

Press release: HMS Queen Elizabeth makes debut in Portsmouth

Greeted by thousands of people lining the Portsmouth seafront, the 65,000-tonne carrier was met with the warmest of welcomes as she arrived in her home port this morning.

Sailors lined the flight deck of the largest warship ever built for the Royal Navy as she passed Portsmouth's Round Tower. HMS Queen Elizabeth was also greeted with a flypast from the Fleet Air Arm, including Wildcat and Merlin helicopters and Hawk jets.

Secretary of State for Defence Sir Michael Fallon said:

Today we welcome our mighty new warship, HMS Queen Elizabeth to her home for the very first time. She is Britain's statement to the world: a demonstration of British military power and our commitment to a bigger global role.

The thousands of people across the UK who have played a part in building her and her sister ship, HMS Prince of Wales, should be immensely proud as our future flagship enters Portsmouth. She has made good progress in sea trials and will now embark on the next phase of preparations that will see the return of Britain's carrier strike ability.

When she enters service she will help keep Britain safe at a time of increased threats, able to fill multiple roles from providing air power anywhere at any time to fight future campaigns, supporting allies or delivering humanitarian aid.

The Carrier programme has brought together the best of British industry, with construction taking place across six cities and involving more than 10,000 people. This includes 700 businesses and suppliers, 800 apprentices and nearly 8,000 jobs at shipyards around the UK.

The UK has 11 state-of-the-art F-35 Lightning II jets and 120 UK personnel training in the United States. By the end of this year that will be 14 jets, with trial flights from the carrier's deck on track to begin next year.

Captain Jerry Kyd, the Commanding Officer of HMS Queen Elizabeth, said:

HMS Queen Elizabeth's first entry into her home port of Portsmouth is an historic, proud and exciting occasion, not only for those of us serving in her, but also for the wider Royal Navy, the city of Portsmouth and the entire nation.

The UK's future flagship, as well her sister ship HMS Prince of Wales, will be powerful symbols of Britain's outward facing global character and ambition. The Royal Navy has a very special relationship with Portsmouth dating back half a millennium and both carriers will ensure the Navy's city remains the focal point of our great nation's maritime power for generations to come.

The ship will berth at the newly-named and upgraded Princess Royal Jetty at Her Majesty's Naval Base Portsmouth, which will be home to both of the Royal Navy's new aircraft carriers. The second, HMS Prince of Wales, will be officially named in a ceremony at Rosyth next month.

The berth has been upgraded and strengthened to support the carriers as part of a £100 million raft of infrastructure upgrades which took place ahead of the arrival of the ship.

A total of 3.2 million cubic metres of sediment, equivalent to 1,280 Olympic swimming pools has been removed from the harbour and approach channel, making it wide and deep enough to accommodate the enormous 65,000 tonne ships.

Sir Peter Gershon, Chairman of the Aircraft Carrier Alliance, said:

I am incredibly proud to witness HMS Queen Elizabeth arrive at her home port of Portsmouth Naval Base having successfully completed the first phase of her sea trials programme.

Over 10,000 people have come together to bring HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales to life, from early design to the magnificent ships they are today. It is thanks to their industrious endeavours and pride that we have achieved this historic moment in the programme to bring HMS Queen Elizabeth into service.

We're excited to complete the remainder of her test and commissioning programme before delivering her to the Royal Navy by the end of the year.

Leading Airman Liam Forgeron, 28, from Portchester, is an aircraft handler on board HMS Queen Elizabeth. He said:

Being a local lad, I am extremely proud that Portsmouth will now be the base port for the nation's future flagship.

The historic port has a long and proud association with the Royal Navy and the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth will cement this relationship for a further 50 years. As a Royal Navy aircraft handler, serving on board this mighty vessel is a real honour, as I too get to make history in my home town.

Both aircraft carriers are being delivered by the Aircraft Carrier Alliance, a partnership between the Ministry of Defence and industry.

Carrier Key Facts

- Each carrier weighs 65,000 tonnes and is 280 metres in length.
- Top speed is upwards of 25 knots.
- The carriers will have a crew of around 700, increasing to 1,600 when a full complement of F-35B aircraft and four Crowsnest helicopters are embarked.
- The flight deck is 70 metres wide and 280 metres long – enough space for three football pitches
- Each carrier keeps 45 days' worth of food in its stores.
- Each carrier is made up of 17 million parts.
- There are 364,000 metres of pipes inside each of the Ships.

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Notes to Editors

- Imagery is available at Defence Imagery
- For more information contact the MOD News Desk on 0207 218 7907 or Royal Navy communications officer Sam Bannister on 023 9262 5256 or email sam.bannister@royalnavymail.mod.uk.
- For the latest news follow us on Twitter at @DefenceHQ.
- Keep up with news and updates from the Royal Navy and Royal Marines by following @RoyalNavy on Twitter.

[Press release: Filipinos awarded the prestigious Chevening Scholarships](#)

Twenty seven Filipino future leaders were awarded the prestigious Chevening Scholarships by the British government to study a one-year postgraduate course in the UK.

Funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and local partner organisations Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), Unilever Philippines, Megaworld Foundation, GlaxoSmithKline Philippines and HSBC, the Chevening scholarships enable outstanding emerging leaders to pursue a one-year master's degrees in their field of expertise at any UK university. The programme provides leaders a unique opportunity to advance academically, develop professionally, build networks, and explore the UK and its culture through fully-funded scholarships.

Ambassador-designate to the Philippines Daniel Pruce said:

Home to some of the world's best universities, the UK's higher education sector promotes the exchange of information and ideas, as well as the building of networks. Chevening enables emerging leaders from the Philippines to deepen their knowledge, expand their networks while immersing themselves in the UK culture. I congratulate the Chevening scholars from the Philippines and wish them the very best of luck with their studies in the UK.

This is the most diverse group of Chevening scholars from the Philippines. The scholars will be pursuing a wide variety of fields ranging through Health Policy, Sustainability and Environmental Policy, Security and Peace studies, Islamic Finance, Finance, Data Analytics, Material Engineering, Transport, Gender studies, law, Film and Media Arts.

The Chevening scholars are: Stephanie Tan, Micheline Rama, Bai Baraguir, Christian Yap, Cristina Villaraza, Danilo Vidad, Kristal Gazmen, Mary Baylosis, Richard Bolisay, Ben Kalaw, Ira Zamudio, Julius Cesar Alejandre, Antoinette Ramos, Loraine Gallevo, Renee Karunungan, Carmela Maranan, Twyla Rubin, Chiara Zambrano, Jam Usman, Miguel Paala, Camille Aromas, Carla Nochesada, Gerry Alcantara, Zayra Abraham, Geisha Sanchez, Francis Tiopanco and Carolyn Bonquin.

For more information on Chevening scholarships, visit the official [website](#). Applications are open for 2018/19 until 7 November 2017.

Contact

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Notes to the Editor:

Chevening began in 1983 and has developed into a prestigious international awards scheme. Chevening Scholars come from over 160 countries and territories worldwide (excluding the USA and the EU), and more than 1,500 scholarships were awarded in 2017/2018. There are over 48,000 Chevening Alumni around the world who comprise an influential and highly regarded global network.

The name 'Chevening' comes from Chevening House in Sevenoaks, Kent – currently the joint official residence of the UK's Foreign Secretary.

More information is available at the [official website](#)

[Press release: UK offering assistance](#)

to those affected by Sierra Leone mudslides

Britain is working with Sierra Leone to coordinate rescue efforts for victims of “devastating” mudslides and torrential flooding that have killed more than 300 people in and around the capital Freetown.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said the UK also stands ready to provide further assistance, with many victims trapped in homes buried under tons of mud.

On Monday, the West African nation’s national broadcaster said the death toll had risen above 300, but this does not include those buried alive in their homes and more bodies are expected to be found as floodwaters recede.

The Red Cross estimates 3,000 people have been left homeless by the disaster, with the figure expected to rise, while communications and electricity have also been affected.

Ms Patel said:

I am deeply saddened by the devastating landslides and flooding in Freetown, Sierra Leone which have claimed innocent lives.

My thoughts are with all those affected at this tragic time.

From stopping the Ebola outbreak in its tracks to helping the country rebuild after this deadly disease, the UK continues to stand by the people of Sierra Leone.

We have pre-positioned vital aid supplies and helped prepare the country’s response to disasters.

We are already working with the government of Sierra Leone to coordinate the rescue efforts and are ready to provide further assistance to those in need.

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Press release: Minister for Europe

[makes fifth official visit to Turkey](#)

A year on from the coup attempt, Minister for Europe, Sir Alan Duncan will travel to Ankara and Istanbul to show his support for Turkish democracy and continued UK-Turkish cooperation. Sir Alan will meet the Turkish Government, main opposition party (CHP), journalists and NGOs, to hear firsthand about the current situation in Turkey.

While Minister Duncan is in Turkey, he will meet members of a human rights organisation that the UK has funded to help Syrian children gain better access to education.

The Minister will also focus on the UK's cooperation with Turkey on science and technology. The UK is proud to support the Newton Fund, which is now the largest bilateral scientific cooperation programme in Turkey. Its budget of around £4 million supports over 170 different projects, in various areas including energy, economics, aerospace and disaster management, making the most of UK expertise in these areas. While in Istanbul, the Minister will visit the Istanbul Technical University, a key partner for this work.

Ahead of his trip Sir Alan Duncan said:

I'm delighted to travel to Turkey on my fifth official visit. Turkey is an indispensable partner for the UK. Our cooperation across security, trade and science is hugely beneficial to both our countries.

I once again condemn the terrible affront on Turkish democracy during the coup attempt last year. Turkey now needs to show its citizens and the world that things are returning to normality. It's crucial that Turkey protects the space for civil society and a free press to operate. As a close friend, the UK stands ready to support Turkey in its endeavours to protect democracy.

Further information

[Press release: Huge A47 improvement programme revealed](#)

Highways England has announced its preferred routes for dualling three parts of the 115 mile stretch of the A47 between Peterborough and Great Yarmouth, and improving several junctions and roundabouts, following a successful

public consultation.

Philip Davie, Highways England Programme Leader for the A47, said:

Delivery of these projects will improve users journey times and safety, so this work is a priority for Highways England.

We have listened to the publics' views and these have helped shape and inform our approach to our proposed schemes. Work now continues, adding detail to the design for each of the dualling and junction improvements, and on planning how we will deliver them in a way that keeps traffic moving.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for taking part. There will be further opportunities to have your say as the schemes develop.

Around Norwich, work includes dualling of the A47 between North Tuddenham and Easton, further east, between Blofield and North Burlingham, along with junction improvements at the Thickthorn Interchange with the A11 plus two busy junctions in Great Yarmouth, on what was formerly the A12.

Further west at Peterborough, the work involves dualling a busy stretch between Wansford (A1) and Sutton, and improving the Guyhirn junction with the A141.

The six consultations into the £300 million work were held between 13 March and 21 April this year. In total, 1,447 people had their say, with 1,333 attending the 19 public events. The six projects are all part of the Government's record £15 billion investment in England's motorways and major A roads, with £3 billion of that being invested in the East of England.

A47 North Tuddenham and Easton

Option 2 was chosen for the dualling between North Tuddenham and Easton, which will see the A47 upgraded to dual carriageway along its existing route, with the alignment been amended to address some of the key concerns raised.

A47 Blofield to North Burlingham

For the Blofield to North Burlingham dualling, option 4 was selected which will see a new stretch of dual carriageway built a little to the south of the existing A47.

A47 Thickthorn Interchange with A11

The consultation was about a single option for the junction improvements, which will now see delivered a direct link from the A11 northbound to the A47

eastbound, and similarly from the A47 westbound to the A11 southbound, alleviating congestion at the roundabout.

A47 Great Yarmouth junctions (formerly A12)

At Great Yarmouth, the Vauxhall roundabout will be enlarged and fully signalled, and get an extended bridge and a new slip road. There will also be minor improvements at the Station Approach junction, while the Gapton roundabout will be significantly improved as it is widened and fully signalled too.

A47 Wansford to Sutton

Option 2 was chosen for dualling the A47 between the A1 junction at Wansford and the dual carriageway section west of Peterborough. This will include building a new dual carriageway to the north, at the western end, and to the south, at the eastern end. There will also be a dedicated slip road from the A1 southbound to the A47 eastbound to alleviate congestion at the junction. Since the consultation, the alignment has been amended to address some of the key concerns raised.

A47 Guyhirn

The single option proposed for the Guyhirn junction will see the roundabout enlarged and the road over the River Nene Bridge widened to three lanes to ease congestion.

The six projects are all part of the Government's record £15 billion investment in England's motorways and major A roads, with £3 billion of that being invested in the East of England.

Subject to statutory processes, work on the six projects could begin as early as March 2020, with completion dates starting from March 2021.

For more information about our plans, [visit the scheme website](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.