

# DESIDER

AN INSIDE LOOK INTO LIFE AT DEFENCE EQUIPMENT & SUPPORT



## DE&S STRATEGY

Our vision for 2025

## REVOLUTIONARY ROBOTICS

Maintaining operational advantage

## CHALLENGER 3

Cutting-edge upgrade

# In this issue



**4**  
**SENIOR  
LEADER  
COMMENT**

**6**  
**DE&S  
STRATEGY**



**8**  
**DELIVERING  
INNOVATIVE  
CAPABILITIES**

**10**  
**TRANSFORMING  
DEFENCE**



**12**  
**CHALLENGER  
3 UPGRADE**



**16**  
**MODERNISING  
CHINOOK**

**19**  
**NHS  
PARTNERSHIP**

**20**  
**EXPEDITIONARY  
ROBOTICS  
CENTRE**

**24**  
**NEW BOXER  
FACILITY**



Cover: An F-35 Lightning Pilot, photo by Sgt Rachel Malthouse RAF

# Foreword

BY SIR SIMON BOLLAM



**The 2021 Integrated Review (IR) set out a vision in which our future armed forces will be more persistently engaged worldwide, equipped with integrated and modern high-tech capabilities. We have just launched our DE&S 2025 strategy, 'Delivering the edge through people, technology and innovation'. It's our response to the significant opportunities and challenges provided by the IR and one that builds heavily on our recent successes.**

Over the last five years we have gone through a major transformation programme to improve delivery of equipment and support to the frontline military operators. We have focused extensively on growing our people, tools and processes to achieve better programme delivery and performance. In my view, and those that I speak to, we have made significant progress towards building the foundations required of a modern professional delivery organisation. Of course, there is still much work to be done to improve, but I am confident we are now ready to deliver the further step-change in performance demanded by the IR. Our new strategy details how we will achieve it. It sets the course for

DE&S to be recognised leaders in the delivery of military equipment solutions for the information age.

Our strategy is built around five strategic priorities, which are described in more detail in this edition of Desider. We must increase the pace and agility we deliver to our clients, maximise the availability of our operational platforms and systems, and rapidly pull through new technology so provide our armed forces with an 'operational edge'. We must also remain focused on delivering financial and social value through the contracts we deliver and the way we operate. We will achieve these outcomes through greater use of digital solutions, both in the battlespace and our workplace. We will work ever closer with our industry and international partners, capitalising on the opportunities presented in the new Defence and Security Industrial Strategy (DSIS). And, importantly, we will continue to invest in the skills, capability and leadership of our people to ensure we have a diverse and professional workforce, empowered and equipped to deliver excellence. Our people are what makes this work.

I've been really pleased with the initial

feedback on our strategy, which has been overwhelmingly positive. In the coming weeks, we aim to make sure that everyone has a chance to understand what it means for them personally and translate the strategy into a plan. I encourage you to read it for yourself, to watch the supporting videos, or to follow us on social media to find out more. It falls to all of us to promote and drive our strategy in our everyday activities – but together, working with our partners, I'm confident we can ensure DE&S is fit for the future, delivering the edge for our armed forces. In the words of the MOD's new Permanent Secretary, David Williams, our DE&S strategy is now all about delivery, delivery, delivery.

## SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

## Krishna Dhanak, Director Strategy and Corporate Operations

### Talks to Desider about DE&S' identity, journey and future following the launch of the new DE&S strategy.

**On joining DE&S a year ago, I said that my first and biggest priority was to develop a strategy for DE&S. One that built on the successes of our internal transformation programme, but which also recognised that the environment in which we operate is changing rapidly.**

Since that time the Integrated Review (IR) and Defence Command Paper have been published, supported by a new Defence and Security Industrial Strategy (DSIS). Whether you have poured over the detail, or just read the headlines, you'll appreciate that the programme to build one of the most integrated, digital and agile armed forces in the world is ambitious and challenging. It's why this is such an exciting period for all of us who have a role in making that happen.

The IR calls for acquisition to be more agile and responsive to the changing nature of operations, pulling on technology. It also expects our capabilities to be more persistently engaged – to be routinely forward deployed around the globe, sometimes indefinitely, requiring us to think differently about support. We must deliver those solutions at pace to keep our armed forces ahead of their adversaries.

DSIS provides us with the means; a new strategic approach to the UK's defence and security industrial sectors. It includes a package

of legislative reform, policy changes and transformation that together aim to improve the speed and simplicity of procurement, provide more flexible approaches to the way we procure and support capability, and stimulate technology exploitation. It will ensure the UK continues to have a competitive, innovative and world-class defence industry that underpins our national security and drives prosperity and growth.

The DE&S 2025 strategy is our response. We listened to what our clients and partners wanted from us in the future, and the areas that our people needed us to focus on. There was a clear appetite for something new; for DE&S to leverage its role as a professional delivery organisation to lead the way in supporting wider Defence to deliver IR and DSIS. The core ideas were developed with our leadership community and subject matter leads; specialists who know their area of the business the best. We tested our approach as we went along with our strategy challenge group – a cross-section of our passionate people who offered invaluable diversity of thought and constructive feedback. It was a federated, one team effort, and I'm grateful to everyone who spared their time to contribute.

While the strategy is built around five distinct priorities, they are intrinsically linked. To deliver

equipment solutions at pace, while maximising value in our products and the way we operate, requires us to truly embrace digital solutions. We need to be thinking how we can use new technology to reduce the time and cost it takes to field capability, for example, in the use of digital trials and evaluation, through to monitoring and predicting the operational performance of our deployed systems. Delivering the right solutions means they must be able to talk to each other – integrated and safe and secure by design.

We must all be digitally savvy to transform the way we work, speeding up our processes and reducing bureaucracy. And we can't do this alone – we are dependent on the professionalism and commitment of our people and partners, to bring this together through the right skills, drive and innovation.

And then there's that well known saying that people like to share with me – culture eats strategy for breakfast. And it's true; no matter how strong your strategic plan, it's the people and culture who will make the difference in making it happen.

The launch of the DE&S 2025 strategy marks the end of the start – it's now down to all of us to play our role in delivering it.

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FEATURE

# DE&S 2025

## DELIVERING THE EDGE THROUGH PEOPLE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

The DE&S strategy sets out our vision for 2025 - to be recognised leaders in the delivery of military equipment solutions for the information age.

It ensures we can rise to the challenges set out in the Integrated Review, and seize the opportunities presented in the Defence Command Paper and Defence and Security Industrial Strategy. Our strategy provides a roadmap for our organisation over the next four years so that we can deliver safe, secure and innovative solutions at greater pace. We will achieve this through our five strategic priorities:



### PACE AND AGILITY FOR OUR CLIENTS

We will maximise the availability of our operational platforms and systems by implementing optimised support solutions. These will blend state-of-the-art processes with the increased exploitation of data, modelling and artificial intelligence. We will improve our ability to deliver performance and solutions at pace, responding faster to emerging priorities. Working ever more closely with our clients we will look for opportunities to pull through new technology and software releases quicker, improve the integration of capabilities across domains, and bring professional expertise and innovation in procurement and support.

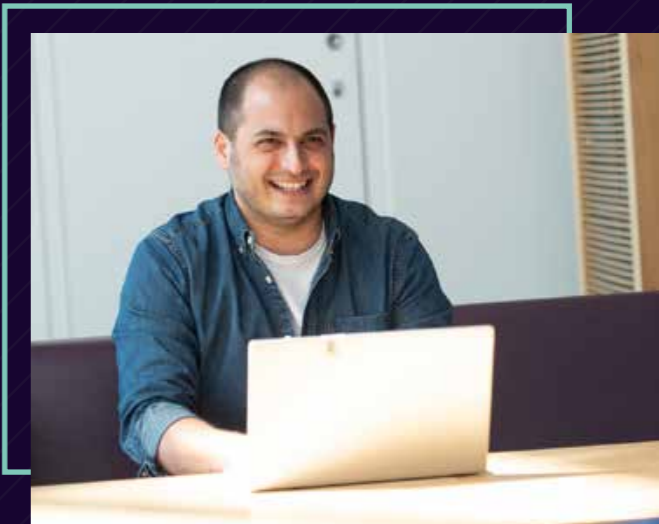
### VALUE TO THE TAXPAYER AND SOCIETY

We will be a more efficient and effective organisation, making our investments go further and providing a positive impact to Defence and more widely. From helping the Government “build back better” following the Covid-19 pandemic, to promoting jobs, prosperity and exports, we will play an important role in supporting national priorities. We will increase our focus on achieving carbon Net Zero by 2040 in the way we operate and on our estate. We will also reduce the carbon emissions of the equipment capabilities we deliver by reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and promoting more sustainable solutions.



### DELIVERY THROUGH PEOPLE

Our people are critical to our successes. We are dependent on their commitment and professionalism. We will empower our people to help us achieve our mission, nurturing the diversity of skills and experience we need to solve our toughest challenges. We will increase opportunities for learning and development, invest in our leaders and new technologies for smarter working, and deliver our Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Strategy. This will help us create and sustain a culture which will be critical to our success.



### ACCELERATED DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

Digital technology is increasingly central to the capabilities we deliver. We will therefore drive digital solutions for business and battlespace advantage. While our traditional focus on large platforms remains critical, we will also embrace new ways of integrating systems and data across the battlespace. We will pool expertise in cross-cutting specialisms and improve the pull-through of new and emerging technologies into our procurement and support solutions. Advanced business tools, automation and a digitally savvy workforce will transform the way we support capabilities and operate our organisation.



### DELIVERY THROUGH PARTNERS

Our achievements are shared with our partners – in industry and internationally. We will attract and work at pace with diverse, resilient and innovative suppliers and partners. We will support the implementation of the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy, including adopting a more flexible approach to acquisition based on understanding the markets, the technologies, national security requirements and the prosperity opportunities. We will better understand the supply chains of our critical and priority programmes to ensure that they remain secure. We will work together to protect our equipment and capabilities, and the sensitive information and technology that underpin them.



Read more about the DE&S strategy here: [des.mod.uk/des-launches-new-strategy](https://des.mod.uk/des-launches-new-strategy)

## FEATURE

# Delivering innovative capabilities

**Minister for Defence Procurement Jeremy Quin speaks to Desider following the Integrated Review and the accompanying Command Paper that sets out the rapidly-evolving threats facing the UK.**

**We need to build a modernised defence which enables the UK armed forces to outpace our adversaries and retain their adaptive edge. Our military capabilities will need to be integrated across domains, with full use made of new and emerging technologies. As the MOD's largest professional delivery organisation, DE&S has a critical role in delivering the innovative capabilities our armed forces' need – at a pace which allows them to stay ahead.**

A modernised defence will require a shift in thinking away from the focused traditional platforms of ships, tanks and aircraft to systems of sensors, effectors and deciders. Solutions must keep pace with rapid technology change – embracing new information-centric technologies, plugging into a digital backbone and being designed for the upgrades of the future. Integration across multiple military requirements and organisational boundaries will be essential. In the workplace, digital automation is becoming the norm and AI is already enabling faster and more effective decision-making.

To remain at the cutting edge and introduce these new technologies at pace, our ways of working are being reformed. In the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy (DSIS) we have set out an important framework, which will also ensure our supply chains are secure and resilient, and that we can produce critical systems onshore.

DSIS also sets out other key priorities. DE&S oversees a spend of £10-billion each year through the contracts it awards and manages. It is essential that this is used to best effect to generate a positive impact to the national economy, taxpayer and society through a more flexible and nuanced approach to competitions. We have a vital role to play in providing critical capabilities and supporting our economy, and in doing so spreading prosperity across the whole UK as well as improving skills and technology.

UK capabilities achieve significant export success and we are viewed as a partner of choice. We will continue to co-operate with our allies and partners on the development of capabilities, where our needs align. We will improve and diversify our international partnerships and enable industrial co-operation.

Leading organisations look to their people to deliver enterprise-wide change at this scale and pace. The key to DE&S' success is, without doubt, the dedication and professionalism of its people, supported by a strong leadership and culture. This context sets the bar even higher, and I look forward to working with DE&S to achieve it.

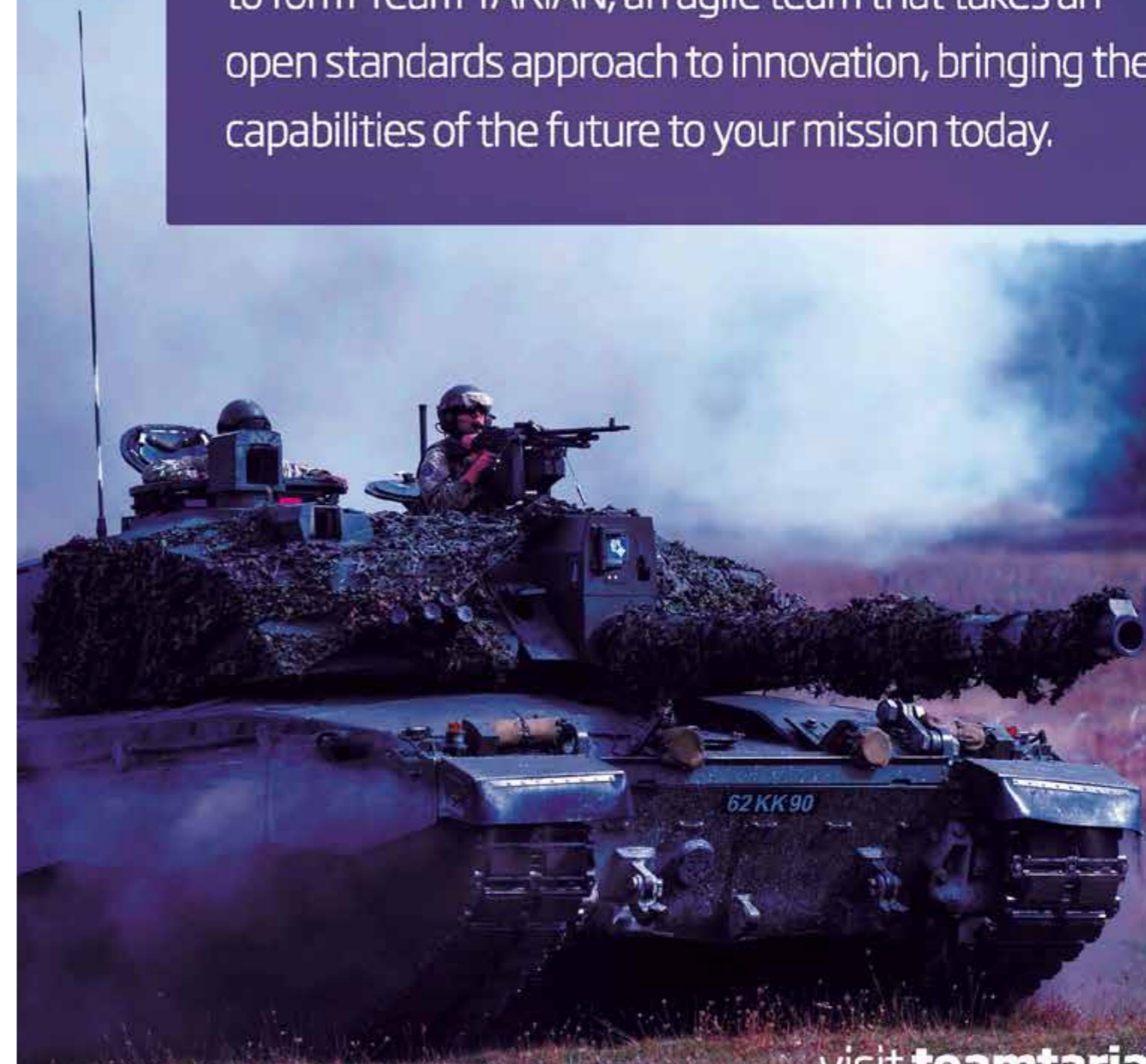


Photo by Dave Jenkins



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## FEATURE

# Modernising defence capabilities

The recently published Integrated Review (IR) and Defence and Security Industrial Strategy (DSIS) has set out the Government's current assessment of major trends that will shape the national security and international environment for the next decade.

Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, Air Marshal Richard Knighton, and DSIS Director, Damian Parmenter, talk to Desider about DE&S' pivotal role in modernising defence capabilities.

## Air Marshall Richard Knighton

The recent investment in defence is a significant acknowledgement of the contribution our world-class armed forces make to our security, economy and renewed global ambition. The expertise of DE&S in equipping and supporting our armed forces – and managing the vast range of complex programmes that are needed to operate effectively – is central to fulfilling the ambitions of the Integrated Review.

We know that the rapid exploitation of new technology by our adversaries is challenging the operational advantage that we have enjoyed for many years. To stay ahead we need to adapt faster, integrate our actions, and put new capabilities into the hands of our armed forces more quickly. A key focus for all of defence is to make the acquisition process more agile and increase the speed of delivery. DE&S must ensure it can deliver future capabilities quickly and efficiently through greater use of technology.

Continuing to think hard about the way we acquire equipment, and how we work with our industry partners to ensure we are exploiting the very best for our armed forces will also be key to success.

There is a significant responsibility on DE&S to deliver world-leading equipment and support to our service people. I am confident that DE&S is absolutely best placed to ensure that the UK continues to have competitive, innovative and world-class defence capability.



## Director DSIS - Damian Parmenter

To protect Defence's technologies in the face of evolving threats requires a new industrial approach. One built on strategic partnerships with industry in the segments most important to our national security. DSIS ensures that the UK will continue to have competitive, innovative and world-class defence and security industries which drive investment and prosperity.

DSIS increases cross-Government focus on the security of supply, provides longer-term plans in specific segments, and offers greater support to exports. It allows for a more flexible and nuanced approach to competition, rather than one based exclusively on value for money. It promotes greater pull-through of technology and sets priorities for focused international collaboration.

As the MOD's largest professional delivery organisation, DE&S has a leading role in bringing DSIS to life. We must all work closely, across organisational boundaries in Defence and with our partners, to ensure a more structured approach to the industrial capability that is critical to our strategic and operational needs. DE&S will be at the forefront of understanding the markets, technologies and prosperity opportunities, and tapping into these through new stronger relationships and commercial arrangements.

DSIS provides greater flexibility in determining the right acquisition and commercial strategies to deliver the strategic industrial capabilities we need over the long term. I look forward to working with you to deliver it.

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# CHALLENGER 3

**DE&S has secured an £800-million contract to deliver Europe's most lethal tank to the British Army and support around 650 UK jobs.**

The British Army will receive a fleet of 148 Challenger 3 main battle tanks as part of an £800-million contract placed by DE&S with Rheinmetall BAE Systems Land (RBSL).

Based in Telford, the contract will create 200 jobs at RBSL, including 130 engineers and 70 technicians, with a further 450 jobs to be established throughout the wider supply chain across the West Midlands, Glasgow, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Isle of Wight.

The new tank will carry additional high-velocity ammunition able to travel at faster speeds with an increased range. Ammunition will also be programmed digitally from a new turret with a 120mm smoothbore gun. This cutting-edge tank will also feature an upgraded engine with a new cooling system and suspension to improve accuracy when firing in transit.

A new automatic target detection and tracking system will be used to identify threats, while new thermal long-range cameras will be fitted as part of a day/night image system.

Director Land Equipment for DE&S, Major General Darren Crook, said: "This is a significant step forward for defence and UK industry as we continue to develop and modernise our fleet of land vehicles and I am looking forward to working closely with our industry partners to deliver the very best capabilities we can for the British Army."

As part of the Army's commitments to adapt to meet future threats, Challenger 3 will be fully digitalised, integrating information from all domains while being able to travel up to 60mph. The Challenger 3 tank is being developed to replace the current Challenger 2, which has been in service since 1998. Full Operating Capability is planned for 2030, with initial operating capability expected by 2027.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "This represents a huge shift in the modernisation of our land forces through the increased lethality of Challenger 3. This pioneering new technology allows us to deliver immense warfighting capabilities in battlespaces filled with a range of enemy threats."

"The £800m investment will also create hundreds of highly skilled jobs across the country, ensuring our soldiers benefit from the very best of British engineering."

Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Chris Tickell CBE, said: "The announcement of the Integrated Review has provided us with a huge amount of opportunity and left the Army in a good place. The integration of Challenger 3 is key to ensure our success and integration in the land domain, ensuring that we meet our international commitments and continue to protect the nation."

As outlined in the recent Defence Command Paper, the Army will be more deployable and better protected in the face of our adversaries. The announcement of Challenger 3 reaffirms the MOD's commitment to invest £3-billion into Army equipment over the next decade, delivering a modernised, adaptable and expeditionary fighting force.

*Photo by M Jacob*

## SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

# Delivering Social Value in defence

DE&S Director General Commercial, Morag Stuart, talks to Desider about why social value is now a key part to the DE&S tendering process.

**DE&S and the MOD have a duty to be concerned with the social, economic and environmental impact its business decisions have on current and future generations.**

From the 1st of June 2021, DE&S will be requiring industry to demonstrate the 'social value' that will be added if their bid for a contract is accepted. But what does this term actually mean, why is it important and how will it affect the way DE&S operates?

While our focus is – and must remain on – delivering for the armed forces, we must do so while addressing the needs of our communities and the environment we live in.

Last year the Cabinet Office launched the Social Value Model to help government procurement deliver these benefits through the contracts that DE&S award.

The Social Value Model focuses on five themes: COVID-19 recovery, tackling economic inequality, fighting climate change, equal opportunity and wellbeing.

The aim of the new measure is to ensure all government procurement contributes to government priorities to boost growth and productivity, help our communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and tackle climate change.

Going forward DE&S will be allocating a minimum of 10% of the tender evaluation weighting to key social value criteria within the themes, like reducing waste and driving supply chain diversity. In turn, this approach means our procurement will have a significantly positive impact on individuals, communities and the environment.

The model will assist recovery from COVID-19 by promoting new jobs, encouraging economic prosperity, tackling climate change and levelling up the UK. It will bring a consistent



approach to identifying and delivering social value in our procurements and those across all of central government. A positive by-product of this is that industry will be encouraged to develop low carbon solutions that improve our defence capabilities and reduce support costs. Our industry partners can therefore expect social value to feature in discussions with both customers and suppliers.

DE&S now has the responsibility to put social value at the centre of procurement and project delivery. I know this is an opportunity that our clients and our partners across industry will embrace along with all of us at DE&S.

**While our focus is – and must remain on – delivering for the armed forces, we must do so while addressing the needs of our communities and the environment we live in.**

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## NEWS

# Modernising the Chinook fleet

**A £1.4-billion programme to start modernising the UK's Chinook fleet over the next decade has been agreed with the US Government.**

The deal negotiated by DE&S will see British forces benefit from 14 of the latest iconic heavy-lift helicopters.

The order for the new aircraft signals the commitment made in the recent Defence Command Paper to invest more than £85-billion on military equipment over the next four years to reform and renew our armed forces.

Proven in battle and operated in every major conflict since the Falklands War, the Chinook is a highly-versatile aircraft. It can operate in a diverse range of environments, from the desert to the Arctic, and transport up to 55 personnel or ten tonnes of cargo.

With a top speed of 300kph, the new H-47(ER) will have a range of new capabilities, including an advanced digital cockpit, a modernised airframe to increase stability and improve survivability, and a digital automatic flight control system to allow pilots to hover in areas of limited visibility.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: "From assisting emergency repairs to UK flood defences, providing vital logistics support during COVID-19 to its warfighting role on Afghan battlefields, the Chinook has been the workhorse of the Armed Forces for over 40 years.

"The cutting edge H-47 (ER) will be at the forefront of our specialist requirements in dealing with threats and logistic support. Our £1.4-billion investment will mean we will be one of very few air forces with this capability."

The 14 aircraft will be purchased from the US via a Foreign Military Sale and the new helicopters will be based at RAF Odiham, the home of the Chinook fleet.

DE&S Head of Helicopters 3, Air Commodore Paul Rose, said: "This announcement signifies a fantastic achievement on the part of DE&S and our colleagues across the Ministry of Defence, United States Government and Department of Defense, who have worked together to deliver this important element of the Chinook Capability Sustainment Programme.

"We look forward to further developing the capabilities of the Chinook Force, giving our customer the best possible equipment to meet their needs."

In addition to traditional warfighting roles, the Chinook supports a wide variety of specialist tasks, including the Military Aid to the Civil Authorities.

Most recently, it was part of the Joint Helicopter Aviation Task Force which transported NHS paramedics, equipment and patients during peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduced into service in 1981, the 40th anniversary of the first Chinook was recently celebrated with a new commemorative colour scheme. The oldest of the fleet will be retired, enabling investment in the new aircraft to modernise the UK's heavy-lift capability.

「We look forward to further developing the capabilities of the Chinook Force, giving our customer the best possible equipment to meet their needs.」



NEWS

# News in Brief



## Fleet Solid Support competition launched

**The competition to build three new Fleet Solid Support (FSS) ships to provide vital support to Royal Navy operations across the world has now been launched.**

These crucial Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels will provide munitions, food, stores and provisions to support carrier and amphibious based Task Groups at sea.

Building on the commitment made in the recent Defence Command Paper to create a shipbuilding renaissance, the DE&S-managed competition will help revitalise British shipbuilding by requiring a significant proportion of the build and assembly work to be carried out in the UK.

Designed to challenge the shipbuilding industry, DE&S has issued the contract notice inviting companies to register an interest in participating in the tender for the design and build of the ships, which will incorporate next-generation technology.

Contracts will allow potential suppliers to develop designs and delivery plans, with a particular focus on providing UK social value through, for example, supply chain development, the creation of new jobs and skills, and contributions to carbon emission reduction targets, as outlined in the new Defence and Security Industrial Strategy.

The manufacture contract award is expected to be made within two years, following approvals.

## Sixth RAF Poseidon named Guernsey's Reply

**The UK's sixth Poseidon MRA Mk1 Maritime Patrol Aircraft will be known as 'Guernsey's Reply' to honour the close bond between 201 Squadron, the island of Guernsey and Flight Lieutenant Herbert Machon OBE.**

Procured by DE&S, 'Guernsey's Reply' is undergoing its final checks at the Boeing factory in Seattle before joining the growing fleet. The first five Poseidon aircraft have been named Pride of Moray, City of Elgin, Terence Bulloch DSO DFC, Spirit of Reykjavik and Fulmar. The RAF Poseidon fleet, which will eventually total nine aircraft, is already providing cutting-edge maritime patrol capabilities working side-by-side with the Royal Navy to secure the seas around the UK and abroad.

## Type 31 'Inspiration class' frigates named

**The names of the Royal Navy's new Type-31 frigates have recently been announced by the First Sea Lord, Admiral Tony Radakin.**

Speaking at the recent Sea Power Conference, the First Sea Lord confirmed that the five ships will be named Her Majesty's Ship(s) Venturer, Active, Formidable, Bulldog and Campbeltown.

The quintet of vessels will be known as the 'INSPIRATION CLASS' and represent the Royal Navy's future vision while drawing on the legacy of former illustrious warships and submarines.

Following their names being announced, Director Navy Acquisition and Senior Responsible Owner for Type 31, Rear Admiral Paul Marshall, said:

"The selection of the inspiration class and the stories behind their names really embodies global deployment, courage, adaptability and innovation.

"I'm absolutely delighted that through Type 31 we're reinvigorating new and old partnerships around the globe with international navies and partners. This continuous drumbeat of ships for the Royal Navy meets the levels of aspiration for the nation, our Royal Navy and also the expectations of our international partners around the world.

"As our carrier strike group sets sail on its maiden deployment, I think Type 31 and the ship building strategy will become part of its story."

## Carrier Strike Group sets sail on maiden deployment

**Nine ships, 32 aircraft, and 3,700 personnel have set sail on the UK Carrier Strike Group's maiden operational deployment.**

Britain's new flagship aircraft carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth, will lead six Royal Navy ships, a Royal Navy submarine, a US Navy destroyer and a frigate from the Netherlands in the largest concentration of maritime and air power to leave the UK in a generation.

On the inaugural deployment, DE&S Director General Ships, Vice Admiral Chris Garner, said: "The Carrier Strike Group setting sail has brought years of planning and execution from the Royal Navy and our teams in DE&S to plan this deployment.

"DE&S has been fundamentally responsible for supporting Navy Command to make sure the ships are materially ready to deploy and will be physically and logistically sustained and supported throughout the totality of their deployment.

"It's been a combined effort between DE&S, Navy Command and industry to ensure we are and will be able to mount this deployment and those of the future. My teams absolutely understand the importance of supporting and sustaining the CSG21 deployment and are wishing the Carrier Strike Group every success."

As outlined in the recently-published Defence Command Paper, the Carrier Strike Group demonstrates the UK's commitment to be ready to confront future threats alongside international partners and help seize new opportunities for Global Britain.



## DE&S and NHS team up for new mentoring initiative

**DE&S and North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT) have teamed up to launch a new mentoring initiative to share experience, knowledge and networks between the two organisations.**

The initiative builds on DE&S' successful partnership with NBT that was strengthened during the fast-paced build of the NHS Nightingale Hospital Bristol as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative aims to harness the power of mentoring alongside all the added benefits of the mentor and mentee being from different organisations.

The six-month mentorship scheme has paired project management staff from DE&S and NBT with senior leaders from their partner organisation.

"DE&S and the NHS are unique organisations that exist in complex worlds," explains Tim Whittlestone, Deputy Medical Director, North Bristol NHS Trust. "Let's share our experience to create resilient and powerful managers."

Mark Geoghegan, one of the DE&S mentors on the scheme and Project Management Head of Function, said: "As a mentor there is no greater privilege than being able to support someone through their career - the highs and lows to the tricky and the straightforward. I have been blessed with having mentors and role models who have supported me in my own development, so I cannot overestimate the significant impact of having had someone there for me, which has allowed me to grow and access a vital fresh perspective."

The intention over time is to extend the initiative to more colleagues and other legacy partners.



## NEWS

# Revolutionising UK military robotics



Photo by Jack Eckersley

**The Expeditionary Robotics Centre of Expertise (ERCoE) has recently been launched by DE&S in collaboration with the British Army.**

Development of innovative robotic equipment that will give the UK military an operational advantage will be accelerated by this specialist organisation.

The ERCoE will bring together robotics and autonomous systems experts from across defence, government, academia and industry – aligning with DE&S' strategy to deliver the edge through people, technology and innovation.

Adopting a collaborative and agile-by-design approach, ERCoE will operate from MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol and from the Army BattleLab in Dorset, with an innovative technology project being announced in August 2020.

The ERCoE will act as a focal point for current innovative projects as well as assessing unexplored, high-risk but rapidly-maturing technologies.

Projects to be investigated at the outset include Remote Platoon Vehicles, nano Unmanned Air Systems, autonomous resupply of forward troops and how defence forms Human Machine Teams.

Open access to information and fresh ideas will ensure defence can exploit the benefits this key disruptive technology could present, while also facilitating the rapid growth of expertise in this area.

The centre sits under the Future Capability Group (FCG) at DE&S, which has a direct line to market, ensuring ideas can be rapidly developed.

FCG Head James Gavin said: "The CoE concept was born out of the need and opportunity to bring together separate projects and people into single groupings to be more efficient and effective.

"Being more effective means a razor-sharp focus on exploitation and operational advantage as the goal.

"Co-teaming between the Army and DE&S will put the customer at the heart of what we do, exploring and delivering iteratively under an 'agile by default' mindset."

DE&S personnel will work alongside industry experts at the Army BattleLab within the Defence Innovation Centre, allowing new ideas and concepts to be quickly developed and put into practice.

The ERCoE has been jointly launched with Future Force Development in Army HQ and is aligned to their Robotics and Autonomous Systems (RAS) Strategy.

The hub will initially focus on projects for the British Army, but there is optimism that as the group expands and matures, it will become a central hub of advice for expeditionary robotics across Defence.

Lt Col Iain Lamont, SO1 Robotics and Autonomous Systems at the British Army, said:

**The Army's Future Force Development team are delighted to be entering into a fast-paced and exciting new partnership with the ERCoE.**

"The Army's Future Force Development team are delighted to be entering into a fast-paced and exciting new partnership with the ERCoE. "Driven by the Army's RAS Strategy, this new agile approach will enable the delivery of several exciting new developments and ensure game-changing technology enters into service as early as possible as we look to accelerate Army transformation."

The ERCoE launch is a pathfinder within the recently launched DE&S strategy 2025 and will pave the way for future delivery teams to maximise advantage from this novel capability.

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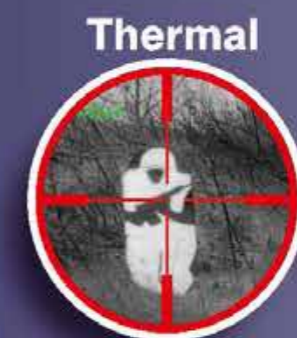
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## NEWS

# DE&S awards contract to deliver high-tech data system for RAF and Royal Navy

**DE&S has awarded a £47-million contract for a high-tech data system that will provide UK defence platforms with improved situational awareness and key operational information.**

The five-year support contract with Thales will deliver the Multi Domain Mission Support System (MD MSS) to the RAF and Royal Navy. The system will be used to exploit operational information that is crucial to dominating the battlespace.

The new contract will deliver full capability support, obsolescence management and a new online training solution. Approximately 150 jobs will be secured at Thales in the UK, including a team of 40 software engineers at the company's Templecombe facility in Somerset.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said: "This £47-million investment will enhance the MD MSS capability and offer further protection across our air and maritime platforms, exploiting data to provide a battle-winning advantage."

"The competition reaffirms our dedication to invest in shipbuilding and support jobs across the UK maritime industry."

As set out in the new DE&S strategy, new capabilities such as MD MSS will be used to 'build a modernised defence which enables the

UK's Armed Forces to outpace our adversaries and retain their adaptive edge'.

Delivering critical information, at speed, to aircrew and ground-based planners, MD MSS is used by a wide variety of force elements in different operational situations.

For the RAF, this includes F-35B Lightning II, Poseidon, Typhoon, Voyager and Chinook among others. In the maritime sphere, MD MSS can also be used onboard the Royal Navy's new aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales, to support air operations by the Carrier Strike Group.

MD MSS has the potential to be used by the UK's next generation platforms including the Future Combat Air System.

DE&S Director Air Support, Richard Murray said: "The signing of this support contract represents an important milestone for data sharing capability across the UK's air and maritime platforms. It's also the culmination of many months of hard work from the air platform systems team and I am proud of their efforts."

The MD MSS solution has been in service since 1986 and was originally used to provide operational support and post flight analysis of mission data for the Nimrod Maritime Patrol Aircraft. Since then, the capability has advanced

beyond recognition and can now be used by more platforms than ever before.

The system can be rapidly exploited and assists effective decision making at the operational and tactical level, through improved situational awareness and communications interoperability. It can process, transmit, receive and manipulate data from multiple sources in multiple locations. The system also uses a deployable satellite system to provide mission support, briefing, debriefing and post flight analysis for numerous aircraft types and frontline operations.

Alex Cresswell, CEO and Chairman, Thales UK, said: "We are delighted to be continuing our strong relationship with the RAF and we are very proud that MD MSS continues to be the RAF's mission system of choice for its air platforms."

"No other MOD digital solution provides the same functionality and information sources, which spans mission planning and intelligence in an end-to-end all-encompassing solution."

MD MSS was previously known as Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance Mission Support System (ISTAR MSS).

*Photo by Cpl Lee Matthews*



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Desider is the monthly corporate magazine for DE&S. It is aimed at readers across the wider MOD, armed forces and defence industry. It covers the work of people at DE&S and its partners, and other corporate news and information.



**DESIDER**

## NEWS

# Boxer manufacturing plant opened by Minister for Defence Procurement

**Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin, recently opened a new manufacturing plant in the North-West of England which will play a significant role in building the British Army's latest armoured vehicle – the Boxer.**

During his visit to WFEL in Stockport, Mr Quin saw the newly-built facility which will fabricate the armoured hulls and assemble the finished vehicles for delivery under a contract with DE&S.

Speaking at the event, Mr Quin said: "Our Boxer programme is playing a significant role in boosting prosperity, supporting skills, protecting over 1,000 jobs across the North-East, West Midlands, central Scotland, Wales and throughout the UK wider supply chain.

"This new production line is creating 120 new jobs at WFEL, further cementing our investment in UK innovation and expertise."

The UK decided to re-join the Boxer programme in 2018 and since then has committed £2.8-billion to deliver more than 500 vehicles to the British Army. They will be made up of four variants: an infantry carrier, a specialist carrier, a command vehicle and an ambulance.

While the initial contract was awarded to ARTEC - a joint venture between KMW and another German company Rheinmetall - much of the work will be carried out by WFEL in Stockport and RBSL, based in Telford, respectively.

The Boxer programme aims to source 60% by value of the contract from within the UK supply chain to protect engineering and manufacturing skills, and make sure the vehicles remain supported through their 30-year operational life.

As part of its development of a new UK supply chain roll-out programme for producing the Boxer vehicles, WFEL recently announced it has awarded a £12-million contract with Bath-based company Horstman to make 250 angular gearboxes and control units for the vehicles. It also revealed it has already received the first delivery of machined component parts from Lancashire-based BCW Manufacturing Group, which is also part of the supply chain.

Our Boxer programme is playing a significant role in boosting prosperity, supporting skills, protecting over 1,000 jobs across the North East, West Midlands, central Scotland, Wales, and throughout the UK wider supply chain.



## PEOPLE

# Major Jim Allen

**Job title**

DE&S Artillery Systems team MFP Project Manager and Military Co-Responder (MCR) for South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) as a Military Emergency Care Assistant (ECA)

**What does your role for SCAS involve?**

I've been a MCR for SCAS since February 2018. In that role, I am trained as a first on scene medic and I respond to emergency and life threatening 999 and 111 calls in a blue lit emergency response car to provide immediate and sometimes lifesaving medical intervention, prior to the arrival of an ambulance. There are approximately 180 tri-service MCRs volunteering for SCAS across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Hampshire split across nine teams. MCR's volunteer outside of their military day job and are not normally military medics by trade. My serving wife and I run the team based in Army HQ.

As the COVID-19 pandemic struck, my wife and I identified the significant capacity increase that the MCR cohort could provide to SCAS as they faced unprecedented pressures. We mobilised 80 personnel as part of Op RESCRIPT, deploying as dispatchers, PPE distributors, non-emergency patient transporters and frontline Military ECAs.

After additional medical and emergency driver training, I deployed to Bracknell Ambulance Station as a Military ECA and was crewed with a Paramedic on a frontline ambulance, responding to the full range of medical emergencies. I attended a huge array of calls: concern for personnel welfare, non-injury falls, trauma, stroke, anaphylaxis, maternity, heart attacks, cardiac arrests, drug overdoses, stabbing, suicide, mental health, COVID-19 and RTCs ranging in age from premature babies to 100 year olds. I've completed 1,300 frontline hours on Op RESCRIPT and volunteering since the pandemic started, treating over 800 patients.

**What do you most enjoy about your job?**

Every call is a fresh challenge, every patient and situation is different – if someone dials 999, they need help and you need to deliver that under pressure providing medical interventions that are sometimes lifesaving. I also feel that we should contribute to and be invested in the communities in which we live and this is a means to do that.

**What is your greatest accomplishment to date?**

Alongside my serving wife, pulling together a tri-service team to be mobilised, trained and deployed during the COVID-19 pandemic that provided 27,000 hours of critical support to the ambulance service. This included 12,000 hours on frontline ambulances, treating 7,600 patients.

**What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?**

Fresh air and walking our crazy dalmatians.

**What might surprise people about you?**

I've a phobia of needles!

**What's the best advice you've ever been given?**

Be confident in your own abilities but understand when you need to be humble and try and identify and understand the perspective of others.

**Editor:**

Louisa Keefe  
07971 013054  
louisa.keefe101@mod.gov.uk

**Contributors:**

Daniel Evans, Lowri Jones, Tom Morris,  
Paul McLennan and Hannah Swingler

**Design and Photography:**

Katherine Williams, Michael Tanner,  
Hannah Bone, Jack Eckersley,  
Charlie Perham, Andrew Linnett  
and Geraint Vaughan

**Distribution Manager:**

Dick Naughton  
0117 9134342  
dick.Naughton501@mod.gov.uk

**Advertising Manager:**

Edwin Rodrigues  
07482 571535  
edwin.rodrigues@noahsarkmedia.co.uk



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