

More than £18 million awarded in final grants from first round of Culture Recovery Fund

- Projects to revive heritage sites boosted with £13.5 million in kickstart grants including UK's oldest surviving synagogue and Georgian outdoor swimming pool
- 33 independent cinemas receive final awards from the first round of support awarded by the British Film Institute
- Awards made as applications being processed for a further £400 million in lifeline grants and loans to support cultural venues into the summer

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden has announced the final awards to be allocated from the first round of the Government's £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund. The latest grants, awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the British Film Institute on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, build on over £1 billion awarded to a huge range of cultural and heritage organisations last year.

Ambitious projects at 22 heritage organisations will benefit from £13.5 million in targeted grants allocated by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to restart regeneration and maintenance projects that were planned before the pandemic and now face delays or increased costs.

33 cinemas across England will benefit from £5 million awarded by the BFI as the final applications for independent cinemas are processed ahead of the second round of the Culture Recovery Fund.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

From restoring Georgian lidos and Roman baths to saving local screens and synagogues, our Culture Recovery Fund is helping to save the places people can't wait to get back to, when it is safe to do so.

All over the country, this funding is protecting the venues that have shaped our history and make us proud of our communities, whilst safeguarding the livelihoods of the people that work in them.

A grant of £497,000 will go to the Bevis Marks Synagogue, the oldest surviving synagogue in the UK, to protect its collection of significant objects and illuminate the history of the site and the community which has worshipped there for 300 years.

More than 90% of the grants allocated by the National Lottery Heritage Fund

have been awarded to heritage projects outside of London, ensuring that the future of important projects at historic places are protected in all corners of England.

The Black Country Living Museum is currently operating as a vaccination centre, however prior to the pandemic the museum had been planning the single biggest development in its history which would create a new area on site exploring the history of the region through the 1940s, '50s and '60s. A grant of £3,740,000 will help this ambitious project continue, creating opportunities for work and skills development in the local area.

£290,000 will ensure the plans to restore Cleveland Pools into a vibrant community asset can still go ahead as planned despite the pandemic. The Grade II* listed site is one of the oldest surviving outdoor lidos in Britain and visitors of all ages will be able to swim in the redeveloped crescent pool all year round from 2022.

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive, National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:

These are all ongoing major refurbishment and restoration projects, funded by us, which have been threatened by the pandemic. From the oldest surviving outdoor swimming baths to a Victorian pier, and from a much-loved park to an historic abbey, these are all places that will enrich hundreds of lives when they reopen. We are delighted this extra funding from the Culture Recovery Fund will ensure that these exciting projects will go ahead.

In addition, the BFI has awarded £5 million in grants to 33 cinemas, including two major independent companies operating cinemas across England. These grants to cinemas mean that 207 independent cinemas have been supported by the Culture Recovery Fund, 83% of which are outside London.

Ben Roberts, Chief Executive, BFI said:

Across the country, local independent cinemas are lifelines for communities and often the only form of culture and entertainment. As well as bringing people together to enjoy the magic of the big screen, local cinemas are hubs for educational and film activities and provide thousands of jobs. The pandemic has made clear just how important local communities are and the support of the Culture Recovery Fund means that many cinemas will be able to reopen and play a vital role in local economies and regeneration.

Reel Cinemas has been awarded £1,500,000 to support 13 multiplexes which will be crucial to the economic and cultural recovery of the communities they serve from Wakefield to Fareham.

KC Suri, Head of Reel Cinemas, said:

It has been very important to us to pursue all opportunities to protect the jobs of every staff member at Reel Cinemas, and to enable the cinemas to reopen, when permitted, to continue to serve our communities. This is why we want to thank the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the BFI who have awarded us this grant from the Culture Recovery Fund. This vital funding will enable us to protect job security and to manage our business sustainability at this challenging time.

Light Cinemas will benefit from a grant of £2,928,364 to support 10 cinema sites across the North, Midlands, and South East, ensuring their broad film programming and important community engagement can restart when cinemas can safely reopen.

Keith Pullinger, Deputy Chairman & Founder, The Light Cinemas said:

We want to thank everyone at the BFI and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport for supporting us through the process to receive a grant from the Culture Recovery Fund. Covid-19 has devastated our finances and this grant is essential to protect our future and ensure our survival. There is still a lot of work to do, but we now have a platform to start rebuilding our business from. Our landlords and suppliers will need to play their part but this will help protect the jobs of the 220 people who are employed at our cinemas. We look forward to delighting our guests once more when we reopen all our sites later this year.

Ten awards totalling £636,887 in essential support to independent cinemas across England brings the total of grants awarded in the first round of funding for the sector to £21,080,662.

The BFI, along with National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England and Arts Council England, are currently assessing applications for the remaining £400 million in funding from the Culture Recovery Fund, which was held back to allow the Government to support organisations through the Spring and Summer.

Recipients from the first round of the Culture Recovery Fund have contributed stunning images to a curated collection of video call backgrounds, released today. The public can choose from famous arts venues and heritage sites from Durham Cathedral and the English National Ballet to local favourites like Heaton Moor's Savoy cinema to use as their background and show their support for the cultural sectors. The backgrounds are free to download.

Notes to Editors

The list of capital grant awards from National Lottery Heritage Fund is:

Museum of Oxford Hidden Histories	£240,000
Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation	£497,000

North Yorkshire Moors Historic Railway Trust	£296,000
The Royal Pavilion Estate, Brighton	£1,000,000
Tavistock Guildhall Gateway Centre	£130,900
Museum of the Home (Geffrye Museum Trust)	£692,000
Bath Abbey	£534,000
Tunbridge Wells Cultural & Learning Hub	£675,000
The Archway Centre: Roman Baths Learning Centre and World Heritage Centre	£359,600
Swanage Pier Regeneration Project	£469,800
Cleveland Pools Trust	£290,000
Lincoln Cathedral	£973,600
Chester Farm	£719,700
Wicksteed Park	£302,700
Black Country Living Museum	£3,740,000
The Whitaker	£179,900
The Globe, Stockton-on-Tees	£774,000
The Common Room of the Great North	£228,000
Beamish Museum	£975,500
Carlisle Cathedral	£250,000
Thackray Museum	£174,600
The Hyde Park Picture House	£285,600

The list of cinemas receiving grants in this round from the Culture Recovery Fund for Independent Cinemas allocated by the British Film Institute is:

Reel Cinemas (13 locations)	£1,500,000
The Light Cinemas (10 locations)	£2,928,364
Archlight Cinema, London	£152,362
East Coast Cinema, Lowestoft	£89,373
The Bonington, Nottingham	£66,695
Piccadilly Cinema, Leicester	£21,220
Tower Cinema, Skegness	£36,026
CineBowl, Uttoxter	£165,448
Regal Cinema, Wadebridge	£5,625
Rex Cinema, Wareham	£52,606
Westlands Entertainment Venue, Yeovil	£33,133
The Wharf Cinema, Tavistock	£14,399

- Reel Cinemas supported are in Borehamwood, Bridgnorth (Majestic), Burnley/Hollywood Park, Chippenham, Chorley, Fareham/Market Quay, Ilkeston (Scala), Kingston Upon Hull, Morecambe, Quinton/Dudley, Rochdale, Wakefield and Widnes.
- Light Cinemas supported are in Addlestone, Bolton, Bradford, Cambridge, New Brighton, Sheffield, Stockport, Thetford, Walsall and Wisbech.

UK to launch new research agency to support high risk, high reward science

- UK government will launch the Advanced Research & Invention Agency (ARIA), a new independent research body to fund high-risk, high-reward scientific research
- ARIA will be led by prominent, world-leading scientists who will be given the freedom to identify and fund transformational science and technology at speed
- the new agency will help to cement the UK's position as a global science superpower, while shaping the country's efforts to build back better through innovation

The UK's next generation of pioneering inventors will be backed by a new independent scientific research agency, the Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng has announced today (Friday 19 February), as part of government plans to cement the UK's position as a global science superpower.

The new agency, the Advanced Research & Invention Agency (ARIA), will be tasked with funding high-risk research that offers the chance of high rewards, supporting ground-breaking discoveries that could transform people's lives for the better.

The UK has a long and proud history of inventing that dates back centuries – from Ada Lovelace and Alan Turing who pioneered early predecessors of the computer, Thomas Newcomen and James Watt who transformed travel by creating steam engines, William Grove who created fuel cells and Frank Partridge who helped save millions of lives by developing the first portable defibrillator.

The creation of ARIA will continue this tradition, backed by £800 million, to fund the most inspiring inventors to turn their transformational ideas into new technologies, discoveries, products and services – helping to maintain the UK's position as a global science superpower.

The new agency will be independent of government and led by some of the world's most visionary researchers who will be empowered to use their knowledge and expertise to identify and back the most ambitious, cutting-edge areas of research and technology – helping to create highly skilled jobs across the country. It will be able to do so with flexibility and speed by looking at how to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and experimenting with different funding models.

ARIA will be based on models that have proved successful in other countries, in particular the influential US Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) model. This was instrumental in creating transformational technologies such as the internet and GPS, changing the way people live and work, while

increasing productivity and growth. More recently, ARPA's successor, DARPA, was a vital pre-pandemic funder of mRNA vaccines and antibody therapies, leading to critical COVID therapies.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

From the steam engine to the latest artificial intelligence technologies, the UK is steeped in scientific discovery. Today's set of challenges – whether disease outbreaks or climate change – need bold, ambitious and innovative solutions.

Led independently by our most exceptional scientists, this new agency will focus on identifying and funding the most cutting-edge research and technology at speed.

By stripping back unnecessary red tape and putting power in the hands of our innovators, the agency will be given the freedom to drive forward the technologies of tomorrow, as we continue to build back better through innovation.

Central to the agency will be its ability to deliver funding to the UK's most pioneering researchers flexibly and at speed, in a way that best supports their work and avoids unnecessary bureaucracy. It will experiment with funding models including program grants, seed grants, and prize incentives, and will have the capability to start and stop projects according to their success, redirecting funding where necessary. It will have a much higher tolerance for failure than is normal, recognising that in research the freedom to fail is often also the freedom to succeed.

Science and Innovation Minister Amanda Solloway said:

The UK's scientific community has a proud history of discovery, producing iconic inventors such as Alan Turing whose imagination and creativity changed the world as we know it.

But to rise to the challenges of the 21st century we need to equip our R&D community with a new scientific engine – one that embraces the idea that truly great successes come from taking great leaps into the unknown.

ARIA will unleash our most inspirational scientists and inventors, empowering them with the freedom to drive forward their scientific vision and explore game-changing new ideas at a speed like never before. This will help to create new inventions, technologies and industries that will truly cement the UK's status as a global science superpower.

Legislation to create the new research agency will be introduced to Parliament as soon as parliamentary time allows. The aim is for it to be

fully operational by 2022.

Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance said:

The Advanced Research and Invention Agency will build on the UK's world-class scientific research and innovation system. The importance of scientific innovation has never been clearer than over the last year and this new body provides an exciting new funding mechanism for pioneering R&D.

The new body will complement the work of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) while building on the government's ambitious [R&D Roadmap](#) published in July 2020. In November 2020, the Spending Review set out the government's plan to cement the UK's status as a global leader in science and innovation by investing £14.6 billion in R&D in 2021 to 2022, putting the UK on track to reach 2.4% of GDP being spent on R&D across the UK economy by 2027.

A recruitment campaign will begin over the coming weeks to identify a world class interim Chief Executive and Chair to shape the vision, direction and research priorities for the agency.

ARIA will be backed by £800 million of government funding over the course of this Parliament, as set out by the Chancellor Rishi Sunak in the March 2020 Budget.

Matthew Fell, CBI UK Chief Policy Director said:

ARIA will create new opportunities for high-risk, high-reward research. As world leaders in R&D and home to the brightest and best scientists, the UK has a unique opportunity to play to its strength with this new agency, to help create jobs, raise productivity and tackle the biggest challenges facing our country such as net-zero. Key to ARIA's success will be strong business engagement to make sure the brilliant ideas developed can make it through to market.

This a prime chance for business, government and the research and innovation community to work together and turn ambitions into realities. And coalesce around an shared economic vision for the next decade in which innovation will be at the heart of it. The CBI looks forward to engaging with the government as it looks to develop its proposals further.

Sir Jim McDonald FEng FRSE, President of the Royal Academy of Engineering, said:

We are delighted to see the government deliver on its commitment to a high-risk high-reward funding agency. I hope this ambitious new

funding mechanism will help to unlock radical innovation and enable step changes in technology that provides value for our economy and society at large. Engineering is central to an ambitious innovation agency of this kind, forming the bridge between research and innovation to enable technological and commercial breakthroughs.

Previous comments provided as evidence to the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee as part of its formal inquiry into the proposition of a new UK research funding agency include:

Universities UK

There is space in the UK's research landscape for a new funding agency that supports high risk, high pay off investment. It should be designed to complement the wider system of funding streams that already exist and should be tied closely to a well-funded university research network.

Royal Society

A UK ARPA could facilitate investments in technologies with radical potential that may not otherwise receive support through existing mechanisms. It is important that this differentiated focus is clearly articulated and understood.

Institute of Physics

The ARPA model's focus on the future would also be a welcome addition to the UK's R&D funding system, scanning the horizon for areas of research and technology development that may not have an obvious immediate market application but that are likely to benefit the industries of tomorrow, in 10, even 20 years' time.

[New campaign to support vaccine roll-out backed by social media companies and British institutions](#)

- Range of frames and GIFs with designs featuring the NHS, the Premier League, the Beano and Charlie Mackesy

- Images are available across the UK and allow users to show “I’ve had my vaccine” or pledge “I’ll get my vaccine”

British institutions the Premier League and the Beano, much loved author, artist and illustrator Charlie Mackesy, and social media platforms Facebook and Instagram are backing a new nationwide social media campaign launched by government and the NHS for people to show their support for the vaccine roll-out.

The new initiative allows users to update their profiles with a range of specially designed profile frames and graphics. People can use these to show “I’ve had my vaccine” or make a pledge that “I will get my vaccine” when their time comes. Famous faces including iconic British designer Zandra Rhodes and actor Brian Blessed are among those set to join in with the campaign.

During the pandemic social media has been a vital tool for people to connect and share updates with their loved ones. The new collection of graphics will allow people to celebrate getting the vaccine with their family, friends and followers and say thank you to the hard work of our NHS heroes.

The designs launched today include artwork featuring the NHS, the Premier League, British favourite the Beano and beloved author, artist and illustrator Charlie Mackesy, who have all helped create images for those that wish to show their support for the vaccine roll-out.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

It’s truly remarkable how quickly we are meeting our vaccine roll-out targets and so protecting the most vulnerable people in our communities. The pace and progress of the roll-out is testament to the way such a huge team has pulled together to support each other through this pandemic, and the tremendous national effort of our NHS workers, volunteers, local partners and the armed forces.

We know people are turning to social media more than ever to stay in touch with family and friends. These new graphics will make it easy for people to share their support for the job and thank the NHS – whether that’s to mark the pivotal moment that they get their vaccine, or pledge to get it when it’s their turn.

It’s been inspiring to hear the stories of people getting their jab across all 4 corners of the UK and it’s vital we keep up this momentum.

The range of new Facebook frames and Instagram GIFs will be ready to use on social media from today (19 February) and will also be available in 13 languages from Monday so that people from communities all across the UK can support the campaign. The campaign aims to reach tens of millions of people across the UK as the roll-out continues over the next few months. These will be the first in a series of graphics created for a range of platforms that

will launch over the coming months.

The roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine is the largest medical deployment in UK history. Over 16 million people have now received their first dose of the vaccine across the UK, and this week people in priority groups 5 and 6 started to receive their jabs as the roll-out expands further.

NHS England's primary care director and London GP Nikki Kanani said:

I've seen first-hand the enthusiasm for being protected when vaccinating people against coronavirus, and it's great people have a new way of showing support for the roll-out online – it's vital everyone is confident to have the vaccine when it is their turn to do so.

Vaccines are safe, simple and effective, and word of mouth is a great way of communicating that message so that our friends, family and loved ones are encouraged to take up the jab.

Premier League Chief Executive Richard Masters said:

Throughout the pandemic, Premier League clubs and players have been proud to provide a wide range of support to local communities, the NHS and other frontline workers – from direct financial contributions to providing facilities for medical use and helping vulnerable members of society. We are pleased to be able to extend this support and help promote important messaging around the vaccine programme.

Charlie Mackesy said:

The vaccination programme has brought hope to many, and I'm happy to help people mark the moment they get the vaccine and give thanks to our wonderful NHS.

As well as promoting the new campaign, Facebook and Instagram have worked closely with the NHS and government throughout the pandemic to help direct people to accurate information and advice, and to do more to identify and take action to remove incorrect claims about the virus.

Nicola Mendelsohn, Facebook Vice President for Europe, Middle East and Africa, said:

We've been supporting the NHS and the UK government throughout the pandemic by directing over 10 million people to their websites and sharing vital information within our Facebook COVID-19 Hub. We're promoting these unique profile frames and GIFs to all UK Facebook

and Instagram users to raise vital vaccine confidence and we're giving free advertising credits to the NHS so they can reach the public with their campaign.

I got my vaccine this week and feel grateful to the NHS for all their hard work so I want to show my support in whatever way I can. It only takes a minute to change your profile picture – why not give it a go today!

The UK's vaccination programme will be extended to more groups in the coming months, with the government aiming to offer the vaccine to everyone over 50 by May, and all adults by September.

Background information

[Find out more about the COVID-19 vaccine](#)

The Facebook frames and GIPHY stickers will be available in English from Friday 19 February and in all UK language variations from Monday 22 February.

Last week, the government and NHS published a new plan setting out the work we are doing in partnership with communities at a national and local level to increase vaccine uptake and ensure equity of access. Building on work already underway to reach more hesitant audiences, which includes translating vaccine resources into over 13 languages, the plan aims to raise awareness of how the NHS is making vaccination accessible to all, especially ethnic minorities, homeless people, asylum seekers and those with disabilities.

How-to guide to using Facebook frames and Instagram GIFs

Facebook frame: desktop

To add one of the COVID-19 vaccine frames to your profile picture:

1. Go to www.facebook.com/profilepicframes
2. Search for the 'NHS Covid Vaccine' frames and select the one you want to use
3. Click 'Use as Profile Picture' in the bottom right of the screen to save

Facebook frame: in-app

To add one of the COVID-19 vaccine frames to your profile picture:

1. Open your profile in the Facebook app
2. Click your profile picture
3. Click 'Add frame'
4. Search for the 'NHS Covid Vaccine' frames and select the one you want to use
5. Click 'Use as Profile Picture' to save

Instagram GIPHY

To use one of the COVID-19 vaccine instagram stickers (from GIPHY) on your Instagram story:

1. Open instagram and add to your story – take a new picture or use a photograph or video of your choosing
 2. From your instagram story, tap the ‘add media’ button, or swipe up to add Stickers from GIPHY
 3. In the search bar, use the search term ‘NHS Covid Vaccine’ and select a sticker of your choosing (scroll through the options to find the one you want to use)
 4. Position this on your story image or video
 5. Use the hashtag #CovidVaccine if you wish, then post
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Unregulated accommodation banned for vulnerable children under 16

A ban on placing vulnerable children under the age of 16 in unregulated accommodation will come into force in September, the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has announced, as part of a series of reforms to drive up standards in children’s social care.

Children in care under 16 will no longer be allowed to be accommodated in unregulated independent or semi-independent placements, helping to ensure the most vulnerable are cared for in settings that best meet their needs. Regulations have been laid in Parliament today, Friday 19 February, for the ban to come into force in September, as part of the Government’s response to its consultation [last year](#) aimed at ensuring the highest quality provision for all children and young people in care.

Published today, the Department for Education’s response to the [consultation](#) makes clear that while independent and semi-independent provision can be the right option for some older children where it is high quality and meets their needs, children aged under 16 are too young for this type of accommodation – which is intended to facilitate supported living for older children developing their independence before they leave the care system.

In his response, the Education Secretary has also announced that plans will be developed to support local authorities in creating more places in children’s homes, backed by additional investment, building on the £24 million announced at the Spending Review and recognising that there are pressures on some local authorities to find the right placement for a child.

He also confirmed that he will be moving forward with plans for legislating at the earliest opportunity to give Ofsted new powers to take enforcement

action against illegal unregistered providers, who should be registered as children's homes but are operating without the correct registration in place. This will enable Ofsted to take quicker action to register or close down these homes, building on their existing powers to prosecute providers operating without the correct registration and strengthening the options available to them.

The Government will also introduce national standards for unregulated settings that are accommodating 16 and 17-year-old children in care and care leavers, to raise the bar for the quality of this provision and ensure consistency across the country. The Department for Education will shortly launch a consultation on the new national standards, so that as more older children come into the care system, a high quality option is available where they can receive the support they need to prepare for adult life.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Vulnerable children under 16 are too young for the type of accommodation that provides a place to stay but not the care and support that they need. The action taken today – supported by the sector and in response to their views – is an important step in making sure children in care are placed in settings that give them the highest chances of success.

We know that for some older young people, independent or semi-independent accommodation can be right in helping them transition to adult life – but these settings need to be consistently high quality. We cannot be complacent about the standards we expect to be met for children in our care.

Our consultation response sets out the urgent steps we are taking to raise the bar for these children, which alongside the independent review of children's social care, will level up outcomes for those most in need.

Mike Thiedke, Depaul UK CEO said:

Children's homes are the right place for many looked after children and I am glad that the Government intends to work with local authorities to open more. Some 16 and 17 year olds want to live in places where they have more independence – specialist young people's supported accommodation can be the best option for these young people.

Depaul UK provides this type of accommodation. We already have close local authority oversight and extensive internal policies and procedures to ensure we provide safe, supportive accommodation, and we believe other providers should operate with these controls in place to protect young people. I support today's announcement that national standards will be introduced with new powers for Ofsted.

Depaul will continue to work with the Department for Education to do our utmost so that young people living in appropriate accommodation can look forward to a bright future.

[Statistics](#) show that across the year 2018-19 there were 660 looked after children placed in independent or in semi-independent living accommodation who were under the age of 16 when their placement started. This is 5% of looked after children in these settings during 2018-19. New data published today shows the characteristics and placements in independent or semi-independent living accommodation for looked after children under the age of 16 in England.

The Government's drive to raise standards and level up opportunities for the most vulnerable in society sits alongside an investment of almost £4.4 million to extend Covid-19 response programmes run by major children's charities aimed at reaching 'hidden' children who may face neglect or exploitation, especially while they spend more time at home. It adds to plans to create a National Centre for Family Hubs that will improve families' access to vital services across the country, and the confirmation from November's Spending Review of an additional £24 million investment in 2021-22 to expand capacity within secure children's homes, as well as £165 million funding for the Government's [Troubled Families programme](#).

The response to the consultation on unregulated provision builds on a campaign of improvement across children's social care, including last month's launch of the wide-ranging and independent [review into children's social care](#). The review is being led by independent chair Josh MacAlister and will look at improving outcomes for children that have experienced the care system.

Statement by the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States of America

"The Foreign Ministers of France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the U.S. Secretary of State held a virtual meeting, for the second time in this format since Secretary Blinken took office, to discuss Iran and other pressing issues. They reaffirmed the centrality of the transatlantic partnership in dealing with the security, climate, economic, health and other challenges the world faces.

"Regarding Iran, the E3 and the United States expressed their shared fundamental security interest in upholding the nuclear non-proliferation regime and ensuring that Iran can never develop a nuclear weapon. In this

context, the conclusion of the JCPOA was a key achievement of multilateral diplomacy. The E3 welcomed the United States' stated intention to return to diplomacy with Iran as well as the resumption of a confident and in-depth dialogue between the E3 and the United States. The Ministers affirmed strong interest in continuing their consultations and coordination, including with China and Russia, on this key security issue, recognizing the role of the High Representative of the European Union as Coordinator of the Joint Commission.

"The E3 and the United States affirmed their shared objective of Iran's return to full compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA. Secretary Blinken reiterated that, as President Biden has said, if Iran comes back into strict compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA, the United States will do the same and is prepared to engage in discussions with Iran toward that end.

"In this context, the E3 and the United States called on Iran not to take any additional steps, in particular with respect to the suspension of the Additional Protocol and to any limitations on IAEA verification activities in Iran. The E3 and the United States are united in underlining the dangerous nature of a decision to limit IAEA access, and urge Iran to consider the consequences of such grave action, particularly at this time of renewed diplomatic opportunity. They reiterated their full support for the professional and impartial role of the IAEA and its Director General and their efforts to implement the necessary verification and monitoring of Iran's nuclear commitments under the JCPOA.

"The E3 and the United States also expressed their shared concerns over Iran's recent actions to produce both uranium enriched up to 20% and uranium metal. These activities have no credible civil justification. Uranium metal production is a key step in the development of a nuclear weapon.

"The E3 welcomed the prospect of a U.S. and Iranian return to compliance with the JCPOA. The E3 and the United States affirmed their determination to then strengthen the JCPOA and, together with regional parties and the wider international community, address broader security concerns related to Iran's missile programs and regional activities. The E3 and the United States are committed to working together toward these goals.

"The Ministers also called on Iran to release all our arbitrarily detained nationals and reunite them with their families. They also expressed deep concern about the continuing grave human rights violations in Iran.

"The E3 and the United States look forward to engaging with partners in order to work together toward these key objectives.

"They expressed their joint determination to work toward de-escalating tensions in the Gulf region. They stressed in particular the urgency of ending the war in Yemen, while reaffirming their steadfast commitment to the security of their regional partners. On Yemen, the Ministers agreed to work closely together to support United Nations Special Envoy Griffiths' efforts to end the war and to address the humanitarian crisis. They expressed concern

about the recent Houthi offensive against Marib and strikes against civilian infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, calling upon the Houthis and all Yemeni parties to engage constructively in the political process.

“On Iraq, the Ministers reiterated their condemnation of the February 15 rocket attack in Erbil. They expressed their condolences for the victims, their families, and the Iraqi people and emphasized that attacks on U.S., Coalition and NATO personnel and facilities will not be tolerated. Ministers reiterated their support for the Iraqi Government.

“Discussing the evolving challenge posed by Daesh, ministers re-committed to continuing critical efforts to target and eliminate the Daesh threat in Iraq and Syria, including efforts via the 83-member Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh. They also emphasized the growing importance of coordinating efforts to target the threat posed by Daesh branches and networks worldwide.

“The Ministers agreed to closely coordinate to address the global challenges posed by China, as well as the need for cooperation across a range of issues, including climate change.

“On Myanmar, they condemned the military coup. They called on military leaders to immediately end the state of emergency, restore power to the democratically elected government, refrain from violence, release all those unjustly detained, and respect human rights and the rule of law.

“The Ministers agreed on the importance of further strengthening NATO and ensuring it is positioned to address today’s strategic realities, building on the NATO Reflection Group’s recommendations.

“Ministers agreed that strong international and multilateral cooperation was essential to ending the COVID 19 pandemic and building back better collectively. They reviewed efforts on the global response, including support for rapid deployment of vaccines globally, primarily through the ACT-A/COVAX facility.

“They agreed to work with urgency to address the climate crisis ahead of the 26th UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Glasgow in November. They agreed that significant collective action was needed to implement the Paris Agreement, including keeping a 1.5 degree Celsius temperature rise within reach. They looked forward to the upcoming U.S.-hosted Leaders’ Climate Summit as an important forum for enhanced climate ambition.”