

News story: Defence Secretary cuts ribbon on Bolton-based missile factory

An opening ceremony saw the Defence Secretary unveil a plaque to mark the completion of five years of work and £50 million worth of investment into the high-tech site, which has been labelled 'the jewel in the crown' of weapons firm MBDA.

It marks a major milestone for the new site, where design, engineering and manufacturing experts are producing state-of-the-art equipment and systems. Complex weapons being built there will go on to do everything from arming F-35 fighter jets to protecting British troops and Royal Navy ships, whilst the move to the site has seen 100 new jobs created.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This £50m factory supports 700 jobs in Bolton, showing how central strong British defence industry is to our national prosperity.

MBDA's investment has created more than 100 new jobs, and this has been supported by a £400m contract from the Government helping to create a further 100 roles within the company.

You can't have prosperity without security. MBDA in Bolton is keeping Britain safe while creating highly-skilled jobs and opportunities, demonstrating our commitment to the people of Bolton and the North West.

MBDA has a history in the Lancashire region stretching back for more than 80 years when the Lostock site was first opened to build propellers for the war effort. The new facility will now replace that site and provide a truly cutting-edge solution, designed to meet the modern requirements of the MOD and worldwide export customers. It will significantly improve the company's manufacturing and test capabilities, as well as making them a more agile outfit whilst improving value-for-money for the taxpayer through contributing further cost reductions to the £1.4 billion in savings already generated by the innovative partnership approach to complex weapons between the MOD and MBDA.

Work at the site was given a boost just last April when the [Defence Secretary signed a £400 million deal](#) with MBDA to upgrade the ultra-accurate Brimstone missile to become compatible with Typhoon jets. That contract created around 130 new jobs and sustained a further 270 existing jobs at MBDA's sites in Bolton, Stevenage and across the supply chain.

The Bolton factory also works on the Sea Ceptor missile, which entered service on the Type 23 frigates in May and provides a powerful shield against airborne threats for Royal Navy ships. Land Ceptor, from the same family

[completed its first successful firing trials](#) in April 2018 as the future battlefield barrier launched from a vehicle on a Swedish test fire range.

Other missiles the site works on include:

- Meteor – world-class air-to-air, radar-guided missile able to defeat fast-moving manoeuvrable targets at long range. It will enter service on Typhoon with the RAF in 2018 and the F35 from 2023
- ASRAAM – Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile enabling UK pilots to engage and defend themselves against other aircraft ranging in size from large multi-engine aircraft to small drones. In service with the Royal Air Force on the Tornado and Typhoon aircraft
- Sea Venom – primarily anti-ship missile designed to destroy small, medium and large vessels, using an imaging infrared seeker that offers full ‘fire and forget’ capabilities in all environments will equip the Royal Navy’s Wildcat Helicopters
- Spear 3 – weapon powered by an innovative miniaturised turbojet engine instead of a rocket motor being developed to meet the F-35’s ground attack requirement

Chris Allam, Managing Director of MBDA UK, said:

I am delighted that the Secretary of State for Defence has today opened our brand-new facility in Bolton. This new site builds on 80 years of illustrious company history down the road at Lostock and prepares us for the challenges of the future. The significant investment placed by MBDA into Bolton is testament to our commitment to our people, to the area, and to delivering on our order book for our customers.

The new facility will also support the Anglo-French “One Complex Weapon” Centres of Excellence initiative – a cross Government scheme which will allow MBDA to develop cutting-edge technology in both the UK and France, while driving new ways of working and increasing efficiency.

The official opening also saw MBDA re-sign the Armed Forces Covenant by which it has already shown its commitment to the military community through facilitating flexible working, support and leave schemes for reservists and participating in the MOD Employer Recognition scheme as well as directly supporting several armed forces charities.