

# Government announces measures on regional connectivity

In a sign of the Prime Minister's commitment to levelling up all regions of the UK, a review of regional connectivity will ensure all nations and regions of the UK have the domestic transport connections local communities rely on – including regional airports.

As part this work and ahead of the March Budget, the Treasury will also be reviewing Air Passenger Duty to ensure regional connectivity is strengthened while meeting the UK's climate change commitments to meet net zero by 2050.

These measures featured in discussions today with Europe's largest regional airline, Flybe, which plays an important role in the UK's connectivity by flying regional routes that other providers do not operate.

In light of these discussions Flybe have confirmed they will continue to operate as normal, preserving flights to airports such as Southampton, Belfast and Birmingham.

## **Chancellor of the Exchequer Sajid Javid said:**

I welcome Flybe's confirmation that they will continue to operate as normal, safeguarding jobs in UK and ensuring flights continue to serve communities across the whole of the UK.

The reviews we are announcing today will help level up our economy. They will ensure that regional connections not only continue but flourish in the years to come – so that every nation and region can fulfil its potential.

## **Business Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:**

I am delighted that we have managed to reach an agreement with Flybe shareholders to keep the company in operation, ensuring that regions across the country can continue to be connected.

My department and others across government have worked tirelessly in an incredibly short timeframe. This will be welcome news for Flybe, their customers and dedicated employees, as well as those in the supply chain. We will continue to work with Flybe and regional operators to find a sustainable long term future.

## **Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:**

I am delighted that we have been able to work closely with Flybe to

ensure Europe's largest regional airline is able to continue providing their valued services, connecting communities across the UK.

The Department for Transport will undertake an urgent review into how we can level up the country by strengthening regional connectivity and will look at all the options that we have to make sure our airports can continue to play an important role in driving economic growth, creating jobs and greening aviation, across the country.

**Mark Anderson, CEO of Flybe said:**

Flybe is made up of an incredible team of people, serving millions of loyal customers who rely on the vital regional connectivity that we provide. This is a positive outcome for the UK and will allow us to focus on delivering for our customers and planning for the future.

**Lucien Farrell, Chairman Connect Airways said:**

We are very encouraged with recent developments, especially the Government's recognition of the importance of Flybe to communities and businesses across the UK and the desire to strengthen regional connectivity. As a result, the shareholder consortium has committed to keep Flybe flying with additional funding alongside Government initiatives.

**Additional information**

- At Budget 2018, the government announced that for the eighth year in a row short-haul rates will not rise, staying at £13 for economy and £26 for business/first, keeping down the costs of travelling for 80% of passengers.
  - UK passenger growth is strong: passenger numbers at UK airports have increased by 28% since 2013. This strength extends across the whole of the UK, with regional airports handling approximately 39% of all passengers in 2018.
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# Baroness Morgan speaking on how we can make technology work for everyone

Good morning.

I am delighted to be here at this event today and to show my support for the Tech Talent Charter.

The Charter is a fantastic initiative which is working hard to promote diversity in the tech workforce, and I am proud that my department has given it our backing.

Thank you to all of you who have signed up, and those of you who haven't, please make it one of your New Year's Resolutions to get signing.

Greater diversity is all about making sure the incredible benefits of technology are spread more widely and more fairly and that is what I wanted to talk about today.

We are in the early stages of a new year, a new decade, and indeed a new Government.

And that makes this the perfect time to look ahead and think about what we want to achieve over the coming years.

DCMS officially became the department for digital in 2017, and even in that short period we have seen huge growth in our digital economy.

Digital is touching more parts of our lives, providing new opportunities and new challenges to grapple with too.

And in this period we have also seen a tech sector that has gone from strength to strength.

Just look at the stats that were published this morning.

Last year venture capital investment in UK tech reached a record high of 10.1 billion pounds, up 3 billion from 2018.

The UK is producing twice as many unicorns – billion dollar value digital companies – as Germany and three times as many as France.

And the rate of growth of money pouring into our tech sector is outstripping the US and China.

The power of digital is transforming our economy, our public services, how we learn and connect, the entertainment we enjoy, and the communities we live in – and this pace of change will only intensify in the future.

And we are starting from a very strong foundation – thanks to our country's

world-beating innovators and entrepreneurs and thanks to the investment this Government has made.

But as we look to the future, the question is how do we ensure a thriving economy, driven by world-leading technology, that works to the benefit of all citizens?

That is our vision as a Government and there are five key principles that I think will help us to get there.

### **Pro-technology government**

The first principle is that we will be an unashamedly pro-technology government in all that we do, because we believe that, harnessed properly, technology is an immense force for good.

Digital innovation and enterprise is a major driver of opportunity, productivity and creativity.

There are over two million people working in digital tech jobs in the UK.

These are high quality futureproof positions, and demand for these roles is growing at pace, at almost three times the rate of the financial services sector.

We have a tech landscape that combines some of the world's major players, alongside thriving new start ups and scale ups.

These in turn boost our other competitive strengths – from creative industries to professional services to advanced manufacturing.

But we need to think about how we can sustain, intensify and spread this growth.

There is so much potential if we can help support the development, application and the adoption of next generation digital technologies – across all of our industries.

And we are well placed to do so, as we have eight of Europe's top 20 universities right here in the UK, working closely with our cutting edge tech businesses.

There are of course broader social benefits too.

These technologies, if developed responsibly, are central to the future of our communities...

They will help transform public services and the relationship between Governments and citizens...

And through the flourishing tech for good industry, they will help us tackle some of the world's greatest challenges.

For example, we are already seeing the use of AI to detect breast cancer more

accurately, predict areas at risk of flooding and identify sites where modern slavery is taking place.

So the opportunities here are vast.

As we expand our trading relations around the globe, I can assure you that we are passionate about the opportunities provided by digital tech.

And that they will be at the heart of the government's trade policy in the years ahead.

### **Sharing the benefits of technology widely and fairly**

Our second principle will be to make sure the benefits of technology are spread more widely and shared more fairly.

One of the Government's major priorities is to help transform communities who feel like they have not felt the benefits of the change we have seen in recent years.

As the Prime Minister said outside Downing Street just last month, we need to unleash the potential of the whole country and deliver opportunity across the entire nation.

And we can only truly view the digital revolution as a success if its positive forces – the jobs, the investment and the creative opportunities – are used to break down barriers, rather than to entrench them.

That means ensuring all people and all businesses have the tools they need to adopt and benefit from digital technologies – the connectivity, the capability and the confidence.

And it means making sure our tech sector is an engine of social mobility, with a focus on tech clusters outside of the capital.

Last week I was in Manchester, a city which is becoming a true tech titan, with a turnover of 3 billion pounds.

In 2018 there were over 160,000 new job openings in Manchester's digital tech sector and it has as many tech 'unicorns' as Barcelona and Madrid combined.

I also visited the Digital Catapult here in London last week.

And I saw first hand how our thriving digital sector is benefiting other industries that rely on digital innovation all across the UK, including our creative industries.

Like Creative XR, a joint project between Digital Catapult and the Arts Council.

This gives arts organisations the support they need to prototype new storytelling techniques, using emerging technologies like Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality.

So the benefits are clear – not just for an area’s digital economy but for their economy as a whole.

But we need to make sure all areas of the country are able to access these benefits. And DCMS is well placed to support this mission.

First, there is the physical infrastructure, like broadband.

Digital connectivity is a motor of economic growth, productivity and social inclusion.

It makes areas more attractive to live.

It gives people the freedom to live and work more flexibly.

And it helps communities to develop thriving digital economies.

Through embracing 5G and full fibre we can deliver greater capacity, faster speeds and more reliable networks.

And we can streamline the way we interact with public services and lay the foundations for the industries of the future.

We will soon be announcing the winning projects of our 30 million pound competition to spark a tech revolution in the countryside and help rural Britain seize the opportunities of 5G.

And we are also aiming for nationwide deployment of full fibre and gigabit-capable broadband by 2025, and we will pass legislation to make rollout quicker and easier.

This is a hugely ambitious challenge. It will involve unprecedented changes to the UK broadband market.

And it requires all parts of government, industry and the regulator to work together on this national mission.

Physical infrastructure is part of the picture.

But if we are to truly spread the benefits of digital we also need competitive digital markets.

So that companies with new services to offer can compete fairly...

And so that consumers get better products and content, cheaper prices and greater choice and transparency.

Over the coming months we will build on the important work of the Furman Review, the Cairncross Review and the current CMA market study to support this.

And alongside this, we need a focus on digital skills, which are an incredible engine of social mobility.

They are now as important to employability and participation in modern Britain as English and maths.

Digital transformation is creating fulfilling and productive roles at all levels.

So we need to make sure that people from all backgrounds have the skills they need to fill them and build lasting careers.

Not just in our tech sector, but in all the parts of the economy that rely on digital skills.

This isn't just about school classrooms. As the pace of digital change intensifies, retraining opportunities for adults to refresh their digital skills will become even more important.

So this year, we will introduce an entitlement so adults without basic digital skills will have the opportunity to undertake new digital qualifications free of charge.

And we will invest an additional three billion pounds over the course of this Parliament to support the creation of a National Skills Fund.

This will be an important step towards ensuring every citizen has the right to retrain at any point during their lives.

If we get this right, we will not only have a more highly skilled economy but also one that is more representative of the country we live in.

Now you don't need me to tell you why this diversity agenda is so important. You are here showing your commitment.

Whenever I speak to leaders in our tech sector, I always reinforce this important point.

If we do not work to open the door to underrepresented groups in our tech sector, not only will we deny them life-changing opportunities...

But we will be robbed of the diversity of thought that we need to drive cutting-edge innovation and shape the technologies that can benefit the whole of society.

Your Annual Report, published today, shows some brilliant success stories, but there is still way more to do.

I was proud to serve as Minister for Equalities for two years.

And I was the first female chair of the Treasury Select Committee, where I oversaw the publication of a landmark report on Women in Finance.

So I know how hard it can be to drive the change that we want to see.

But if we are committed to being a country where everyone has the chance to flourish, then diversity in our tech sector is imperative.

And so we must redouble our efforts to get underrepresented groups studying science in schools, taking on digital roles and having seats at the table where big decisions are made.

### **Pro-innovation regulation**

As digital technology matures, it is time to move away from the view of new technologies as a utopia.

But we must also move away from making technology the scapegoat for all of the problems in the world.

We need to look towards a third approach. In which technology is neither the cause nor solution to all ills, but a tool which we can harness as we choose.

Where users of technology are empowered to make choices over how it impacts their lives...

Companies are responsible for the implications of their choices...

And in which governments act where they need to, to promote good and protect from harm.

And so our third principle for digital will be to drive growth through pro-innovation regulation.

When carefully designed and implemented, regulation drives growth and stimulates innovation and new ideas.

It gives confidence and certainty to innovators and investors, and builds trust amongst consumers.

And this, in turn, increases demand for digital products and services.

Our world-leading regulatory regimes have made the UK the 'go to' place for science, research and innovation for decades.

The OECD has given the UK its highest overall score for the quality of our regulatory practices.

More than 20 countries have adopted the 'sandbox' schemes pioneered in the UK to foster the development of innovation.

And our ground-breaking Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation is looking at complex emerging policy issues, as diverse as facial recognition technology, deep fakes and bias in algorithms.

And I am determined that we will build on this.

We have an incredible opportunity to lead the world in nimble, proportionate and pro-innovation regulation, giving us a competitive advantage at this important time in our history.

So we are developing a new strategic and joined up approach for regulating



and governing digital technologies.

Working with industry and across sectors, so our regulations and our regulators are equipped for the digital age.

As well as our groundbreaking work on online harms and digital competition, over the coming months, we will work to:

Foster fair, transparent and ethical online advertising, so this market delivers the right outcomes for businesses and consumers.

Develop our National Data Strategy, so we can fully and responsibly unlock the power of data, for people and organisations across the UK.

And set out our response to the Cairncross Review into the sustainability of high quality journalism in the digital age.

Critically, we will work to make sure our approach to digital governance and regulation is coherent and is able to adapt as technologies evolve.

And rather than simply tackling each new issue as it arises, we will make sure that we have the tools and the institutions so we can respond strategically, to support the whole of the digital economy.

### **Protecting the vulnerable and ensuring safety and security**

Our fourth principle is making sure that our online spaces are places where anyone can feel safe and secure.

Although I am optimistic about the power of technology, it cannot be denied that its widespread adoption has brought new threats.

If we cannot be confident that digital technologies are safe and secure, then we will lose the trust that is the lifeblood of any digital economy.

And we will discourage the adoption of the new technologies that are vital if we are to truly unleash Britain's potential.

We can only keep the benefits of the digital economy – the opportunities for commerce, and the fast flow of transactions and ideas – if we can improve trust and confidence in technology, and tackle what erodes it.

This is what our groundbreaking work on online harms seeks to do.

79 per cent of 12 to 15 year olds have had at least one potentially harmful online experience in the past year.

And while there has been good work done voluntarily by industry and others in this area, it has not gone far enough.

We cannot allow our online spaces to become fertile ground for those who want to abuse, harass and promote terrorist content.

So our Online Harms White Paper has set out plans for a new statutory duty of

care, overseen by an independent regulator.

The security of our digital platforms is also essential.

Nearly a third of businesses suffered a cyber breach or attack in the past twelve months.

Businesses can only fully realise the benefits of being online when they and their customers are confident their money and data are secure.

So good cyber security has to be at the heart of a modern digital economy.

Through our National Cyber Security Strategy we are investing 1.9 billion pounds to protect the nation online.

But top down action from Governments can only reach so many and can only go so far.

As with all new developments, we must all learn to adapt – as citizens, as businesses, and as parents.

If we can help users learn how to use digital technologies in a secure and responsible way and differentiate fact from fiction, then we can have a huge impact.

And we can combat the corrosive effects of disinformation and extremism which threatens our democracy and civil society.

Part of the answer lies in promoting the sustainability of high quality journalism and public service broadcasting, and this is a big priority for me and my department.

We are also developing a media literacy strategy, which we will publish this Summer, as part of our programme of work on the Online Harms White Paper.

And together with the National Cyber Security Centre, we are developing a new public cyber security campaign, planned to launch early this year.

This will shed light on the proactive steps anyone can take to protect themselves against cyber attacks.

All of us have a shared responsibility for the safety and security of our online spaces.

And we will play our role as a Government to give people the tools and frameworks they need to be confident and informed digital citizens.

### **A free and open Internet**

The fifth principle is a commitment to a free and open Internet.

The UK will continue to be a global champion of the multi-stakeholder model of Internet governance, in which a variety of different actors play important roles in how the Internet itself is run.

It is thanks to this model that the Internet has developed, expanded and brought so many benefits around the world.

We will continue to oppose those authoritarian governments that want to bring the management of the Internet under inter-governmental control.

And we will remain a global champion for human rights online. This is more critical than ever when we see Internet shutdowns and other restrictive measures introduced elsewhere in the world.

Our Online Harms White Paper shows our commitment to tackling public policy concerns in a way that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms, like freedom of expression.

Reaching a shared understanding of what it means to be a digital citizen in a free and open society – the rights and the responsibilities – will always be a difficult endeavour but it is one that we must tackle.

So we will capitalise on our internationally respected regulators, our standards and our expertise, to influence this agenda.

And we will strengthen our alliances with like-minded nations so that we maintain the values that we hold dear.

So we can allow future generations to benefit from a free and open Internet.

## **Conclusion**

In these crucial five years for our country, I see these five areas as being critically important if we are to achieve our vision.

These principles are what I want us to work towards together.

And I want you to tell us if you think we aren't practising what we preach.

Of course, these five areas are not standalone silos.

They are all deeply connected; the infrastructure, the investment, the policy and regulatory environment, and the skills and the security.

We need each and every one of these if we are going to harness technology in a way that works for us all.

Governments – and societies – that truly flourish in the digital age are those that see digital policy as a coherent, horizontal whole and who look at all parts of the equation.

Which is exactly how DCMS intends to approach this digital policy area.

And if we hold firm to these five principles, we can make sure that we are not just driving growth.

But that we are driving innovative, transformative, inclusive, and responsible growth.

So we can heal divisions rather than exacerbate them.

And make sure that the innumerable benefits of this digital revolution can be felt far and wide.

That is the challenge ahead and I'm looking forward to working with you all to get this right.

Thank you very much.

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## [DVLA unveils Blood Bikes Wales as their Charity of Choice for 2020](#)

Since being launched in 2014 the Charity of Choice scheme at DVLA has raised more than £300,000 for local charities through a variety of fundraising activities including charity concerts, skydiving, running half marathons, completing the Three Peaks Challenge and taking part in sponsored head shaves.

Nigel Ward, Chairman of Blood Bikes Wales, said:

I'm absolutely delighted DVLA staff have chosen Blood Bikes Wales to be their 2020 Charity of Choice. This means so much to us as we are all volunteers delivering blood samples, plasma, breast milk and other crucial items to the NHS completely free.

Our bikes cover hundreds of miles every week and need to be maintained to keep our riders safe. DVLA's support will help us do this so we can continue to deliver these essential items to local hospitals.

Julie Lennard, DVLA Chief Executive, said:

The volunteers at Blood Bikes Wales provide vital assistance to hospitals across Wales and I am delighted that we will be supporting them throughout 2020. Our staff have given so much of their own time over the years to raise hundreds of thousands of pounds for charity and I'm looking forward to seeing the range of activities they come up with to support Blood Bikes Wales.

### **Notes to editors:**

Blood Bikes Wales are a volunteer charity that provide free courier service

to the NHS across Wales from 7pm on Friday evening until midnight on Monday morning including bank holidays and Christmas day. They also operate on weekdays for some health board areas and deliver blood samples, plasma, breast milk, documents and other items all over Wales.

Since 2014 DVLA staff have raised £21,389 for the Wales Air Ambulance, £43,578 for LATCH, £70,906 for the Alzheimer's Society, £56,159 for Mind, £58,803 for Maggie's Swansea and £62,033 for Tŷ Olwen.

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## **Jobs boost for Cumbria as 500 nuclear roles to be advertised via new service**

All Together Cumbria, a community interest company and social enterprise, will become the digital gateway for all Sellafield Ltd career opportunities.

On average, Sellafield Ltd and its supply chain recruits approximately 750 roles annually.

The plan is to ensure at least 500 roles are recruited through All Together Cumbria within the next 18 months. This includes apprenticeships and graduate roles.

The company was formed a couple of year ago to provide a more effective and efficient approach towards maximising the benefit of current and future employment in the local community.

The funds generated through All Together Cumbria are reinvested to provide greater employment opportunities through improved skills development and training.

Sellafield Ltd chief executive officer, Paul Foster said:

Our ambition is to ensure everyone has equal and inclusive access to all career opportunities and roles within our organisation and the supply chain.

All Together Cumbria will help us to achieve our vision by ensuring the employment opportunities we have are visible, accessible and achievable for all.

Our commitment enables All Together Cumbria to further enhance its existing skills hub programme locally as well as supporting the development of an online platform. And its all part of our Social Impact Programme, to make sure that people across the region have better access to job opportunities.

All Together Cumbria management committee chair, Tim Corrigan, said:

We are delighted to have secured this commitment from Sellafield Ltd. It enables us to further expand and build on our vision to work in partnership with industry and the community to provide people in Cumbria with greater opportunity and access to employment.

All Together Cumbria is committed to working closely with the local industry to understand their current and long-term recruitment needs, helping to identify skills gaps for the future and enabling targeted investment to be made to improve the lives of the local people in Cumbria.

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**[Recovered appeal: land at former Westferry Printworks site, 235 Westferry Road, London \(ref: 3225474 – 14 January 2020\)](#)**

Decision letter and Inspector's Report for a recovered appeal for a comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment comprising 1,524 residential units (Class C3), shops, offices, flexible workspaces, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments (Classes B1/A1/A2/A3/A4), community uses (Class D1), car and cycle basement parking, associated landscaping, new public realm and all other necessary enabling works.