

Defence Secretary announces launch of National Shipbuilding Office

Marking the start of London's International Shipping Week, the founding of the new National Shipbuilding Office is a significant milestone in the UK's shipbuilding renaissance.

The Office will be responsible for driving forward one of the Prime Minister's key domestic priorities across government, working in close collaboration with the sector industrial partners and supply chain.

Rear Admiral Rex Cox has been appointed as the Chief Executive of the new organisation. With over 30 years-experience in the Royal Navy, Rear Admiral Cox worked as the Defence policy advisor for Her Majesty's Treasury from 2015 to 2018 and most recently served as the Head of Capability Planning in the Finance and Military Capability directorate of the MOD.

Shipbuilding Tsar and Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The creation of the National Shipbuilding Office and the appointment of Rear Admiral Rex Cox marks a further demonstration of this Government's ambition to supercharge the UK's shipbuilding industry across all four corners of the UK.

The newly formed Office will be the strategic centre that drives transformative change across the shipbuilding industry and wider maritime sector and supply chains.

The shipbuilding industry is integral to the future of Defence and the Royal Navy, as outlined in the recent Defence Command Paper. The MoD is investing £1.7 billion in the sector, which is further enhanced by the £24 billion increase in Defence spending over the next four years, as announced by the Prime Minister last November.

The shipbuilding sector contributes a huge amount to the UK and in 2020 the ship and boat building, repair and maintenance services contributed £2.4 billion to the UK economy supporting around 44,000 jobs. There were 1,665 registered business in this industry, 99% of which were Small and Medium Enterprises.

Defence continues to support the Shipbuilding sector with contracts placed for five Type 31 frigates in 2019. The UK's Type 26 design is being exported to both Canada and Australia, creating and sustaining 5,000 jobs in the UK and around £6 billion of potential export contracts to benefit UK suppliers. The UK government also commissioned the RRS Sir David Attenborough, built in the UK by Cammell Laird, as one of the world's most advanced research

vessels.

Newly appointed National Shipbuilding Office Chief Executive Officer Rear Admiral Rex Cox said:

I am delighted to have been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer for the National Shipbuilding Office.

The Office has a mandate to drive transformative change across the UK's shipbuilding enterprise, creating a strategic focus across Government to champion our shipbuilding ambitions and the amazing talent across our maritime sector.

The National Shipbuilding Office will report directly to the Shipbuilding Tsar and will oversee all of the UK government's interests in UK shipbuilding, from coordinating the long-term pipeline of government vessels to ensuring skills priorities are aligned across the enterprise.

The launch of the National Shipbuilding Office is central to the National Shipbuilding Strategy Refresh which is due to be published later this year. The Refresh will encapsulate the broader shipbuilding enterprise, not just the naval sector. It will look at themes such as skills, exports, and technology, particularly the opportunities associated with clean maritime technology. The National Shipbuilding Office is central to this ambitious strategy and will take ownership of driving its delivery.