

[Press release: David Davis concludes visit to Estonia](#)

David Davis has pledged that the UK will remain the greatest ally of our European partners in matters of security and defence after Brexit.

The Brexit Secretary made the remarks following a visit to Estonia, where 800 British troops are stationed as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP). eFP comprises of four multinational NATO battalions in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland designed to protect Europe's eastern flank.

David Davis held political meetings with Estonian Europe Minister Maati Maasikas and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee Marko Mihkelson. Reaffirming the UK's commitment to European security, the Brexit Secretary said the UK will offer to continue to contribute expertise and assets to EU operations, cooperate on sanctions and agree joint positions on foreign policy as part of a deep security partnership with the EU after Brexit.

He also highlighted the UK and Estonia's shared values, including around the importance of free trade, and reiterated the UK's pledge that no country will be financially worse off over the current budget plan because of the UK's decision to leave the EU.

Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, David Davis said:

"In exiting the EU the UK is not pulling up the drawbridge or turning away from our friends across the Continent.

"We will remain our European neighbours' greatest ally in security and defence, cooperating fully in order to tackle the global threats we jointly face.

"And we will ensure that no Members will need to pay more or receive less money over the remainder of the current budget plan as a result of our decision to leave."

[Press release: Welsh Secretary: Now is the time to deliver transformational change for the North Wales economy](#)

- Budget commitment to a North Wales Growth Deal gives region the scope,

the power and the resources to act.

- UK Government ambitions for cross-border working presents huge economic opportunities for the region.

Speaking at the Wrexham Business Professionals dinner, Mr Cairns will say that there are exciting times ahead for North Wales but that partnership working was crucial to best exploit cross-border opportunities, and the support offered through growth deals and the upcoming Industrial Strategy.

The speech comes 24-hours after the UK Government confirmed a series of Budget investments set to bring real growth opportunities to the North Wales region.

The UK Government has already delivered the £1.2 billion Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and, earlier this year, the Prime Minister signed the Swansea Bay City Region Deal. The Chancellor yesterday confirmed that he will now turn his attention to delivering a growth deal for North Wales and to consider the funding of specific projects.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

The simple fact is that growth and city deals recognise that local people know their areas best. This is North Wales' opportunity to benefit from this movement and I'm delighted that we are in a position to look at the financial aspect of a deal for the region.

We will now look in detail at the proposals which draw on the strength of the east of Wales as a centre for advanced manufacturing and North West Wales for energy production and make the most of its connections to the Northern Powerhouse.

The Secretary of State will also address the crucial aspect of cross border working and the benefits North Wales can draw from it to bring prosperity to the region. He'll highlight the plans announced by the Chancellor for a number of potential rail schemes designed to improve journey times on the North Wales Main Line, as well as providing funding to explore proposals to improve journey times on the Wrexham to Bidston line.

He added:

Cross border connectivity is crucial. As we work towards a growth deal for North Wales I am firmly focused on tapping into cross border opportunities – linking the proposed new power station on Anglesey to nuclear expertise in Manchester University and supporting advanced manufacturing on Deeside to benefit Toyota and Nissan investments in Sunderland and Derbyshire.

The UK Government is committed to strengthening the links between the economies of England and Wales. We will work with local authorities and local businesses on both sides of the border to

encourage growth, investment and innovation to bring prosperity to all corners of our nation.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Wrexham Business Professionals group is made up of highly skilled professional firms of solicitors, accountants and other businesses working together to raise the profile of expertise that exists in the region and beyond.

Press release: Man arrested for illegal poaching

Two further suspects remain at large and the Environment Agency is urging anyone with information to report it to their incident hotline.

It is suspected they were poaching on Waskerley Beck, Wolsingham, using an illegal gaff – a one meter long metal hook – which they used to take 13 sea trout. Eleven of the dead fish were females ready to spawn. Between them they were carrying around 35,000 eggs.

Environment Agency officers made the arrest at 2100hrs on 21 November 2017. During the operation they seized the gaff, the dead fish and a landing net. The investigation is ongoing.

The Environment Agency's Kevin Summerson said:

This level of illegal activity could have a serious impact on the sustainability of future stocks of sea trout in the River Wear. That's why we take reports of suspected poaching seriously and work closely with the police to take action where appropriate.

At this time of year salmon and sea trout are returning to rivers to spawn and protecting returning fish is vital to maintaining a healthy fish population.

We'll continue to target all aspects of illegal fishing activity, particularly where serious illegal and potentially damaging methods are used.

Reporting illegal fishing

Anyone discovered committing offences could face a substantial fine in court. The Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal fishing by calling 0800 80 70 60.

All income from rod licence sales is used to fund Environment Agency work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, including improving habitats for fish and facilities for anglers, tackling illegal fishing and working with partners to encourage people to give fishing a go.

Buying a rod licence is quick and easy – you can buy them online at the Post Office.

[News story: Defence Minister visits small Ipswich company which has played big part in Britain's new aircraft carriers](#)

HMS Queen Elizabeth, the first of Britain's two new flagship 65,000 tonne aircraft carriers, sailed back into her home base in Portsmouth this week ahead of being formally commissioned into the Royal Navy fleet by Her Majesty the Queen early next month.

Tex Special Projects Ltd, based just outside of Ipswich, Suffolk, played an important role in constructing the Flying Control Room (FLYCO) on-board. The FLYCO is the hub from which the Armed Forces will direct air operations from the Carrier at sea, launching the UK's new F35 jets from her enormous flight deck.

The Flying Control Room on HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The team of just 15 engineers and support staff provided structural, engineering and glazing systems for the FLYCO for both Carriers. The Minister met with employees and was shown a sample of Tex's British designed Maxi-View Tempest glass installed in the FLYCO. The multi-layered laminated panels are over three meters high, making them the largest single panes of glass used on any Royal Navy vessel.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

The largest panes of glass for the biggest ships in Royal Navy history were designed here, by this incredibly impressive small

company. Soon our sailors will be watching, through these panes of glass, our F-35 fighter jets take off to defend our country. Our new aircraft carriers are a floating example of British industrial ingenuity and they have helped to boost local businesses right up and down the UK.

Chris Parker, Managing Director of Tex Special Projects Ltd said:

Tex Holdings have long been involved in a variety of Ministry of Defence projects such as designing visual control rooms within air traffic control centres for Royal Air Force and Royal Navy air stations across the UK. For this project we had to design and overcome some very demanding technical challenges, delivering a near uninterrupted 290-degree field of view of the flight deck, which is unparalleled in any nation's warships.

We feel incredibly privileged to have been a part of this very prestigious capital project. For 12 years we have provided our technical expertise and supplied the FLYCO and all the ship's windows, wipers and blades. Without the Queen Elizabeth Class programme the Special Projects Company would never have been formed, so we are extremely grateful for the exceptional opportunity it afforded us.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin paid a visit to Tex Special Projects Ltd.

Tex is one of the hundreds of British small to medium enterprises that has supported the build of the Carriers, which has been a truly national endeavor involving 700 businesses and suppliers. The programme has brought together the best of British industry, with construction taking place across six main cities, involving more than 10,000 people.

Last year saw the MOD's direct spend with smaller business increase by over 10% as the department continues efforts to make it easier for SMEs to win defence business, maximising the innovative solutions they can offer the Armed Forces.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin has launched initiatives such as a [new Supplier Portal](#), which brings together a range of useful information for new and prospective suppliers in one place for the first time, as well as a dedicated Twitter account to flag opportunities to SMEs.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin paid a visit to Tex Special Projects Ltd.

Press release: Sex offender who targeted children online has sentenced increased

Sex offender, Paul Leighton, has had his sentence increased to 20 years in prison

A sex offender who befriended and then blackmailed children online to get them to engage in sexual activity will spend more time in prison after his sentence was referred to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Paul Leighton, 33, befriended a number of children around the world using fake social media accounts before persuading them to send sexual photos and videos of themselves. If they refused, he would threaten to tell their family members.

Other children were forced into performing sexual acts on their siblings and Leighton also persuaded a 14 year old child in America to rape his baby niece.

Leighton was originally sentenced to 16 years in prison with a 6 year extended licence period at Newcastle Crown Court. His sentence was increased to 20 years in prison with a 7 year extended licence period.

The Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP presented the case in Court today and said:

This is a deeply disturbing and serious case. Leighton callously targeted vulnerable children and subjected them to a series of threats, frightening them into complying with his sexual demands.

Such terrible offending deserves a tougher punishment and this increased sentence takes into account the seriousness of this offending.