

News story: HMS Sheffield revealed as new warship

Built on centuries of history, the state-of-the-art submarine hunter will be the fourth ship to carry the name, and will be Britain's fifth state-of-the-art Type 26 frigate.

The Defence Minister announced the news at Chesterfield Special Cylinders in Sheffield, a key supplier to the multi-billion-pound Type 26 programme. The company makes high pressure gas storage systems for the ships.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

HMS Sheffield will be at the forefront of our world leading Royal Navy for decades to come, providing cutting edge protection for our aircraft carriers and nuclear deterrent, and offering unrivalled capability at sea.

From north to south, these ships are truly a national endeavour, built on centuries of British expertise and supporting thousands of businesses like Chesterfield Special Cylinders across the UK.

Defence boosts the economy of Yorkshire and the Humber economy by £232million every year and it's only right the region's significant contribution to our national security is recognised by the naming of HMS Sheffield.

The fourth HMS Sheffield will be built on more than 80 years of proud naval history, with the first ship carrying her name in 1935. She played a vital role in Scandinavia during the Second World War and assisted with the evacuation of Andalsnes in 1940. She also took part in the first major Allied landing of the war in North Africa during Operation 'Torch', and patrolled waters from the Mediterranean to the Arctic. The second HMS Sheffield, a Type 42 destroyer, was lost during the Falklands War.

The naming of HMS Sheffield, the fifth ship in the city-class of Type 26 frigates, came as Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson also announced the sixth ship would be called HMS Newcastle during a visit to the Tyne today.

The two ships will join HMS Glasgow, HMS Belfast, HMS Cardiff, HMS Birmingham and HMS London. The final name has yet to be announced.

All of the Type 26 frigates will be built on the Clyde, supported by suppliers across the country and securing decades of work for more than 4,000 people. The first three ships have already been ordered for £3.7bn.

Chesterfield Special Cylinders is just one of thousands of small and medium-sized enterprises in the supply chain delivering essential services to the UK

defence sector. It is a world-leading designer and manufacturer of safety-critical high pressure gas storage systems. Its bespoke products are deployed in the Type 26 frigate for breathing air storage, safety and backup systems, fresh water and power systems.

Chesterfield Special Cylinders' managing director, Mick Pinder, said:

Chesterfield Special Cylinders has been a strategic supplier to the Royal Navy for over 100 years. Our high-pressure gas storage systems are in use across many platforms, from submarines to surface ships.

Our reputation for excellence in the design, manufacture and maintenance of safety-critical naval systems has seen our customer base grow in recent years to now include almost every NATO-friendly overseas navy, though the Royal Navy remains a prime partner.

It is an honour to host the Minister for Defence Procurement and for our manufacturing site to be the location for this important announcement.

Last year the MOD injected nearly £2.5bn into small and medium businesses. The visit by the Defence Minister came ahead of Small Business Saturday on 01 December, an opportunity for defence to thank the workforce behind many SMEs.

The news also came as the Defence Secretary announced he will retain three of the Royal Navy's patrol ships to bolster Britain's fishery protection capability.

[Press release: Minister calls on businesses to reveal how many disabled staff they employ](#)

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Sarah Newton has urged large employers to build more inclusive workforces.

[Press release: Minister calls on businesses to reveal how many disabled staff they employ](#)

Large companies should reveal the numbers of disabled people they employ, the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Sarah Newton urged today as part of a drive to build a more inclusive society.

With around a fifth of the working age population living with a disability or health condition, the government has launched a [new framework](#) to encourage businesses to report how many of their staff have a disability or health condition.

The voluntary framework, created in partnership with employers and charities, will also call on businesses to set out how they are currently supporting their disabled employees.

This comes as Transparency is confirmed as the 10,000th business to sign up to the flagship [Disability Confident](#) scheme, which marks its second anniversary this month. The scheme focuses on the role employers play in ensuring disabled people are recruited, retained and supported in their careers.

The latest employment figures show more than half of disabled people are now in work, with almost a million more disabled people in the workplace over the last 5 years.

This afternoon the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Sarah Newton hosted a roundtable at Downing Street with leading businesses, including Barclays, Channel 4 and KPMG, and disabled employees to discuss accessible employment and what more companies can do to build inclusive workforces.

The Prime Minister Theresa May said:

I am committed to creating a society where we empower disabled people, celebrate their talents, and enable them to achieve their hopes for the future.

And we've taken steps in the right direction with almost a million more disabled people in work over the last 5 years, and 10,000 businesses having signed up to the Disability Confident scheme.

But the disability employment gap is still too wide. I call on employers in every sector to take an honest look at how many disabled people they employ.

I ask them to look at the support they are offering and how accessible their workplaces are so everyone can be given the chance to reach their full potential at work.

Alongside this, the Access to Work scheme already in place helps to pay for support in the workplace to ensure someone's disability or health condition doesn't hold them back – providing up to £57,200 per person per year.

The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work has confirmed 19 projects will receive a share of the £3.9 million Work and Health Challenge Fund to support disabled people and people with mental health conditions. The successful projects will enable people to stay in work by helping them to manage their conditions themselves and making it easier to access advice and support about what jobs they are most suited to.

The Access to Work scheme and the Work and Health Challenge Fund are the latest in a series of government measures which form part of a 10-year strategy to get one million more disabled people in work by 2027.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Sarah Newton said:

Employers across the country this month have joined us in celebrating and promoting inclusive workforces as we mark Disability Confident's anniversary – and embraced the hashtag #IAmConfident to empower people to talk openly about a disability or health condition.

Our voluntary reporting framework builds on our longstanding commitment to companies to help them in supporting their staff at all levels to create more inclusive workforces as we set out to achieve our ambition of one million more disabled people in work by 2027.

Welcoming the announcement, Scope Director of Policy and Research Anna Bird said:

This is a watershed moment – we will only be able to tackle disability unemployment if we understand the scale of the problem.

We frequently hear from disabled people about difficulties they face – from negative attitudes and inaccessible recruitment processes, to inflexible workplaces and difficulties getting adjustments.

Data on disability is crucial for employers to understand what action they need to take to recruit and retain disabled people.

The government must ensure that this information shapes future approaches to increasing disability employment. This will be vital in realising the ambition to get one million more disabled people into work by 2027.

The [voluntary reporting framework](#) has been developed in partnership with a

range of leading employers, partners and supported by the Inclusive Economy Partnership.

Disability Confident, in collaboration with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, has published a [good practice guide](#) for managers to support disabled staff and those with mental health conditions. This user-friendly guide will support employers to voluntarily report their disability employment numbers and practices, and to give direction to those who intend to in the future.

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Speech: PM statement on EU negotiations: 22 November 2018

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to update the House on our negotiations to leave the European Union.

Last week I set out the details of the draft Withdrawal Agreement which will ensure our smooth and orderly departure when leave the European Union on the 29th of March next year.

I also updated the House on the outline Political Declaration that set out a framework for the future relationship we want between the UK and the EU.

Last night I met with President Juncker in Brussels to work through the details of the full Political Declaration on this future relationship.

We had good discussions in which I was clear about what we need in order to ensure the best possible deal for the United Kingdom.

We then tasked our negotiating teams to work through the remaining issues.

As a result, the text of the political declaration has now been agreed between the UK and the European Commission. And I updated the Cabinet on this progress this morning.

Mr Speaker, the draft text that we have agreed with the Commission is a good deal for our country and for our partners in the EU.

It honours the vote of the British people by taking back control of our borders, our laws and our money while protecting jobs, security and the integrity of our precious United Kingdom.

It ends free movement once and for all. Instead we will introduce a new skills-based immigration system – based not on the country people come from, but on what they can contribute to the UK.

It ends the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice in the UK. We will make our own laws in our own Parliaments, here in Westminster, and in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast, and they will be adjudicated on by UK Courts.

And it means an end to sending vast sums of money to the EU.

So we can take full control of our money to spend on priorities, including our long-term plan for the NHS, to which we have committed to spending over £394 million more per week by 2023/24.

And just this morning I was able to announce a major new investment in primary and community care worth £3.5 billion a year in real terms by 2023/24.

Mr Speaker, the text we have now agreed would create a new Free Trade Area with the EU, with no tariffs, fees, charges or quantitative restrictions.

This would be the first such agreement between the EU and any advanced economy in the world, which will be good for jobs.

The EU said that the choice was binary – Norway or Canada. The Political Declaration recognises that there is a spectrum, with the extent of our commitments taken into account in deciding the level of checks and controls.

Crucially, the text we have agreed also has an explicit reference to development of an independent trade policy by the UK beyond this partnership with the EU.

So we would have the ability to sign new trade deals with other countries and capitalise on the opportunities in the fastest growing economies around the world.

And we would be able to get on with this – negotiating deals during the Implementation Period and putting them in place immediately afterwards.

The deal would mean we leave the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy.

Mr Speaker, let me be absolutely clear about what this would mean for fishing.

We would become an independent coastal state, with control over our waters so our fishermen get a fairer share of the fish in our waters.

We have firmly rejected a link between access to our waters and access to markets.

The fisheries agreement is not something we will be trading off against any other priorities.

We are clear that we will negotiate access and quotas on an annual basis, as for example, do other independent coastal states like Norway and Iceland.

The trade agreement with the EU would also cover services and investment that will go further than any other recent EU agreements.

And it would secure new arrangements for our financial services sector – ensuring that market access cannot be withdrawn on a whim and providing stability and certainty for our world-leading industry.

We would also have a cutting edge agreement on digital helping to facilitate e-commerce and reduce unjustified barriers to trade by electronic means.

And there would be strong rules in place to keep trade fair and ensure neither side can unfairly subsidise their industries against the other.

The text we have agreed with the European Commission also includes a new security partnership, with a close relationship on defence, and tackling crime and terrorism to keep all our people safe.

There would be a surrender agreement to bring criminals to justice no matter where in Europe they break the law.

And there would be arrangements for sharing of data, including on DNA, Passenger Name Records, and fingerprints.

The new Security Partnership would also ensure close co-operation between our police forces and other law enforcement bodies.

And we would continue to work together on sanctions against those who violate international rules or commit atrocities.

And there would be joint working on meeting cyber-security threats and supporting international efforts to prevent money laundering and the financing of terrorists.

Finally, as I set out for the House last week, the draft Withdrawal Agreement will ensure that we transition to this new and ambitious future relationship in a smooth and orderly way.

It will deliver a 20-month Implementation Period so that we have time to put our new future relationship in place and that businesses have time to prepare for it.

It will protect the rights of EU citizens living in the UK and UK citizens living in the EU, so they can carry on living their lives as before.

It will ensure a fair settlement on our financial obligations – less than half what some originally expected.

And it will meet our commitment to ensure there is no hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland and no customs border in the Irish Sea.

Mr Speaker, the text we have agreed is explicit about the determination of both sides to avoid the backstop altogether by getting the future relationship in place on the 1st of January 2021.

And in the unlikely event that we ever did need the backstop, to ensure it is quickly superseded either by the future relationship or alternative arrangements.

As part of this, there is an explicit commitment to consider facilitative arrangements and technologies which could avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland.

And I am grateful to My Rt Hon Friends the Members for Chingford and Woodford Green and for North Shropshire for their ideas on this.

Preparatory work on alternative arrangements to avoid the backstop would begin before we leave, enabling rapid progress after our withdrawal.

Mr Speaker, I want to be very clear about the stage we have reached in these negotiations and the scale of what is now at stake.

We have an agreed text between the UK and the European Commission.

This text is today being shared with the leaders of the other 27 Member States ahead of the special EU Council on Sunday.

The negotiations are now at a critical moment and all our efforts must be focused on working with our European partners to bring this process to a final conclusion in the interests of all our people.

Last night I spoke to Prime Minister Sánchez of Spain. We have been working constructively with the governments of Spain and Gibraltar in the negotiations on the Withdrawal Agreement.

And we want this work to continue in the future relationship. But I was absolutely clear that, Gibraltar's British sovereignty will be protected and that the future relationship we agree must work for the whole UK family.

Today I met Chancellor Kurz of Austria, which currently holds the EU's Presidency. And later today and tomorrow I will be speaking to other European leaders ahead of returning to Brussels on Saturday.

Mr Speaker, the British people want Brexit to be settled.

They want a good deal that sets us on a course for a brighter future.

And they want us to come together as a country and to move on to focus on the big issues at home, like our NHS.

The deal that will enable us to do this is now within our grasp.

In these crucial 72 hours ahead, I will do everything possible to deliver it for the British people.

And I commend this Statement to the House.

Speech: TheCityUK National Conference 2018

Introduction

This is an important event...at an important time.

As we leave the European Union, we are faced with exciting choices and possibilities.

It is a moment of national renewal, where we are affirming our faith in the British people and businesses to take advantage of the opportunities our new relationship with the EU, and yes, the rest of world, will present.

And let me be clear – the deal we strike with the European Union will mean we take back control of our laws, borders and money, and it will protect our economy, security and precious union.

The theme of today's conference – “Going for Growth” – in many ways sums up this government's ambition for Britain – not just economically, but socially, so that all parts of our country, all communities, can thrive, with no-one left behind.

The role of the city in the 21st century economy

And cities are central to this ambition.

For millennia the city has been a unit of economic and social solidarity.

From ancient Athens and Rome, to modern day London, Beijing and New York. Throughout history, to individuals and businesses, the city simply made sense.

But it hasn't been a story of ever upward progress, of continuing growth and expansion.

Think back to the 1970s and 80s and how cities suffered from declining populations and slowing economic growth.

As the economy has become more globalised and technology revolutionises the way we do business, the state has found new ways to support the city and in turn the last 20 years I think have seen a global renaissance in the city as a place to live and work.

Government has been working to give places the tools to take advantage of these opportunities.

We've created city region mayors – with new powers to boost jobs and skills, to build homes and improve travel – and devolution deals such as the West Midlands, which will see over £1 billion invested over the next 30 years.

It's also why we're backing 26 City Deals in England and 7 across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – and are keeping up the momentum, with the recent Budget announcements regarding the £350 million City Deal for Belfast and £150 million for the Tay Cities Deal.

We have continually backed cities because the contribution they make speaks for itself.

Birmingham has the highest number of new start-ups outside London and the wider West Midlands, as a whole, is the fastest growing region in the UK for goods exports.

Leeds has seen its economy expand by just over a third during the last decade and, in 2016, saw the fastest rate of private sector jobs growth of any UK city.

And Glasgow is also booming, generating more than £20 billion in economic output last year.

Dealing with the challenges of success

And yet, with the growth and productivity of our cities, come new challenges borne of this success.

If we want to ensure our cities continue to grow their potential we need to evolve policy to meet these challenges.

Weak skills, low wages and stagnating productivity, for example, all speak to a world in which work needs to be much more rewarding.

When work is alienating and lacking in meaning it creates a void in the individual which is filled by frustration and disengagement.

That is why a key part of our national [Industrial Strategy](#) and local growth plans is to help make work better for all, so that each individual can reach the full measure of their potential.

But we must ensure the right powers are held locally to ensure every place and person can forge their own destinies, address their own specific challenges and support local communities.

Since 2010 we have devolved power from Whitehall, rightfully handing it to local leaders and businesses, who have used it to improve the lives of their communities.

And we're taking it a step further.

I'm pleased to confirm that our new devolution framework will be published shortly and with it we will begin a new conversation about our emerging neo-

localist agenda.

This new strand of policy will set out a direction for devolution post Brexit.

It will support areas to collaborate to help drive greater sub-national trading activity.

And it will challenge places to harness the opportunities new technology provides and, yes, for cities in particular, show just how much smarter they can be as a result.

The new devolution framework will build on the successes of the past, helping to ensure our cities remain the drivers of national economic growth, as well as connecting our towns and villages to that story too.

As my colleague the Business Secretary Greg Clark noted when the first Industrial Strategy green paper was launched, “economic growth doesn’t happen in abstract, it happens in particular places.”

Cities are already leading the way

Here in the Midlands this won’t be news to you; over 220,000 people are employed in the financial and related sectors.

So it’s little wonder that HSBC decided to base its UK headquarters here, in Birmingham’s Enterprise Zone – and highly fitting, too, given that the core of HSBC’s UK business goes back to the Birmingham and Midland Bank, founded in 1836.

The North, similarly, is a big draw for these sectors.

Manchester’s banking, insurance and professional services employ over 51,000 people and its financial quarter, Spinningfields, boasts Barclays, BNY Mellon and RBS alongside Deloitte and the recent arrival of Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer.

Leeds is also proving a winner – as the home of international law firm Reed Smith’s new Global Solutions service and also Channel 4’s new national HQ.

Which all reinforces this government’s great vote of confidence in our vibrant, thriving cities – and also in the regions to which they belong.

I’m incredibly proud to represent and support these regions as Midlands Engine Champion in Cabinet to ensure they become even better places to live, work and invest.

The recent Budget reinforced that mission, with very welcome announcements on:

- £165 million for Birmingham, to support the Commonwealth Games Athletes Village and unlock 5,000 homes as a lasting legacy,

- £8.5 million to support Coventry when it hosts the UK City of Culture in 2021,
- and, crucially, a refreshed Midlands Engine Strategy to be published next year.

A strategy that will be grounded in strong, hard evidence about the region – underpinned by the [Midlands Engine Observatory](#) that’s just been launched.

This will initially focus on a wide-ranging independent economic review of the Midlands.

Because we need to do more to understand the needs and ambitions of our city-regions if we’re to back them to really succeed – indeed, if we’re to back our country to succeed.

I’ve seen for myself, first-hand, what that means since I was appointed to my role.

In July, here in Birmingham, I heard first-hand about the ambitious plans for Curzon Street and the new HS2 station – which will turbo-charge the region’s already great transport links and prime central location.

In August, I was in the East Midlands, at Lincoln and Loughborough Universities – just 2 of the 20 universities that make the Midlands a magnet for cutting-edge research and teaching excellence.

While I was there, I also saw how companies like Laing O’Rourke are leading innovations in modular housing to help us build more homes.

And in October, I undertook my first Midlands Engine Trade Visit, accompanying Sir John [Peace] and West Midlands’ Mayor Andy Street, to India; travelling to Delhi and Pune and meeting key partners in the automotive and engineering industries – key sectors for both the Midlands and Maharashtra State.

A trip that was a great success, reinforcing the global reach of the brilliant products and services the Midlands offers and the exciting opportunities that lie ahead – opportunities that will see us forging new links.

Links that will see us increasingly talking about not just London-New York, but also Birmingham-Mumbai and Manchester-Hong Kong.

Because there is so much more our places can do to support their economies and transform their environments.

That is why our new devolution framework will help local areas take advantage of the opportunities leaving the European Union presents and build stronger bonds of kinship between people and communities.

I want to ensure that every area, every community, can seize the opportunities that will flow from that.

Because too many people feel like they didn't benefit from the old arrangement and that decisions weren't made in their interests.

This means thinking differently about how we invest; how we plan for our infrastructure, how we ensure new technology and the opportunities it brings can fit in with our cities, towns and villages.

This is why we're developing the UK Shared Prosperity Fund – a programme of investment to tackle inequalities between communities – to take effect after Brexit.

The aim is to drive up productivity, underpinned by evidence of what works at a local level, with Local Industrial Strategies playing their part to help communities maximise the Fund's long-term impact.

We will be consulting widely on its design shortly and I urge everyone with a stake in creating stronger, more prosperous communities to contribute.

Conclusion

Because it's these communities – the dynamic businesses, the bold entrepreneurs, the millions of talented, hard-working people – that hold the key to our future.

Communities that when they come together – as strong, confident cities anchored into strong, confident regions – with the backing of our financial and professional services, are unbeatable – both socially and economically.

I'm delighted to be working with you to celebrate and support them, knowing that when they succeed, we all succeed.

And that, as we leave the European Union, we harness the new opportunities available to us, enhance our skill base and productivity – seize the potential.

That we approach the future with an optimistic outlook of how we will forge a new direction.

Building upon innovation, technology and, yes, the strengths of our great cities, regions and the character of the British people.

Where everyone has a stake, everyone has a role and truly create a country where no-one is left behind.