

News story: Brexit Minister concludes two day tour of Scotland

Reaffirming the Government's commitment to work with all parts of the UK as we leave the EU, Minister for Exiting the EU Robin Walker embarked on a two day tour across Scotland this week.

With negotiations firmly underway, the visit comes as the UK Government has stepped up its engagement with businesses from all parts of the United Kingdom. During the trip, the Minister travelled across the country, hearing from a wide range of Scottish industries, from farming and fishing to life sciences and energy.

He attended roundtables on financial services and oil and gas, and met with representatives from the Scottish Whisky Association and the Scottish Fishermen's Federation. He also paid visits to the Easter Grangemuir Farm in Fife and ROVOP in Aberdeen.

UK Government Minister for Exiting the EU, Robin Walker, said:

Over the past two days, I've met with many of Scotland's most important sectors about their priorities as we leave the European Union.

We've been crystal clear that we want businesses to work as freely as they do now, which is why we're determined to work with businesses from all parts of the UK to protect our internal market and get a deal that works in the interest of the whole of the United Kingdom."

Earlier this month, the UK Government introduced the Repeal Bill which will transfer all EU law into UK law on exit day. As part of the process, it is expected that there will be a significant increase in the decision making power of each devolved administration.

As powers are repatriated from the EU, the Government will ensure they are exercised within the UK in a way that ensures no new barriers to living and doing business within the UK are created.

This will protect the UK internal market, ensuring we have the ability to strike the best trade deals around the world, protect our common resources, and fulfil our international obligations.

The UK Government is continuing to have intensive discussions with the devolved administrations, which will identify where we need to retain common frameworks and what these should be.

[News story: Commercialising quantum: extra £3 million available](#)

Additional funding for UK businesses and researchers to realise the potential of quantum technologies brings total up to £9 million.

Up to £9 million is now available for UK businesses and research organisations to work together to understand the feasibility of quantum technologies and develop the market.

Innovate UK will invest up to £6 million, with an additional £3 million co-funding announced from the [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council](#) (EPSRC). It is being run as part of the [UK National Quantum Technologies Programme](#), government's £270 million commitment.

The opportunities of quantum

The emerging quantum technologies sector is valued at £1 billion and offers substantial opportunities for innovative UK businesses.

We are seeking collaborative feasibility studies that improve understanding of the technical capabilities of quantum technologies, and the market for these products or services.

Your project could be:

- technical, establishing the feasibility of devices that exploit quantum phenomena
- non-technical, analysing future markets, applications or business models

Competition information

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is 20 September 2017
 - projects must be collaborative, with either a UK business or research and technology organisation as the lead
 - projects should last between 3 months and one year
 - total project costs should be between £40,000 and £500,000
-

News story: Vans to go greener and cleaner under new plans

Changes to driver licensing rules will make it easier for van drivers to switch to electric vehicles, the government has announced today (28 July 2017).

Van drivers will be able to operate heavier electric or gas-powered vehicles without having to apply for a new licence, as part of moves to improve air quality in towns and cities across the country.

The reforms are a step towards the government's aim for nearly all cars and vans on our roads to be zero emission by 2050.

Currently, a motorist with an ordinary category B licence for a car can drive a van weighing up to 3,500kg. Cleaner vans, especially those powered by electricity from batteries, are generally heavier than conventional diesel vans because of the battery they carry. This reduces the amount of goods they can carry or means van drivers have to apply for a category C licence with the associated costs and medical report requirements.

Now the Department for Transport has published [plans to allow motorists to drive vans weighing up to 4,250kg](#) if they are powered by electricity, natural gas, LPG or hydrogen.

Transport Minister Jesse Norman said:

Vans have become essential to our economy and are vital for our builders, small businesses and delivery drivers. We have more of them on our roads than ever before. That's a good sign for the economy, but our challenge is to try to tackle their impact on air quality.

We want to make it easier for businesses to opt for cleaner vehicles, and these proposals are designed to do just that.

Road traffic estimates show there has been a rapid rise in light goods vehicle traffic over the last 20 years, in part powered by the growth in internet shopping.

In 2016 vans clocked up 49.1 billion vehicle miles – an increase of 23% when compared with 2006. Vans spend much of their time driving around our towns and cities and over 96% of them are diesel powered so making them greener is essential for people's health and the environment.

Head of Fleet at Ocado Stuart Skingsley said:

At Ocado, we are very keen to incorporate the latest low-emission technologies in our vehicle fleet, but we have been unable to do so, due to the extra weight of the technology and category B licence restrictions.

This vital derogation would allow us to field the latest alternatively fuelled vans, reducing harmful emissions and improving the UK's air quality.

A [public consultation](#) is now open on the proposed new measures and will last 12 weeks. They will help level the playing field by addressing the payload penalty which currently puts operators of cleaner vans at a commercial disadvantage compared to operators of equivalent conventionally-fuelled vehicles.

[News story: The impact of qualification reform on A level science practical work](#)

This study explores the perspectives of teachers implementing the changes to A level science practical work after one year.

Ofqual has today (28 July 2017) published its report on [‘The impact of qualification reform on A level science practical work – Paper 1: Teacher perspectives after one year’](#)

Reformed A level science qualifications were introduced for first teaching in September 2015. The assessment arrangements for practical work have changed significantly and Ofqual is conducting a programme of research to evaluate the impact of the reform on students' practical skills. This report describes the first study from this programme, in which a series of interviews were conducted in 2016 with teachers. They were asked for their initial reflections on how the reform had affected the teaching and learning of practical skills.

On balance, most teachers perceived the reform, or at least many aspects of it, to be positive for teaching and learning practical skills. They suggested the new arrangements compared favourably to those that were previously in place, which had, prior to their removal, become beset by significant issues around reliability and fairness. Many suggested the post-reform assessment arrangements allowed greater flexibility to embed practical work into the

course and encouraged a more 'hands on' approach to practical work.

The findings also suggest schools and colleges have not been affected in a uniform way by the reform. The magnitude and nature of the impact is dependent on the characteristics of the school or college. And there was some evidence of contradictory views about how the reform would affect student motivation for engaging with practical work.

Press release: Birmingham and Liverpool through to final phase of assessment process for 2022 Commonwealth Games bid

Birmingham and Liverpool have both passed the preliminary assessment phase in the UK city selection process for a potential 2022 Commonwealth Games bid, Sports Minister Tracey Crouch has announced today.

Both cities have been the subject of inspection visits in the last few weeks attended by an independent assessment panel, Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) representatives and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport officials.

The assessment panel has recommended to government that both cities have sufficiently developed a clear initial vision as to how they would construct a compelling games programme which meets CGF requirements and which would leave a legacy for their city, the region and the UK. The panel found that Birmingham and Liverpool's current planning demonstrates sufficient merit that both cities be given the opportunity to further develop their proposals over the coming weeks.

Birmingham and Liverpool will now undertake further, more detailed work on the cost, practicability and delivery of their plans with both cities asked to submit final proposals to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in August.

In early September the independent assessment panel will make a recommendation to the government on a preferred city before the government then makes a final decision whether to submit a formal bid to the Commonwealth Games Federation based on the overall value for money of hosting the Games.

Sports Minister Tracey Crouch said:

It is right that a proper and rigorous assessment is carried out before we decide if a formal bid for the 2022 Commonwealth Games is submitted. I've been encouraged by the commitment and enthusiasm that both Birmingham and Liverpool have demonstrated so far in the process but it will be crucial that their final plans demonstrate good value for money, how they would leave a lasting legacy and showcase the best of Britain.

We have a great track record of hosting the biggest events in sport in the UK and I am sure that if we were to host the Games in 2022 the British people would give a warm welcome to the world and get right behind the event.

Commonwealth Games England chief executive Paul Blanchard said:

An English Commonwealth Games in 2022 would be an inspirational event and create a lasting legacy for the whole country. Five years ago this week, the country was gripped by London 2012, the best Olympic and Paralympic Games ever staged. Then in 2014 the UK hosted the memorable Commonwealth Games in Glasgow showing beyond doubt what a spectacular success an English games would be.

Birmingham and Liverpool have two fantastic sets of plans and either city would stage a Games to remember for athletes and spectators alike. There is still a huge amount of work to be done by both Government and the cities themselves but what we have seen so far promises some very exciting times ahead.

Earlier this week Team England topped the medal table at the Youth Commonwealth Games, a home Games in 2022 would give the best possible platform to our outstanding young sporting talent.

Notes to Editors

For further information please contact:

Jose Riera, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on 020 7211 6971 / 07825 057405

The independent assessment panel is made up of the following people:

Nicky Roche (Chair)

Nicky is currently a Non-Executive Director of UK Sport and Chair of the UK Sport Major Events Panel. She is also Director of Strategy at Sporting Assets, a social enterprise supporting communities and local organisations to use sport for wide social impact, including how to fund and operate local sports facilities. Before that, Nicky was Chief Executive of TDFHub 2014, responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of the 2014 Tour de France Grand Depart and before that was Director of Operations at the Government Olympic

Executive during London 2012.

Jan Paterson

Jan Paterson, MBE, is CEO of the British Olympic Foundation and Director of Olympic Relations at the British Olympic Association. She has participated in a myriad of roles including; Chef de Mission, Deputy Chef de Mission and Press Attaché at every Olympic and Olympic Winter Games between 1992 – 2016, three Commonwealth Games and four World University Games. Jan was appointed Team GB's first female Chef de Mission and more recently was Chef de Mission for Team England at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, where the team topped the medal table. She is a member of the IAAF's Conflict Resolution Advisory Group and was recently appointed as a member of the 2019 European Games Co-ordination Commission.

Charles Johnston

Charles is currently Property Director at Sport England where he has overall responsibility for Sport England's investment in sports facilities across the country. A qualified engineer who also has a Master's in Business Administration, Charles started at Sport England in 2008 from MDA Consulting where he was Chairman and CEO. He began his career at Jaguar before joining Sainsbury's where he helped to develop Homebase stores and the Savacentre Hypermarkets as Project Manager. He progressed to become Director of Construction and Facilities.

Ian McKenzie

Ian is an Architect and Director of McKenzie Sports Architecture Ltd, a consultancy specialising in venue master planning for major sports events and the design and development of sports facilities. Previously he was Head of Venue and Village Development and Integration at Glasgow 2014 Ltd, the Organising Company for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. He had responsibility for planning and managing the development of the competition and non-competition venues and the Commonwealth Games Athletes' Village.

Paul Blanchard

Paul is Chief Executive of Commonwealth Games England (CGE), the member association of the Commonwealth Games Federation. CGE is the organisation that leads and manages the participation of the English team at the Commonwealth Games, working closely with each sport's National Governing Body, Sport England and the Games' Organising Committee. Before that Paul was Chair of Active Surrey and Chief Executive of The Surrey Sports Park, a £36m elite training venue at The University of Surrey and has been involved in sport for over 25 years.

David Brooker

Most recently David was Director of Sport at DCMS. Before that he was Director of Legacy at the Government Olympic Executive during London 2012. David has also worked in the Home Office and the Northern Ireland Office,

where he remains a Non-Executive Director.