

[Press release: Tech innovators urged to use their skills to tackle terror threat](#)

The UK is already renowned for its world-leading academics, researchers, engineers and technology developers, but today the Government is urging these talented individuals to come together and further support our work to keep the public safe.

In his speech Security Minister Ben Wallace is expected to say:

“Society must come together to defeat terrorism which is why I am delighted to see representatives here from businesses from across the country who take seriously the need to protect the public.

“In light of the horrific attacks in London and Manchester, the Government has committed to review its counter-terror strategy and further to this I am announcing today that we are making up to £2 million available to fund research into cutting edge technology and behavioural science projects designed to keep people safe in crowds.

“The threat from terror does not stand still so neither will we, which is why we are calling on the best and the brightest from the science and technology sector to come forward with their ideas and proposals to support our ongoing work to keep people safe.”

The [competition](#) is being run in a partnership between the [Home Office](#) and [Defence and Security Accelerator](#) with support from the [Royal Society](#). The competition is seeking research proposals from the country’s brightest talents for innovative or novel ideas to reduce the threat from terrorist attacks using weapons or explosives.

This [competition](#) forms part of the science and technology programme within the Government’s current counter-terrorism strategy.

Head of the Defence and Security Accelerator, Lucy Mason, said:

“The terrible terrorist attacks in London and Manchester shocked and appalled all of us. Protecting people from terrorism is something we can all do, industry and academics and public servants.

“We don’t have all the answers. So we must bring together the brightest minds from the private sector, and academia to help find solutions to help keep our country and people safe and secure.

“The Defence and Security Accelerator exists to help government find and exploit game-changing ideas to help the security services and police stay one step ahead of those who threaten our safety. By funding and fast tracking the development of real solutions, we help to bring the innovation community

together, rapidly.

“So today I reach out to our innovation community to be part of something bigger and show their support for their country. I’d encourage anyone who feels they have a great idea that can help keep our crowded areas safe to visit our website for more information on this competition.”

Vice-President of the Royal Society, Professor Alex Halliday, said:

“Research and innovation are key to improving lives in so many ways. That includes finding new ways to fight terrorist threats.

“I am sure the ingenuity of the UK’s innovators will deliver new technologies that will help make us all safer.”

[News story: Accelerator Innovation Network event: 27 July 2017](#)

The event is taking place at the [Chelsea Harbour Hotel](#) in London.

Technical experts will provide specific information about the themed competition: [‘Improving crowd resilience’](#).

This Home Office (HO) competition, delivered through the Defence and Security Accelerator, seeks innovative or novel ideas to reduce the threat from the terrorist or malicious use of explosives and weapons in public spaces by using the crowd as a sensor. We envisage these capabilities and systems being used in crowded spaces, such as shopping centres, sports stadia and entertainment venues.

This competition seeks proposals for technologies, systems and behavioural sciences, as part of a whole systems approach to improve the detection of explosives and weapons within crowded spaces.

Bruce Hardie, Accelerator Innovation Partner will brief on what the Accelerator is all about, our funding opportunities and how to work with us.

In addition, Bruce will talk about [how to submit a great proposal](#) to the Accelerator.

Attendees will be able to book a face-to-face meeting with Accelerator staff and subject matter experts to discuss potential proposals to the [‘Improving crowd resilience’ themed competition](#). once you’ve signed up for the main event.

There will be networking opportunities with other potential bidders, current suppliers, Accelerator, Dstl and military experts.

Statement to Parliament: Main civil engineering works contracts for Stage 1 of HS2 Phase One

I would like to update the House on the progress of High Speed Two.

Phase One of the railway – from London to West Midlands – is progressing well. In February 2017, Parliament granted powers to construct the route from London to Birmingham, including new stations at London Euston, Old Oak Common, Birmingham Curzon Street and Birmingham Interchange, near Solihull. As a result, enabling works on the route, contracts for which were awarded last November, have now started.

In March last year, the tender shortlist for Phase One of the main civil engineering works contracts, comprising bridges, tunnels, embankments and viaducts, was released. These are the biggest HS2 contracts to date. In a clear signal of how work is progressing, this morning I am pleased to announce the decision to award Stage 1 of these contracts, comprising design and construction preparation works, to the joint ventures set out below. Contracts are expected to be signed after completion of the mandatory standstill period. The joint ventures are as follows:

- Area South
 - S1: Euston Tunnels and Approaches – SCS JV (Skanska Construction UK Ltd, Costain Ltd, STRABAG AG)
 - S2: Northolt Tunnels – SCS JV (Skanska Construction UK Ltd, Costain Ltd, STRABAG AG)
- Area Central
 - C1: Chiltern Tunnels and Colne Valley Viaduct – Align JV (Bouygues Travaux Publics, VolkerFitzpatrick, Sir Robert McAlpine)
 - C2: North Portal Chiltern Tunnels to Brackley – CEK JV (Carillion Construction Ltd, Eiffage Genie Civil SA, Kier Infrastructure and Overseas Ltd)
 - C3: Brackley to South Portal of Long Itchington Wood Green Tunnel – CEK JV (Carillion Construction Ltd, Eiffage Genie Civil SA, Kier Infrastructure and Overseas Ltd)
- Area North
 - N1: Long Itchington Wood Green Tunnel to Delta Junction and Birmingham Spur – BBV JV (Balfour Beatty Group Ltd, VINCI Construction Grands Projets, VINCI Construction UK Ltd, VINCI Construction Terrassement)
 - N2: Delta Junction to WCML Tie-In – BBV JV (Balfour Beatty Group Ltd, VINCI Construction Grands Projets, VINCI Construction UK Ltd, VINCI Construction Terrassement)

The expected total value of these contracts including both Stage 1 and Stage 2 (the full construction phase) is currently estimated to be worth £6.6 billion. Stage 2 will commence in 2019 and, along with Stage 1, is expected to support 16,000 jobs across the country. In addition, they are expected to generate 7,000 contract opportunities in the supply chain, of which around 60% are expected to go to SMEs.

HS2 stations at Euston, Old Oak Common and in Birmingham will be central to HS2 and the work needed to develop designs is also well underway. Last week, both the invitations to tender (ITTs) for the station design services contracts for all 4 Phase One stations and the invitation to participate in dialogue (ITPD) for a Euston Master Development Partner were released to shortlisted bidders. These are significant milestones. They show how progress is continuing at pace in order to deliver stations that will be embraced by the local communities, drive economic growth and provide seamless journeys for passengers.

We are also making good progress on the rest of the route. Later today, I will be introducing a Bill to Parliament seeking the necessary powers to construct Phase 2a of HS2, from West Midlands to Crewe. Phase 2a will bring HS2 within reach of all the cities in the north that have existing rail connections to Crewe. I will also be updating the House on other developments along the Phase Two route including decisions on the Phase 2b route from Crewe to Manchester and West Midlands to Leeds.

The progress we are making with HS2 is clear evidence that the government is delivering on its commitments and is getting on with building the infrastructure needed to build a stronger, fairer, more prosperous Britain.

[First big HS2 contracts to build Britain's new railway will support 16,000 jobs](#) news story, 17 July 2017.

[News story: First big HS2 contracts to build Britain's new railway will support 16,000 jobs](#)

- government confirms plans to extend HS2 from Birmingham to north-west, East Midlands and Yorkshire
- decision announced on the first and second stages of the big construction contracts – valued at around £6.6 billion and supporting 16,000 jobs
- HS2 trains set to carry more than 300,000 people a day – freeing up thousands of seats and creating extra local services

The [winners of the major construction contracts for Britain's new railway were announced today](#) (17 July 2017), with the £6.6 billion contracts supporting 16,000 jobs across the country.

The huge infrastructure investment covers the main civil engineering work on the first phase of HS2 between London and Birmingham – including construction of tunnels, bridges, embankments and viaducts.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling announced the decision to award contracts today, which will mean the new high speed link reaching Birmingham by 2026.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

This is a hugely important step in the construction of Britain's new railway and underlines this government's determination to deliver an economy that works for all.

HS2 will deliver vital links between some of our country's biggest cities, helping to drive economic growth and productivity in the north and midlands.

As well as providing desperately needed new seats and better connecting our major cities, HS2 will help rebalance our economy.

We will now get on with building the railway, while continuing to ensure affected communities get appropriate support and are treated with fairness, compassion and respect.

David Higgins, Chairman of HS2 Ltd, said:

This is a huge day for the HS2 project and for the country. These contracts will support 16,000 jobs here in Britain and will create opportunities for thousands of SMEs.

HS2 was always designed to be much more than just a high speed railway and today we can see the opportunities it brings right around the country – spreading prosperity, acting as a catalyst for investment and rebalancing our economy 10 years before the railway even opens. Business now has the surety to invest with confidence to build a legacy for Britain.

HS2 could carry more than 300,000 people a day. And with fast trains using the new line, there will be extra space for more trains on the existing rail network.

Benefits will be felt across the network with trains running as far as Scotland and the number of seats available out of Euston in peak hours more than doubled.

In total, construction of the full HS2 route to the north-west and Yorkshire

will create up to 25,000 jobs and 2,000 apprenticeships. Another 3,000 people will operate HS2 and it is estimated that growth around new HS2 stations will create another 100,000 jobs.

In February, Parliament granted powers to construct the Phase One route from London Euston to Birmingham, with the route opening in 2026.

The winning bidders to build the first phase of the route are:

Area South

- Euston Tunnels and Approaches – SCS JV (Skanska Construction UK Ltd, Costain Ltd, STRABAG AG)
- Northolt Tunnels – SCS JV (Skanska Construction UK Ltd, Costain Ltd, STRABAG AG)

Area Central

- Chiltern Tunnels and Colne Valley Viaduct – Align JV (Bouygues Travaux Publics, VolkerFitzpatrick, Sir Robert McAlpine)
- North Portal Chiltern Tunnels to Brackley – CEK JV (Carillion Construction Ltd, Eiffage Genie Civil SA, Kier Infrastructure and Overseas Ltd)
- Brackley to South Portal of Long Itchington Wood Green Tunnel – CEK JV (Carillion Construction Ltd, Eiffage Genie Civil SA, Kier Infrastructure and Overseas Ltd)

Area North

- Long Itchington Wood Green Tunnel to Delta Junction and Birmingham Spur – BBV JV (Balfour Beatty Group Ltd, VINCI Construction Grands Projets, VINCI Construction UK Ltd, VINCI Construction Terrassement)
- Delta Junction to WCML Tie-In – BBV JV (Balfour Beatty Group Ltd, VINCI Construction Grands Projets, VINCI Construction UK Ltd, VINCI Construction Terrassement)

Preparatory works are already underway, with main construction work starting in 2018/19 following a period of detailed design work.

In addition, HS2 stations at Euston, Old Oak Common and in Birmingham will be central to HS2 and the work needed to develop designs is also well underway. Both the invitations to tender (ITTs) for the station design services contracts for all 4 Phase One stations and the invitation to participate in dialogue (ITPD) for the Euston Master Development Partner have been released to shortlisted bidders.

These are significant milestones which show how progress is continuing to deliver stations that will be embraced by the local communities, drive economic growth and provide seamless journeys for passengers.

A series of other HS2 announcements are taking place today.

The Transport Secretary will today publish a Bill to deliver the next phase of HS2, from the West Midlands to the West Coast Main Line south of Crewe.

This means – subject to Parliamentary approval – this part of the route can open in 2027, 6 years earlier than planned, to bring the benefits of HS2 to the north and Scotland sooner.

The Transport Secretary will also confirm the final Phase 2b route, from Crewe to Manchester and Birmingham to the East Midlands and Leeds. This phase will complete HS2 and unlock the transformative project's full benefits for the country.

Press release: Home Secretary announces action plan to tackle acid attacks

As part of the action plan, the Crown Prosecution Service's (CPS) guidance to prosecutors will be reviewed to ensure it makes clear that acid and other corrosive substances can be classed as dangerous weapons, and what is required to prove intent.

In addition, the Poisons Act 1972 will be reviewed to assess whether it should cover more acids and harmful substances, and the Home Office will work with police and the Ministry of Justice to assess whether the powers available to the courts, including sentencing, are sufficient to deal with these serious offences.

These measures will form part of a wide-ranging review of the law enforcement and criminal justice response, existing legislation, access to harmful products and the support offered to victims.

New guidance will also be provided to police officers on preventing attacks, searching potential perpetrators for harmful substances and responding to victims at the scene. And further work will also take place with retailers to agree measures to restrict sales of acids and other corrosive substances.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

Acid attacks are horrific crimes which have a devastating effect on victims, both physically and emotionally.

It is vital that we do everything we can to prevent these sickening attacks happening in the first place.

We must also ensure that the police and other emergency services

are able to respond as effectively as possible, that sentences reflect the seriousness of the offences and victims are given the immediate support they need.

The announcement comes as indicative figures from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) suggest that more than 400 acid or corrosive substance attacks were carried out in the six months up to April 2017, based on returns from 39 forces in England and Wales. The returns also indicated that bleach, ammonia and acid were the most commonly used substances.

The action plan has been developed with the help of the police, health professionals and retailers and follows an event on Tuesday, 4 July, which was hosted by the Home Office and the NPCC.

Other measures in the action plan include:

- improving police recording and reporting of offences;
- commissioning research to better understand the motivations for carrying out these attacks;
- confirming appropriate support is provided to victims, from the initial medical response to giving evidence in court and the long-term recovery beyond; and
- ensuring that victim impact statements are completed in every case by the police so courts are made aware of the full impact of the attack. The police will also be encouraged to prepare Community Impact Statements to show how such attacks have affected communities.

NPCC lead for Corrosive Attacks, Assistant Chief Constable Rachel Kearton said:

Police have dealt with a number of high-profile cases in recent months and we continue to collect data from police forces across England and Wales to understand the scale and extent of these attacks and develop our ability to support and protect victims.

While it is virtually impossible to ban the sale of all corrosive substances, we are working closely with the Home Office and retailers to determine how we can keep these products from people who intend to cause harm.

I would urge anyone who is a victim of this type of attack to report it so that we can deal with the matter positively and sensitively.

The Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, Sarah Newton, will outline the plans during a Parliamentary debate in the Commons tomorrow (Monday, 17 July).