

Speech: Sajid Javid's speech to the LGA conference 2017

Good afternoon everyone.

This week we're marking the LGA's 20th birthday, a great achievement.

When the association was formed, back in the spring of 1997, the national political scene was very different from today

We had a Conservative Prime Minister leading a minority government and facing big questions over Europe...

A charismatic, populist leader of the opposition promising the earth to young voters...

The Liberal Democrats could fit all their MPs in a minibus...

Plus ca change, as they say...

The LGA's 20th anniversary should be a time for celebration.

For focussing on the very best of local government, highlighting successes and raising a glass to future achievements.

But this year, I don't think any of us are in the mood for revelry.

In the past 4 months we have seen terrorist attacks in Westminster, in Manchester, at London Bridge, and in Finsbury Park.

And of course, last month saw the tragic catastrophe at Grenfell Tower.

So much of the response has been exemplary.

Selfless men and women from our emergency services, in local government and across the public sector working all hours to keep their communities safe.

These local heroes have shown what public service really means.

They have my thanks, and those of a grateful nation.

I would also like to pay tribute to the role that you in this room have played.

The past months have not been easy.

But, again and again, I've seen you coming together to support each other through these testing times.

Nine London councils have been involved in the recovery at Grenfell – and I am grateful to the LGA for the work they have been doing with my department

to ensure that other towers around the country are safe for the families that live in them.

But none of this changes the fact that, in Britain in 2017, the fire at Grenfell simply should not have been possible.

Nor does it change the fact that there were serious failings in the immediate aftermath; failings that created unnecessary suffering for residents who had already suffered too much.

So while I don't want to ignore or disregard the amazing work the LGA has done over the past 20 years, you'll forgive me if, today, I reflect on what has gone wrong in local government – and what we need to do to, together, to fix it.

Grenfell and the crisis of trust

I've been in politics and government for 7 years now.

And nothing I've seen in that time hit me harder than what happened to the people of Grenfell Tower.

It was a disaster on a scale we hadn't seen for many years.

The television pictures were harrowing.

But what the survivors saw and experienced...

Well, I cannot even begin to imagine how hard it must be for them.

When I visited the community support centre I spoke to one family that lived about halfway up the tower.

Mum, dad and children.

When the fire broke out they followed official advice: they stayed put and waited for help.

But as the flames and smoke closed in, the father decided it was time to get his family out.

And as they headed for the exits he stayed at the back, making sure nobody was left behind.

The mother led her children to safety.

But in the smoke and confusion, she lost touch with her husband.

When I met her she was hopeful they were about to be reunited, that she would see her husband again soon.

When I met her son, he was trying to find the words to tell his mother that his father's body had been found in the stairwell.

It's not a conversation I'll ever forget.

I'm not afraid to say that it shook me to my core.

Like my parents, that family had come to this country in search of opportunity, in search of a better life.

And we, as a country, failed them.

Just as we failed all the victims of that terrible tragedy.

There are many questions that need answering about the Grenfell Fire.

There may have been failures by individuals, failures by organisations and failures of public policy at all levels stretching back several decades.

The public inquiry will get to the bottom of what happened.

We must allow that inquiry, and the criminal investigation, to run their course, and be careful not to prejudge or prejudice either of them.

But, speaking to survivors, people in the local community, and people in tower blocks around the country, one thing is abundantly clear.

Local government is facing a looming crisis of trust.

A decade ago, up in Blackpool, David Cameron said that you can't drop a fully-formed democracy out of an aeroplane at 40,000 feet.

He was talking about foreign wars and military interventions, but it's a lesson that all of us here today would do well to remember.

Because all politics is local.

Whether you're councillor or an MP, we are elected by our local communities to serve the people of our local communities – to ensure their interests are put first.

We see and feel the effect of our decisions on our streets, and in the services we use every day.

And when something isn't working, when something isn't right, it is our duty to speak up and do something about it.

I know how hard many of us work to do just that.

But if the events of the past few weeks have taught us anything, it's that we have to raise our game.

The ties that bind local government to local communities have not snapped.

But if we don't act now, such a time may one day be upon us.

Rebuilding trust

We must rebuild, refresh and reinforce the trust that local people have in local democracy.

But that won't happen by hiding away.

Just as we can't drop a democracy out of an aeroplane, so we can't rebuild one from behind castle walls.

If people are going to trust their elected representatives, they have to see them working in the harsh light of the public eye, not in comforting shadows behind closed doors.

Not only must democracy exist; it must be seen to exist.

It can't be about decisions made in private meeting rooms.

Nor can it be about experts telling people what's best for them without ever taking the time to listen to their worries and concerns.

After all, government is about serving people – not simply telling them what to do.

And local government must show that it is FOR the people – not just OF the people.

Supporting communities

So our mission has to be local government that is truly engaged with and supportive of communities.

These aren't communities as government-designated groups.

People carefully categorised into boxes that can be ticked on official forms.

I'm talking about the genuine communities made up of people connected by common bonds and shared values – whether built around neighbourhood, background, or beliefs.

It's what I've seen at Grenfell Tower.

The council may have built the tower, but the people built the community.

A network of mutual support that government can never replicate and should never attempt to replicate.

A community where support is given not because of any entitlement, but simply out of love and compassion and basic human decency.

And while it's been inspiring to see the community around Grenfell Tower swinging into action, it can't help but make the loss all the more heartbreaking.

It is these kind of communities we need to be much, much better at supporting.

Above all else they must be listened to. They must be heard.

It must be an honest and open discussion across all communities.

Where consultation isn't just treated as a legal necessity, but a genuine engagement in which all views – even ones we don't like – are treated as if they could actually be right.

Where we value voices, dissenting or otherwise.

It will require us to tackle some deep-rooted issues which for too long we have collectively failed to deal with.

Honesty about the housing we need

Just look at housing.

It's hard to believe now, but just a few years ago it was fashionable for people to question the need for more house building.

They'd point to obvious flaws in the housing market, or too many empty homes, or immigration.

Today, most people recognise that even if those issues were solved overnight, it would still not be enough.

There's a serious shortage of decent, affordable housing in this country.

It's not the fault of any one government or party – we all carry some of the blame.

Since the 1970s – under Wilson, Callaghan, Thatcher, Major, Blair, Brown, Cameron and now May – we've supplied an average of 160,000 new homes each year.

That's far below what's needed

And that failure of supply to keep up with demand has led to predictable results.

Across the country the average house now costs almost 8 times average earnings – an all-time record.

Unless they can get a leg up from their parents, for many young people the dream of home ownership is just that – a dream.

And it's in housing that that we see most starkly the problems of inequality in this country.

Between those with wealth, and those without.

Between old and young.

And between those with security, and those who live with uncertainty day-in day-out.

The simple fact is that to put this right we need to build more homes that people want to live in, in places people want to live.

Between 225,000 and 275,000 of them every year, according to independent estimates.

That may sound simple enough, but as I said it's a goal that has proved elusive for every government since the 1970s.

So we need to rethink the entire process of development and, as ever, that starts with planning.

Years after local plans were introduced, some councils still haven't produced one.

Others produced a plan when the policy was first introduced, but haven't touched it since and are left with a dusty document that's hopelessly out-of-date and irrelevant to the real needs of their communities.

And then there are those councils that have an up-to-date plan, but have failed to be honest about the level of housing they need in their area.

It's not good enough.

The era of tolerating such poor, patchy performance is over.

Today I can confirm that this month we will launch a consultation on a new way for councils to assess their local housing requirements, as we promised in the [housing white paper](#).

Our aim is simple: to ensure these plans begin life as they should, with an honest, objective assessment of how much housing is required.

That means a much more frank, open discussion with local residents and communities.

It also requires a new approach.

One that is straightforward, so everyone can understand the process.

One that is transparent, so decisions are not hidden behind complexity or bureaucracy.

And one that is consistent, so every community, from the biggest city to the smallest hamlet, can be confident their council is assessing housing need properly and fairly.

After all, nothing is more corrosive to trust than the idea that some areas are being treated better than others.

Where housing is particularly unaffordable, local leaders need to take a long, hard, honest look to see if they are planning for the right number of homes.

And it's not enough that plans start honest; they need to stay that way.

So we'll also insist they are reviewed at least every 5 years.

I'm under no illusion that these plans will require courage to both conceive and execute.

There will be tough decisions, difficult conversations.

But that is what political leadership is about.

Showing real ambition for the communities you serve and doing the right thing, not the easy thing.

Now I know you're sitting there thinking "That's great Saj, but I don't need more bureaucracy.

"I want to build houses, not piles of paperwork."

Well, let me assure you that the last thing I want to do is to add unnecessary burdens to local government.

Yes I want these plans to be more honest, and yes I want the local debates and challenges to be taken head on.

But I also want these plans to be simpler, faster, and cheaper to produce.

That's exactly what the consultation will propose.

Providing the right infrastructure

The new system will make a big difference but I'm not naïve.

I know that plans and ambitions are not enough on their own.

If there was one thing that made our housing white paper different from its predecessors, it was the recognition that there is no single magic bullet that will solve all the problems of our housing market.

It's simply too big and too complex for one policy to fix, and that's why action is needed on many fronts.

Look at infrastructure.

Across the country there are housing sites that never get going because the final piece of funding for infrastructure is missing.

The larger the site the bigger the problems.

Many crucial strategic housing schemes struggle to get off the drawing board

because it proves impossible to co-ordinate and pay for the upfront infrastructure that's required.

And as far as local communities are concerned, it comes back to trust.

Most people are willing to accept new housing in their areas, they know that their children and grandchildren need places to live.

But they also don't want to see massive development being imposed on an area where schools, GP surgeries, roads, buses and trains are already under pressure.

They'll accept the new homes, but they also want the right infrastructure put in at the right time in a joined up way.

It's not exactly an unreasonable request.

So where there are ambitions to do that, we will help through our [Housing Infrastructure Fund](#).

We announced plans for the fund earlier this year and I'm delighted that we're publishing the prospectus today.

It's an invitation to bid for a share of £2.3 billion that has been set aside to pay for the infrastructure we need alongside new homes.

Housing deals

I know infrastructure isn't the only barrier to delivering new housing.

I know in some places you may need extra support to deliver ambitious proposals to meet your housing demand.

Well if you're prepared to do what it takes to meet that demand and deliver genuinely additional housing, then I will consider all tools at my disposal to support you in that.

But only if you're ambitious enough.

By ambitious I mean greater collaboration with neighbouring areas.

A more strategic approach to decisions on housing and infrastructure.

More innovation and high quality design in new homes.

And an eye for creating the right conditions for new investment.

I want to strike some housing deals with a small number of places, so if you are one of those ambitious councils, you know where to find me.

Strong political leadership

If we can tackle the injustices caused by our broken housing market we will

be making a significant step towards rebuilding the trust in local politics.

But it is far from the only injustice that we need to deal with.

And as with housing, fixing any of these problems is far easier said than done.

We are talking about deep-set issues and it would be dishonest to suggest it is anything other than the work of years to address it.

That work will need strong local leadership.

In May we saw 6 new mayors elected by millions of people right across the country, including here in the West Midlands.

All 6 have wide-ranging new powers they can use to improve the lives of the communities they serve.

The driving force behind this devolution was the desire to bring decision-making to a more local level.

So my challenge to all those newly-elected mayors, whatever Party they're from, is to make good on that purpose – by using their powers to work with communities, tackling the problems that matter most to them and the wider community.

Whitehall is listening

I'm sure many of you will have been sitting there thinking that's all well and good but Whitehall could do a bit more listening of its own.

And you're right.

Last month's general election result was not the one that I wanted.

I'm sure it's not the result anyone in this room expected.

I'll let the pollsters and pundits argue and debate over "what it meant".

But I know one thing for sure.

The people of the UK may have delivered a hung Parliament, but they did not deliver a demand for inaction.

32 million people made their voices heard last month and they will not forgive us if we fail to heed their call.

Things have to change, things have to get better.

The work of local government will be central to that, and I'm determined you'll be listened to – just as we have listened in the past.

You asked for extra money for adult social care, and I made sure it was delivered in the settlement.

You asked for greater devolution of powers, and we paved the way for metro mayors across the country.

And you asked for more resources to help you plan for the homes you need, and through the Housing Infrastructure Fund and higher planning fees, we're helping with that too.

I can't promise you'll always get what you want.

But whether you ask for help, identify risks, or suggest opportunities, I can promise that we will listen.

Conclusion

In the midst of all the uncertainty, I know that your cool-headed commitment to deliver for your communities will carry on.

I don't care whether you're on the blue team, the red team, the yellow team or any other team for that matter.

I know that you are in local government for the right reasons.

Because you want to house the homeless.

You want to maintain the roads.

You want to keep the streets clean or make our parks beautiful.

You want to see that our young people are taught properly and our elderly are cared for with the dignity they deserve.

Doing all this requires practical action, yes, but not everything can be converted into pounds and pence.

Good leadership matters too.

And ultimately, for all of us, whether we're in local or national government, our first role is to lead.

What happened in Kensington 3 weeks ago showed just how important leadership is.

So my challenge for local government this year is not only to provide the services your communities deserve, or plan for new homes and growth they need, but also to be the leaders they can trust.

To listen to your communities.

To treat them with care and respect.

And, above all, to keep them safe.

Grenfell will forever serve as a reminder of what went wrong.

Let us rise from those ashes and promise to be better.

Speech: Grenfell Tower disaster: David Lidington statement

The public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower disaster has understandably been the subject of much commentary. People have every right to feel passionate about this. The community – and the whole country – want answers following such a horrific tragedy.

That is why it is right that there should be a judge-led inquiry into the disaster, and that the residents are consulted before the terms of reference are decided. Our judiciary is respected the world over as fair, free from improper influence, and truly independent from government and Parliament. As Lord Chancellor, I am clear that their motives and integrity should always be respected and not impugned by politicians. I have complete confidence that Sir Martin Moore-Bick will lead the inquiry into this tragedy with impartiality and with a determination to get to the truth and see justice done.

Press release: Motorists urged to make plans for major M5 scheme

Concrete repairs and waterproofing work at the Oldbury viaduct, between junctions 1 and 2, get under way at the end of this month.

The scheme, valued at more than £100 million, finishes in autumn 2018, with some minor work continuing into spring 2019.

To keep the M5 open a contraflow system is being put in place. From the end of July all traffic will be diverted onto the northbound carriageway, with two lanes operating in each direction, along with a 30mph speed limit. Slip roads will be kept open throughout, to ease effects on the local network, but drivers are advised to expect long delays.

Motorists travelling from across the country are urged to consider routes such as the M42 and M6 to keep congestion to a minimum on the M5 and surrounding roads while work takes place.

To help with this there will be changes at key junctions in the area,

including at M6 junction 8 southbound and M5 junction 4a northbound. This is to increase capacity where the M5 joins the M6 and M42 and reduce the amount of traffic heading towards the roadworks.

These measures are essential to manage the volume and flow of traffic through this busy part of the network and reduce the potential impact on local roads.

Changes include:

- from early July: At the link between the M6 and the M5 southbound, one lane will lead onto the M5, with three lanes continuing onto the M6, to encourage drivers to take the alternative route around Birmingham.
- from mid-July: At M5 junction 4a northbound, the layout will be changed to provide 2 dedicated lanes to the M42 and 2 dedicated lanes to the M5. The link between the M42 and the M5 northbound will also be changed to one lane
- from mid/late July: The M5 northbound at junction 4a will be further changed to provide one lane to the M5 through the junction while still providing 2 lanes to the M42. The M5 will be reduced to two lanes in each direction at Oldbury/West Bromwich in preparation for the contraflow
- end of July/start of August: Installation of contraflow on Oldbury viaduct

At those locations motorists will see a mixture of cones, lining on the road surface and barriers and there will be a 50mph speed limit on approach to the 30mph speed restriction between junctions 1 and 2.

For the first time upgraded travel information signs linked direct to the regional control centres that monitor traffic flows will provide real time travel advice.

These digital signs are being rolled out in the Midlands to coincide with work starting on the viaduct and can suggest multiple alternative routes with up to date travel times and distances.

Highways England project manager Alastair Warnes, said:

We're doing everything possible to plan and manage the roadworks in order to keep traffic moving, minimise disruption and maximise safety.

That includes using the latest technology to help motorists adapt their journeys, using real time travel information to reduce delays as much as possible.

A network of early warning strategic travel advice signs will be deployed many miles from the junctions to allow drivers to choose alternative routes at earlier steps in their journeys.

Some of the suggested alternative routes for motorists include:

- southbound M6 traffic north of junction 16 (A500) heading South East use A50 / M1
- southbound M1 traffic north of junction 23A (A42/M42) heading South West use M69 and A46
- northbound M1 traffic south of junction 19 (M6) heading North West use M1 / A50
- westbound A14 traffic east of M1 heading North West use M1 / A50
- clockwise M25 traffic south of junction 16 (M40) heading North West use M1 / A50
- northbound M5 south of junction 8 (M50) heading for North Wales use M50 / A49
- northbound M5 south of junction 9 (A46) for North East use A46

Highways England has liaised with local authorities to minimise clashes with other works. It is also keeping the haulage, freight and distribution industries informed of the essential work to allow their lorry drivers to plan ahead and seek alternative routes.

Motorists are urged to plan journeys in advance, allow extra time and consider alternative modes of transport, car sharing or working from home where possible.

The viaduct structure itself is safe but, as it was built in the late sixties, the work needs to be carried out to protect it for the future.

Large stretches of both the M5 and M6 in the Midlands are elevated and repair work is essential to protect the structure, with a £4.7 million concrete repair scheme at the iconic Spaghetti Junction on the M6 also taking place this summer.

The work is part of a major government investment to build a modern and resilient road network. By maintaining this key corridor Highways England is delivering a huge investment that will support economic growth locally and in the wider West Midlands.

For more information about the work visit the [Oldbury viaduct project pages](#) and for information about the work on the [Spaghetti Junction project pages](#).

Highways England provides live traffic information via its website, local and national radio travel bulletins, electronic road signs and mobile apps. Local Twitter services are also available at @HighwaysWMIDS.

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Press release: £100 million Rutherford Fund to attract best researchers to the UK

Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson today (4 July 2017) confirmed the government is investing £100 million to attract highly skilled researchers to the UK through its new Ernest Rutherford Fund.

The Rutherford Fund will provide fellowships for early-career and senior researchers, from the developed world and from emerging research powerhouses such as India, China, Brazil and Mexico, helping to maintain the UK's position as a world-leader in science and research.

Speaking at the launch event in London, Jo Johnson said:

Research and innovation is at the heart of the government's Industrial Strategy. At the 2016 Autumn Statement, the government announced a significant increase in public research and development spending, totalling £4.7 billion.

In her vision for the UK as the go-to place for scientists, innovators and tech investors, the Prime Minister has made clear she wants us to be a country that attracts the brightest and best minds.

To that end, I am pleased to announce today that we are investing £100 million in a Global Talent Research Fund that will be used to attract highly skilled researchers to the UK.

It will be named after Ernest Rutherford. He is one of our most distinguished scientists, the father of nuclear physics, a Nobel Laureate, holder of chairs at the Universities of Manchester and Cambridge, and, crucially, an immigrant – who came to the UK at the age of 24 from New Zealand.

Rutherford and his immense contributions to science exemplify our vision of a Britain that is open to the best minds and ideas in the world, and stands at the forefront of global collective endeavours to understand, and to improve, the world in which we live.

We look forward to welcoming these talented Rutherford research fellows to the UK. The Rutherford Fund will send a strong signal that, even as we leave the European Union, we are open to the world and will reinforce our ambition of making the UK the go-to country for innovation and discovery.

Research and innovation is at the heart of the government's Industrial

Strategy. At the 2016 Autumn Statement, the government announced a significant increase in public research and development spending, totalling £4.7 billion. This will provide an additional £2 billion a year by 2020 to 2021 – an increase of around 20% to total government spending, and more than any increase in any Parliament since 1979.

In April 2017 the Business Secretary Greg Clark announced the creation of the [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund](#) (ISCF) with £1 billion of support over the next 4 years. To support delivery of the ISCF, the government announced at the Spring Budget it will invest £250 million over the next 4 years to continue to build the pipeline of high-skilled research talent.

The ISCF was created to ensure research and innovation takes centre stage in the government's Industrial Strategy, with investment earmarked for technologies where the UK can build on its world-leading strengths and help innovative businesses to tap into large and growing global markets, as well as the industries of the future.

The fund is being administered by Innovate UK and the Research Councils until the new body UK Research and Investment (UKRI) is formed in 2018. UKRI, under the leadership of its recently appointed Chief Executive Sir Mark Walport, will play a key role in strengthening the UK's competitiveness through the Industrial Strategy.

Speech: Association of British Insurers long term savings conference

Thank you for that introduction, and to the Association of British Insurers and its Chairman, Andy Briggs, for inviting me to speak here this morning. I am delighted to be addressing you in my first speech as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

In my previous roles as Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Chief Secretary to the Treasury, I witnessed great advances being made in the pensions industry; therefore I hope that I'm already familiar with some of the key issues you face.

I am also somewhat familiar with the ABI. Indeed, there was a period when I was Financial Secretary that no day felt complete unless I had had a meeting with Huw and his team.

I intend to build on my Treasury experience in my new role as Secretary of State; I hope you will feel the benefit of consistency, and my commitment to working with you to secure long term objectives.

I know, all too well, that pensions reform is a long term game. We need a

well thought-out approach, built on a solid evidence base.

As we consider the repercussions of increased life expectancy on future generations, I welcome the contributions of John Cridland, and the Government's Actuary Department, to our thinking on the future State Pension Age. It represents exactly the sort of longer-term approach I want to cultivate within my Department, and across wider Government.

I should also mention Andy Briggs's excellent work to support the Government as our Business Champion for Older Workers, because employers are crucial in helping secure those prizes.

Government's Ambition

We should be ambitious about improving our pensions saving system.

We've already had some notable successes where Government and industry have collaborated to achieve positive outcomes for both consumers and pension providers.

A good example is the new prototype of the Pensions Dashboard. We believe this tool has genuine potential for making our financial lives much simpler.

The dashboard presents a clear picture of all a person's pension entitlement in one secure online location, and will make it easier for savers to plan ahead.

A cross-section of the industry worked with us to develop the working prototype. The successful demonstration of the prototype last April showed the feasibility of providing information from different pensions schemes in one place; and was met with enthusiasm by technology start-ups, financial advisors, and the media.

Such a tool would encourage people to properly consider their retirement arrangements earlier in their working lives, and could help savers reconnect with an estimated £400 million in lost pensions accrual – something which we'd all like to encourage.

Pension freedoms is another example of Government and industry successfully working together. In an expanded pensions market, we are giving savers more control over their money to use in ways that suit them – while supporting financially sound decision-making through Pension Wise, the Pension Advisory Service, and the Money Advice Service.

And I await with interest the Financial Conduct Authority's 'Retirement Outcomes Study' report, and look forward to continuing to collaborate with you to ensure that reforms deliver for both consumers and the industry.

And I must mention the major success story that is Automatic Enrolment. By automatically enrolling people into workplace pension-saving, we have reversed a decades-long decline in participation, and improved millions of workers' future prosperity.

Latest estimates show that over 8 million individuals have already been enrolled, a figure that is projected to grow rapidly. 600,000 businesses and employers have got behind the scheme, fulfilling their duties so their workforce can start saving – often for the first time.

The bedrock of this success has been the sustained consensus between industry, Government and other stakeholders.

Challenges faced and still to face

It has not all been plain sailing to reach our current position. Not so long ago, engaging employers on such a large scale was considered an insurmountable challenge. Without the industry's backing and support, the programme would have struggled to leave the planning room. From working together on the high-level design, to fine tuning the detailed requirements, Automatic Enrolment's success flows from sustained collaboration across the many sectors to deliver the programme on the ground.

In particular, I'd like to recognise the role the Pensions Regulator has played in supporting, encouraging, and (where necessary) ensuring that employers met their duties. And also the part played by NEST, in providing access to a pension for all employers, regardless of their size.

That is why we have worked hard to ensure that employers are prepared and able to enrol their workers. And that is why we will continue to work with the ABI, its member organisations and the wider industry as we try to build on our success to date. Not just in terms of pension providers but also the wider eco-system – payroll, intermediaries and many others have an essential role to play.

Our original forecast was that around a third of people would opt out of the pension they were automatically enrolled into. In practice, we have seen incredibly low opt-out of the workplace pension automatic enrolment scheme – something to be celebrated.

We have seen particularly low opt-out rates amongst young savers. Getting people to save from the very start of their working lives is a tremendous result to build on. However, we won't see people who have saved through automatic enrolment for their whole careers until the 2050s.

We still have a lot to achieve. The Conservative Party manifesto commits us to expanding pensions entitlements to include workers who are self-employed. Just as before, this may feel an overly-ambitious challenge, but I have reason to feel positive.

Look at what we've already achieved: workplace pension saving is set to increase by £17 billion every year by 2020. And an estimated 10 million workers will be newly saving, or saving more, as a result of automatic enrolment by 2018.

And the current review of automatic enrolment will help us to explore the best solutions for self-employed savers. In partnership with employers and

industry, we are now in a strong position to build on the successes we have already seen, and set the future direction of the automatic enrolment scheme.

I'm also looking forward to the findings of Matthew Taylor's review of modern employment practices. It will tie-in with work that is already going on across Government on the issue.

Encouraging the industry to adapt

Looking ahead, it is apparent that we must do more to encourage new savers, many of whom are young, to engage with their pension provision.

Both Government and industry must look closely at the ways in which we can support this new type of saver to devote more of their earnings to their workplace pension, or a private pension provider.

I think it is worth reflecting on the opportunities an improved private pensions landscape will present.

I would encourage the pensions sector to see the potential that new savers will bring. By adapting your services to emerging trends you will better serve individual savers, by increasing the value-for-money they will reap from their retirement saving – a goal that we all share.

Get to know the new pensions landscape – your industry and society can prosper from its success. It is about informing consumers and supporting them to make the right choices. Look at how you communicate with your customers, and consider adapting your products to the new types of saver entering the market.

Government is fulfilling its end of the bargain

As I said at the start, I am keen to provide the consistency and continuity that your industry is seeking. But I am also keenly aware of Government's responsibility to help and support new savers. And it is clearly also in the interests of the pensions industry to ensure that savers are properly supported, and informed in their choices.

That is why we have announced that we will be introducing a single body for the provision of public financial advice, which will replace the three existing public advice services. Streamlining to a single body will make it easier for people to seek advice, and make effective financial decisions.

Setting up the new single financial guidance body will require legislative changes, and we have already commenced introducing the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill to Parliament, which took place last week as part of the Queen's Speech.

Yet another issue on which the Department is working closely with industry is the sustainability of Defined Benefit Pension schemes. What recent cases have shown is that, even in difficult circumstances; better outcomes are achieved when all parties – members, sponsors, regulators and Government – play their

part.

My Department will continue to work closely with industry to develop sensible policy proposals in this space for the long term which will work for both Government and industry to protect members and business.

Conclusion: Together, let's get this right.

Industry has been instrumental in what has been achieved so far.

We have overcome some really challenging situations in the past, which is part of the reason that I have great confidence for the future pensions landscape.

I have spoken about the challenges we anticipate, such as increasing savers' engagement, finding sustainable solutions to an ageing society and ensuring peoples' security in later life.

And we will have to overcome these challenges against the backdrop of a legislature intensely focused on delivering Britain's successful withdrawal from the European Union.

Now more than ever, building consensus across the sector, and across party-lines will be absolutely key.

But I feel confident that with your support we can substantially widen individuals' engagement with the pensions industry – wake them from their pension-inertia to invest more in their future prosperity from a younger age.

I have set out both the challenges and the opportunities facing the industry and I look forward to working together in charting the new pensions landscape.