

# Minsk Group co-chairs, personal representative of chairperson in office and high level planning group: UK statement

Thank you Mr Chair.

The United Kingdom joins our colleagues in welcoming the Minsk Group Co-Chairs; Mr. Schofer, Ambassador Visconti and Ambassador Popov. We also welcome the Personal Representative of the Chairperson in Office, Ambassador Kasprzyk and the Head of the High Level Planning Group, Lieutenant Colonel Mustafaraj.

The United Kingdom express full support for all of your work over the last 12 months, including throughout the recent military action and also in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Your unparalleled efforts, as detailed in your recent reports, serve as a timely reminder of the efforts of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. It is clear, the Minsk Group should remain the primary format through which any final settlement should be reached.

The renewal of active hostilities in recent months has been deeply concerning. The United Kingdom reaffirms its support for the deal agreed between the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan which has prevented further loss of life.

The United Kingdom welcomes the report by Ambassador Kasprzyk. In particular we note the efforts to continue providing mediation support in order build confidence between the parties earlier this year despite the disruption of COVID-19. We are grateful for the assessment of the current situation on the ground and echo the emphasis on the importance of ensuring the respectful return of the remains of the deceased. Keeping neutral OSCE communication channels open has never been more important.

Ambassador Kasprzyk's report has made clear the need for the OSCE to remain fully engaged on this file and reinforces the value of an OSCE presence in the region. The United Kingdom remains ready to provide support to Ambassador Kasprzyk and the Co-Chairs going forwards.

The United Kingdom also appreciates the efforts by Lieutenant Colonel Mustafaraj and the HLPG. We welcome your cooperation with the Co-Chairs and Ambassador Kasprzyk, as well as your engagement with relevant international organisations.

To conclude, the United Kingdom once again reaffirms its full support for the Co-Chairs of France, the United States and Russia and urges all Minsk Group members to provide their full support for their efforts. The Minsk Group and the OSCE have a vital role to play in the coming months and we encourage full

engagement between the Co-Chairs and Ambassador Kasprzyk and Lieutenant Colonel Mustafaraj. The United Kingdom stands ready to assist, however necessary, and is committed to providing support for the humanitarian response and ongoing conflict resolution efforts.

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## PM statement to the House on the Integrated Review: 19 November 2020

Mr Speaker, thank you and with permission, I will update the House on the Government's Integrated Review of foreign, defence, security and development policy.

Our Review will conclude early next year, setting out the UK's international agenda,

but I want to inform the House of its first outcome.

For decades, British governments have trimmed and cheese-pared our defence budget

and if we go on like this,

we risk waking up to discover that our armed forces – the pride of Britain – have fallen below the minimum threshold of viability,

and once lost, they could never be regained.

That outcome would not only be craven, it would jeopardise the security of the British people,

amounting to a dereliction of duty for any Prime Minister.

So I refused to vindicate any pessimistic forecasters there have been by taking up the scalpel yet again.

Based on our assessment of the international situation and our foreign policy goals,

I have decided that the era of cutting our defence budget must end – and it ends now.

I am increasing defence spending by £24.1 billion over the next four years,

That's £16.5 billion more than our manifesto commitment –

raising it as a share of GDP to at least 2.2 percent,

exceeding our NATO pledge,  
and investing £190 billion over the next four years,  
more than any other European country  
and more than any other NATO ally, except the United States.

The Ministry of Defence has received a multi-year settlement because equipping our armed forces requires long term investment,  
and our national security in 20 years' time will depend on decisions we take today.

I have done this in the teeth of the pandemic, amid every other demand on our resources,

because the defence of the realm,  
and the safety of the British people,  
must come first.

I pay tribute to my Right Honourable Friends the Chancellor and Defence Secretary, who believe in this as fervently as I do.

Reviving our armed forces is one pillar of the Government's ambition to safeguard Britain's interests and values

by strengthening our global influence,  
and reinforcing our ability to join the United States and our other allies to defend free and open societies.

The international situation is now more perilous and intensely competitive than at any time since the Cold War.

Everything we do in this country – every job, every business, even how we shop and what we eat –

depends on a basic minimum of global security.

Our people are sustained by a web of lifelines, oxygen pipes that must be kept open

open shipping lanes, a functioning internet, safe air corridors, reliable undersea cables, and tranquillity in distant straits.

This pandemic has offered a taste of what happens when elemental requirements are suddenly in question.

We could take all this for granted, ignore the threat of terrorism and the ambitions of hostile states, and hope for the best,

and we might get away with it for a while, before calamity strikes, as it surely would.

Or we could accept that our lifelines must be protected, but we are content to curl up in our island and leave the task to our friends.

My starting point is that either of those options would be an abdication of the first duty of Government to defend our people.

My choice – and I hope it will carry every member of this House – is that Britain must be true to our history,

To stand alongside our allies, sharing the burden

and bringing our expertise to bear on the world's toughest problems.

To achieve this, we need to upgrade our capabilities across the board.

We have already united our international effort into a new department combining aid and diplomacy,

Led with grit and purpose by my RH Friend the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary.

Next year will be a year of British leadership, when we preside over the G7, host COP-26 in Glasgow

and celebrate the 75th anniversary of the first United Nations General Assembly in London.

We are leading the world towards net zero with our ten-point plan for a Green Industrial Revolution,

and we are campaigning for our values, particularly freedom of religion and the media, and giving every girl in the world access to 12 years of quality education.

But extending British influence requires a once-in-a-generation modernisation of our armed forces,

and now is the right time to press ahead

because emerging technologies, visible on the horizon,

will make the returns from defence investment infinitely greater.

We have a chance to break free from the vicious circle, whereby we ordered ever-decreasing numbers

of ever more expensive items of military hardware, squandering billions along the way.

The latest advances will multiply the fighting power of every warship,

aircraft and infantry unit many times over,

and the prizes will go to the swiftest and most agile nations, not necessarily the biggest.

We can achieve as much as British ingenuity and expertise allow.

We will need to act speedily to remove or reduce less relevant capabilities – and this will allow our new investment to be focused on the technologies that will revolutionise warfare,

forging our military assets into a single network designed to overcome the enemy.

A soldier in hostile territory will be alerted to a distant ambush by sensors on satellites or drones,

instantly transmitting a warning,

using Artificial Intelligence to devise the optimal response,

and offering an array of options,

from summoning an air strike to ordering a swarm attack, by drones

or paralysing the enemy with cyber weapons.

New advances will surmount the old limits of logistics.

Our warships and combat vehicles will carry “directed energy weapons”, destroying targets with inexhaustible lasers

and for them the phrase “out of ammunition” will become redundant.

Nations are racing to master this new doctrine of warfare

and our investment is designed to place Britain among the winners.

The returns will go far beyond our Armed Forces.

From aerospace to autonomous vehicles, these technologies have a vast array of civilian applications,

opening up new vistas of economic progress,

creating 10,000 jobs every year – 40,000 in total –

levelling up across our country

and reinforcing our Union.

We shall use our extra defence spending to restore Britain’s position as the foremost naval power in Europe,

taking forward our plans for eight Type 26 and five Type 31 frigates,

and support ships to supply our carriers.

We are going to develop the next generation of warships, including multi-role research vessels and Type 32 frigates.

And this will spur a renaissance of British shipbuilding across the UK

– in Glasgow and Rosyth, Belfast, Appledore and Birkenhead –

guaranteeing jobs and illuminating the benefits of the Union in the white light of the arc welder's torch.

If there was one policy which strengthens the UK in every possible sense, it is building more ships for the Royal Navy.

Once both of our carriers are operational in 2023, the UK will have a Carrier Strike Group permanently available,

routinely deployed globally and always ready to fight alongside NATO and other allies.

Next year HMS Queen Elizabeth will lead a British and allied task group on our most ambitious deployment for two decades,

encompassing the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and East Asia.

We shall forward deploy more of our naval assets in the world's most important regions, protecting the shipping lanes that supply our nation,

and we shall press on with renewing our nuclear deterrent.

We shall reshape our army for the age of networked warfare,

allowing better equipped soldiers to deploy more quickly,

and strengthening the ability of our Special Forces to operate covertly against our most sophisticated adversaries.

Our security and intelligence agencies will continue to protect us around the clock from terrorism and new and evolving threats,

We shall invest another £1.5 billion in military research and development, designed to master the new technologies of warfare,

and we will establish a new centre dedicated to Artificial Intelligence

and a new RAF Space Command, launching British satellites and our first rocket from Scotland in 2022.

I can announce that we have established a National Cyber Force, combining our intelligence agencies and service personnel,

which is already operating in cyberspace against terrorism, organised crime

and hostile state activity.

And the RAF will receive a new fighter system, harnessing Artificial Intelligence and drone technology to defeat any adversary in air-to-air combat.

Our plans will safeguard hundreds of thousands of jobs in the defence industry,

protecting livelihoods across the UK and keeping the British people safe.

The defence of the realm is above party politics

and we all take pride in how British resolve saved democracy in 1940,

and British internationalism – directed by Clement Attlee – helped to create NATO and preserve peace through the Cold War.

The wisdom and pragmatism of Margaret Thatcher found a path out of confrontation when she met Mikhail Gorbachev in 1984.

In each case, Britain tipped the scales of history and did immense good for the world.

Now we have a chance to follow in this great tradition,

to end the era of retreat,

transform our armed forces,

bolster our global influence,

unite and level up across our country,

protect our people,

and defend the free societies in which we fervently believe.

Mr Speaker, I commend this statement to the House.

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## **NHS Test and Trace processes more tests and contacts more positive cases**

During the week of 5 to 11 November, 1,997,623 tests were processed for pillars 1 and 2, an increase of 9% (158,444) compared with the previous week.

A record number of positive cases (156,853) were transferred to contact tracers between 5 and 11 November, an 11% increase on the previous week. Of

those, 84.9% were reached and told to self-isolate, 11,788 more than the previous week.

In total, NHS Test and Trace successfully reached 323,080 people during the week of 5 to 11 November and asked them to self-isolate. These people might otherwise have unknowingly spread the virus.

People are also being reached more quickly, with 72.8% of positive cases being reached within 24 hours, up slightly from 72.5% in the previous week.

313,771 people were identified as coming into close contact with someone who had tested positive. Of these, where communication details were available, 77.9% were reached and asked to self-isolate.

NHS Test and Trace has been boosted by the introduction of local tracing partnerships with over 150 local authorities. This means local authorities are provided with extensive data and supported to manage local outbreaks, working closely with ring-fenced group of NHS contact tracers to follow up positive cases in the area and implement public health measures.

Over 100 more of these partnerships are in the process of being implemented in the next few weeks.

Acting on feedback the service has received from families, changes to the contact-tracing process, coming in this week, should see a reduction in the number of calls received by households with children. These changes mean that under-18s in a household will not each have to be contact traced individually, as long as the parent or guardian in the household confirms they have completed their legal duty to inform their child to self-isolate. If no parental permission is provided, NHS Test and Trace will follow the standard contact-tracing routes.

From the end of November, changes will be extended to cover adults in the same family so they can be traced via a single phone call, further reducing the number of calls made to the same household. This change will also optimise the productivity of the tracing service by minimising the number of calls made.

Since its launch in May, 82.8% (764,897) of people who have tested positive and been transferred to contact tracing have successfully been contacted. More than 2.3 million people have been reached by the service, including those who tested positive and their contacts.

Nearly 680 test sites are now in operation across England, including more than 300 local walk-through testing sites, meaning the average distance to a test centre has halved since the beginning of September to a median distance of 2.6 miles.

Nearly 35 million tests have now been processed in the UK since the service began, while increases in capacity – now at more than 500,000 a day – should lead to improvements in test turnaround times. The [announcement this week of 2 new 'megalabs'](#) confirmed that capacity will increase by a further 600,000 in early 2021, meaning faster turnaround times for test results.



For in-person test routes, the median time taken to receive a test result remained at 25 to 29 hours.

For this reporting period, 69.1% of in-person test results were received the next day after the test was taken, slightly lower than the 70.8% reported in the previous week.

For all routes combined, this week's figure was 41.7%, compared with 40.9% the previous week. 85.8% of pillar 1 test results were made available within 24 hours, compared with 87.9% the previous week.

Royal Mail announced this week that they will begin Sunday collections from 15,000 priority boxes from this weekend, which is expected to have a positive impact on turnaround times for home testing kits.

The [weekly statistics from the 24th week of NHS Test and Trace](#) show in the most recent week of operations (5 to 11 November):

- a total of 1,997,623 tests were processed (pillars 1 and 2), a 9% increase from the previous week
- 133,195 (84.9%) people who tested positive and were transferred to the contact-tracing system were reached and asked to provide information about their contacts, compared with 121,407 (85.6%) the previous week
- 77.9% (189,885) contacts where communication details were given were reached and told to self-isolate, compared with 190,835 (78.4%) the previous week
- 69.1% of in-person test results were received the next day after the test was taken, compared with 70.8% the previous week
- 38% of in-person test results were received within 24 hours after the test was taken, compared with 37.5% the previous week
- 91.3% of satellite (care home) tests were received within 3 days after the day they were taken, compared with 93.9% the previous week

Since NHS Test and Trace launched, over 2.3 million contacts have been identified, and 79.9% of all contacts where communication details were given have been reached and told to self-isolate.

Figures also show that, as of 11 November, the [NHS COVID-19 app](#) has been downloaded more than 19.8 million times.

Interim Executive Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection Baroness Dido Harding said:

Our first defence against this virus is washing our hands, wearing face coverings and following governmental guidelines on social distancing. Alongside this, NHS Test and Trace is a valuable tool to stop transmission and drive down the R rate.

This week we have seen more tests processed and more positive cases contacted than ever before, which means we are finding the virus where it hides and reducing its spread.

As the number of people using NHS Test and Trace continues to increase, so the service is constantly evolving and improving. This week sees the introduction of changes to the contact-tracing programme to reduce calls to the same family household, which should reduce duplicate calls, as well as the introduction of Sunday collections of tests from priority boxes by the Royal Mail, which should improve home test turnaround times.

Meanwhile, our commitment to increasing capacity continues, with our announcement this week of 2 new 'megalabs' that will see testing capacity grow by 600,000 a day by next year, while generating local employment.

I'm grateful to everyone, including our partners in local government, who are working tirelessly every day to make sure the service continues to evolve and improve.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

Through a massive concerted effort by everyone involved in NHS Test and Trace, we have now processed more than 35 million tests, rolled out nearly 680 test centres (meaning the average distance to travel to one is now 2.6 miles), boosted testing capacity to more than 500,000 a day, and seen more than 2.3 million people successfully contacted by our contact tracers. This is a great achievement, in which all involved should feel rightly proud.

Our efforts do not end there, however. The mass testing pilot currently underway in Liverpool, the rapid testing being made available to directors of public health, and the latest mass testing pilot, launching this week in Methyr in Wales, are proof of our ongoing commitment to expanding and improving the NHS Test and Trace programme.

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## [Defence secures largest investment since the Cold War](#)

Combined with the manifesto commitment of a 0.5% uplift, the total increase for Defence is a substantial £24.1 billion.

Today's announcement funds a generational modernisation of the Armed Forces so they can defend the UK against future threats, while cementing Britain's role as a leader in NATO and stimulating thousands of highly skilled jobs

across the UK.

A radical program of innovation and modernisation will create up to British 10,000 jobs a year, and support thousands more livelihoods as the nation builds back better from the coronavirus pandemic.

The investment will underpin the revitalisation of shipbuilding, funding a significant expansion of Royal Navy vessels to create the biggest surface fleet of modern warships in Europe.

An additional £1.5 billion will be poured into military research – including for the Future Combat Air System – allowing the Armed Forces to tackle the threats of tomorrow and to make sure the UK can stand shoulder to shoulder with our allies across the globe.

For the hard-working men and women of the armed forces, the funding will go towards improving their day to day lives – whether through the wrap around childcare offer or improved living conditions, their health and wellbeing will be protected.

**Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:**

This is excellent news for Defence, and provides us with the financial certainty we need to modernise, plan for the future, and adapt to the threats we face. It demonstrates the Prime Minister's recognition of how important Defence is to our resilience, and to the reputation of the United Kingdom.

This settlement secures UK jobs and livelihoods, allows us to invest in our fantastic shipyards and aerospace industry, spreading prosperity to every corner of the UK.

Next year represents a huge opportunity for this country, and Defence will be at the forefront of creating the jobs and business opportunities that will help us build back from the pandemic.

Over the next few months, I will set out in more detail our ambitious agenda for Defence.

In recent years, our adversaries have developed and weaponised a myriad of emerging technologies which go beyond the traditional warfighting domains of air, land and sea.

That's why the Prime Minister has announced a new agency dedicated to developing Artificial Intelligence, the creation of a National Cyber Force and a new 'Space Command' that will protect the UK's interests in space and control the UK's first satellite launched from a UK rocket by 2022.

The National Cyber Force will disrupt terrorists, hostile state activity and criminals and transform the UK's cyber capabilities. This Ministry of Defence and GCHQ partnership will conduct responsible cyber operations ranging from

countering terror plots to supporting military operations.

**Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nick Carter, said:**

This multi-year settlement is very welcome for the Armed Forces. It funds a pathway to modernisation and the digital force we need for the 2030s, integrated across the domains of maritime, air, land, cyber and space.

It allows us to adapt in the near-term to deter the range of complex threats we face. It secures the defence of our country, gives meaning to the vision of Global Britain, and sends a powerful message to our allies and opponents.

Thanks to the cash injection, other technologies including autonomous vehicles, swarm drones, and cutting-edge battlefield awareness systems will be developed for military use.

These developments will be underpinned by a strong R&D pipeline, which will contribute to the already over 400,000 skilled jobs supported by Defence.

The £16.5 billion investment confirms our order of 8 Type 26 and 5 Type 31 frigates, commits us to the next generation Type 32, and supports the future solid support ships that will supply our Carrier Strike Group.

Whilst this is reassuring news for the defence industry, Defence will not overlook the challenges that are ahead, to continue addressing the savings still required and the efficiencies we need to make.

In the years ahead, Defence will continue to research, invest and adapt its equipment to become a greener and more sustainable industry. As the UK prepares to lead the COP26 summit in Glasgow next year, Defence will be working to reduce the emissions footprint of our armed forces around the globe.

With this significant financial settlement, the UK will stand proudly alongside our friends and allies as a top investor in Defence. The Integrated Review that we will publish in early 2021 will further signal our ambition for the armed forces.

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## [The Economic Secretary's keynote speech to TheCityUK 2020 Conference](#)

Good morning everyone

It's a real privilege to speak to you all today.

While I immensely value the way that technology has enabled us to communicate with one another over the past months...

I very much look forward to talking to you live and in person again – just as I have in the past.

The theme of today's event is revitalisation.

Or perhaps, to borrow the phrase the Chancellor used last week, a "new chapter".

But before I turn to that subject – I'll start with a moment of reflection.

I've been Economic Secretary for almost three years now.

That might not sound very long – but believe me it is aeons in politics.

A lot has changed since I started in the job – both within the financial services sector and more widely...

but over the past eight months, Covid-19 has transformed our lives.

I don't underestimate for one moment, the test of leadership this pandemic has presented to you all – the people at the helm of this vitally important industry.

But you've risen to the challenge.

As the Chancellor said last week, the past months have shown your sector at its best.

It's your industry that has safeguarded the savings and pensions of millions of people through the choppiest waters imaginable.

It's your frontline workers, in banks and call centres, who have helped people access the vital financial services they need.

And it's your sector that has helped the Government swiftly and efficiently issue £60 billion of loan payments that have helped keep one million businesses afloat.

So, thank you for everything you've done and continue to do.

We're acutely aware of the disruption caused by the further restrictions, that we recently had to introduce to combat the virus.

We are grateful for your patience and we'll be setting out further detail on our next steps as soon as possible.

But now I want to look slightly further ahead.

## **New Vision for FS**

And I'm particularly glad to speak to you today because this event is very timely.

This moment, as we come to the end of the Transition Period, and begin our economic recovery from coronavirus...

marks the start of a new chapter for this country's financial services industry.

And last week the Chancellor, began that chapter, by setting out the Government's vision for the future of the sector.

It's a vision of an open industry, where British finance and expertise drives trade, commerce and prosperity with partners in Europe and around the world.

A technologically advanced industry, that uses all its ingenuity and talent to deliver better outcomes for consumers and businesses.

A greener industry, that harnesses innovation and finance to tackle climate change and protect our environment.

And above all, an industry that serves the people of this country, acting in the interests of communities and citizens...

creating jobs, supporting businesses, and driving growth as we direct all the strength of this country towards economic recovery.

Needless to say, this vision will be based on world-beating regulation that is agile and responsive, along with safe and stable markets.

Last week I laid the legislative foundations of that vision with the Financial Services Bill.

While the Chancellor announced new policy in three areas that underpin our vision: Openness, technology and green finance.

### **Openness to international markets**

I'll turn to the first point – openness.

Our approach is very simple. We want to become the most open and competitive financial services centre in the world.

And our most urgent task right now is to give certainty on our approach to regulation.

To achieve that, we need to decide on our approach to equivalence; one of the central mechanisms for managing our cross-border financial services activity within the EU and beyond.

We strongly believe it is in the UK and EU's mutual interest to reach a comprehensive set of decisions on mutual equivalence.

As I think you know, our ambition had been to manage these decisions cooperatively with the EU.

However, it has become clearer that there are many areas where the EU is not prepared to even assess the UK in the short to medium term – despite having a wealth of information at its disposal.

We've no wish to politicise this situation but we simply can't allow the uncertainty to rumble on interminably – that's no good for industry or the economy.

It's time for us to move forward and do what's right for the UK.

That's why last week we published a set of equivalence decisions for the EU and EEA member states, based on outcomes based proportionate assessments.

It's a step that should provide the certainty and stability you, as industry, need, and deliver our goal of open, well-regulated markets.

We've taken a principled approach, aiming to be open, predictable and transparent, as we've made those decisions.

In addition, we've published a detailed framework for our general approach to equivalence, taking a technical, outcomes-based approach which prioritises stability openness and transparency.

It's important too that our UK businesses benefit from a level playing field, as far as possible.

As I'm sure you're aware, UK financial services businesses cannot currently reclaim input VAT on exports to the EU.

So, to make sure UK financial services exports to the EU remain competitive, we will treat them the same as exports to other countries.

This means UK firms will be able to reclaim input VAT on financial services exports to the EU – support worth £800 million per year.

And just as we are focused on providing certainty to financial services after the Transition Period...

we also want to help your industry seize new opportunities outside the EU.

Earlier this year we took a major step forward with our partnership with Switzerland.

While we recently had a productive economic and financial dialogue with India – and hope to hold a dialogue with Brazil before the end of the year.

We've also just signed a trade deal with Japan that goes further than the EU's financial services deal, and that will take effect in January.

And financial services are a key feature of talks with other partners, such as the US, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.

In addition, last week we announced our intention to launch a call for evidence on our overseas regime...

This will allow us next year, to tailor our future approach to enable market access to investment funds from other countries.

And to build on the 113,000 jobs already supported by the asset management industry, we've also said we are going to publish a consultation on reforming the UK investment funds regime.

We've also heeded the investment industry's request that we make it easier to invest in longer term, illiquid assets, such as infrastructure.

I know this is also an area of interest for TheCityUK.

So, I was delighted that last week we set out our ambition to have a Long Term Asset Fund and have it up and running within a year.

This won't just be good for savers and the industry.

It will also be good for the UK, boosting investment in the vital infrastructure that will support our economic recovery.

## **Technology**

While our investment industry is one of the jewels of our financial services sector, so is our thriving fintech industry...

a sector that has generated 76,000 jobs, right around the country.

So, now let me turn to the next part of our vision for financial services – technology.

We want to reach our full potential in this area.

That's why we're looking forward to studying the recommendations of Ron Kalifa's independent review, on how the UK can become the leading destination for starting up, growing and investing in FinTech firms.

In addition, we continue to take a leading role in the global conversation on Central Bank currencies...

with the Treasury and the Bank of England considering whether and how central banks can issue their own digital currencies.

On that note, we're going to launch a consultation on our regulatory approach to StableCoins.

And this will help us seize the opportunities of this emerging form of payment but ensure it meets the same minimum standards as more traditional methods.

While we're on that subject, we've all seen how digital and contactless payments are helping to keep the economy moving throughout the pandemic.



And through our Payments Landscape Review, we've been considering the new challenges and risks that arise from this rapid switch to these new forms of payments.

We do have some work to do on this front.

So, I'm delighted that we received over 60 responses to the review to help inform our decisions. And we'll be setting out our next steps early in 2021.

## **Green Finance**

I'll move on now to the last area of policy I'd like to discuss today – harnessing the power of financial services to tackle climate change.

This is a real personal priority of mine.

In fact, last time I spoke to you, I talked about the need to turn this challenge into a spur for technological, economic and social progress.

Because we really do want to take a lead here.

That's why last year we launched the Green Finance Strategy – to mobilise investment in clean and resilient growth.

And now as we prepare to host the COP 26 UN climate conference next year and the G7 conference, we have a real chance to shape the future agenda in this area.

So, I'm delighted that last week we announced our intention to introduce mandatory Taskforce on Climate Related Financial Disclosures, requirements across the economy by 2025, with a significant portion of requirements in place by 2023.

This is a really significant moment. It makes this country the first to go beyond 'comply or explain' or 'as far as able' requirements...

while the UK's TCFD Taskforce Interim Report, also published last week, sets out how we will meet this important commitment.

We've also said that we'll issue our first ever green sovereign bond.

I know that it's something some of you have been calling for some time – so I'm delighted to show you that we've made progress on this front.

## **Wider Programme of Regulatory Reform**

These policies begin a new chapter for financial services.

And they are part of an ambitious programme of regulatory reform being undertaken by the Government.

Because now we've left the EU, we have the opportunity to take back control of decisions governing the sector...

and to be guided by what is right for the UK – to regulate differently and regulate better.

As I mentioned earlier, last week, the Financial Services Bill had its second reading in Parliament, marking the next stage of our reform agenda.

The Bill will deliver several existing government commitments and will help ensure the UK maintains its world leading regulatory standards, as well as ensuring our openness with international markets.

And, we're also taking a fundamental review of our Financial Services Regulatory Framework.

This will allow us to consider how we may need to change the way we make and shape our future rules, now we have left the EU...

while building on the strengths of our existing framework and on the role played by our independent financial service regulators.

We're also carrying out a number of other reviews in areas that we know are a priority for industry...

including looking at the Solvency II Directive to make sure it properly reflects the unique features of the UK insurance sector.

So, as you can see, we are at the start of a new chapter.

And while all of this is going to keep me and my team busy.

It's not a job for us alone. It's going to take the collective efforts of us all.

And I really do mean all of us – from the biggest bank to the smallest fintech start-ups in every part of the country.

Indeed, as the Chancellor said last week financial services are not synonymous with the City of London.

That's why, over the coming weeks, I'll be making a point of meeting those of you based outside of the Capital, as I know that you are going to play a crucial part in realising our vision.

I'll wind up by saying that I really do mean that it is a privilege to talk to you today.

And I very much look forward to working with you all over the weeks and months ahead...

so we can together make this next chapter for your sector even better than the one before.

Thank you.