

[News story: Multi-billion pound defence deal secures thousands of UK jobs](#)

Manufacture of the first three of these new highly capable warships will secure approximately 1700 skilled shipbuilding jobs in Scotland and 1700 jobs throughout the supply chain across Britain until 2035.

Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon said:

The Type 26 Frigate is a cutting-edge warship, combining the expertise of the British shipbuilding industry with the excellence of the Royal Navy. We will cut steel on the first ship later this month – a hugely significant milestone that delivers on our commitment to maintain our global naval power. These ships will be a force to be reckoned with, there to protect our powerful new carriers and helping keep British interests safe across the world.

Backed by a rising defence budget and a £178bn Equipment Plan, the Type 26 programme will bring vast economic benefits to Scotland and the wider UK. The contract is structured to ensure value for taxpayers' money and, importantly, now designed to protect them from extra bills from project overrun. The investment will secure hundreds of skilled jobs at BAE Systems on the Clyde for the next twenty years, and thousands of jobs in the supply chain across Britain.

The Royal Navy's new Type 26 frigate.

These world-class warships will protect the nation's nuclear deterrent and the Royal Navy's new aircraft carriers, the first of which, HMS Queen Elizabeth, has recently taken to sea for the first time. The ships specialise in anti-submarine warfare, protecting the UK's overseas territories and interests across the globe. The flexible design will allow the capabilities to be adapted throughout its lifespan to counter future threats.

The deal also reaffirms the commitment made by the Government in the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR15) to build eight Type 26 ships. The contract for the second batch of five ships is expected to be negotiated in the early 2020s, paving the way to sustain further jobs in Scotland and across the wider supply chain for many years to come. The Type 26 programme will secure the long term future of the Scottish shipbuilding industry.

Admiral Sir Philip Jones, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval

Staff, said:

For an island nation, dependent on maritime trade, a strong Royal Navy is essential for our national security and economic prosperity. Today there are over 500 submarines in the world operated by 40 navies. As one of the quietest and most potent submarine-hunters of any Navy, the Type 26 will have a crucial role to play to protect the nuclear deterrent and our two new aircraft carriers.

Although designed to fight and win in the most demanding scenarios, they will also work alongside our international partners to protect and promote the United Kingdom's interests around the world.

A Computer Generated Image of the Royal Navy's new Type 26 frigate.

The Type 26 will be the most advanced anti-submarine warfare ship in its class around the world. The MOD is exploring potential export opportunities where there is strong interest from international customers.

The contract is specifically structured to motivate both sides to deliver to a successful outcome where both parties share in the pain and gain in the delivery of the programme. This will deliver better value for money for the UK taxpayer.

The MOD spent £1.5 billion with Scottish businesses last year and supports 9,700 jobs across Scotland. The Royal Navy's new Queen Elizabeth Carriers are being built in Rosyth and the new Offshore Patrol Vessels are under construction in Govan and Scotstoun ahead of this summer's Type 26 Frigate steel cut.

[News story: Business Minister Margot James urges FTSE 350 firms to improve gender transparency](#)

Business Minister Margot James is urging chief executives of FTSE 350 companies to be transparent about the number of women in their leadership positions and hand over data to independent reviewers on increasing female representation in business.

It comes after the leaders of an independent review into increasing female representation in the senior ranks of the UK's largest businesses wrote to FTSE 350 companies requesting their latest data for the number of men and

women in the executive pipeline.

In November 2016, Sir Philip Hampton, Chairman of GlaxoSmithKline, and Dame Helen Alexander, Chair of UBM, who are chairing the review, set a voluntary target for FTSE 100 companies to increase the proportion of women sitting on executive committees and their direct reports to 33% by 2020. Statistics published at the time showed just 25% of those positions were occupied by women.

The latest statistics on gender representation at the top of business are expected to be published later this year.

Business Minister Margot James said:

Businesses have already made great strides over the last six years by more than doubling the number of women in board positions.

But our largest businesses must continue to grasp the nettle which is why today I am urging CEOs of FTSE 350 companies to help drive the agenda for greater inclusivity in the workplace by becoming more transparent about the gender makeup of their leadership teams.

Sir Philip Hampton and Dame Helen Alexander said:

We look forward to receiving the data from FTSE 350 companies on the gender representation at Executive Committee and Direct Reports over the summer and will be compiling our report on progress and the sharing of best practice for publication later this year.

We anticipate the majority of companies will have robust action plans in place now to address any shortfall of women in their top teams, and welcome efforts from all companies to improve the gender balance, particularly those companies yet to meet the 33% target.

In the coming months, Business Minister Margot James is expected to chair the first ever meeting of the Business Diversity and Inclusion Group, set up to make sure government and industry work more closely to remove barriers in the workplace.

The group will bring together the leaders of four industry-led diversity reviews:

- Sir Philip Hampton and Dame Helen Alexander
- Baroness McGregor-Smith, who led a review into BME participation and progression in the workplace
- Sir John Parker, who is leading a review into diversity on boards
- Jayne-Anne Gadhia, Government champion for women in finance

Separately, on 6 April 2017 legislation came into effect, requiring employers with more than 250 staff to publish their gender pay gaps. They must publish the following figures on their own website and on a government website:

- Gender pay gap (mean and median averages)
- Gender bonus gap (mean and median averages)
- Proportion of men and women receiving bonuses
- Proportion of men and women in each quartile of the organisation's pay structure

Notes to editors

1. The Hampton-Alexander Review was published in November 2016. The key recommendations were:
 - 33% target for FTSE 350 Boards by the end of 2020
 - 33% target for FTSE 100 Executive Committees and Direct Reports to the Executive Committee on a combined basis by 2020
 - FTSE 350 companies to increase number of women roles of Chair, Senior Independent Director and into Executive Director positions on their boards.
2. The Government has invited the following individuals and organisations to be founder members of the Business Diversity and Inclusion Group, which will meet quarterly:
 - Sir Philip Hampton and Dame Helen Alexander
 - Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith
 - Sir John Parker
 - Jayne-Anne Gadhia
 - Confederation of British Industry
 - Institute of Directors
 - BITC
 - Financial Reporting Council
 - Equality and Human Rights Commission

[Press release: UK takes key step towards fair new fishing policy after Brexit](#)

The United Kingdom will take an historic step towards delivering a fairer deal for the UK fishing industry this week by triggering the withdrawal from an arrangement that allowed foreign countries access to UK waters, Environment Secretary Michael Gove confirmed today.

As part of moves to prepare the UK for the opportunities of leaving the European Union, the Government will officially begin withdrawal from the London Fisheries Convention.

The London Fisheries Convention, signed in 1964 before the UK joined the European Union, allows vessels from five European countries to fish within six and 12 nautical miles of the UK's coastline. It sits alongside the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which allows all European vessels access between 12 and 200 nautical miles of the UK and sets quotas for how much fish each nation can catch.

On Monday the UK will notify the other Member States signed up to the London Fisheries Convention, triggering a two-year withdrawal period – in a similar way to the Article 50 letter which began a two-year withdrawal from the EU.

Securing a fairer deal for the UK fishing industry is a Manifesto pledge and one of the Government's key objectives for Brexit.

When we leave the EU, we will no longer be bound by the Common Fisheries Policy but without action, restrictions under the historic London Fisheries Convention would still apply. By withdrawing from the London Fisheries Convention we will no longer be bound by the existing access agreements.

Instead we will regain control of fishing access to our waters and become fully responsible for the management of fisheries so we can ensure a fair, sustainable and profitable industry for all our fishermen.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Leaving the London Fisheries Convention is an important moment as we take back control of our fishing policy. It means for the first time in more than fifty years we will be able to decide who can access our waters.

This is an historic first step towards building a new domestic fishing policy as we leave the European Union – one which leads to a more competitive, profitable and sustainable industry for the whole of the UK.

As announced in the Queen's Speech, the Government will introduce a [Fisheries Bill](#) to control access to the UK's waters and set fishing quotas once we have left the EU. This is supplemented by our decision to leave the London Fisheries Convention.

Working closely with our neighbours, the Government will design a new fishing policy which allows the fishing industry and coastal communities to thrive, in line with our international obligations, as we build a deep and special partnership with the European Union after Brexit.

Barrie Deas, Chief Executive of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, said:

This is welcome news and an important part of establishing the UK as an independent coastal state with sovereignty over its own

exclusive economic zone.

The fisheries sector contributes £1.3 billion to the economy, employing 34,600 people. There were over 6,000 UK fishing vessels in 2015, which landed 708,000 tonnes of fish – worth £775 million.

An estimated 10,000 tonnes of fish, including mackerel and herring, was caught by fishing vessels from the London Fisheries Convention countries France, Belgium, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands in 2015 within 12 nautical miles of the British coast – worth an estimated £17 million.

In the coming months and years, the government will be working with the industry and marine scientists, as well as the devolved administrations, to preserve and increase fish stocks for their long-term sustainability, and secure prosperity for fishermen across the UK when we leave the European Union.

Starting this summer, there will be a period of engagement on the Fisheries Bill with the devolved administrations, fishermen, trade organisations, fish processors and the public to make sure we deliver a deal that works for the whole of the UK.

[Press release: Powerful new forum to boost jobs and growth in UK digital economy](#)

- First meeting of Digital Economy Council chaired by the Culture Secretary
- Council will see Government, academia and tech firms work together
- Aims to help increase value of sector already worth £118 billion a year

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport will chair the first meeting of the Digital Economy Council (DEC) on Monday 3rd July. It will bring together some of the most influential voices in the tech sector to stimulate new growth and deliver new jobs in the digital economy.

The Council has been set up to provide a forum for collaboration as Government works with leading industry figures on the implementation of the UK Digital Strategy and the development of a Digital Charter. Its members include TechUK, Google, Facebook, Cisco, Dotforge, Coadec, TV Squared, BT and Apple.

The Digital Strategy includes plans to boost the nation's digital skills, infrastructure and innovation, and aims to make the UK the best place to

invest in tech. It will help to deliver the Government's ambition to make the UK the best place to start and run a digital business – creating more of the high-skilled, high-paid jobs of the future with the benefits felt in all four corners of the United Kingdom.

The Council will help ensure our tech sector's enormous potential is fulfilled as we leave the European Union. The UK is already home to more than 200,000 digital businesses supporting more than 1.4 million jobs – with the fastest growing-digital hubs from 2010-14 in Southampton, West Cornwall and Dundee. It will also help break down barriers so every individual and every business can seize the opportunities of digital technology.

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Karen Bradley said:

I'm delighted to be bringing together this powerful group of tech experts, industry leaders and global > innovators to spearhead new growth in our thriving digital economy.

The Digital Economy Council will play a vital part in helping us achieve our aim of making the UK the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business with the benefits enjoyed throughout society and in every part of our country.

The Secretary of State will use the first meeting to ask the tech community how Government can better work with them to take advantage of the opportunities and overcome the challenges of digital technology, as well as set out the priorities for the council for year ahead.

This could include looking at new ways to improve small and medium businesses' digital transformation, how to boost the digital skills pipeline and assessing how the country can better commercialise its world-leading research.

She will also express her confidence in the UK's world-leading digital economy and commit to working with other Digital Economy Council members so technology delivers economic growth and prosperity across the whole of the UK, as we prepare to leave the European Union.

The Council, which will meet quarterly, includes leading UK digital businesses as well as global tech firms and representatives of the broader digital economy.

Jacqueline de Rojas, President of techUK, said:

Tech can be a powerful growth engine of the UK economy post-Brexit. For that to happen there is much that we need to get right. From the Digital Strategy to the proposed new Digital Charter, I'm happy Government is working with tech businesses to ensure that we unlock the next wave of digital growth.

As the President of techUK, I am delighted to serve on the Digital Economy Council to ensure a strong voice for the whole of the tech industry, from the largest employers through to the innovative SMEs and start-ups.

Government will also shortly convene the Digital Economy Advisory Group, which represents a variety of UK tech businesses, to focus on the specific challenges and opportunities of starting and growing a tech business.

Media enquiries – please contact the DCMS News and Communications team on 020 7211 2210 or out of hours on 07699 751153.

The seven pillars of the Digital Strategy are:

1. Connectivity – building world-class digital infrastructure for the UK
2. Digital skills and inclusion – giving everyone access to the digital skills they need
3. The digital sectors – making the UK the best place to start and grow a digital business
4. The wider economy – helping every British business become a digital business
5. A safe and secure cyberspace – making the UK the safest place in the world to live and work online
6. Digital government – maintaining the UK government as a world leader in serving its citizens online
7. Data – unlocking the power of data in the UK economy and improving public confidence in its use

[News story: Joint Concert by British and Armenian Military Bands in Yerevan](#)

On June 23, The Salamanca Band and the Bugles of The Rifles of the UK Ministry of Defence performed a joint concert with the Honour Guard Unit and the Military Band of the General Staff of the Armenia Ministry of Defence at Freedom Square in Yerevan, Armenia.

The UK and Armenia Ministries of Defence organised the concert as part of the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Minister of Defence of the Republic of Armenia Vigen Sargsyan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Relations Garen Nazarian and Her Majesty's Ambassador to Armenia Judith Farnworth attended the event.

Ambassador Farnworth mentioned in her opening remarks:

Over the last 25 years the United Kingdom and the Republic of

Armenia have developed strong partnerships in a range of areas – political, economic, commercial, cultural, and, of course, defence. The UK is committed to building on these strong foundations by further developing our cooperation for the benefit of Armenia and the United Kingdom.

The Deputy Foreign Minister Garen Nazarian said:

Not incidentally, we are commencing the celebrations with a cultural event. These type of events are aimed at promoting mutual understanding and increasing contacts between our societies.

Mr Nazarian also underlined that the two countries cooperate successfully in the bilateral and multilateral formats, focusing on the challenges threatening the international community and the issues related to addressing them. He expressed hope that the positive dynamics of close cooperation will be maintained through joint efforts and the interstate dialogue will be raised to a qualitatively new level.

The sight of the two military bands drew large crowds of appreciative onlookers who enjoyed the performance of classic and popular British and Armenian tunes.

Besides this concert, the British military band also performed at the Yerevan State Conservatory and during the Queen's Birthday Party in Armenia.

Visit the [British Embassy Yerevan's Facebook page](#) for more photos of the Salamanca's performances in Armenia.