintenance, landscaping and planned building repair work.

Around 1,000 staff, including 100 contractors, who were previously employed by Carillion will now move across to the new company, Gov Facility Services Limited, with their terms and conditions of employment preserved.

These services, which are provided to 52 prison establishments located across South West, South Central, Kent & Sussex, Greater London and East of England, will continue unaffected in the transfer.

Justice Secretary, David Gauke said:

We have robust contingency plans and are taking appropriate action to ensure that the prison FM services continue to operate normally.

I want to reassure staff that their jobs are secure and essential to making prisons safer and more decent.

Permanent Secretary, Richard Heaton said:

The Ministry of Justice's (MOJ) priority is to ensure continuity of service. We are implementing our contingency plan for the prisons facilities management contracts held by Carillion.

This means the work that was undertaken by Carillion will move to a new government-owned company set up for this purpose. I'd like to thank all the Carillion staff who are moving across into the new company, and reassure them that their jobs are secure. The vital work they do to maintain and improve our prisons is greatly valued and appreciated.

The new company has already been created and will take responsibility for the prison FM services as soon as the formal transfer of staff has occurred.

FM is a critical service for Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS) and there is an ongoing need for a continuing service.

MOJ and HMPPS will work with all relevant stakeholders to ensure a stable service which retains skilled and knowledgeable staff working on the FM contracts.

The government has been clear that its priority is to ensure the smooth running of public services. Our robust contingency planning and preparations for the transition to Gov Facility Services Limited has meant there have so far not been any disruptions to prison maintenance.

[Press release: Warrington's £34 million flood defence scheme officially complete](#)

More than 2,000 Warrington homes and businesses will benefit from the town's multi-million pound flood defence scheme, officially opened today (26 January) by Environment Agency Chief Executive, Sir James Bevan and the town's Mayor, Councillor Les Morgan.

The scheme is one of the largest value flood defence projects constructed in the region in recent times, and will significantly reduce flood risk to the town which has been no stranger to flooding – given it sits in naturally low-lying land and within the path of the River Mersey and its tributaries.

The £34 million scheme brings increased flood protection to properties in 9 residential and public areas of Warrington, better protecting the hundreds of families and businesses who have experienced flooding in the past and are aware of the destruction it can bring.

Sir James Bevan, Environment Agency Chief Executive, said:

The scheme not only brings flood risk benefits but the work in the area is also good news for walkers, birdwatchers and wildlife. It's been great to see the Environment Agency working together in partnership to better protect Warrington – a fine example of what can be achieved by working with others.

These new flood defences will not only benefit hundreds of homes and businesses in the area but will also safeguard critical infrastructure, vital in keeping the town moving.

Due to the scale and complexity of works, the scheme was delivered in 3 phases – parts of which have been effectively operating for some time. Phase one (the Knutsford Road section) was put to the test during the 2013 December high tides, preventing some 200 properties from being flooded. The predicted value of damage to properties that would have otherwise occurred, covered the actual cost of this section of the scheme.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Warrington's new £34 million flood scheme will reduce the flood risk to over 2,000 homes and businesses, and protect vital infrastructure helping to bring investment to the area.

This scheme is an excellent example of how working together with councils and local businesses allows us to make the most of government funding to secure the best possible defences for communities. By 2021, we will have invested £47 million in flood defences to better protect 4,280 homes in Cheshire.

Comprising 5km of flood walls and 2.2km of embankment, the 7.2km scheme has improved amenity and recreational opportunities, as well as habitat conditions along the river corridor.

The widening and clearing of formerly impassable footpaths has improved connectivity, as well as views of the river and across the town, and extensive tree planting has created many pleasant vantage points for walkers and cyclists.

At the Twiggeries site behind Kingsway North, a 500m section of Padgate Brook has been realigned to create a more natural look and 5 hectares of reed bed habitat has been established to attract wildlife to the area.

The town's main park, Victoria Park, has seen major improvement works to the main entrance, and a 'wavy-topped' railing along the road frontage at Knutsford Road makes a strong urban design statement.

The scheme was designed not only to be functional but to be aesthetically fitting within its environment. Children from local primary schools were challenged to create the winning artworks that adorn the defence walls, from Kingsway North all the way along Knutsford Road.

Funding for the scheme came from a number of sources. The majority – £29m – came from Government Grant-in-Aid, the remaining came from the partners the Environment Agency worked with to deliver the scheme.

The Environment Agency worked closely with Warrington Borough Council, who contributed £4 million towards the scheme, of which £1 million was 'works in kind'. Scottish Power, who owns and operates a high voltage substation in the Howley area that serves almost half of the town, also contributed £2 million to the scheme to better protect this key piece of Warrington infrastructure.

As well as contributing funding, the Council was a key partner in cementing a strong relationship with stakeholders and landowners within the scheme's footprint.

Councillor Hans Mundry, Warrington Borough Council's executive board member for public realm, said:

The work done by the Environment Agency will bring peace of mind to many Warrington people as we work together to protect homes and businesses along the Mersey.

It is more than just functional though, as you will see if you take a walk by the river. It is an attractive addition to the waterfront and has improved the ecology and helped protect wildlife in the area.

You can view [aerial drone footage of the Warrington flood defence scheme on YouTube](#).

Drone footage filmed by Suave Air Photos