

[Press release: Women in senior leadership: launch of the Future Board Scheme](#)

In November 2016, government launched the [Future Board Scheme](#), in partnership with [30% Club](#) and [Board Apprentice](#). The scheme gives talented women from a wide range of backgrounds the opportunity to spend 12 months with boards in a developmental capacity. It is a unique opportunity for senior women to get board experience to progress their careers to the next level.

The concept has been developed through a number of successful trials run by UK Government Investments, Board Apprentice and the Institute of Directors in New Zealand. Now UK Government Investments and Board Apprentice are working together with 30% Club to make the scheme more widely available across the public and private sectors.

The scheme is aimed at FTSE 350 companies, SMEs and other major organisations. Each organisation involved hosts a participant on their own Board and in return puts forward an employee of their own to be placed on another participating Board. Several major companies and well-known public sector bodies have already signed up to take part in the scheme, including 30% Club members, Aviva and Hammerson, as well as the Student Loans Company and UK Government Investments.

Further information can be found on the [30% Club website](#).

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[Press release: Dr Lucy Mason appointed Head of the Defence and Security Accelerator](#)

As Head of the [Accelerator](#), Lucy will be responsible for building strong relationships between defence and security departments within the UK Government, industry, academia and other partners, to accelerate the delivery of innovative ideas for the security and prosperity of the UK.

Launched in December 2016, the Accelerator fast-tracks innovative, game-changing ideas by funding their development and connecting suppliers to end users at an early stage of development. By matching them with expert Innovation Partners to and guiding them through the process, we help turn their ideas into marketable products and defence and security capabilities.

Backed by a rising defence budget and the [£800 million Innovation Fund](#), the Accelerator is a key conduit for transforming Defence's creative culture as part of the Defence Innovation Initiative. This investment helps deliver future battle-winning technologies, keeps our Armed Forces safe in challenging environments and creates prosperity. The Accelerator will also work with security departments from across government to strengthen the national security of our nation.

Lucy joins the Accelerator from the Home Office where she most recently led the science and technology, and private sector engagement work strands for the review of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy.

Rob Solly, Division Head for the Defence and Security Analysis Division within the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and Interim Head of the Accelerator said:

I'm delighted to welcome Lucy as Head of the Accelerator. Lucy's passion for innovation and strong leadership skills will be vital in taking the Accelerator through to full operating capability; ensuring innovative ideas can be taken forward for the benefit of our Armed Forces and the security of the UK. Her expertise in horizon scanning and security technology and her knowledge of digital ethics and identity, social and behavioural science, make her a perfect candidate for this role.

Over the last two months, the Accelerator has launched two routes to funding: Themed Challenges and the Enduring Challenge, and is developing new collaboration mechanisms to be launched later this year.

Our themed competitions help our customers find solutions to specific challenges. These are announced throughout the year. The first Innovation Fund challenge was launched in February to revolutionise the human-information relationship for Defence.

The Enduring Challenge, launched in January, casts the net wider to provide a route into defence and security for any supplier who thinks they have an idea that can benefit UK Defence and Security, at home or abroad.

It exists because we can't possibly know all the potential solutions and novel approaches out there – whether that's more advanced technical capability, how we work or operate, or how we train our people.

This year the Enduring Challenge has secured £6 million, including a second phase of new funding. The first phase will look at ideas in their early stages, while the second phase will nurture promising projects, as well as

offering an alternative route for more advanced ideas and technologies.

[News story: The chicken and the egg: GLD Lawyers work on the bird flu outbreak](#)

The end of last year saw the biggest outbreak of bird flu (avian influenza) in Europe, which was eventually spread to the UK's shores, wetlands and poultry premises in December by migrating wildfowl. Since then, about 250,000 poultry have died or been culled at 10 infected premises across the UK from Lincolnshire to Lancashire.

GLD lawyers played a central role in providing legal advice to Defra to deal with operational issues. This included dealing with issues arising whenever there was an outbreak detected or poultry culled, creating a 3km protection zone and a wider 10km surveillance zone around the premises. In these zones all movement of poultry and poultry products is banned and the area is effectively quarantined and a "lock down" imposed until the risk of disease spreading disappears.

On 6 December 2016, as the threat of bird flu increased, the Secretary of State for Defra, Andrea Leadsom MP, used her power in specific disease control legislation to declare an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone. This was the first time, since its creation in 2006 that this power has been used. The Prevention Zone Declaration required all poultry in England to be kept separate from wild birds by netting or being housed. Scotland and Wales followed suit as did Northern Ireland 2 weeks later. Around 51% of egg laying hens in England are raised entirely indoors in barns or enriched colony cages so the prevention zone did not affect that part of the poultry sector. However England's higher welfare free-range sector was affected as poultry were not allowed to range free.

When under such restrictions EU law permits eggs and poultry meat from free-range systems to still be sold as 'free-range', for a fixed 12-week grace period which expired on the 28 February. During this period GLD lawyers advised on how the period operated, having regard to poultry husbandry practices, and what should be done once the 12-week grace period came to an end as the status of free-range eggs would be immediately affected. Free-range poultry meat would be affected later.

Richard Vidal who led GLD's Disease Outbreak team said:

This was a very legally challenging situation as it was the first time a Prevention Zone had been introduced.

We've been responsible for explaining how the grace period operated and the imminent need, if the initial prevention zone was extended in time, to ensure labelling of any poultry produce was correct when the grace period expired.

To achieve this it was essential that we were involved with Defra industry meetings, calling on the views of the British Egg Industry Council, British Retail Consortium and the National Farmers' Union.

The prevention zone has recently been adjusted and extended until 30 April. It has been now adjusted to create two different disease risk areas: all poultry in higher risk areas have to be housed or fully netted to prevent wild birds from having access, whilst those in remaining areas (currently around 75% of England) can be allowed to range free but strict biosecurity measures will need to be put in place by the keepers. This includes such things as the disinfection of vehicle wheels and footwear, restricted access to poultry sheds and pens, and records needing to be kept of anyone having contact with their poultry.

This means that until the latest prevention zone is lifted the labelling of 'free-range' from those that still house their birds must not mislead consumers.

Speech: Promoting Our Prosperity

I'm delighted to join you today for the final session.

Over the last two days you've been discussing a security landscape that is becoming increasingly unpredictable and uncertain.

Recently the independent reviewer of terrorism law (Max Hill QC) said the danger of attack is as great as at any time since the 1970s.

Yet we don't just face problems from the asymmetric threat of Islamist extremism but also from Russian aggression and cyber warfare.

At the same time, we're preparing to implement the decision of the British people to leave the European Union; stepping back from the EU while stepping up our commitment to international security.

IMPLICATIONS FOR UK DEFENCE

What do all these events mean for UK defence policy?

The short answer is that, despite big changes, the important things are staying the same.

Our three National security objectives listed in 2015's Strategic Defence and Security Review – to protect our people, project our influence, and promote our prosperity – remain right for today.

We're one of only five NATO nations meeting the 2 per cent target and we'll continue investing in defence equipment: using our growing budget and £178bn 10-year equipment plan to spend on world class capability such as Dreadnought submarines and carriers, frigates and F-35.

Above all, we're determined to become, what our Prime Minister calls, a "global Britain", working with our NATO allies to front up to aggression from a position of strength, while joining forces with our bi-lateral friends to bring a tapestry of capability to bear on international problems.

RELEVANCE FOR DEFENCE INDUSTRY

But what does all this mean for the Defence industry?

Rest assured, we're more aware of your value than ever.

And nowadays we're not just looking for you to devise new game changing technologies, making the most of autonomy, cyber and big data, to keep one step ahead of our competitors.

Nor are we simply expecting you to focus on value for money as the demands on our budget rise.

We're also turning to you to enhance the UK's prosperity.

Our SDSR was the first time we officially recognised promoting prosperity as a national security task.

Now that strategic exports are a core activity for MOD, we need your help increasing defence sales and inward investment.

It's a lot to expect but the good news is we're here to help.

That doesn't mean we're going to retreat into a protectionist shell.

We don't believe in propping up inefficient industries

Instead, we believe in the power of free markets to push our companies further.

So we're going out of our way to create a can-do, pro-growth culture.

In three ways:

1. INNOVATION

First, we're investing in innovation. This is an area where Britain traditionally has had strength in depth.

We gave the world radar, the jump jet and the world wide web.

Today we're leading the way in wing design and intelligent systems.

Tomorrow we will have produced dragonfly drones and sub-orbital engines.

But we can't rely on natural talent and serendipity to see us through.

So six months ago, we launched our innovation initiative.

It's all about pushing the boundaries, making defence more open to risk and new ideas.

Consequently, we're speeding up the time it takes for suppliers to turn concepts into capabilities.

We've set up an Innovation Fund worth around £800m over 10 years to pump prime investment into advanced new solutions, such as laser directed energy weapons and unmanned rotary wing technologies.

And we're running a set of competitions to develop leading edge capabilities in everything from rapid and automated integration of new sensors to machine learning algorithms.

Last week we unveiled the next stage in our plan.

Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte has become our new Chief Scientific Adviser, with direct accountability for the defence research programme...which is 1.2% of Defence's annual budget.

He'll be working across defence and internationally to stimulate defence innovation, commission research, and use technology to keep our people safe.

At the same time, we've been gearing up our new Defence Innovation Advisory Panel, with high-profile appointees including astronaut Major Tim Peake; outgoing director of GCHQ, Robert Hannigan; and the founder and chairman of McLaren, Ron Dennis.

These inspiring individuals will challenge the Defence status quo...ensuring we become innovative by instinct.

2. INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

There's a second way in which we're creating a pro-growth culture.

We're tapping into the broader currents of Whitehall's industrial strategy by strengthening clusters of defence capability around the country, in Scotland, the South West, the North West and North Wales.

We're determined to make this a country that works for everyone.

Sir John Parker's recent report suggested how we could use such centres of expertise to improve our shipbuilding capability: embracing digital engineering and proposing the creation of a Virtual Shipbuilding industry model.

In other words, rather than a single shipyard building a ship from scratch, a vessel would be built in blocks by different sites across the UK as we've done with carrier, ensuring high productivity, competitive cost and a dramatic reduction in build time.

Sir John's report will inform our shipbuilding strategy due out in the Spring.

But switch domains from sea to air and you can already see what stronger clusters will mean for the UK.

Over in North Wales, Government and business joined forces and last year won the F-35 Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul contract award.

Their bid was so compelling it established Britain as a hub for all European F-35s: sustaining, in turn, potentially thousands more high value jobs across the supply chain, generating hundreds of millions – and potentially several billions of pounds of revenue – supporting hundreds of jobs in Wales and extending Britain's reputation for excellence worldwide.

I'd like to thank all those who helped make it possible.

It was a truly team UK effort.

3. PARTNERSHIPS

But this brings me to my final point.

Creating a pro-growth culture, means strengthening partnerships between Government and industry.

So we'll be looking to you to collaborate more – sharing the risk and reward of research and development.

We want you to build exportability in as standard from the outset, placing even greater emphasis on the use of modularity and open systems.

And we'll be looking for you to follow Boeing's example and increase bid opportunities for UK suppliers – large and small.

Significantly, Boeing recently announced their first European manufacturing facility will be in Sheffield.

You help us and we'll help you.

That's why we're making sure our refreshed industrial strategy will continue supporting the growth and competitiveness of UK companies.

It's why we're reaching out to imaginative industries outside defence...to import new ideas and ways of working. This time last week I was in Farringdon, chairing the Small Business Forum at a digital start-up company.

It's why we're working day and night alongside our colleagues in the Departments for Exiting the EU and Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

to address issues that affect industry after we leave the EU; whether it's Defence exemptions from EU regulations on movement of goods or access to skills and experience.

And it's why we will continue to tirelessly bang the drum for British business at home and abroad through export support; our expanded Defence attaché network; and speeches like this.

CONCLUSION

So despite mounting pressures, exciting new possibilities are opening up.

And by working together to build a winning mentality and develop a pro-growth culture we will do more than enhance our capability, more than increase our prosperity, more than inspire a new generation of innovators.

Together we will emulate the effect of that famous F-35 contract in Wales and send the strongest of signals to the world that our great defence industry and our great global nation are very much open for business.

[News story: South West characterisation disposal project: New site announced](#)

The MMO facilitated the process of the designation of the new site by the funding partners including Associated British Ports (ABP), Cattewater, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas).

Consultation

The designation of a new site involved considering and balancing a variety of views from the fisheries, business, defence and scientific communities as well as from local residents.

The MMO asked for people to share their views regarding a potential new marine disposal site in the South West from 29 November 2016 until 23 December 2016. This consultation period was extended to 6 January 2017 to allow for detailed representations.

Fisheries

Representations were received from the commercial fisheries sector. These were considered as part of the consultation process. The [Site Characterisation Report](#) was published on the MMO's website, and direct

consultation was undertaken with 8 organisations related to commercial fisheries.

Decision

After considering all available information, the MMO concluded that the proposed area is the optimal, sustainable alternative disposal site for dredged material.

Plymouth Deep is now open for marine licence applications for the disposal of dredged material.

All activities relating to the disposal of dredged material at sea are required to apply for a marine licence. As part of the licensing process, the MMO is required to assess various contaminants, to assess the suitability of the material for disposal at sea and in the proposed location. The MMO is content that any material disposed at the site will be suitable for disposal to sea.

Rame Head

It is important to note that the Rame Head South designated disposal site remains an open disposal site. Its status will change after 5 years to 'disused' and then to "closed" after 10 years.

The MMO has produced an evaluation report which details the conclusions drawn from a review of the evidence submitted, and the representations received during the consultation period. The evaluation report can be viewed on the [Marine Selected Cases](#) of the website.