

DIOlogue

The magazine of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation

Issue 1 June 2011



Defence Infrastructure Organisation



All hands on deck



A dual challenge



Aspiring for better



Featured in this issue of

DIOlogue



Welcome

from Andrew Manley

I am extremely pleased to introduce the first issue of our organisation's new online corporate magazine. I hope you find it interesting and informative.

A few months back we gave our staff the opportunity to suggest titles for this new publication; we had a huge response and the title that has been selected was proposed by a majority of respondents.

In my view 'DIologue' is an excellent choice because it encapsulates the way I want to see communication with all our stakeholders working, with ongoing, two-way engagement helping us to take our business forward.

As the DIO is still in the early weeks of its formation, the majority of the articles in this issue focus on the various elements of change that are currently underway. The editorial team have interviewed several of the key players in the Defence Infrastructure Transformation Programme to capture their views on the progress being made.

These include Brigadier Mark Armstrong, who is leading the Soft Facilities Management (FM) area of work and gives an insight into how Soft FM may be run in the future. Admiral Montgomery, one of our most senior estate users, and a member of the Defence Infrastructure Board, has also been put in the 'hot seat' and he shares his thinking on what the DIO must deliver in order to meet the end users' needs.

And, if you want to hear more about my own thoughts on the future of the DIO, I am - somewhat improbably - on page three.

I hope you find this first issue an enjoyable read. It is always good to hear feedback from our staff and other readers, so please let me know what more we can add to DIologue in the future to make it even better than this first edition.

Andrew
(Andrew Manley, DIO Chief Executive)



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DIologue

DIologue is the online journal of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). It is available on both the DIO intranet and to external readers on the DIO website.

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FORCES' NURSERY IN GLOUCESTER GETS PRAISE FOR GREEN CREDENTIALS



Young children from military families at Imjin Barracks in Gloucester are living the 'green' life in a new eco-friendly nursery building which has drawn praise from judges in the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors South West Awards 2011. The building, which was shortlisted in the sustainability category, provides a high-quality environment for the children of Service personnel, with light airy spaces and modern facilities.

JOINT HEADQUARTERS NORTHWOOD WINS PPP 'BEST OPERATIONAL PROJECT' AWARD 2011

The MOD Joint Headquarters building in Northwood, Middlesex, designed by Scott Brownrigg, has won 'Best Operational Project' at the recent Partnerships Bulletin Awards 2011, held at the Park Lane Hilton.

NEW LEARNING FACILITIES HELP SOLDIERS PREPARE FOR DEPLOYMENT

New IT facilities that were rapidly constructed at Paderborn Garrison are enabling soldiers from 20 Armoured Brigade to get to grips with a vital communications system ahead of their deployment to Afghanistan. Four classrooms were created in four-and-a-half months by the DIO and its industry partners, through the conversion of existing rooms into online IT training facilities.

THOUSANDS OF NEW BEDROOMS FOR BRITISH MILITARY PERSONNEL

Armed Forces personnel across England and Wales are enjoying a much better standard of living accommodation with 2,582 new bedrooms for single Servicemen and women having been delivered during the financial year 2010-11 under Project SLAM (DIO's Single Living Accommodation Modernisation Project).

TRACK EXTENSION ENHANCES MILITARY TRAINING ON SALISBURY PLAIN

A programme of work to construct a 30km tank track to complete the orbital transit route around Salisbury Plain Training Area is nearing completion. The new stretch of track - described as 'the military equivalent of the M25' - will allow military training exercises to be conducted right across the Plain. ■

PUS VISITS DIO HQ

MOD Permanent Under Secretary (PUS) Ursula Brennan met with staff from the DIO in May when she visited its Sutton Coldfield HQ.

In her opening address, PUS said: "The DIO has spearheaded transformation in Defence. The changes being made here set the tone and tenor for the way we want to operate in Defence as a whole."

CATTLE TO KEEP TRAINING SITE INTACT



The DIO has recently joined forces with Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) to manage Barossa Training Area - a 580 hectare Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) near Camberley. The partnership has already planned to introduce grazing cattle to the heath land, which will eat the coarse grasses that are currently threatening to invade its fragile ecosystem.



Destination DIO

When DIO launched on 1 April 2011, Andrew Manley, the organisation's Chief Executive, made clear that it was only the start of the infrastructure transformation journey. Now, two months on, he explains to Rhian Williams what the road ahead looks like and why the DIO's staff, suppliers and estate users should hold-on for an interesting ride.

How will the DIO be different to its predecessor, Defence Estates?

"We have to change the Business Model and that means changing three things and we have to change them together, otherwise we won't make this a different organisation.

"The first thing is that we have to be absolutely clear about what it is the DIO delivers for Defence and how it delivers this. We need to simplify radically what we are doing and reduce variation. We should do the same thing, the same way, regardless of which part of the country or Armed Services we are in.

"Secondly, we have got to sort out our legacy IT platforms. We have got a very fragmented and ancient set of IT applications and we really have to look at which applications we need to run the business. I expect to e-enable many of the things that we do and to develop a Management Information System (MIS) that really helps us make effective decisions.

"The last thing is getting the organisation right. Directionally we believe that we will outsource more to industry and we will do less ourselves. But we can't make decisions about that without getting the other two 'pieces' right.

"So far, there has been too much credence given to a particular organisational size. This concern is misplaced. We have to arrive at the right size and shape for the organisation by working out the Business Model first.

How will you make this change happen?

"I think there is inherently a fear about making mistakes right across Defence and I think in areas like this we can afford for people to think the unthinkable and feel they won't be criticised for coming up with what, at first, may seem like a slightly crazy idea. Actually a crazy idea can often challenge established norms and may turn into something that reduces cost, adds value or improves service.

"In the change workshops that we have been holding, what we have been trying to do is to create an environment in which people can have really honest conversations. What we need is that creativity, that preparedness to challenge the status quo, and then drive it into something that is going to produce more effective and efficient delivery going forward." ➤



How much support is there out there for the DIO at the moment?

"I think there is a huge wave of support for the DIO right across the whole of the MOD. The Secretary of State presented the decision to form the DIO to Parliament and has expressed very strong encouragement to drive the DIO forward as fast as possible and to be quite radical in our thinking.

"If I go to any of the Service chiefs, particularly the Chief of the General Staff, the Chief of the Air Staff and the First Sea Lord and their immediate reports, there is recognition that this is the first significant change that has been processed through the Defence Reform Programme and they are incredibly supportive in trying to make it work."

What's the next 'big thing' in the transformation programme?

"The next six months, up to October, is a really intensive study piece. We need to get clear how the Business Model will work by determining how the three interlocking 'pieces' work together.

"We will make a decision in October whether we will then go on alone or whether we will engage with a strategic partner to help us invest expertise and potentially money

in the things that we need to do. At a time when public finances are very constrained, the possibility of bringing-in a strategic partner is a very real one for us. We need to make that decision before we move on with implementing the new Business Model."

What is currently at the top of your own 'to-do' list?

"Absolutely at the top at the moment is to get the senior people appointed into the new organisation. Without that team it is going to be impossible to make the DIO become the reality it should be."

We haven't got a DIO vision yet. In your opinion, what should we be working towards?

"I am personally very wary of vision statements, especially if they are created by Chief Executives. The people who work in the transformation programme, which will ultimately be all of our staff, will need to come to their own decision about what the DIO vision should be.

"My only view is that it should probably allude to us being 'the best' or 'extremely good at' doing whatever it is that we decide to do. The reason for that is that nobody comes to work in the morning to do a bad job." ■

ANDREW MANLEY IN FIVE QUESTIONS

1. Where are you most likely to be found at the weekend?

"On a touch line somewhere! I have two teenage kids; a keen sportsman and a keen sportswoman. I'm a touch line parent a lot of the time."

2. What is your greatest ambition?

"All my ambitions are ones around adventure. I am a keen hill walker and climber and a keen sailor. Anything that is an achievement in that area is one that I would sign-up to."

3. Who do you most admire?

"I admired my father who was an extremely successful entrepreneur in his own right. I have had more than a dozen bosses in my career. Amongst them I have been fortunate enough to work for three great bosses; I learnt something important from each of them but one of the things that I admired in all of them was a sense of humility."

4. What sports team do you support?

"I have very strong Irish roots so if England aren't playing I will always support Ireland. Predictably perhaps we are a Manchester United household."

5. What's your pet hate?

"Arrogance. I cannot abide it. Arrogant people are usually destined to fail."



Andrew Manley,
DIO Chief Executive



The DITP explained

The Defence Infrastructure Transformation Programme (DITP) resulted from the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), and is designed to transform the delivery of the MOD's Infrastructure, including the creation of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).

DIO came into existence on 1 April 2011 and continues to evolve. The embedding and development of this organisation sits at the heart of all DITP work.

A Transformation Support Team (TST) is in place to coordinate the delivery of the DITP. In order to split the programme into manageable sections of work, four Solutions Areas have been created. These are:

- a) Operations
- b) Head Office
- c) The Strategic Asset-management Programme Team (SAPT)
- d) The User

The Operations Solution

The Operations Solution Area is responsible for proposing a design of how DIO's Operations area will work in the future.

This area will define the five high-level operations processes that, once refined, will provide a framework for the delivery of all infrastructure services.

The User Solution

The new DIO will need specific conduits in order to manage business effectively between itself and all of its Users. New ways of working will need to be developed that make the most of leaner User teams, the new SAPT and new Operations processes.

The User Solution Area will work with the other Solution Areas to develop and agree the necessary interfaces that will bring coherence, enable communication and improve delivery.

The SAPT Solution

Once established, the SAPT will be a key element of the new DIO organisational structure. It will be responsible for translating Defence infrastructure requirements into a strategic programme to deliver what the Armed Forces require.

A number of options for the overall structure of the SAPT are being considered, along with how Strategic Asset Management techniques can be applied to better manage the Defence estate.

The Head Office Solution

The Head Office Solution Area will continue to build on the existing framework for delivering all of the outputs required of a Defence Top Level Budget (TLB) and contributing to wider MOD and Government policy formation. Head Office functions will also play a key role in enabling the transformation programme itself.

The second element of this Solution Area's work is to develop and refine the existing Head Office functions to support the requirements of the evolving DIO. ■



All hands on deck

Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery CBE ADC, Second Sea Lord, Commander-In-Chief Naval Home Command, and a member of the new Defence Infrastructure Board (DIB), explains how his role at the helm will help to keep the new DIO firmly on course.

Report by Rhian Williams



Vice Admiral Montgomery, Second Sea Lord, and Commander-In-Chief Naval Home Command

It's a complex portfolio of infrastructure that is required to keep the Navy afloat and so Vice Admiral Montgomery has a pretty hefty stake in the evolving DIO.

He explains: "As 2SL and a member of the Navy Board, I am acutely aware of the need to deliver balanced infrastructure. One important factor is the continued support for individual Service personnel and their families. This means providing the right working, living and rehabilitation environments for our people."

He acknowledges that now is the time for the infrastructure tide to change.

"We must be radical in our thinking. What will be valued most by the User is the simplification of processes, responsiveness to need, transparency in decision making, sharing of information, and engagement with the estate user at all levels. An effective management information system will be essential to achieving these improvements."



The diverse range of infrastructure that makes-up Portsmouth Naval Base (Whale Island)

But the journey doesn't end there. He adds:

"In the longer term, we need to embed the necessary culture change. For the Services it will mean being clear about our requirements and their relative priorities, whilst leaving management and delivery of infrastructure to the DIO. For the DIO it will mean the development of an increased awareness of how our infrastructure supports the delivery of Defence outputs. The most important of these are those of the Joint and Single Service Front Line Commands."

Whilst the new DIO is still in its infancy, Vice Admiral Montgomery has a clear view on how to deal with the testing waters ahead.

"We must put in place the right governance and the DIB will have a vital role in providing direction."

"I am absolutely clear that the Navy is giving the DIO transformation programme the support it needs



Navy personnel who are key users of Defence infrastructure

and this includes my personal commitment as a DIB member. We are going in the right direction and my staff will continue to work with DIO colleagues in developing, testing and implementing the new structures and processes.

"This is key to meeting the challenge of delivering the required Defence infrastructure within both a testing operational environment and a taut public financial position." ■



A dual challenge

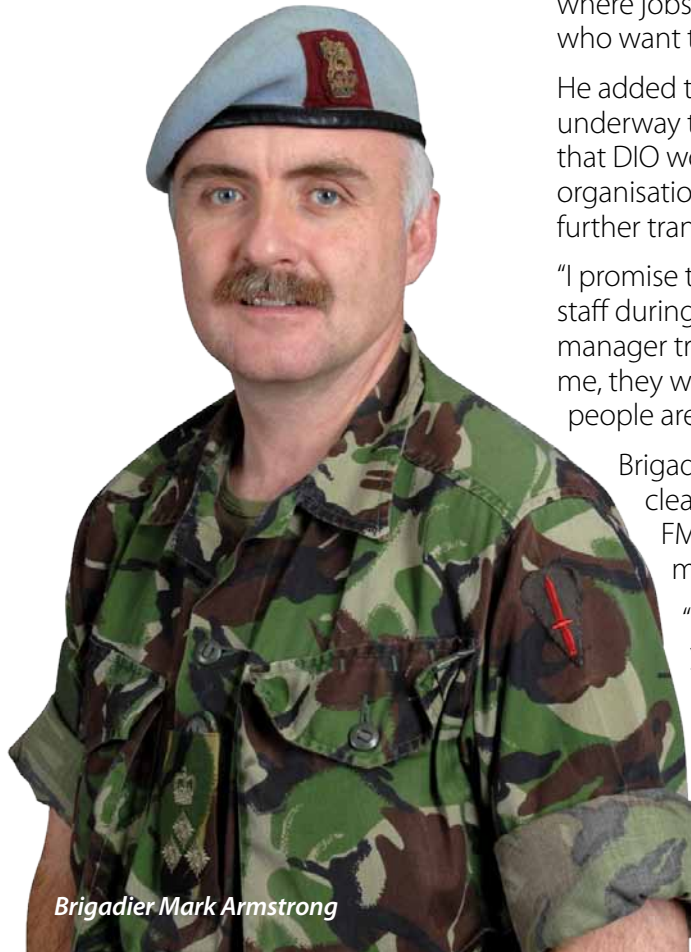
Brigadier Mark Armstrong may have begun his military career in the clouds, but his feet are now firmly on the ground as he heads the drive to tackle the dual challenges of Soft FM and Transition to the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).

Report by Tony Moran

An experienced aircraft engineer before his previous appointment as Land Forces' Director of Infrastructure, Brigadier Armstrong is now leading the transition of colleagues from other parts of the MOD into the new organisation.

He is also in charge of the daunting task of rationalising Soft FM contracts across Defence. Over the years the provision of support services, such as cleaning and catering, have developed independently of any central policy and direction, into a myriad of different ways of working.

Some 4,000 former Defence Estates (DE) staff and around 600 staff from other areas of Defence joined the new organisation on its launch on 1 April and more are coming across over the year as part of the transition. With DIO set to grow in numbers before becoming a leaner, more efficient operation by 2014, Brigadier Armstrong is clear on what needs to be done.



Brigadier Mark Armstrong

"These are challenging times across Defence and I'm not promising anyone a job, but I am promising that we will work with the unions and our staff to create a level playing field for everyone, where jobs will go to the best people who want them."

He added that work was now underway to refine the functions that DIO would need to deliver as an organisation and this would 'unearth' further transfers of staff.

"I promise to do my best to look after staff during this process. After all, if a manager transfers 200 of his staff to me, they will want to be sure that their people are being looked after."

Brigadier Armstrong is equally clear on his vision of how Soft FM arrangements for Defence must develop.

"DE used to decide what you lived in and how it was maintained," he said. "After listening to our estate users, the DIO will also decide two other things: where you live and how you live on the estate."

"Optimising soft FM contracts helps us to do this – particularly the 'how you live'. For example, we could change mess opening hours, bar policy and dining patterns. Does it really make sense for some messes to have more staff than residents at weekends?"

He recognises that some decisions made as a result of savings across Defence might prove unpalatable, but there were stark choices ahead as a result of the current economic climate.

"A rather far-fetched example, but I recently said to a group of officers that I can provide any service they like, such as providing their men breakfast in bed if that is what they want, but in return, they have to decide which posts and functions they are prepared to give up to pay for it."

Brigadier Armstrong explained that his team was working with all three Services to reach mutually agreed ways forward. One upcoming tool which will help this process is a common Key User Requirement Document, that is being developed for the first time, for Soft FM services across Defence. ➤



“The only constant is change. You can be driven by change and end up in a place you don’t want to be in, or you can drive change and set the direction of travel yourself,” he explained.

“DIO must now work with its estate users to define levels of service and how best we deliver this work. The Key User Requirement Document will help us set our destination and get there as quickly and efficiently as possible.”

He added that his post was a military appointment because it was important that whoever led this part of DIO’s work understood military needs and traditions. It also made delivering unpalatable decisions to Service colleagues a little easier.

“I’m motivated by doing the right thing,” he said. “We have a duty by Service personnel to ensure they have a Defence estate that befits the sacrifices they make on behalf of the UK and supports them in generating operational capability. I’m very pleased to be in the new Defence Infrastructure Organisation and look forward to working with my new colleagues in driving this work forward.” ■

Catering is just one of the services that will be delivered by the DIO



Ones to watch



The three initiatives that DIOlogue readers may want to keep their eye on this quarter.

1 THE ARRIVAL OF MOSS

The Defence Training Estate (DTE) Headquarters at Warminster has become the first DIO operating area to go-live with Microsoft Office SharePoint Services (MOSS).

MOSS is being established across Defence as part of the Defence Information Infrastructure (DII) programme and was launched at HQ DTE in May. A key element of the MOSS functionality is that it presents information to users through web-based Team Sites, which replace current ways of working on shared drives and via email.

MOSS will be rolled-out in the rest of the DIO during 2012, once DII migration is complete.

2 REVIEW OF BRITISH SOVEREIGN BASE AREAS IN CYPRUS

Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox announced in May that the MOD will lead a review on the Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) in Cyprus as part of the SDSR follow-on work.

The UK MOD has a wide variety of interests and responsibilities in Cyprus. Some aspects of the UK Defence role in Cyprus have already been, or are being reviewed, but there is now a need for an all-encompassing study.

The review will take into account wider developments in Defence, including the end of combat operations in Afghanistan in 2015, the Gulf initiative, the withdrawal of the Army from Germany, the need to find efficiency savings across Defence, and the wider implications of the Strategic Defence and Security Review.

3 MOD ONLINE SECURITY CAMPAIGN

The MOD has launched an online security awareness campaign to inform users of the potential risks of social networks and the steps they can take to mitigate these.

Social media websites are widely used by Service personnel, Defence civilians, veterans and their friends and families. Improper or irresponsible use of social media channels can present risks to operational and personal security unless appropriate steps are taken to safeguard personal and operationally sensitive information.

A **website** has been set-up to provide guidance for the Defence community when using social media. ■



Re-building housing

Last month around 100 industry delegates met at RAF Wyton in Cambridgeshire to be briefed on future commercial plans for the support of 49,000 military homes in the UK and on the procurement process ahead.

Report by Walter Scott

They included around 30 potential prime contractors, along with smaller businesses focussed on supply chain opportunities such as architecture, insulation, flooring and furniture supply.

Under the Next Generation Estate Contracts (NGEC) programme, the various contracts for UK housing will be replaced by a single contract – the National Housing Prime – with an in-service date of April 2013. Worth potentially as much as £1.5 billion over the next ten years, it is a highly significant component of NGEC, and the search for the right industry partner is now underway.

A single UK-wide contract is expected to deliver clear benefits for both the MOD and Service families. More coherent commercial support of MOD housing stock will enable DIO to respond more flexibly to the changes in the Armed Forces under the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), to meet the ongoing challenge of providing the right numbers of good quality houses where Service personnel need them.

The National Housing Prime could potentially contain a number of housing-related activities that are currently delivered in-house. These include the allocation of houses to Service families, management of the moves into and out of properties and the supply of furniture and fittings. The merits of



Upgrades underway on Service family homes at High Wycombe

outsourcing these services will be compared to in-house provision in terms of value for money. A decision is expected by late 2012.

Whichever options are taken-up, a single national contract will provide greater coherence and standardisation to provide the best possible service to Service families. Work is ongoing to improve the existing arrangements – such as the recent launch of an electronic application form enabling personnel to apply for a military home online. Future changes could include further ‘e-enabling’ of the allocations process, and improved support for families at a local level.



It's vital that the future industry partner is prepared to work collaboratively to identify opportunities to improve value for money and the estate user's experience. From the end of May, the NGEC team will evaluate the potential bidders and produce a shortlist of three to five companies. Following a period of 'competitive dialogue' it expects to identify the preferred bidder by early 2012.

Updates on progress in the NGEC programme will be made available on the DIO website. ■



Aspiring for better

For readers unfamiliar with Project Allenby/Connaught, the largest infrastructure Private Finance Initiative ever let by the MOD, it has one simple mission – to make life better for nearly 19,000 soldiers.

Report by Kathy Dicker

The contract for this landmark project (which joined the DIO on 1 April 2011) was awarded to Aspire Defence - a joint venture between Carillion and KBR - in 2006. The project is now delivering and maintaining living, working, technical and recreational accommodation for the Armed Forces, and providing a wide range of support services over 35 years.

The Junior Ranks Dining Centre at Warminster Training Centre

This work is transforming four garrisons across Salisbury Plain and at Aldershot, which have historically suffered from a lack of long-term investment in their infrastructure. Project Allenby/Connaught's Project Manager, Andrew Mathewson, highlights what this means in practice for Service personnel. "The post SDSR Army will continue to be based on its core estate, including the Allenby/Connaught garrisons on Salisbury Plain and in Aldershot, and it will be vital to ensure that the living and working conditions in these garrisons are of the highest quality.

"As we deliver on this commitment, soldiers who used to share rooms and communal washing facilities in poorly maintained buildings are increasingly moving or returning from operational tours into accommodation of a standard which they deserve and of which the nation can be proud."

And speaking to soldiers living in accommodation improved under Project Allenby/Connaught confirms that the changes are making a big difference to them. Private Cleon Walters comments: "I now have my own bathroom, loads of storage space and the common room means I can have the boys around for dominos or cards. I'm very impressed with the new accommodation – it's really top drawer. Most of us eat in the new diner, but we've now got a kitchen for when we get hungry later in the evening. We didn't have any of this before so it's a great improvement."

The pace of change has been quick and, five years in, 381 new/refurbished buildings have been delivered and more than 7,200 soldiers are enjoying new single en-suite bedrooms. The current build programme will be finished by 2014, some two years earlier than originally planned. ▶



While it is the construction progress that catches the eye, Allenby/Connaught is essentially a services contract, providing pretty much everything the garrisons and units need on a day-to-day basis. Andrew highlights the overall contribution made by these services.

“The first rate support services being provided under the contract make a truly vital contribution to the military effectiveness of the units based in the garrisons. Over a 35-year period Aspire Defence is managing and delivering a wide range of support services including property management, building and grounds maintenance, catering and cleaning, office support, transport and stores. In fact, everything other than the physical guarding of the sites is included.”



Soldiers from 27 Regiment Royal Logistics Corps outside a new Single Living Accommodation block

As part of the contract, a helpdesk service is provided to all personnel living and working in the garrisons across the project footprint. The helpdesk provides advice and assistance on the range of services that Aspire Defence offers, as well as providing the point of contact for reporting maintenance issues. The unique selling point of the helpdesk though, is that it is local; there is a ‘walk-in’ or telephone service in each of the individual garrisons.

The logistics of concurrently operating across four major garrisons, each as complex as a small town, with a footprint spanning 80 miles, require careful planning to ensure that ongoing military training and operations are not impeded. Andrew believes that the constructive working relationships that have made this possible will stand Project Allenby/Connaught in good stead in the coming years.

“The commitment of the people involved and our determination to work together will be our strength in dealing with the changes we face in the future. To that end we are very excited to be firmly embedded within DIO, giving as it does the opportunity to work alongside other projects and teams delivering facilities management services for the Armed Services.” ■



A soldier collects his kit from the Garrison Store Supplies Unit at Aldershot

PAC BY NUMBERS

Under Project Allenby/Connaught:

8,000,000 meals are produced each year

400,000 items (bed linen, curtains etc) are laundered each year

100,000 items go through the tailoring process every year

7,200 soldiers have new en-suite bedrooms

6,500 calls are taken by the helpdesk each month, of which 98% are answered within 30 seconds

381 new and refurbished buildings have been delivered since the project began



Bridging the gap

As the DIO delivers better strategic management of the military estate over the coming years, it will also yield significant financial savings.

And its Next Generation Estate Contracts (NGEC) programme has a key role to play in delivering those savings. From 2013, current arrangements with industry to provide management, maintenance and development of the UK Defence estate will start to expire.

The NGEC programme is replacing those arrangements with a mix of contracts that will deliver the best possible service for the Armed Forces and the rest of UK Defence, and achieves best value for money for the UK taxpayer.

In order to bridge the gap until new arrangements start to come into force in 2013, the DIO has already exercised its option to extend its current contracts and has awarded extensions to four of its five existing Regional Prime Contracts (RPC).

Diane Rampling, Head of DIO Commercial, said: "Our top priority is supporting our Armed Forces in preparing for operations. By extending the RPCs, we aim to maintain and improve service delivery, as we prepare to introduce new arrangements with industry in 2013."

Contract extensions have been agreed on UK mainland RPCs for Scotland (Turner Estate Solutions), South West (Debut Services), South East (PRiDE) and Central (Carillion Enterprise). Negotiations are ongoing on RPC East (Babcock Dyncorp).

Future commercial arrangements will comprise four RPCs for Scotland and Northern Ireland; North of England, Wales, the Midlands and East Anglia; Southwest England; and Southeast England.

In addition, there will be a number of regional Core Works Frameworks and one National Framework delivering construction projects, and a single UK-wide National Housing Prime Contract .

There will also be new or revised commercial arrangements for the Defence Training Estate. Several options are currently under consideration and a decision is expected imminently. ■



The appliance of science



Paul Burden, Assistant Head of the Environmental Science Group

Overseeing the clearance of explosive ordnance and assessing environmental risks on the Defence estate is all in a day's work for Paul Burden, Assistant Head of the Environmental Science Group. The group recently transferred from Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) into the DIO and Paul explained to DIologue how they ensure that their work doesn't literally go with a bang!

Paul, can you tell us what the ESG's work involves?

"The ESG completes environmental assessment work on the Defence estate and it also undertakes explosive ordnance clearance activities on MOD sites."

And what do you do in your role specifically?

"As well as day-to-day management duties, I am involved in the technical work, whether preparing my own reports or going out on site visits to carry out inspections or supervise site work."

"I also need to keep as up-to-date as possible with what is happening in environmental consultancy in industry; our 'internal' reports need to be as good as, or better than, what is being produced by external consultants."

Is clearing explosive ordnance as dangerous as it sounds?

"Well, there is a slightly higher risk than when carrying out environmental assessments! For every job we complete a health and safety risk assessment before commencing any work on-site so we ensure that the risks are managed and work is completed in as safe a way as possible. Also, part of the team that undertakes the ordnance disposal work are ex-Service personnel, so they have a lot of experience in dealing with munitions."

What is the best thing about your role?

"The variety of technical work that we carry out on the MOD estate makes it continually interesting."

And the most challenging?

"Balancing management responsibilities with the requirement to complete the technical work for our customers."

Finally, your group has recently moved into DIO from DE&S. Has this meant any changes for you?

"For me personally it has meant a new piece of work, as I am involved in the transition to form the new organisation. Our day-to-day work currently continues as usual, but we are speaking to other teams who have joined the DIO with shared areas of expertise, such as the Environmental Liability Team in the Professional and Technical Services area, to work out how the teams will be integrated." ■



Did you know...

...that in May 1965 the Beatles filmed scenes for their second film *Help!* on Salisbury Plain?

At the time the Beatles were already a world wide phenomenon and it was the film's storyline that led the world's first boy-band to Salisbury Plain. When Ringo Starr discovers that one of his many rings was a 'mystical

sacred ring' from the Far East, which its real owners want back, they decide to make their next record under the close guard of the British Army.

The Plain, which is still the largest military training area in the UK, featured

alongside several more exotic locations such as the beaches of Nassau and the ski slopes of Austria. The Army 'security' came from the troops of 3 Division, Royal Artillery, who were on exercise there at the time.

The three day shoot took place at Knighton Down, near Larkhill Garrison. The Salisbury Plain scenes see the Beatles miming to the George Harrison song 'I Need You'.

Like everywhere else they went, The Beatles brought with them a following of besotted female fans. Gwyn Nicholls (now Blanchard), was a 13-year-old Beatles fanatic, who lived locally and went up to the Plain every day to try and catch a glimpse of one of her idols.

She said: "There wasn't a lot of people around then. The tanks were there as The Beatles were being chased across Salisbury Plain. It took all day to film, and in between times, they were sat in bunkers."

Over 50 years on, Salisbury Plain remains a popular location for film, television and radio crews. Songs of Praise, Country File, Children's BBC and Radio 4's 'On Your Farm', are just some of the programmes that have contacted the DIO's Communications Team in recent months to seek permission to film on the training area. ■



The Beatles performing on Salisbury Plain

Picture courtesy of © Salisbury Newspapers www.journalphotos.co.uk

