

[News story: MOD and Royal College of Art collaborate on cutting-edge new uniform](#)

The Future Soldier Vision (FSV) is part of the MOD's plan to give British soldiers' high-quality, cutting-edge equipment.

The Royal College of Art's (RCA) researchers and designers worked on the clothing to ensure prototypes were fitted to the body, easy to run in and comfortable to wear. The RCA supplied a number of sets of prototype combat clothing which were assessed at the Specialist Weapons School, Warminster, to examine future uniform concepts.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

From new materials to high-tech helmets, innovation is all about giving our personnel the kit they need by working with world famous partners like the Royal College of Art. You might not expect the MOD to work with an art and design university, but it is this kind of non-traditional partnership which will keep our Armed Forces equipped with cutting edge technology.

So far, kit being designed for FSV includes advanced combat clothing, with new materials like four-way stretch 'phase-change material' and silent hook-and-loop pockets. The enhanced body armour will be stronger, as well as having a new high-tech helmet with state-of-the-art, built-in communication systems.

FSV aims to give industry an example of an integrated soldier system that balances military need with cutting-edge technology. This includes technology that delivers distributed power and data, scalable and integrated protection, augmented surveillance and target acquisition, and a range of functional fabrics incorporated into the clothing.

Head of Programme for Textiles and Reader in Smart Textiles at the RCA Anne Toomey said:

The RCA was pleased to have this opportunity to demonstrate how our innovative design approaches can enhance value and impact across sectors through optimising existing materials performance and fabrication.

As the RCA grows its research activities to embrace new materials and fabrication technologies, we will be able to further extend this reach upstream. We plan to become the world's first STEAM institution, operating a design-led approach to future innovation

with materials through the development of our new Materials Science Research Centre.

MOD and Royal College of Art Collaborate on cutting-edge new uniform. Crown Copyright.

Defence Science & Technology Laboratory has worked with a number of small and non-traditional suppliers, such as the RCA, to develop options for improved soldier system components.

Press release: Autonomy on the frontline: Last Mile challenge winners announced

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) set industry and academia a challenge to design pioneering technology to get vital supplies to soldiers on the front line and the winners have now been chosen.

Part of MOD's Innovation Initiative, and led by MOD's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) with the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA), the contracts are worth around £3.5 million over 3 years.

Dstl, in partnership with industry and academia, delivers defence and security science and technology (S&T) research for MOD and other government departments and allied organisations, looking to find the best solutions to UK defence and security challenges of today and the future.

Supplying troops in challenging environments – often dubbed ‘the last mile’ – using unmanned technology may reduce risk and cost. As announced at last year's Farnborough Airshow, Dstl is working with the US Department of Defense to accelerate and demonstrate the effective use of these new robotic and autonomous systems technologies, with UK troops testing prototypes by 2019.

Drawing on commercial technology and conceptual ideas, from online delivery systems to futuristic unmanned vehicles, more than 140 organisations from small and medium-sized enterprises to big defence companies submitted entries for the Last Mile challenge.

Winning ideas include autonomous hover-bikes, unmanned air and ground vehicles, novel means of autonomously loading and unloading, navigating and delivery ordering, management and control using ‘uber-like’ and other app-based technologies.

Twenty-five projects were chosen from organisations from the UK and worldwide

with a total contract value for the 6-month first phase of almost £2 million to advance the technology towards a system solution for 'tactical resupply in a box'. The subsequent year-long phase will then go on to produce demonstrator system prototypes of the concepts, including evaluation with the British Army in October 2018 as part of the Army's Warfighter Experiment 'Autonomous Warrior (Land)' (AWE18), in addition to a potential demonstration in the US.

UK jobs will be created or secured from the project, with the majority of companies chosen being from Britain. The Innovation Initiative and £800 million Defence Innovation Fund aims to encourage imagination, ingenuity and entrepreneurship, to find twenty-first century solutions to rapidly emerging threats.

Dstl's lead for the challenge, Peter Stockel, said:

The number and quality of the entries for this competition was outstanding and the competition was fierce. We chose the best from across the proposals to enable the system solutions we want for prototype demonstration and evaluation. This was a fully open competition, with many of those down-selected happening to come from the UK. This illustrates the strength of our national capability and the benefit of recent investments in this important and rapidly developing technology sector. However, it was great to also be able to pick some great propositions from around the world. The brief is to rapidly demonstrate system solutions which aim to reduce the logistic burden on our Armed Forces, provide new operational capability and reduce casualties; so we're pleased with the response and keen to see the potential capability benefits being assessed by our military during AWE18.

Corporate report: European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) implementation reports

Details on the activities supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) programme. This includes a information on:

- development and delivery of the operational programme
- applicant facing tools including e-systems guidance
- scheme governance and management control systems
- programme monitoring committee
- selection criteria draft and adoption

[Press release: CMA finds customers could lose out due to car parts merger](#)

Euro Car Parts bought most of Andrew Page in October 2016, after the company went into administration. Both companies sell car parts and components to independent garages and workshops and to larger national or multi-regional customers, including repair centre chains, vehicle fleets and roadside assistance companies.

A group of independent panel members at the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has [investigated the merger](#). The group identified 10 local areas in England where the 2 companies were close competitors and where the merger could result in reduced competition for local customers, leading to higher prices or a lower quality of service.

The group did not consider that national or multi-regional customers would be adversely affected by the merger.

Professor Alasdair Smith, Inquiry Chair, said:

Andrew Page was in administration and would have closed down if a purchaser had not been found. The only 2 other purchasers would have bought a much smaller number of depots. We think that in most markets the merger will not further reduce competition compared to the alternative.

However, in 10 local areas we are concerned that a reduction in competition could lead to higher prices and a lower quality of service.

In addition to the summary of provisional findings and the provisional findings report, a notice of possible remedies has been issued today, which outlines the measures the CMA could take if it still believes the merger would reduce competition when it makes its final decision. This identifies that competition could be maintained if Euro Car Parts sells depots in the 10 affected areas.

Anyone wishing to respond to the notice of possible remedies should do so in writing by no later than 28 September 2017. Anyone wishing to respond to the provisional findings should do so in writing, by no later than 5 October 2017.

Please email eurocarparts/andrewpage@cma.gsi.gov.uk or write to:

Project Manager

Euro Car Parts/Andrew Page merger inquiry
Competition and Markets Authority
Victoria House
Southampton Row
LONDON
WC1B 4AD

As set out in the administrative timetable for this inquiry, the CMA's final report will be published by the statutory deadline on 5 November 2017.

Notes for editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law.
2. The summary of provisional findings can be found on the [case page](#). The CMA is required to publish its final decision by 5 November 2017.
3. On 10 March 2017 the CMA started its initial investigation and on 22 May 2017 the CMA referred it for a phase 2 investigation.
4. All the CMA's functions in phase 2 merger inquiries are performed by independent inquiry groups, chosen from the CMA's panel members, and supported by CMA staff. The appointed inquiry group are the decision-makers on phase 2 inquiries.
5. The members of the inquiry group are: [Professor Alasdair Smith](#) (Inquiry Chair), [Lesley Ainsworth](#) and [Rosalind Hedley-Miller](#).
6. The CMA's panel members come from a variety of backgrounds, including economics, law, accountancy and/or business; the membership of an inquiry group usually reflects a mix of expertise and experience.
7. The 10 local areas, which the group identified are Blackpool, Brighton, Gloucester, Liphook, Scunthorpe, Sunderland, Swindon, Wakefield, Worthing and York.
8. For more information on the CMA see our [homepage](#) or follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Sign up to our [email alerts](#) to receive updates on merger cases.
9. Media enquiries should be directed to: press@cma.gsi.gov.uk, 020 3738

[News story: CMA clears festivals merger](#)

This follows a [‘phase 1’ investigation](#) by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) into the deal.

As part of its examination, the CMA sought the views of a number of sector experts, including other organisers of live music events and industry bodies, as well as festival goers. A survey was sent to several thousand customers of the Isle of Wight festival to gain insight into what drives their choice between different festivals (or other activities, such as going to a concert or on holiday).

The evidence collected indicates that the Isle of Wight festival and Live Nation’s existing festivals were not competing particularly closely for customers. After the merger, people will continue to be able to choose between festivals owned by Live Nation and a variety of competing festivals. The fact that festival goers also choose between going to a festival and other activities will also ensure that Live Nation continues to face sufficient competition.

Following concerns raised by third parties, the CMA also investigated whether the merger would enable Live Nation to stop rival organisers of live music events (both festivals and concerts) from being able to book the range and quality of artists that they need to provide a competitive proposition. However, the evidence indicates that the merger will not materially strengthen Live Nation’s position in booking artists, and that a sufficient range and quality of artists will continue to be available for rival organisers of live music events.

The merger will therefore not be referred for an in-depth phase 2 investigation.