

PM statement on transport infrastructure: 11 February 2020

Mr Speaker, there are all sorts of reasons why the city in which we now sit is the most productive region in the whole of Europe

the time zone, the language, the agglomeration of talents

and above all we have the mass transit system

that every day conveys millions of people efficiently and affordably

with tubes and trains and 8600 buses

into the central activities zone in the morning and out in the evening

like the respiration of some vast undersea coelenterate

and as that public transport network has expanded in the last 150 years

it has brought hope and opportunity and job prospects to people growing up in every part of the city and beyond

and it is the ambition of this government to employ that same utensil – fantastic transport infrastructure – to unite and level up across the whole country

and of course there is far more to do in London – and the present mayor frankly needs to be shaken out of his complacency –

but there is even more to do across the nation as a whole

Whether you are stuck in a jam on the A303 or on the outskirts of Lincoln

whether you are trying to get from Warrington to Manchester or toiling across the Pennines by rail

you know that this country is being held back by our inadequate infrastructure and so in the next few weeks this government will be setting out more details of a transport revolution

because we all know the potential of transport to change your life and the life of your town or city

and we know that efficient transport can clean the air and cut pollution and get cars off the road

We can simultaneously reach our ambition of net zero by 2050

and we can shorten your commute and give you more time with your family and increase productivity

and bring business and investment to left behind communities

and that is why we are embarking now on a massive programme of investment in local transport

Starting with a record-breaking £5 billion of new investment in buses and bicycles.

An investment that will mean bus passengers across the country seeing a dramatic improvement in their daily journeys.

More than 4,000 brand-new buses on the roads – zero carbon British built buses – on the roads of places Ashfield, Barnstaple, Southampton, Manchester and many more towns and cities besides.

More services, including in the evenings and weekends.

Simpler, cheaper and more convenient ticketing.

Properly designed priority schemes to speed passengers past the traffic jams.

And it's an investment that will also mean cyclists enjoying hundreds of miles of brand-new separated lanes.

With "Mini-Hollands" blooming like so many tulips in towns and cities right across the country.

And that £5 billion, Mr Speaker. is just the start

My very good friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be making a full announcement on this in next month's Budget and I have no desire to steal his thunder.

but I can signal today that we are taking forward transformative investments improvements from Cornwall, to the A1 north of Newcastle

from south Salisbury to south Ribble

from Cheadle to Chiverton

dual carriageways, roundabouts, bypasses, underpasses

And those are just the roads.

We have already set out plans to explore new investments in the rail network across the North.

Developing proposals to reopen the Fleetwood Line in Lancashire and Ashington-Blyth rail line in the North East.

Improving track and platform capacity at Middlesbrough station.

And installing new signalling at Harrogate, one of North Yorkshire's busiest

stations.

And further south, I can today announce that we will be upgrading the Bristol East junction – a major pinch point in the rail network of the South West that limits access to the Brunel-designed Victorian splendour of Bristol Temple Meads Station.

Mr Speaker the transport revolution is local because it must be local

we can unite and level up across the country with fantastic local improvements

with better rail and less congested roads

and beautiful built buses that are cleaner, greener, quieter and above all more frequent

and above all we can improve the quality of life and improve their productivity

we can make places more attractive to live in and to invest in

but we cannot make these improvements in isolation from one another

because we will only be doing half the job

we will not fix the great musculoskeletal problem of UK transport

yes we must fix the joint between the knee bone and the thigh bone

and the shin bone and the ankle bone

and yes we must fix the arthritis in the fingers and the toes

but we also have to fix the spine, Mr Speaker

and our generation faces a historic choice

We can try to get by with the existing routes from north to south

we can consign the next generation to overcrowding, standing up in the carriageways

or we can have the guts to take a decision – no matter how difficult – unlike the party opposite by the way Mr Speaker – no matter how difficult and controversial – that will deliver prosperity to every part of the country

50 minutes off the time to Glasgow

When it comes to advocating HS2 it must be said that the task is not made easier by HS2 Ltd – the company concerned

Speaking as an MP whose constituency is on the route I cannot say that HS2 Ltd has distinguished itself in the handling of local communities

As everybody knows, the cost forecasts have exploded

But poor management to date has not detracted in my view from the fundamental value of the project.

The review recently conducted by Douglas Oakervee

copies of which will be placed in the library of the House

leaves no doubt of the clinching case for high speed rail

A vast increase in capacity, with hundreds of thousands of extra seats.

making it so much easier for travellers to move up and down our long, narrow country.

That means faster journey times

Not just more capacity – it means faster journey times

extraordinarily fast journey times

Passengers arriving at Birmingham Airport will be able to get to central London by train in 38 minutes

which compares favourably with the time it takes to get from Heathrow by taxi – a point I just draw attention to the house

but this is not just about getting from London to Birmingham and back

this is about finally making – and considerably faster than the Piccadilly line – finally making a rapid connection from the west Midlands

to the northern powerhouse

to Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds

and simultaneously permitting us to go forward with Northern powerhouse rail

across the Pennines

finally giving the home of the railways the fast connections they need

and none of it makes any sense without HS2

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority considers that this first phase can be delivered for its current projected cost of £35 billion to £45 billion in today's prices.

The designs have been improved immeasurably thanks to the tireless contributions of campaigners including the Rt Hon Member for Chesham and Amersham.

And if we start now, services could be running by the end of the decade.

So today Mr Speaker, the Cabinet has given high speed rail the green signal.

We are going to get this done.

And to ensure that we do so without further blowouts on either cost or schedule,

we are today taking decisive action to restore discipline to the programme.

I will be appointing a Minister whose full-time job will be to oversee the project.

A new Ministerial oversight group will be tasked with taking strategic decisions about it.

There will be changes to the way HS2 is managed.

We will, in line with Oakervee's recommendations, be interrogating the current costs to identify where savings can be made in phase 1 without the costs and delays that would be associated with a detailed redesign.

And, so that the company can focus solely on getting phases 1 and 2A built on something approaching on time and on budget

I will be creating new delivery arrangements for both the grossly behind-schedule Euston terminus, and phase 2B of the wider project.

But before those designs are finalised and legislation introduced, we will also present an integrated plan for rail in the north.

Informed by an assessment from the National Infrastructure Commission it will, in line with the findings of the Oakervee review, look at how we can best design and integrate rail investments across the north –

including Northern Powerhouse Rail between Leeds and Manchester, – and I have just spoken to the Mayor of Greater Manchester who has warmly welcomed this project – which I committed to supporting I remember during my first days in office.

I want the plan to identify the most effective design and sequencing of all relevant investments in the north.

For example, with many in the north crying out for better east/west links instead of improved north/south ones, which you've heard many times in this house

...some have suggested delaying or even cancelling HS2 in order to get Northern Powerhouse Rail done more quickly.

But I want to say to you Mr Speaker and to the House, this is not an either/or proposition.

Both are needed, and both will be built – as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.

To make sure that happens we will, working closely with northern leaders, explore options for creating a new delivery vehicle for Northern Powerhouse Rail.

And we will start treating HS2, north of Birmingham, Northern Powerhouse Rail and other local rail improvements as part of one integrated masterplan, High Speed North.

Because something has to change.

Those who deny this, who say we should simply build 2B and Northern Powerhouse Rail according to the plans currently on the table, are effectively condemning the North to get nothing for 20 years.

And that would be intolerable.

So as we draw up this plan we are not asking whether phase 2B is not to be.

That is not the question, Mr Speaker

The question is how we can bring a transport revolution to the north sooner.

Together, this revolution in local and national transport has the potential to be truly transformative for the entire country.

Yes, it is ambitious.

But ambition frankly is what we have lacked for too long.

Two centuries ago our ancestors could have been content with breeding faster horses.

Instead, they invented the railways.

They created the transport network on which the United Kingdom rose to economic pre-eminence.

They looked to the future of transport and they made it happen and today it is our duty to do the same.

Let us bring about a future where high-speed trains glide between our great cities.

Where electric buses convey us cleanly around our towns.

Where self-driving cars roam along roads that are free of the congestion that causes so much pollution.

And where a new generations of cyclists pedal safely and happily to school and work in tree dappled sunlight

on their own network of fully segregated cycle paths.

This government – as we did in London – will deliver a new anatomy of British

transport

A revolution in this nation's public transport provision.

And a sign to the world that in the 21st century this United Kingdom still has the vision to dream big dreams and the courage to bring those dreams about.

I commend this statement to the House.

Inspection report published: Inspection of Country of Origin Information, June 2019

My report from the June meeting of the Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was sent to the Home Secretary on 29 July 2019. The report looked at information produced by the Home Office in respect of Ethiopia and Jamaica.

In the case of both countries, the Home Office accepted most of the detailed amendments recommended by the independent reviewers appointed by IAGCI.

Updated versions of the Ethiopia Country Policy and Information Notes (CPINs) were published on GOV.UK in August ('Opposition to the government') and October 2019 ('Oromos including the "Oromo Protests"').

An updated version of 'Fear of organised criminal groups, Jamaica' was also published in August 2019. Instead of updating the March 2018 'Background information, including actors of protection, and internal relocation' CPIN, the Home Office issued two new CPINs (in August and September 2019): 'Country Background Note' and 'Actors of Protection'. The bulk of the published information about 'internal relocation' is now found in the 'Fear of organised criminal groups, Jamaica' CPIN.

As my report noted, the viability of relocation in Jamaica, due in part to the size of the island, is likely to affect anyone who is returned there, not just those who have reason to fear organised criminal groups. It would appear from the embedded hyperlink that the Home Office is intending to produce a separate CPIN on 'Jamaica: Internal Relocation'. If so, it should expedite this.

I made one overarching recommendation, repeated from an earlier inspection report, that the Home Office should carry out a thorough and open needs analysis for Country of Origin Information (COI), involving both Home Office "customers" (primarily asylum caseworkers) and external stakeholders, which I

am pleased has been accepted, albeit with caveats in relation to external stakeholders. I look forward to seeing the results of this exercise, which will be important in demonstrating that COI is serving its purpose of ensuring that asylum and other decision makers are as well-informed as possible about the factors that should be considered when making what are potentially life-changing decisions.

UK statement to the WTO Committee on Trade and Development – 48th Session on Aid for Trade

Thank you, Chair.

I am delighted to be giving the first statement in the Committee on Trade and Development by the United Kingdom since we left the European Union, because this is a subject very close to our hearts.

The UK has long been a strong supporter and advocate of the work of the International Trade Centre. The high esteem in which we hold ITC is reflected in our position as their second largest contributor, and in the growing portfolio of programmes they implement for us.

This growing and successful cooperation can in large part be attributed to the strong leadership and drive for results instilled by Arancha González during her time as Executive Director. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms González on her new appointment and thank her for her excellent work at the International Trade Centre. We are confident that Dorothy Tembo will continue the tradition of excellent leadership as interim Executive Director.

Chair, let me say a few words on our wider approach to aid-for-trade.

The United Kingdom strongly believes that aid for trade is vital to the future of the global trading system. While the past half-century has changed the WTO, our commitment to development within it has not. The United Kingdom believes that targeted technical assistance, linked to stable and predictable rules, allow cross-border trade to transform economies, unlock growth, and reduce poverty. We believe that when developing countries have the resources to engage at the WTO, to understand what it means for their own economies, and that their governments and businesses have the capacity to trade more and better goods and services, we all benefit, and not only economically.

Since the signing of the Marrakesh Agreement twenty-five years ago a lot has indeed changed. The membership is larger and more diverse. Issues have come onto, and fallen off, the agenda. Delegates have come and gone. Most

importantly, the WTO community's understanding of how trade works has changed, especially in a development context.

Every day, we have a little more evidence on how commitments on paper – negotiated in Geneva and signed at a Ministerial Conference – can create prosperity. From OECD research, we know that one dollar invested in aid for trade in developing countries is, on average, associated with an increase of nearly 8 USD in exports. This increases to 20 dollars for the poorest countries.

We also know these commitments create implementation challenges: that market access does not always mean market presence.

This is why the United Kingdom has developed a unique, cross-cutting approach to trade and development, focused on trade facilitation and capacity building. At its heart is our commitment to spend 0.7% of our national income on overseas aid, channelled through a joined-up way of working across government that ensures development and global prosperity are deeply embedded into UK trade and investment policy.

The United Kingdom is a major investor in the ecosystem of organisations right here in Geneva, dedicated to providing practical support to help developing countries access the WTO's global markets.

Through our Trade and Investment Advocacy Fund, and our support to the Commonwealth Small States Office, we help developing countries to engage in WTO discussions, especially smaller Missions thinly stretched across multiple organisations, committees and topics.

The United Kingdom is also the largest donor to the \$140 million Enhanced Integrated Framework, the world's only trade capacity building fund focused on the poorest countries, and the only fund mentioned in the SDGs, housed right here in the WTO.

Our programme to support the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement ensures that its five partners – the WTO's TFA Facility, the Standards and Trade Development Facility, UNCTAD, the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation and the World Bank – work together for the success of the WTO's only multilateral agreement to date.

Our work here in Geneva sits in the UK's global Aid for Trade programme – including our investment in TradeMark East Africa, which the UK's Department for International Development set up as a not-for-profit company in 2010 to promote faster and cheaper trade in East Africa.

Our commitment to the development pillar of the WTO is also reflected in the way we engage in events within and outside the United Kingdom.

The UK-Africa Investment Summit on 20 January 2020 laid the foundations for new partnerships between the UK and African nations based on trade, investment, shared values and mutual interest. Billions of pounds of new commercial deals were announced, highlighting the strength of the UK's offer and its existing relationship with Africa. The many new initiatives and

funding announced at the Summit will help to realise the UK's ambition to become the investment partner of choice for Africa, creating hundreds of thousands of jobs and ensuring the mutual prosperity of all our nations in the process.

Looking ahead, we'll be working with all our development partners to help deliver a successful outcome in Nur-Sultan. Soon after, we will hand over the Commonwealth Chair-in-Office role to Rwanda at the Heads of Government Summit in Kigali, taking stock of our trade and prosperity deliverables since the last Summit in London. Later in 2020, we will host COP26, five years on from the historic Paris Agreement. In 2021, we look forward to engaging right here in the next WTO Global Review of Aid for Trade.

As part of the European Union, the United Kingdom was the leading Member State behind the European Union's development Programmes and its support for Aid for Trade. Outside of the European Union, we plan to play an even greater role in our own right, working hand in hand with the European Union and other major donors to improve access to global markets for developing countries, and the benefits that brings us all.

Thank you, Chair.

[2019 was record-breaking year for UK exports](#)



2019 was a record-breaking year for UK exports, according to new figures published today (Tuesday 11 February) by the Office for National Statistics.

The UK has now experienced 45 consecutive months of annual export growth on a rolling annual basis.

UK companies exported £689.0 billion worth of goods and services across the globe – up by 5.0% on 2018.

Some of the UK's fastest growing goods exports include:

- Cereals which were worth £2.5 billion, up by 16.6%
- Fish and shellfish which were worth £2.1 billion, up by 13.1%
- Meat and meat preparations which were worth £2.1 billion, up by 12.4%

Goods exports to non-EU countries grew by 13.6%.

Secretary of State for International Trade, Liz Truss, said:

The UK is an exporting superpower and these new statistics show that UK companies are exporting record levels of goods and services.

As a newly independent trading nation, we will strike new trade deals with key partners across the world, open up new markets and make it even easier for our businesses to meet global demand.

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[Oxbotica moves into UKAEA's Pit Lane facility](#)

Europe's leading self-driving vehicle software company, Oxbotica, is the first business to move into Culham Science Centre's connected and autonomous vehicle (CAV) building, Pit Lane, as it looks to scale-up the release of its software for use across multiple industries.

The company has signed a 10-year lease for one of Pit Lane's bespoke workspaces with offices above (totalling 2,377 sq. ft.) to provide Oxbotica's engineers with the opportunity to work on vehicles in the garage whilst also analysing huge quantities of data generated from the vehicles.

Oxbotica has already formed a strategic alliance with the UK Atomic Energy Authority, owner of Culham Science Centre, having worked together on the DRIVEN consortium, using the site's 10km of private road networks to test autonomous passenger vehicles, ensuring they could safely navigate complex, urban environments ahead of the recent week-long demonstration in London.

Ozgur Tohumcu, CEO, Oxbotica, said: "Working on-road, off-road, down mines, in warehouses, around runways and across the world, we strongly believe that the world will be transformed beyond recognition by autonomous vehicles, and we are confident that our Universal Autonomy software is engineered to drive this change – working to make roads safer, environments cleaner, industries more efficient and the world that little bit more accessible."

Lizzie Wells, Facilities Manager, Oxbotica, said: "We first set up a workshop at the Culham Science Centre back in 2016 and over the years have benefited greatly from the innovate culture of the site and private road network access for both our on-road and off-road trials. It was therefore important for us to maintain access to these benefits as we began looking for a larger premise, and the new Pit Lane offices offered us just that."

Culham Science Centre unveiled its Pit Lane building last October with an event designed to cultivate the growing cluster of dynamic companies based in Oxfordshire who are spearheading the UK's development of self-driving vehicles.

Garry Staunton, Lead Technologist for RACE, the UKAEA facility that specialises in robotics and autonomous vehicles, said: "We are delighted that Oxbotica continues to recognise the benefits of Culham Science Centre for the testing of self-driving vehicles. We are committed to developing the site to ensure the test facility we have here in Oxfordshire stays ahead of the game, providing those specialising in self-driving vehicles and other robotic technologies, with world-leading facilities."

With 10km of varied and mixed private roads as well as more than 2,000 people on site, Culham Science Centre offers a unique environment for controlled testing of self-driving vehicles before they venture out onto public roads.

The Pit Lane facility enables Culham Science Centre to scale-up its operations in addition to increasing the range of work it can host.

For further information about Pit Lane or self-driving test facilities at Culham Science Centre, email: Commercial.Property@ukaea.uk or visit culham.org.uk/property-availability.