

Prepare for lift-off: Jet Zero Council to deliver carbon-free flight

- Jet Zero Council sets out ambitions on sustainable aviation fuel, zero-emission aviation and aerospace technologies
- partnership between government and industry to drive forward the government's net zero-emission ambitions for the aviation and aerospace sector
- group brings together representatives across aviation, aerospace, academia and wider

The pioneering partnership between government and the aviation sector to fast-track zero-emission flight has taken its next step forward today (Friday 25 September 2020) with the publication of the [group's members and key aims](#).

Following the first meeting of the group earlier in the summer, representatives from the UK's leading aerospace, aviation and technology sectors will work in lockstep with Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, Aviation Minister Robert Courts and Business Secretary Alok Sharma to drive forward the government's ambitions for clean aviation.

Industry leaders from Rolls-Royce, Airbus and Shell, along with representatives from some of Britain's top aviation, tech, non-governmental organisation (NGO) and investor groups, including John Holland-Kaye (Heathrow) and Alex Cruz (IAG), will aim to turbocharge government plans through a laser focus on UK production facilities for sustainable aviation fuels and the acceleration of the design, manufacture and commercial operation of zero-emission aircraft in the UK, helping speed the sector towards a low-carbon future.

Aviation Minister Robert Courts said:

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges faced by modern society, and we know we need to go further and faster if we're to make businesses sustainable long into the future.

That's why we're bringing together government, business and investors to reduce emissions in the aviation sector – through innovative technologies, such as sustainable fuels, hybrid and eventually electric planes, we will build a cleaner, greener and more sustainable future for all.

The council, which will establish sub-committees to accelerate progress, will focus on reducing carbon dioxide emissions and delivering clean growth. It will operate in the context of the UK's wider target for net zero emissions by 2050 – one of the most ambitious targets in the world.

The partnership will leverage the UK's world-leading aviation sector, which employs 230,000 people in the UK and contributes £33 billion to the UK economy, to effectively tackle emissions while encouraging growth and green innovation. Through this partnership, the UK will go further than ever before in developing the first zero-emission transatlantic passenger aircraft.

The publication of the group's aims today coincides with the Aviation Minister's visit to Cranfield to witness the world's first hydrogen-electric passenger plane flight.

ZeroAvia, a leading innovator in decarbonising commercial aviation, supported by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) through the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI) Programme, completed the flight at the company's research and development (R&D) facility in Cranfield, England, with the Piper M-class 6-seat plane completing taxi, take-off, a full pattern circuit and landing.

Business and Industry Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

The UK is unrelenting in its commitment to ensuring a cleaner world for future generations by achieving net zero emissions by 2050 – and making air travel greener will be a huge part of this.

This ambitious council will see the government working in tandem with key players from across aviation, aerospace and wider to develop innovations that will catapult aviation to a low-carbon future.

[The full list of attendees can be found online, along with the terms of reference.](#)

Winter Economy Plan to support Scottish firms and workers

The Chancellor Rishi Sunak has outlined additional government support to provide certainty to businesses and workers impacted by coronavirus across the UK.

Delivering a speech in Parliament, the Chancellor announced a package of measures that will continue to protect jobs and help businesses through the

uncertain months ahead as we continue to tackle the spread of the virus. The package includes a new Jobs Support Scheme to protect millions of returning workers, extending the Self Employment Income Support Scheme and 15% VAT cut for the hospitality and tourism sectors, and help for businesses in repaying government-backed loans.

The announcement comes after the Prime Minister set out further measures to combat the spread of the virus over the winter, while preserving the ability to grow the economy.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

The resurgence of the virus, and the measures we need to take in response, pose a threat to our fragile economic recovery...

Our approach to the next phase of support must be different to that which came before.

The primary goal of our economic policy remains unchanged – to support people's jobs – but the way we achieve that must evolve.

Scottish Secretary Alister Jack said:

As the Prime Minister made clear this week, the struggle against covid is the single biggest crisis the country has faced in decades. The UK Government is focussed on stopping the spread of coronavirus and keeping people safe, while doing everything we can to protect the our economy and people's jobs.

The package announced by the Chancellor today is great news for people and businesses in Scotland. It will help keep people in jobs, extend crucial support to businesses and giving them the certainty they need. It will give businesses and self-employed people the support they need to get through this difficult situation. It comes on top of an extensive package of UK Government support throughout the pandemic, and is very welcome.

The UK Government has put in place unprecedented measures to support all parts of the country during this pandemic. It shows clearly how Scotland benefits from being part of a strong United Kingdom.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the government has taken swift action to save lives, limit the spread of the disease and minimise damage to the economy.

Ministers have introduced one of the most generous and comprehensive economic plans anywhere in the world with over £190 billion of support for people, businesses and public services – including paying the wages of nearly 12

million people, supporting over a million businesses through grants, loans and rates cuts and announcing the Plan for Jobs in July.

The government has been consistently clear that it would keep its support under review to protect jobs and the economy, with today's action reflecting the evolving circumstances and uncertainty of the months ahead. The package of measures, which applies to all regions and nations of the UK, includes:

Support for workers

A new Job Support Scheme will be introduced from 1 November to protect viable jobs in businesses who are facing lower demand over the winter months due to coronavirus.

Under the scheme, which will run for six months and help keep employees attached to the workforce, the government will contribute towards the wages of employees who are working fewer than normal hours due to decreased demand.

Employers will continue to pay the wages of staff for the hours they work – but for the hours not worked, the government and the employer will each pay one third of their equivalent salary.

This means employees who can only go back to work on shorter time will still be paid two thirds of the hours for those hours they can't work.

In order to support only viable jobs, employees must be working at least 33% of their usual hours. The level of grant will be calculated based on employee's usual salary, capped at £697.92 per month.

The Job Support Scheme will be open to businesses across the UK even if they have not previously used the furlough scheme, with further guidance being published in due course.

It is designed to sit alongside the Jobs Retention Bonus and could be worth over 60% of average wages of workers who have been furloughed – and are kept on until the start of February 2021. Businesses can benefit from both schemes in order to help protect jobs.

In addition, the Government is continuing its support for millions of self-employed individuals by extending the Self Employment Income Support Scheme Grant (SEISS). An initial taxable grant will be provided to those who are currently eligible for SEISS and are continuing to actively trade but face reduced demand due to coronavirus. The initial lump sum will cover three months' worth of profits for the period from November to the end of January next year. This is worth 20% of average monthly profits, up to a total of £1,875.

An additional second grant, which may be adjusted to respond to changing circumstances, will be available for self-employed individuals to cover the period from February 2021 to the end of April – ensuring our support continues right through to next year. This is in addition to the more than £13 billion of support already provided for over 2.6 million self-employed individuals through the first two stages of the Self Employment Income

Support Scheme – one of the most generous in the world.

Tax cuts and deferrals

As part of the package, the government also announced it will extend the temporary 15% VAT cut for the tourism and hospitality sectors to the end of March next year. This will give businesses in the sector – which has been severely impacted by the pandemic – the confidence to maintain staff as they adapt to a new trading environment.

In addition, up to half a million business who deferred their VAT bills will be given more breathing space through the New Payment Scheme, which gives them the option to pay back in smaller instalments. Rather than paying a lump sum in full at the end March next year, they will be able to make 11 smaller interest-free payments during the 2021-22 financial year.

On top of this, around 11 million self-assessment taxpayers will be able to benefit from a separate additional 12-month extension from HMRC on the “Time to Pay” self-service facility, meaning payments deferred from July 2020, and those due in January 2021, will now not need to be paid until January 2022.

Giving businesses flexibility to pay back loans

The burden will be lifted on more than a million businesses who took out a Bounce Back Loan through a new Pay as You Grow flexible repayment system. This will provide flexibility for firms repaying a Bounce Back Loan.

This includes extending the length of the loan from six years to ten, which will cut monthly repayments by nearly half. Interest-only periods of up to six months and payment holidays will also be available to businesses. These measures will further protect jobs by helping businesses recover from the pandemic.

We also intend to give Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme lenders the ability to extend the length of loans from a maximum of six years to ten years if it will help businesses to repay the loan.

In addition, the Chancellor also announced he would be extending applications for the government’s coronavirus loan schemes that are helping over a million businesses until the end of November. As a result, more businesses will now be able to benefit from the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Bounce Back Loan Scheme and the Future Fund. This change aligns all the end dates of these schemes, ensuring that there is further support in place for those firms who need it.

Investment in public services

At the start of the pandemic, the Chancellor pledged to give the NHS and public services the support needed to respond to coronavirus – and as of today, £68.7 billion of additional funding has been approved by the Treasury, including £24.3 billion since the Summer Economic Update in July.

This funding has helped ensure the procurement of PPE for frontline staff, provided free school meals for children while at home and protected the country's most vulnerable. In addition, the £12 billion funding to roll-out the Test and Trace programme has played a key role helping to unlock the economy, enabling businesses like restaurants and bars to serve customers again.

As announced earlier this year, the Treasury has also guaranteed the devolved administrations will receive at least £12.7 billion in additional funding. This gives Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland the budget certainty to for coronavirus response in the months ahead.

Government backs bold leadership of UK Atomic Energy Authority

Professor Ian Chapman has been reappointed to lead the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) as its CEO for a second term of office, following four highly successful years deepening its scientific capabilities, its technological collaboration with industry and its international reputation.

This comes at a time of significant growth for the organisation, which is managing multiple ground-breaking experiments and new programmes.

Ian Chapman will continue to lead the UK's magnetic confinement fusion research programme at Culham. This includes running the world's most powerful operational fusion research machine, the Joint European Torus (JET), on behalf of the EU, and a programme of experiments on the recently-completed MAST Upgrade device.

He is determined to push ahead with UKAEA's many ambitious goals:

"I am delighted to be given the opportunity to lead UKAEA through exciting changes over the next few years," Ian Chapman said. "As we strive to tackle climate change and at the same time deliver benefits to the UK economy, our fusion energy mission is more vital than ever.

"Next year, JET will conduct unique high power fusion experiments that cannot be done anywhere else in the world, whilst MAST Upgrade will explore new solutions to exhaust extreme heat from fusion devices. Our programmes in materials, robotics, tritium and fusion technology will continue to expand and help UK industry to thrive. Finally, through the STEP programme, we have an audacious goal to deliver a demonstration fusion power plant – something I truly believe will change the world."

Ian Chapman joined UKAEA after receiving his MSc in Mathematics and Physics from Durham University in 2004, before completing a PhD in plasma physics

from Imperial College London in 2008 – rising to become UKAEA's Head of Tokamak Science in 2014. His research has been recognised with a number of international awards, including the Institute of Physics Paterson Medal in 2013, the American Physical Society Thomas H. Stix Award in 2017 and the Royal Society Kavli Medal in 2019. He chairs the IAEA Fusion Research Committee.

Amanda Solloway MP, Minister for Science, Research and Innovation said:

“Under Ian Chapman's leadership, UKAEA has grown rapidly in ambition and capability, putting in place a bold new programme to deliver the world's first commercially viable fusion power plant. I am delighted at his reappointment and am sure he will continue to drive UK leadership in the world of fusion energy research.”

Professor Chapman will be supported in his role by four new Non-executive Directors: Lady Eithne Birt, Stephen Barter, Dr. Luc Bardin and Mark Bayley. All bring wide experience and expertise from across the public and private sectors to the Board, in particular in property and real estate; financing and strategic partnerships with the private and public sectors. They will join the four existing non-executive Board members – Sir Adrian Smith, Shrin Honap, Sue Scane and Chris Theobald.

Chair of the UKAEA Board, Professor David Gann, said: “Ian's vision and leadership over the last four years has laid the foundations for an incredibly exciting period in UKAEA's history. UKAEA leads the world in fusion science and technology and we can look forward with confidence to next year's key experiments on JET, the first operations on MAST Upgrade and the construction of the Hydrogen 3 Advanced Technology (H3AT) tritium facility.

“The next four years will be transformative, with new Fusion Testing facilities in Rotherham and completion of concept design for the world's first fusion reactor to put power on the grid. I am delighted that we will continue to benefit from Ian's outstanding leadership and the opportunity this brings to make the UK the best place anywhere to develop fusion energy.”

£80 million boost to towns

- Over a hundred towns to share £80 million to boost regeneration, helping them to build back better
- Funding will kick start local projects, driving growth and improving environment
- First part of £3.6 billion to level up towns across England

Over 100 towns in England will be given up to £1 million to kick start regeneration projects and give areas a boost, Communities Secretary Robert

Jenrick has announced today (25 September 2020).

This funding, which ranges from £500,000 up to £1 million per town, will be used to support projects that will make a difference to the area, such as new green spaces, the creation of pop-up businesses spaces, pedestrianising streets to encourage walking or cycling and creating of new community hubs to support those living alone.

Projects such as Burton on Trent's High Street regeneration, for which the town has been awarded £750,000, will see improvements to make the high street a more pleasant place to visit with new bus access and cycle lanes so the public can more easily visit.

In Newcastle-under-Lyme, the £1 million funding will boost the town's regeneration plans, helping to demolish unloved buildings to make way for a new chapter in the town's history.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

Our Towns Fund will help to share prosperity across the country and level-up. This £80 million funding for immediate investment is a real boost for our towns and will help them thrive with investment in transport, technology, skills and culture.

It will give towns across the opportunity to drive economic growth and improve prospects for their communities, which will be vital as the country respond to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. We are fully behind our high streets and will support local areas to build back better.

This investment will give areas in all corners of England the opportunity to drive economic growth and improve prospects for their communities, which will be vital as the country continues to respond to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. These funds are part of the overall £3.6 billion Towns Fund money allocated – with this initial pot shared out now to get some projects off the ground and give local areas the boost they need.

All 101 towns selected to work towards a Town Deal were given a funding allocation with proposals submitted to the MCHLG in August, before being reviewed by officials and a final decision made by ministers.

Town Deals build directly on the government's commitment to decentralising funding and decisions away from Whitehall and investing in the growth of local economies and devolving 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.

The government is working with councils and LEPs to create better transport links, more connectivity and world-class education opportunities across the country.

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

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](#).

UK Government local coronavirus testing site opens in Aberdeen

A new walk-through coronavirus testing centre has opened in Aberdeen. The new facility is being provided by the UK Government as part of a UK-wide drive to continue to improve the accessibility of coronavirus testing for local communities.

The centre, in the University of Aberdeen's Roy Strathdee building, will offer pre-booked tests for those with coronavirus symptoms.

The new site is situated so as to be easily accessible without a car. Those being tested will be required to follow public health measures, including social distancing, not travelling by taxi or public transport, practising good personal hygiene and wearing a face covering throughout, including while travelling to and from the testing centre.

Anyone attending an appointment at a walk-through testing site will be provided with guidance on getting to and from the test site safely, with additional support for vulnerable groups and people with disabilities.

Testing at the new site will start today [24 September], with appointments made available each day.

Testing is available only for those with coronavirus symptoms – a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste. Anyone with one or more of these symptoms should book a test at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/test-and-protect> or by calling 0800 028 2816.

This latest UK Government site is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history, which now comprises 75 drive-through sites, 112 walk-through sites, 258 mobile units, home testing and satellite kits and network of Lighthouse laboratories.

Anyone testing positive for the virus in Scotland will be contacted by

contact tracers to help them trace their contacts. This will help people to identify who they may have been in close contact with, protecting others from further transmission. Close contacts of those testing positive will also hear from contact tracers, asking them to stay at home for 14 days to prevent them from unknowingly spreading the virus. They will be advised to also book a test if they develop symptoms.

UK Government Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

We continue to expand testing to make sure that everyone with symptoms can get a test, with our new walk-in sites making it even easier no matter where you live.

This new site forms part of our national testing network, which has the capacity to test more than a million people a week and is growing all the time.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus, I urge you to book a test today and follow the advice of contact tracers if you are contacted to protect others around you and stop the spread of the virus.

This is a national effort and we are proud to be working with a number of partners to turn this ambition into a reality and roll out additional capacity to where it is needed.

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

Our new walk through sites offer communities better access to coronavirus testing, so everyone with symptoms can get a test. This new site is part of our ongoing work to expand testing across the UK to deliver 500,000 tests a day by the end of October.

Please book a test if you have coronavirus symptoms: a new continuous cough, a high temperature and a loss or change in sense of smell or taste.

Everybody should continue to think hands, face, space, and follow the advice of contact tracers if you are contacted – this is the only way we can return to a more normal way of life.

UK Government minister for Scotland, David Duguid, said:

The UK Government is committed to helping all parts of the UK fight coronavirus and providing people in Scotland with testing facilities. This new walk-through centre in Aberdeen city centre, funded by the UK Government, will play a key part in tackling the virus in the North East of Scotland, and joins our existing drive-

through facility at Aberdeen Airport.

Testing will play a vital part over the coming months, helping to manage local outbreaks and protect livelihoods. This walk-through centre will help people in Aberdeen get tested quickly.

As I saw for myself when I visited our Inverness and Aberdeen drive-through centres this month, these sites are not possible without the hard work of many people, and I would like to thank everyone involved in getting this new centre open.

The testing centre is being operated in partnership with Mitie and will offer self-administered tests.

Simon Venn, Chief Government & Strategy Officer, Mitie, said:

Our priority during the pandemic is to support the nation's efforts to fight COVID-19 and help keep the country running.

Testing is a critical part of the UK's strategy to combat coronavirus and we're proud to support the Government with this vital task.

A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in Aberdeen, who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.