

There's a real lack of ambition and clarity in the government's digital transformation strategy – Trickett

Jon Trickett MP, Labour's

Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office, responding to warnings from the Institute for Government about deficiencies in the Government Transformation Strategy, said:

"Ministers need to pay attention to these warnings. There's a real lack of ambition and clarity in the government's digital transformation strategy.

"While the Government tried to avoid criticism by sneaking it out after the Brexit debate, they cannot ignore the details which they'll be judged on in the long term.

"Theresa May and her Government should throw their weight behind this strategy to make sure a digital transformation actually takes place – and this isn't just another flashy strategy that falls by the wayside when Ministers realise they haven't thought through the details."

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Press release: British Minister for Africa to visit Democratic Republic of Congo

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Part of:

FCO Minister for the Middle East and Africa, Tobias Ellwood, will visit Goma in the Democratic Republic of Congo on 14-15 February.

Speaking before the visit Mr Ellwood said:

'I am delighted to be able to visit the Democratic Republic of Congo again. During my visit I hope to have the chance to better understand the current security and political situation in the country.

'The UK remains a serious and committed partner of the DRC, as our half a billion dollar annual contribution shows. Part of that commitment involves direct assistance to the government through MONUSCO to end ongoing conflicts, where the primary responsibility for achieving this of course sits with the government.

'But I will also be interested to see what progress has been made towards organising elections in 2017, including the implementation of the 31 December Agreement. The UK firmly believes that elections can always be organised where there is the will to do so, and that the greatest threat to DRC's stability will arise where the democratic aspirations of the Congolese people are not met.

'I take this opportunity to again present my condolences to the Congolese people for the recent loss of opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, whom I met during my last visit. He was an inspiration to many Congolese, whatever their political inclinations. In this period of mourning, and suspension of talks pending the formation of a new government, it would not be appropriate to discuss in detail international support for elections but I hope to do so with the new government in due course'.

[News story: UK Role in Fusion following EU Exit](#)

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The UK government's intention to leave Euratom alongside leaving the EU was announced just over two weeks ago in the White Paper entitled "The United Kingdom's exit from, and new partnership with, the European Union". This has obvious implications for UKAEA – especially the continued operation of JET after 2018 and the UK's continued participation in ITER.

UKAEA has since received the following statement from the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Jo Johnson MP :

The research done at the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy is rightly recognised as world class and it has driven UK leadership in fusion

R&D for many years. The Government has no intention of compromising this position following the decision to withdraw from the Euratom Treaty. Leaving Euratom is a result of the decision to leave the EU as they are uniquely legally joined. The UK supports Euratom, and we value international collaboration in fusion research and the UK's key role in these efforts.

Maintaining and building on our world-leading fusion expertise and securing alternative routes into the international fusion R&D projects such as the Joint European Torus (JET) project at Culham and the ITER project in France, will be a priority.

The Government is working closely with the UKAEA management and board on ways to achieve this.

Press release: More than 50 Welsh companies expected at major UK Government export summit

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A major summit on exports is set to draw together a range of Welsh companies with experts on hand.

More than 50 Welsh companies are expected at a major export summit set up by the UK Government to help exporters sell more across the globe.

The event, being hosted on 6 March at Cardiff City Hall by the Wales Office and the Department for International Trade, will bring together a range of exporters under one roof who can offer practical advice on:

- Applying for grants or financial help with exports
- Getting market intelligence in countries around the world
- Negotiating around rules and red tape in new markets
- How the UK Government can support trade fairs and exhibitions abroad
- Advice on protecting your ideas from the Intellectual Property Office

Alun Cairns, Secretary of State for Wales, said:

Wales is already a successful exporter – shipping aircraft wings to the world, cooling technology to the Middle East and TV formats to dozens of countries. Our export market is worth around £1bn a year.

Leaving the European Union will create new trade opportunities. The role of this summit is to help connect our brilliant Welsh business community with expert guides and tutors to ensure they are off to a flying start as we strike new trade deals.

This is about gathering a range of experts in one place who can plug your business into new markets. I urge everyone who wants to sell more abroad – or even just explore the options – to attend.

There will also be presentations from successful companies including thermal equipment manufacturer SPTS Technologies, civil engineers Dawnus and Cloth Cat Animation – a creative agency which has just won a major deal with Chinese broadcasters.

The summit is free to attend – you can register online [here](#)

Press release: Restoring fifty hectares of rare and threatened habitats in Doncaster to benefit all

Almost 50 hectares of nationally-important habitat is being restored in Doncaster as part of an Environment Agency-led project benefiting communities and wildlife.

The work across seven woodland areas, including two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), will help improve water quality, reduce flood risk, and enhance natural habitats for protected species.

Beginning in September last year, the Inspiring Water Action in the Torne project is creating, restoring and improving up to 46.5 hectares of wet-woodland priority habitats – and involving local communities in doing so.

The 46.5 hectares represents 11 per cent of the Environment Agency's national target for habitat creation.

Measures include selectively thinning the woodland, re-wetting areas that have dried out, improving access for visitors, and sowing native plants that will help filter pollutants from the environment.

As well as providing for one of the nation's most threatened bird species –

the Willow Tit – the restored wet-woodland will act as a natural aid to reducing flood risk by creating more room for water.

The estimated 4,000 cubic metres of extra storage space will help naturally interrupt and soak up the flow of rising waters, reducing the risk to around 1,000 nearby properties, as well as to agricultural land.

This will lessen the reliance on the Keadby Pumping Station, bringing down the carbon and financial costs of using it to artificially drain excess water from the River Torne into the River Trent.

David Newborough, Environment Agency catchment co-ordinator, said:

Our role is to create better places for people and wildlife. This project is a perfect example of how we can achieve that through simple measures that deliver many benefits.

By restoring wet woodland to a state that's closer to how nature intended, we're protecting vital habitat, providing for threatened species, creating spaces that everyone can enjoy, and reducing the risk of flooding, all in one go.

Communities across the area are involved in making the project a success, with volunteers and school children taking active roles.

Around 600 children and young people across seven schools, each linked with one of the woodland sites, are using the project to learn first-hand about flood risk, water quality and management, and ecology.

David continued:

Working with school children is one of the most exciting and rewarding aspects of this project.

They are directly involved in understanding and protecting our natural environment, which is essential for its future. And their enthusiasm for the difference they can make is great to see.

Some of the work is being carried out by volunteers, who are learning new skills in the management of woodland habitats. These skills will help them maintain the improvements into the future.

The £100,000 project, which includes work at Potteric Carr Nature Reserve SSSI, Holmes Carr Wood, Tickhill Low Common, Bog Wood, Bessacarr Bank, Sandall Beat Wood SSSI and Rossington Brick Pond, is expected to bring benefits valued at around £1m.

Inspiring Water Action in the Torne is a Torne Catchment Partnership project led by the Environment Agency and involving [Yorkshire Wildlife Trust](#), [Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council](#), [Natural England](#) and local

communities.