

Minister visits projects launching Shetland into the future

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart visited Shetland, where he saw how cutting-edge projects, from a sustainable energy initiative to a spaceport, are shaping the islands' future.

His first visit was to the ORION Clean Energy Project, which aims to harness Shetland's natural resources to generate sustainable, affordable energy. He heard about how the project is leading the world as it works to transform Shetland into a green energy hub while contributing to the UK's net zero ambitions.

The Minister then travelled up to Unst, where he met with representatives from the SaxaVord spaceport. The UK's first vertical satellite launch, supported by £13.5 million UK Government funding, is anticipated to take place from the site later this year.

Visits to Shetland's food and drink businesses were also on the agenda, as the Minister met with Shetland Reel distillery, and Cooke Aquaculture, a leading producer of Scottish salmon. As Shetland Reel Gin is exported around the world and salmon is the UK's top food export, he enjoyed discussing how these companies could benefit from upcoming trade deals, boosting Shetland's economy.

The Minister later met with representatives from Shetland Islands Council and other key stakeholders to discuss how the Islands Growth Deal could support developments across the area. The Heads of Terms for the Deal was signed in March 2021 to commit £50 million investment from both the UK and Scottish Governments for Shetland, Orkney and the Outer Hebrides.

Minister Stewart said:

The innovation and resourcefulness of the projects I've visited in Shetland has been truly inspiring. From hearing about how ORION is utilising the islands' natural abundance of wind and wave power to create clean energy, to seeing how Unst's unique position is helping to pioneer vertical satellite launches from UK soil, these projects highlight Shetland's leading spirit of innovation.

Shetland's food and drink offer is also fantastic, with real potential for export growth. It was a pleasure to visit Cooke Aquaculture and even try some delicious gin at Shetland Reel, the UK's most northerly distillery.

Almost a year after we signed the Heads of Terms for the Islands Growth Deal, it's fantastic to see these projects helping the

islands flourish. I look forward to exploring how this funding can work hand-in-hand with our Levelling Up agenda to futureproof Shetland's success.

Shetland Islands Council Leader Steven Coutts said:

We were very pleased to welcome Mr Stewart to Shetland and showcase the economic opportunities in our island community. Our location, natural resources and entrepreneurial spirit ensures there is a lot happening in Shetland, and more yet to come.

We took the time to discuss some of the challenges of living and doing business in Shetland, particularly the increasing impact of rising energy costs, and the need to look to solutions to enable us to address these.

The importance of a just transition from oil and gas to Net Zero was also discussed and acknowledged.

The talks were constructive and we look forward to developing the positive ongoing relationship and delivery on our ambitions.

[Health Secretary statement on spring COVID-19 booster vaccinations](#)

Government response

A statement from the Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid on spring COVID-19 booster vaccinations following updated advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.



Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Thanks to our COVID-19 vaccination rollout, we are already the freest country in Europe. It has saved countless lives, reduced pressure on the NHS and is allowing us to learn to live with the virus.

Today I have accepted the advice from the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to offer, from spring, an additional COVID-19 booster jab to people aged 75 years and over, residents in care homes for older adults, and people aged 12 years and over who are immunosuppressed. All four parts of the UK intend to follow the JCVI's advice.

Following the JCVI's advice, I have asked the NHS to prepare to offer those eligible a vaccine from around six months after their last dose and they will set out further details in due course.

We know immunity to COVID-19 begins to wane over time. That's why we're offering a spring booster to those people at higher risk of serious COVID-19 to make sure they maintain a high level of protection. It's important that everyone gets their top-up jabs as soon as they're eligible.

The JCVI will keep under review whether the booster programme should be extended to further at-risk groups.

This is a national mission – the vaccines are the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones and I urge everybody to get your jabs as soon as you can. For anyone who is yet to get a booster, come forward to Get Boosted Now.

Published 21 February 2022

[The partnership behind some of the UK's successful regen projects](#)

With a mission to take on challenging development sites and encourage private and institutional investment in cities, The English Cities Fund (ECF) is behind some of the UK's most successful, place-changing regeneration projects.

The English Cities Fund (ECF) is a national public private partnership of Homes England, Muse and Legal and General. With initial investment of £100 million, and an additional £100 million of investment in 2018, ECF is on track to deliver six schemes in England comprising 1 million sq ft of office,

retail and leisure space as well as 1,700 homes with a total value of £2.5 billion.

This innovative partnership has worked closely with local partners to spearhead impactful regeneration projects in Salford, Plymouth, Liverpool, Wakefield, Canning Town and is at the start of an exciting new partnership with St Helens Borough Council.

ECF was set up in 2001 to bring together the best of the public and private sector, combining the expertise and ambition of Homes England, the Government's dedicated land and homes agency; Legal & General's deep capabilities in delivering long-term, joined-up investment across UK property and infrastructure; and the nationwide urban regeneration expertise of Muse Developments.

ECF works in partnership with councils, landowners, and key community stakeholders to transform forgotten places to thriving, mixed-use communities.

Through an initial £100m investment from ECF partners, the team has brought forward five multi-phase regeneration schemes with a total value of £1.6 billion. In 2018 the partnership doubled its investment to £200 million, to provide certainty to new partners that complex, large scale, long-term developments could be realised, unlocking the potential of even more places.

One of those places is Salford, a city with a rich history of industry and culture. The city conjures up images of rows of terraced streets, alive with the buzz of everyday life.

Success in Salford

As the Government was setting up its Urban Task Force at the end of the 90s, Salford was suffering from two decades of decline – a victim of de-industrialisation and the inevitable migration of people to places of greater prosperity – increased crime and deprivation led to a perception problem.

ECF's partnership with Salford City Council is transforming this historic city. Together, ECF and the council have assembled a 50-acre, isolated brownfield site across the River Irwell from Manchester city centre that was formally a surface car park and turned it into a dynamic destination in its own right, loved by the people who live and work there.

The 21-phase, £1 billion project is delivering a new commercial and leisure district at New Bailey, adjacent to Salford Central station and close to Manchester's Spinningfields, keeping the place buzzing day and night. 1,484 high-quality homes have also been built as part of an inspiring new community in the Chapel Street district. The scheme has become an engine of growth and renewal for Salford. Among the first commercial organisations to call New Bailey home are Magic Circle law firm Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, BLM, Eversheds, HM Revenue and Customs and wealth management business WHIreland.

The development has delivered one of the North West's first institutionally

funded build-to-rent schemes – the Slate Yard, comprising 424 homes. Chapel Street, once an area of vacant shops and low investment, is now a vibrant urban village with six bespoke phases of 463 homes knitted seamlessly into the existing, historical, listed environment.

Backed by a bold vision of what the city could offer, some clever design ideas and a strong, long-term partnership, central Salford is once again an enterprising place which is attracting other investors. Even the car parks are award winning.

Making an impact in the South

In the South East, ECF built on its striking £200 million Rathbone Market scheme – which delivered 651 homes, of which 25% are affordable, and is now bringing forward a major new development in the borough at Manor Road in partnership with London Borough of Newham and the Greater London Authority.

On the South West coast, ECF is halfway through its £250 million regeneration of the Millbay area of Britain's ocean city. With over £120 million invested in the area already, the new coastal quarter for Plymouth is delivering an innovative mix of residential, business and leisure development.

What next?

Looking to the future, ECF exchanged a 20-year development agreement in December 2020 with St Helens Borough Council. The partnership is borough wide and will aim to bring forward opportunities to repurpose and regenerate areas across St Helens, creating new grade A office space, delivery of town centre homes and improved public realm. Following a major consultation exercise, St Helens Council's cabinet approved the masterplans in February 2021 to repurpose and regenerate the town centres of St Helens and Earlestown.

To date, ECF has generated 20,000 jobs, build 4,500 sustainable homes, provide over 145,000 of community facilities and generate £400m in GVA per annum to build strong communities. It has shown that it's possible to commit for the long-term while still delivering at pace. An approach that's allowed us to see potential where others may not and to transform even the most complex sites.

[Environment Agency issues Severe Flood Warning for Ironbridge, Shropshire](#)

Press release

Residents in flood-risk areas urged to evacuate with support from police and

council.



- Severe Flood Warning issued for Ironbridge, Shropshire due to immediate threat of flooding
- High river levels the result of back-to-back storms and continued heavy rain

The Environment Agency has issued a Severe Flood Warning for Ironbridge, Shropshire due to extremely high river levels on the River Severn that are threatening to over-top flood barriers.

Properties along The Wharfage in Ironbridge are at a very high risk of flooding as fast-flowing water from the River Severn is expected to flood the area later today.

The Agency deployed temporary flood barriers along The Wharfage at the weekend, which are expected to divert the majority of the flood water. However, there is still a high risk that some water will breach the top of the defence.

The Environment Agency issues Severe Flood Warnings when there is imminent risk of flooding and threat to life. Residents are strongly urged to evacuate their homes in advance of the flood and are being supported by the police and councils.

Environment Agency Area Duty Manager for Shropshire Jim Kitchen said:

We are facing a significant flood risk in Ironbridge and urging people to remain vigilant and take extreme care. Heavy rain, affecting already wet areas, is likely to cause significant river flooding along the River Severn for several days.

We have teams out on the ground taking preventative action and we are working with other agencies to support people who need to evacuate their homes.

We advise people to stay away from swollen rivers and not to drive through flood water as just 30 centimetres of flowing water is enough to move your car.

Residents are urged to sign up to Environment Agency Flood Warning messages and to make sure they are prepared for flooding by following the 'Prepare, Act, Survive' guidance:

- Prepare a bag that includes medical and insurance documents
- [Check the latest flood situation online](#)
- Know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water
- Check your insurance to make sure you are covered for flood damage. If you rent your home, it is your responsibility to have insurance for your belongings
- If you are flooded, call 999 if in immediate danger and follow advice from emergency services.

Published 21 February 2022

[Crime news: letters notifying 2022 Crime Contract applicants](#)

News story

Notification letters about the outcome of tenders for work under the 2022 Standard Crime Contract will be issued shortly.



Applicant organisations will start learning the outcome of their bids for work under the 2022 Standard Crime Contract from 21 February.

We will be using the LAA eTendering system to send notification letters.

Monitoring the eTendering system message boards

There are a large number of bidders and accordingly the process of notification will last through the week. If you have bid for a 2022 Standard Crime Contract then you should monitor the LAA eTendering system message

board for your notification letter and ensure that you have a registered user available to access the letter.

Anyone bidding who has not received their notification by Monday 28 February should send a message through the LAA eTendering system.

What will the letter cover?

Your notification letter will set out the:

- outcome of our initial assessment of your bid
- what you should do next in terms of providing verification information as relevant

Verification deadline

The deadline for submitting compliant verification information is 11:59 pm on 27 March 2022.

Further information

2022 Standard [Crime Contract](#)

Published 21 February 2022