

[A Tribute to the Rt Hon Dame Cheryl Gillan MP](#)

News story

The Former Welsh Secretary died after suffering from a long illness.



Rt Hon Dame Cheryl Gillan MP was the first, and so far only, female Welsh Secretary. She served in Prime Minister David Cameron's Cabinet and held the position from 2010 to 2012.

In 2011, she supported the running of the Welsh devolution referendum on direct law-making powers for the Welsh Parliament, formally the National Assembly for Wales.

During the same year, she established the independent commission on Devolution in Wales, also known as the Silk Commission, where the case for the devolution of fiscal power to the Welsh Parliament was reviewed and considered the case for increasing its powers.

Current Secretary of State for Wales, Simon Hart MP said:

Dame Cheryl Gillan was a hugely respected figure who contributed a great deal to Welsh and UK politics over many years, including as Welsh Secretary.

She will be fondly remembered, and I send my condolences to her family and friends.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I'm very sad to hear the news of the death of Dame Cheryl Gillan. She was a great servant to the people of Chesham and Amersham, to the Conservative Party and to the country as Secretary of State for Wales.

Always full of wise advice and good humour, she was much loved on all sides of the House of Commons and will be sorely missed. My sincere condolences to her family and friends.

Director of the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales, Glynne Jones said:

I had the privilege of working closely with Dame Cheryl whilst she was Welsh Secretary and I witnessed at first hand her compassion, kindness and generosity. She will be sorely missed, and my heart goes out to her friends and family.

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Prime Minister announces new deal to boost Cornwall economy

- £23.6 million Truro Deal will boost economy, create jobs and new homes
- Investment will transform Truro into the county's modern economic, cultural and green capital
- Plans to revitalise waterfront and create new tourist attractions as part of government's multi-billion programme to level up the country

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has today (7 April 2021) announced a multi-million pound investment in Truro to boost the local economy, create jobs and improve local skills, helping the county build back better from the pandemic.

The £23.6 million Deal for Truro will help transform Cornwall's capital into a Connected River City and support its vision of becoming a modern economic, cultural and green capital for its residents and the wider community by 2030.

The Deal will breathe new life into Truro's waterfront by creating new spaces for business, vibrant and green event areas, promenades and new ferry terminals with berthing facilities and pontoons.

The investment will also boost its cultural and tourism offer by transforming some of its historic buildings into thriving businesses. The creation of a 'go to destination' in Boscawen Park will include a new 'winter garden' to build on Truro's national reputation as a city of bloom.

Green and sustainable travel are at the heart of these plans, connecting key

locations and attractions with accessible walking and cycling routes including a proposed new bridge between areas currently isolated from each other. The funding will also help convert some of Truro's unused buildings into much-needed new homes.

The government is already investing £3.75 million in Truro to support the redevelopment of The Hall For Cornwall Theatre, boosting tourism and leisure opportunities in the area. This is part of £92.4 million investment in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly from Growth Deals and the Getting Building Fund.

Today's investment is the 53rd deal to be announced from the Towns Fund and is part of comprehensive action by the government to level up opportunity and prosperity across all areas of the country including through the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund, the £220 million Community Renewal Fund and the £830 million Future High Streets Fund.

Last month, the government also announced a £56 million Welcome Back Fund to help high streets and seaside towns prepare for the safe return of shoppers and tourists as national restrictions ease.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

We are determined to level up across the entire country, and the Deal we're announcing for Truro will help to unleash its tremendous potential.

Through a range of innovative projects including greener transport links and the restoration and renewal of spaces in the city centre, we will be able to rejuvenate the local economy, support businesses, boost connectivity and create new jobs.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

This government is levelling up towns and cities across the country by building stronger and more resilient local economies, boosting prosperity and opportunity in our communities, and helping them build back better from the pandemic.

This Deal is great news for Truro and the county. By revitalising the waterfront, breathing new life into unused historic buildings and investing in new cultural and tourist attractions, it will make a huge difference to the local economy and create much needed jobs and homes.

Mark Duddridge, Chair at Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP said:

The award of £23.6 million for Truro, as the country begins to emerge from the restrictions of lockdown is a fantastic boost for

Cornwall and the City. The environmentally sensitive development of the town will create welcome employment and will bring a new vibrancy to many areas of Truro.

This investment follows on from the redevelopment of the Hall for Cornwall, another project supported by the LEP, which together will reinforce Truro's position as a centre for our creative industries.

This latest funding builds on the government's wider package of unprecedented measures to help protect and support communities, business and jobs through the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that nobody is left without hope or opportunity.

Today's announcement responds to a locally led proposal put forward by Cornwall Council and the Town Deal Board with representation from business, the local community, public sectors and local MPs.

All 101 places selected to work towards a Deal were given a funding allocation with proposals submitted to MHCLG. The first cohort submitted proposals in July, before being reviewed by officials and a final decision made by ministers.

The Town Fund builds directly on the government's commitment to decentralise funding and decisions away from Whitehall, invest in the growth of local economies and devolve powers through ambitious City and Growth Deals, providing more than £9 billion of funding to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and introducing 8 metro mayors in England.

On 27 July 2019 the [Prime Minister announced](#) that the £3.6 billion Towns Fund would support an initial 101 town deals across England.

A Town Deal is an agreement in principle between government, the Lead Council and the Town Deal Board. It will set out a vision and strategy for the town, and what each party agrees to do to achieve this vision.

See the [101 places being supported to develop Town Deals](#).

Further details of the Truro Towns Fund Deal:

- Truro's neglected waterfront and community spaces will be reinvigorated to create vibrant, attractive weather-proof and green event areas. This will include two new public spaces, cycle hire facilities, new ferry terminals with berthing facilities and pontoons, walkways/bridges/promenades and new spaces for 12 businesses.
- A new Truro Community Hub will provide a 'safe and welcoming' space in Truro where people can get together, learn new skills, take part in activities and attend events. Truro currently has no central community hub or indoor events space. This will contribute to skills provision in the town and provide a much-needed space where there is currently no provision.
- A green travel project will connect key locations around the town including its centre, Truro College, the Royal Cornwall Hospital and

intervention sites, promoting new forms of travel and healthier lifestyles. A proposed bridge will improve connections between areas of the town currently isolated from one another.

- The Hive will be a state-of-the-art building in the heart of Truro, providing a blueprint for how innovation, enterprise and education will weave together in the future. It will be part of the Pydar Development, a multi-million pound inclusive and sustainable urban development planned for the edge of Truro city centre.
- The New Life for City Buildings project will aim to transform and regenerate unused, historic buildings in Truro city centre. It will improve access to and celebrate Truro's heritage and culture offer through a transformation of The Royal Cornwall Museum alongside the launch of a scheme to enable the wider repurposing of Truro buildings ensuring spaces are future proofed for modern day use responding to a new economic landscape.
- A 'go-to destination' will be created in Boscawen Park, already a popular park on the edge of the city. The project will provide Truro resident and visitors of all ages with new leisure and recreational opportunities across a range of indoor and outdoor facilities operated by local businesses. Building on Truro's national reputation as a city of bloom, there will be a 'winter garden' horticultural showcase based on a partnership between Truro City Council, local and national horticultural businesses. The project will create up to 40 new jobs.

[£3.5 million to support Coventry City of Culture](#)

- Funding will help the city deliver celebrations this summer in line with Covid-19 restrictions
- Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said: "Coventry has demonstrated a remarkable resilience and ability to adapt during these challenging and unprecedented times"

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has awarded £3.5 million to Coventry City of Culture to help the city deliver its celebrations this summer in line with Covid-19 restrictions.

The funding will help Coventry City of Culture host events with enhanced Covid-19 safety and hygiene methods, providing reassurance to audiences and ensuring the celebrations can go ahead as restrictions ease over the summer. It will allow the live streaming of events so that people from all over the West Midlands and the UK can join in with the launch of UK City of Culture 2021 from the safety of their own homes.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

Coventry has demonstrated a remarkable resilience and ability to adapt during these challenging and unprecedented times. Now more than ever, it is vitally important that we bring our communities together through culture, arts and heritage.

This additional funding will help the city as it begins its exciting year of celebrations for UK City of Culture and I look forward to seeing how the next 12 months will benefit the local area as we build back better from the impact of Covid.

Martin Sutherland, Chief Executive of Coventry City of Culture Trust, said:

This funding will help us to deliver our promises to Coventry and to the visitors we hope to welcome soon, starting with a Summer of Surprises. We are excited to share the extraordinary creativity from Coventry and explore new ways to use digital platforms and broadcast channels to reach new audiences both in person and at home.

It's been an incredibly challenging 12 months for the sector; this new funding enables us to support the organisations, artists, freelancers and communities who are so key to delivering a safe, secure and exciting year for the city".

The funding will address the specific financial challenges the pandemic has brought about and will help Coventry unlock additional support to allow the 2021 programme to maximise its impact and reach.

The additional £3.5 million announced today brings the total government support for Coventry's tenure as UK City of Culture to over £18.5 million. This includes £8.5 million of capital funding for key heritage and cultural organisations including the Daimler Powerhouse, FarGo Box, Belgrade Theatre, Drapers Hall, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum and Coventry Cathedral. The Cultural Investment Fund provided £6.58 million to the Coventry City of Culture Trust for resource and legacy projects including a new digital art gallery.

In addition, Arts Council England has allocated £4.9 million to support Coventry's success as City of Culture and over £8.8 million of the government's unprecedented £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund has been awarded to 28 organisations in Coventry to help them through the Covid-19 pandemic.

More than £170 million has been awarded to over 1,000 organisations in the Midlands from the government's unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund.

UK City of Culture is a competition run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport every four years. The competition celebrates culture in all its forms across the UK and helps to stimulate economic growth, create jobs in the community and attract inward investment, leading to a lasting

legacy of social, cultural and economic change.

Coventry is planning a spectacular year of events and activities, from the opening city-wide "Coventry Moves", through established events such as the Booker Prize and Turner Prize announcements both being held in the city this year, to productions created especially for City of Culture.

It is expected that Coventry's year as City of Culture will see an economic boost of £211 million with an additional 2.5 million visitors. It is hoped that 80% of the city's residents will engage with the programme three or more times across the year, and it will attract around 10,000 volunteers and create more than 900 jobs.

Coventry is the third UK City of Culture with Derry-Londonderry the first city to take up the mantle in 2013, followed by Hull in 2017. Partner is the British Council.

Flood protection project continues on the Ouse Washes

The project to raise the Middle Level Barrier Bank to improve the Ouse Washes flood storage reservoir will maintain the standard of flood protection to more than 2,000 properties and 67,000 hectares of agricultural land.

As the washes are an internationally important habitat, construction work will continue during summer and early autumn to avoid disturbing breeding and over-wintering birds.

The improvement works underway will ensure compliance with recommendations made by the reservoir inspecting engineer. As such, it has a statutory deadline for completion under the Reservoirs Act 1975.

A reservoir inspection in 2020 set deadlines for the project with the physical construction to be completed by December 2022. Following this, there will be a further 2 years of maintenance works to establish grass cover to ensure the stability of the banks.

Demountable flood barrier at Welney

As part of the project and to comply with the Reservoirs Act, a robust demountable flood barrier is required at Welney where the Wash Road meets the Middle Level Barrier Bank.

Originally planned to take place during 2021, this work has been rescheduled for 2022. This is due to delays last year in the bank raising work caused by wet weather.

To complete the flood barrier construction it will be necessary to gain permission to close the Welney Wash Road/A1101 for 6 to 8 weeks in 2022.

A consultation with residents indicates that their preferred time for these works to be carried out is during the school summer holidays. See the [report to the consultation](#).

Nicola Oldfield, Project Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

The construction works to refurbish the Ouse Washes flood storage reservoir remain on track to be completed by the end of 2022.

We are complying with recommendations from the reservoir inspecting engineer. The work when finished will help to ensure that people, land and buildings are protected from flood water escaping from the reservoir for years to come. The public can be assured that the reservoir remains in a safe condition while these works are ongoing.

We would like to thank the local community for their patience and understanding during this challenging complex programme of work which is taking longer than we originally predicted.

The work is being carried out in line with the government's coronavirus guidance with public footpaths along the crest of the Middle Level Barrier Bank diverted to maintain safety.

Further information on the project is available on the [Ouse Washes Citizen Space information page](#).

Further information

The Ouse Washes flood storage reservoir is located on the River Great Ouse north east of Huntingdon in the Environment Agency's Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire Area. It is registered under the Reservoirs Act 1975 and the Environment Agency is the Undertaker for the reservoir.

The flood storage reservoir is approximately 30 kilometres long, varies in width between 200 metres and 800 metres and covers an area of approximately 1,900 hectares.

The Middle Level Barrier Bank and the Cradge Bank form the 2 dams of the reservoir; both are approximately 30 kilometres long and have a maximum height of 5 metres. When the water level in the reservoir reaches the Cradge Bank's crest it is storing approximately 90,000,000 cubic metres of water above the surrounding ground.

The Ouse Washes system was originally conceived more than 350 years ago. Its creation played a major role in turning the Fens into agricultural land. The Washes span more than 10 parishes and 2 counties.

As well as being one of the country's largest flood defence systems, it is an internationally important nature reserve attracting visitors for wildlife and recreation. Its designations include Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Ramsar wetland site.

As the washes are an internationally-important habitat, the work has to take place in the summer and early autumn to avoid disturbing breeding and over-wintering birds.

Foreign Secretary visits South East Asia to usher in "new era" of UK-Indo Pacific security cooperation

Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab is visiting Indonesia and Brunei-Darussalam this week (7-9 April), to forge closer trade and security ties with the two countries while tackling key global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and the coup in Myanmar.

It is Dominic Raab's fourth visit to South East Asia as Foreign Secretary – and first since the publication of the Integrated Review – setting out the growing importance of the Indo-Pacific. Later this year, the UK's Carrier Strike Group led by the HMS Queen Elizabeth, will make its maiden visit to the region.

In Jakarta, the Foreign Secretary met Indonesia's President Joko Widodo and Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi to discuss the growing UK-Indonesia trade partnership now worth £2.7 billion a year. He also met Health Minister Budi Sadikin where they discussed the importance of international collaboration in pandemic preparedness. In his final meeting in Jakarta, Dominic Raab spoke to ASEAN Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi as the UK looks to progress closer ties with the key regional bloc.

Dominic Raab will now travel to Commonwealth nation and current ASEAN chair, Brunei-Darussalam, for several high level meetings tomorrow (Thursday 8 April) to discuss trade, climate, and security issues, with the British Garrison stationed in the country.

Speaking ahead of the visit Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, said:

This is my fourth visit to the region; to two key strategic partners, because the Indo-Pacific tilt is vital for the UK to grasp the economic opportunities and rise to the new challenges ahead.

We're deepening our trading relationships. The Carrier Strike Group's deployment marks the start of a new era of defence cooperation. And the UK is investing in long term partnerships as a force for good in the region.

In Brunei's capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, Dominic Raab will have an audience with His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei before meeting Foreign Minister II Dato Erywan, where trade will be on the agenda given Brunei's membership of the CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership), which the UK hopes to accede to.

He will then join the second UK-ASEAN ministerial dialogue, to explore Dialogue Partner status for the UK, before returning to the UK.