

Press release: Coventry company wins £63m Army vehicle support contract

These vehicles offer soldiers, medics and other Army personnel protection from mine and ballistic threats as they navigate rough terrains on the battlefield.

NP Aerospace has secured the £63m contract for the upkeep, update and upgrade of more than 2,200 protected mobility vehicles based in the UK and on operations.

The contract will support approximately 100 jobs in Coventry and 250 jobs across the UK supply chain until 2024. A further 50 jobs will be created at NP Aerospace's HQ in Foleshill.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Armoured vehicles save lives on the battlefield and this contract will ensure they are repaired, upgraded and returned to the frontline as quickly as possible.

This vital contract demonstrates how the MOD benefits every region of the UK by providing hundreds of skilled jobs and multi-million-pound investment to the West Midlands.

As an example, under this contract, a request could be made by Army personnel in Afghanistan to fit a new loudspeaker to a Foxhound patrol vehicle. NP Aerospace will rapidly design, procure and fit the equipment, as well as providing technical advice throughout the contract period.

Other protected mobility vehicles to benefit from the contract include Mastiff, Wolfhound, Ridgeback, RODET, Jackal, Coyote and Husky vehicles, all of which are currently being used by the British Army for either training or operations in the UK and overseas.

Director Land Equipment for DE&S Major General Colin McClean said:

The Protected Mobility fleet has been hugely important for defence over the last 15 years, saving numerous lives on operations. It is vital that we continue to invest in our battle-winning capabilities, ensuring that they are always ready for training or operational purposes.

Given its significant role now and in the future, I am pleased we are partnering with NP Aerospace to deliver this contract".

The MOD invested £622m with industry in the West Midlands in 2017/18, sustaining 4900 jobs across the region.

Press release: Government introduces Commonwealth Games Bill for Birmingham 2022

- Games will benefit Birmingham, West Midlands and the UK through job creation, business and tourism opportunities
- Bill includes measures to prohibit unauthorised sale of Games tickets, protect commercial rights and support transport flow to venues

Preparations for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games reached a major milestone today with the publication of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill, which will help to deliver a successful Games in 2022 by ensuring:

- unauthorised sales of Games tickets is prohibited
- transport around Games locations flows effectively
- commercial rights are robustly protected
- the government's funding of the Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee continues to comply with financial propriety rules

Mims Davies MP, Minister for Sport and Civil Society said:

“The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will be the biggest sporting event ever held in the city, and represents a truly fantastic opportunity to showcase the very best Birmingham, the West Midlands and the whole UK has to offer.

“With almost three years to go, this Bill is an important step. It helps ensure the Games will be delivered effectively and successfully.”

John Crabtree, Chairman of Birmingham 2022, said:

“The introduction of this Bill is a significant moment in our preparations for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and it contains a number of important, temporary measures to help ensure a truly world-class event.

“The Games is already proving to be a catalyst for the transformation of the whole region and hosting this event brings with it incredible opportunities and benefits for the people of the West Midlands. We are determined to use the Games as a way of demonstrating to the world the vibrancy and passion that we have to offer.”

Cllr Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council, said:

“We want Birmingham 2022 to be as successful as possible in all regards – from the way the sporting action is organised to the way people move around the city and the consumer protection measures that ensure the thousands of spectators coming to the city can enjoy their stay here as much as possible.

“Major sporting events held in the UK in the recent past show how important legislation is to achieve these aims. The Bill that is being introduced will help ensure the city remains open for business during a memorable and successful Games.”

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, said:

“The legislation is another key landmark on the road to Birmingham 2022 – which will be fantastic for both the city and the wider West Midlands.

“In just a few weeks it will be exactly three years to go until the Games get underway and I am delighted that we can already see plans starting to take shape – not least around the athletes’ village in Perry Barr.

“The West Midlands Combined Authority will be working very hard as a key partner to make sure the region as a whole is thoroughly prepared to take fullest advantage of all the benefits the Games brings, especially in terms of boosting business, tourism and cultural opportunities, as well as new skills and jobs.”

David Grevemberg CBE, Chief Executive of the Commonwealth Games Federation, said:

“The Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill is an important milestone that will enable the West Midlands to deliver a hugely successful multi-sport competition in 2022.

“The Commonwealth Games will provide a huge boost to Birmingham and act as stimulus package for regeneration, social cohesion and economic diversification.

“The UK has a fantastic opportunity to raise the bar for the Commonwealth Sports Movement and with just over three years to go, I believe we have all the ingredients for an incredible Games that will leave a lasting legacy for future generations.”

Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill

The Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bill contains a number of essential, temporary measures which all have precedence in previous legislation for major sporting events, including legislation passed for the London 2012 Olympics and Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Commercial protections

- This bill will ensure that only those authorised to associate with the Games – such as those who have contributed to the costs of delivering the Games – may do so.

- The Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee will be issuing clear guidance letting people know how they can show their support without falling foul of the law.
- In line with legislation for previous major events – this bill will restrict unauthorised advertising and street trading in the immediate vicinity of Games locations. This will improve the spectator experience by ensuring that advertising and trading do not obstruct easy movement around Games areas.
- Government will bring forward detailed regulations setting out exactly when and where these restrictions will apply – driven by when and how Games locations are used. The aim is to ensure that these measures take effect for the shortest possible time and only in the immediate vicinity of Games locations.

Ticketing

- Unauthorised sale of tickets for the Games will be prohibited. Only those authorised to sell tickets by the Organising Committee will be permitted to do so. This will ensure that, for those who want to attend the Games, buying tickets will be clear, simple and affordable.

Transport

- The measures in the bill will help ensure that transport in Birmingham and the region works – for spectators, for athletes and Games officials; and for those living and working around Games locations and across the region. They will allow short term changes of road use – where needed – to ensure those travelling to and from the Games can do so quickly, safely and with minimal disruption.
- The bill will set a statutory basis for the Games Transport Plan and provides the Transport Secretary with the necessary safeguards to guarantee the safe and reliable delivery of transport operations at Games time.

Funding

- In light of HMT guidance about managing public money we are bringing forward a technical provision to provide the necessary financial propriety basis for ongoing government funding of the Organising Committee for the Games.

Notes to editors:

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will take place between 27th July and 7th August. It will be the biggest sporting event ever held in the city, featuring thousands of world-class athletes, over a million spectators and an estimated global TV audience of 1.5 billion.

Press release: Sentence increase for fraudsters who carried out student visa scam

Three people found guilty of running a student visa scam have had their sentence increased by the Court of Appeal for being too lenient.

Tashina Nayyar, Muhammed Babar Bashir and Koteswara Nallamothu were involved in two separate schemes worth over £650,000 that sold over 1,300 fake Confirmation of Acceptance to Study (CAS) documents to people wanting to enter or remain in the UK illegally.

Nayyar was sentenced in January at Manchester Crown Court to 2 years 3 months' imprisonment. Bashir and Nallamothu were then sentenced in March at the same Court to 6 years' imprisonment and 2 years' imprisonment suspended for 2 years, respectively.

The sentences of Nayyar, Bashir and Nallamothu have now been increased by the Court of Appeal to 4 years, 8 years, and 3 years 11 months respectively, after the Attorney General's Office referred them as unduly lenient.

After the hearing, the Solicitor General, Lucy Frazer QC MP, said:

"This fraudulent conduct deliberately undermined the UK immigration and education systems for the financial benefit of the offenders. The offenders abused a system designed to help genuine students from outside the EU. I am pleased that the Court of Appeal has agreed that their original sentences failed to reflect the risks that this type of offending creates."

Press release: Foreign Office launches 2018 Human Rights and Democracy Report

The Foreign Office has launched its [Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report 2018](#) today (Thursday 6 June 2019).

2018 marked the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the 20th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. The report examines what the government has done to promote and defend human rights globally, echoing the principles and values enshrined in these Declarations. It focuses on the situation in 30 countries which the FCO has designated as its Human Rights Priority Countries* and highlights our work on a wide range of thematic issues.

The Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, said:

Human rights and democracy are fundamental to the values the UK champions on the world stage. I recently appointed Rita French as an International Ambassador for Human Rights to strengthen our ongoing work.

Today's report makes for sobering reading. Respect for human rights globally seems to be at an all-time low. As Foreign Secretary I will ensure that British diplomats continue to defend and protect human rights wherever they are.

In particular, I am deeply concerned that 2018 saw the murder of 99 journalists around the world. A free press is essential to open societies. I believe the UK, alongside all democratic countries, must protect the freedom and safety of those who must be able to hold the powerful to account, without fear of retribution.

Minister of Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon launched the report to an audience of civil society, Ambassadors and NGOs today. He said:

70 years have passed since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights set out the fundamental rights that all people are entitled to.

Today we must continue to fight for the vulnerable and those who are discriminated against for their colour, creed or religion because in too many countries across the world, human rights and the rule of law are not respected.

Standing up for human rights is not only the right thing; it also helps to create a safer, more prosperous and progressive world.

The report sets out the UK's actions in a wide range of areas, including leadership on promoting media freedom and a commitment to deliver change for those who are abused, targeted or killed for their beliefs. It comes ahead of the international Media Freedom Conference which will be held in London in July. Co-hosted with Canada, the conference aims to highlight abuse of media freedom and raise the cost for those who wish to restrict it.

The Foreign Secretary recently appointed an [International Ambassador for Human Rights, Rita French](#), to help promote human rights globally.

*The 30 priority countries are Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burma, Burundi, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Libya, Maldives, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

[News story: Developing the Royal Navy's autonomous underwater capability: commercial clarification](#)

Please be advised that, in respect to the Defence and Security Accelerator competition: [developing the Royal Navy's autonomous underwater capability](#), Dstl Commercial Services have offered a commercial clarification in respect to industry queries around the agreement of a Limitation of a Contractor's Liability to the [proposed Framework Agreement](#):

It is not possible to request a Limit of a Contractor's Liability (LoCL) under a Framework Agreement because it is impossible to calculate an appropriate LoCL amount with such a broad scope of work. Requests for a LoCL to the overarching framework agreement will be turned down, and proposals that include such requests will be deemed to be commercially non-compliant and excluded from the competition.

However, in the event of placement of any Framework Agreement as a result of this Themed Competition, under the Tasking element of the aforementioned Framework Agreement (Item 2 of the proposed Framework Agreement only) on a Task by Task basis we will consider the risks associated with that Task and may consider it appropriate to agree a LoCL against that specific task only.

This does not apply to Item 1 of the proposed Framework Agreement. Requests for a LoCL against Item 1 of the Framework Agreement will not be considered and proposals that include them excluded from the competition.

Please be advised that this clarification explicitly applies to the Defence and Security Accelerator competition: [developing the Royal Navy's autonomous underwater capability](#) only.