

Cayman Islands to establish a new reserve unit with support of the UK military

Following engagement from the Minister earlier this year the Governor of the Cayman Islands his Excellency Martyn Roper OBE and the Honourable Premier, Alden McLaughlin have announced that they will look to establish a reserve unit to be known as the Cayman Regiment, the first defence force for the islands.

A team of UK military and civilian experts from the MOD and FCO will shortly deploy to begin the assessments needed to take the project forward. Having a specially trained defence force in the region will provide a boost to security and disaster management capability both in Cayman and the wider Caribbean.

Initially, assistance from the UK is likely to take the form of logistical advice and support but will develop further to include operational training and equipment.

Minister for the Armed Forces Mark Lancaster said:

The UK enjoys a close and historic bond with the Cayman Islands and through helping to establish the Islands first reserve unit we are strengthening this relationship even further.

We are committed to the safety and security of the Overseas Territories. Having recently worked with regional partners on the response to Hurricane Dorian we have demonstrated both the depth of that commitment and value we place on our partnerships in the Caribbean.

Both in 2017 during the response to Hurricane Irma and more recently with Hurricane Dorian the UK has worked hand in hand with the Cayman Islands on relief efforts. During his visit the Minister was able to personally thank the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service and the Air Operations Unit for their work on the response and hear about how they worked with the Royal Navy and RFA Mounts Bay.

The Minister was also shown the growth of the Cayman Island Junior Cadet Corps, which has gone from strength to strength since its establishment in 2001. The new defence force will help offer an avenue for cadets on graduation, should they choose to develop their skills further. The Cadet Force also assist with low-level activities during national emergencies such as hurricanes.

Midland Metropolitan hospital gets extra government support



This funding will secure the future of the new hospital which has been stalled since the collapse of Carillon in 2018. It follows the government's recent commitments of £2.7 billion to fund six new hospitals, £850 million for 20 hospital upgrades and £100 million towards developing business case proposals for new building projects across 34 hospitals.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sajid Javid, said:

It is absolutely right that the Midland Metropolitan hospital is completed so that doctors and nurses working for our NHS across the West Midlands can deliver excellent care in brand new, state-of-the-art facilities.

This investment of £350 million will help deliver on the people's priorities of improving the NHS and levelling up services available across the country.

The new Midland Metropolitan hospital will bring together urgent care services from two hospitals across the region into one state-of-the-art site, promoting better patient safety and care while ensuring value for taxpayer's money.

Further information

- the project is expected to be completed in April 2022 and will ensure that patients across the West Midlands continue to benefit from access to world-class treatment and cutting-edge facilities.
- this is part of the NHS long term plan, setting out how the NHS will improve the quality of patient care and health outcomes. This is backed by a historic commitment of an extra £33.9 billion a year by 2023-2024.

- this announcement marks the formal sign off by Government of the Trust's business case for completion of the MMH hospital. The Trust is finalising commercial terms with its preferred bidder Balfour Beatty and expects to sign a contract for the construction work in the next few weeks.

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[New £250 million Culture Investment Fund launched](#)

Innovative cultural projects, libraries, museums and creative industries will benefit from £250m of new funding for the culture and creative sector, the Culture Secretary announced today.

Of this new funding over £125m will be invested in regional museums and libraries around the country. More than £90m will be provided to extend the Cultural Development Fund which uses investment in heritage, culture and creativity to drive regeneration and growth.

A further £18.5 million has been allocated to York's National Railway Museum, and an extra £7 million for Coventry and the UK City of Culture programme.

In total, over the next 5 years, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will invest an additional £50 million each year in culture and the creative industries across England to revitalise existing assets and to support new cultural development.

Culture Secretary Nicky Morgan said:

Creative and cultural institutions are at the heart of our communities. The Cultural Investment Fund is the Government's biggest ever single investment in cultural infrastructure, local museums and neighbourhood libraries and will benefit communities across the country. This will help drive growth, rejuvenate high streets and attract tourists to our world-class cultural attractions.

The CIF will provide funding for a wide range of projects, including:

- Extending the Cultural Development Fund for another 5 years with over £90m of funding, which will enable more than 20 places across the country to transform their local cultural and creative industry

infrastructure.

- Kickstarting the transformation of the National Railway Museum, including new gallery and exhibition spaces, improved accessibility and the restoration of heritage buildings. The museum will become the cultural hub of York Central – the redevelopment of the largest city centre brownfield site in Europe – projected to include 6,500 high-value jobs, and up to 2,500 new homes.
- Major infrastructure and maintenance work at local and regional museums across the country, safeguarding precious collections and local landmarks and increasing opportunities for commercial and community use. This will help realise one of the key recommendations of the Mendoza review about how the government can better support the sustainability of the sector in England.
- Upgrading buildings and technology so public libraries across England are better placed to respond to the changing ways people are using them.
- Additional support for UK City of Culture 2021 to transform Coventry, unlocking £37m of additional funding and over £107m of tourism impacts.

The £250 million investment will be delivered by DCMS, with Arts Council England (ACE) having a key role in distributing the fund. Both the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England will also play important roles, particularly in the delivery of the museums maintenance fund.

ACE has significant expertise in assessing capital projects and evaluating funding applications. It will run open competitions to ensure that investment goes to the best projects and benefits across the country.

Arts Council England Chair Nick Serota said:

This additional and very significant investment is exciting news for culture and for communities across the country. We are grateful to the Secretary of State and to the government for responding so positively, following conversations over the past few months. We know that towns and villages up and down England will benefit from investment in local libraries and museums, and in new jobs in our growing creative industries. We'll work closely with Government to develop the detail of the programme in the coming days and weeks.

Tim Davie, Industry co-Chair of the Creative Industries Council said:

Our creative industries are world renowned and vital to future economic growth. This extra funding is excellent news. It will extend the successful work developing vibrant creative industry hubs across England, a central theme of the Creative Industries Sector Deal agreed between the Creative Industries Council and Government last year.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, said:

Coventry City of Culture is a golden opportunity for the West Midlands and a brilliant stage on which to showcase our great pool of cultural and digital talent.

Not only will residents get to enjoy and take part in the wide range of events, shows, and activities throughout the year, but City of Culture will also create both job and volunteering opportunities for local people.

The Government has played an important role in helping to make this happen, and I am delighted that they have provided further funding to help City of Culture be the best it can possibly be.

Martin Sutherland, Chief Executive Coventry City of Culture Trust said:

We are delighted to receive the news about the funding for Coventry City of Culture Trust. This new investment will ensure that we are able to deliver the most extraordinary year of events in 2021, welcoming more than 2.5 million extra visitors and laying the foundations for a meaningful legacy for one of the UK's most youthful and diverse cities and region".

Sir Ian Blatchford, Chairman of the National Museum Directors' Council and Director of the Science Museum Group, said:

This fund will make a huge difference to regional museums that are doing superb work and is a welcome recognition of the importance of investment in our cultural heritage. At a time when the eyes of the world are turned to Britain, it is encouraging to see further funding for culture, following the recent positive spending round.

Judith McNicol, Director of the National Railway Museum, said:

This is wonderful news for the National Railway Museum – and for the City of York. This £18.6m investment by the Government is an extremely significant milestone in realising our £55m Vision 2025 campaign to turn our museum into a truly world-class attraction. It is the springboard for unlocking our role as the cultural heartbeat of York Central – one of the most ambitious regeneration projects

in Europe.

[UK aid to provide education and jobs to thousands of Syrian refugees](#)

The UK will help thousands of Syrian children access quality education and create jobs for Syrian refugees forced to flee their homes to neighbouring Lebanon, Minister for the Middle East Dr Andrew Murrison announced today (11 October 2019).

During a visit to Lebanon, Dr Murrison met some of the 7,000 Syrian and Lebanese children set to benefit from this UK aid allocation of £2 million.

Nearly half of the children who have fled conflict in Syria risk being denied an education because they have missed too many days of school or there are not enough school places for them. Today's announcement takes the total number of child refugees being supported by UK aid in Lebanon to over 300,000.

Today's UK support will also help to improve the conditions needed to create new businesses and jobs in areas hosting large numbers of refugees. This includes improving vital infrastructure, such as the redevelopment of market spaces, which is central to businesses successfully trading in local communities and boosting incomes. Over one million people will be helped to support themselves and their families.

Dr Murrison was also able to discuss the situation in Northeast Syria with key international agencies working in Syria and Lebanon. He expressed the UK's serious concerns about Turkey's military incursion and the potential humanitarian consequences of the situation, and reaffirmed that the UK is ready to respond.

The UK continues to be a leading donor to the humanitarian response inside Syria, including the Northeast region, to which we have allocated £40 million this year. This will go to those who need it most, and will provide vital medicine and shelter, including helping those caught up in the current ongoing conflict. But we will not support plans for returns until the conditions are in place for a safe and voluntary return home.

Speaking during his visit to Lebanon, Minister for the Middle East, Dr Andrew Murrison, said:

I have seen first-hand that UK aid is providing a vital education lifeline for the hundreds of thousands of Syrian children that have

been forced to flee the brutal conflict in Syria. Too many children have had their childhoods stolen away from them by the war and we will not allow their future to be lost.

That is why UK aid is helping vulnerable Syrian refugees to get access to education and jobs that they deserve to give them hope for the future.

The only way of ending this misery, including for those still trapped in Syria, is through a negotiated political settlement which ensures the safety of those who wish to return home voluntarily. The Syrian regime must engage seriously and constructively in the new Constitutional Committee as a first step in this direction.

Whilst on the visit, Dr Murrison spoke directly to Syrian families living in extremely challenging conditions, who are receiving UK aid to meet their most urgent survival needs. He also visited a trading area in Tripoli where UK aid has helped restore the roof of a souk, and refurbish shops so they can open for business.

Across Lebanon, UK aid is boosting the local economy. In Mount Lebanon, where there are high numbers of Syrian refugees, UK support has helped to transform the fishing port of Jiyeh. UK aid has redesigned the port, creating space for more boats, establishing a market space and providing fishing equipment, like fishnets and fish finding technology for fishermen, benefiting over 300,000 people.

UK aid support in Lebanon has also already helped to provide:

- access to clean water and sanitation for 471,000 people;
- a decent education for around 322,000 children;
- and nutrition for 9,000 children under 5, women and adolescent girls.

To date, the UK has committed £2.81 billion in response to the Syria Crisis, our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. Since 2012, across Syria and the region, we have provided over 28 million food rations, over 17 million medical consultations, and over 12 million vaccines. Our aid provides life-saving support to millions of Syrians.

Dr Murrison met with President Michel Aoun, Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri, Prime Minister Saad Hariri, Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil, MPs and senior business leaders to discuss the important relationship between the two countries. He thanked Lebanon for the essential role it has played throughout the conflict, ensuring that Syria's instability does not spread through the wider region.

Notes to editors

- Today's announcements of UK aid for Lebanon are allocations from funds that the UK pledged at the Syria Conference 2019 in Brussels. The UK's Department for International Development will provide:

- £31 million to the Lebanon Municipal Services Programme 3 (LHSP3) to support communities hosting refugees – this will run for three years from 2019 to 2020.
- £2 million to the No Lost Generation Initiative to provide education to Syrian children, taking total UK support to the Initiative in Lebanon to £67 million.
- Free-to-use photographs from Dr Murrison's visit are available [here](#). Any usage must be credited to: 'HM Government'

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