

Programme and Project Partners announce winners of third multi- million pound framework

Innovation in awarding long-term work packages is continuing at the Sellafield site, with the Programme and Project Partners appointing its next partners to support transformation and a lasting legacy for future generations.

The partners have appointed Balfour Beatty Kilpatrick and Doosan Babcock to deliver the mechanical and pipework requirement, through a framework agreement worth £112 to £237 million, over the life of the programme.

The mechanical and pipework package is the third key delivery partner framework to be awarded by the partners as part of a major programme spanning the next 18 years.

The framework has been procured under a new multi project procurement model which encourages long-term collaboration throughout the supply chain, enhanced project delivery, and paves the way for greater economic and social impact in the West Cumbria region.

This new model will see the appointment of key delivery partners to deliver work packages covering everything from building fit out, groundworks and general civils to steelwork and cladding.

Will Smith, managing director, Balfour Beatty Kilpatrick, said:

Utilising our expert capabilities and collaborative delivery approach, Balfour Beatty Kilpatrick is perfectly positioned to deliver the latest mechanical and pipework framework at Sellafield.

Having now been appointed to the third Programme and Project Partners' framework, we have cemented our status as a key delivery partner; through which we will continue to deliver a lasting positive legacy across the region.

Cameron Gilmour, vice president for nuclear and defence, Doosan Babcock, said:

The 18-year framework provides a unique opportunity to build upon our site-delivery and expertise heritage at Sellafield and provide further value to the local West Cumbrian area.

Programme and Project Partner head of supply chain Peter Hogg added:

We are delighted to have confirmed our third long-term work partnership. I'm confident that these 2 companies will bring positive innovations and value to our projects.

They will also be working closely with small and medium-sized enterprises within these frameworks to ensure enhanced project delivery, and increased social impact and economic benefits for our communities.

The Programme and Project Partners awarded its first long-term framework for [heating, ventilation, and air conditioning work](#) to Balfour Beatty Kilpatrick and EJ Parker and the second long-term framework for [electrical and instrumentation](#) to Balfour Beatty Kilpatrick and NG Bailey.

As part of its pioneering approach to project delivery and local impact, the partners have engaged with the 'Swimming with the Big Fish small and medium-sized enterprise matchmaker service', which brokers introductions and develops relationships between those bidding to become key delivery partners and high performing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) willing to invest in West Cumbria.

These SMEs plan to create additional jobs, recruit apprentices and invest to expand/create new facilities in the West Cumbria as a result of the work they do with their respective key delivery partners.

The Programme and Project Partnership is made up of lot partners:

- KBR (integration partner)
- Jacobs (design and engineering partner)
- Morgan Sindall Infrastructure (civils construction management partner)
- Doosan Babcock Ltd (process construction management partner)

Sellafield Ltd is the 5th partner.

[HMRC late payment interest rates to be revised after Bank of England increases base rate](#)

News story

HMRC interest rates for late payments will be revised following the Bank of England interest rate rise to 0.75%.



The Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee voted on 17 March 2022 to increase the Bank of England base rate to 0.75% from 0.50%.

HMRC interest rates are linked to the Bank of England base rate.

As a consequence of the change in the base rate, HMRC interest rates for the late payment will increase.

These changes will come into effect on:

- 28 March 2022 for quarterly instalment payments
- 5 April 2022 for non-quarterly instalments payments

The repayment interest rate will remain at 0.5%. The repayment rate is set at Bank Rate minus 1%, with a 0.5% lower limit.

[Information on the interest rates for payments](#) will be updated shortly.

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[A level playing field – all pupils entitled to high-quality PE](#)

News story

Ofsted has published the latest in a series of reviews into different subjects across the curriculum. Today's review looks at physical education (PE).



The review draws on a range of sources, including our education inspection framework (EIF) and other literature, to identify factors that can contribute to a high-quality PE curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and systems. We will use this understanding of subject quality to examine how PE is taught in England's schools, before publishing a subject report to share what we have learned.

High-quality PE is an entitlement for all pupils, regardless of their starting points or prior experiences of sport and physical activity. The national curriculum for PE aims to ensure that all pupils are physically active for sustained periods of time and develop the competence to excel in a broad range of physical activities. This may encourage them to engage in competitive sports and activities, and to lead healthy, active lives.

To meet these aims, today's review highlights the importance of building firm foundations in fundamental motor skills, as well as providing pupils with high quality instruction, practise and feedback.

A strong PE curriculum should clearly state what it means to get better at PE. Pupils should learn increasingly intelligent movement and important knowledge that can reduce barriers to participation and inform their own healthy, active lifestyle choices. While Ofsted recognises that there is no single way of achieving high-quality PE, our review finds that high-quality provision may have the following features:

- Teachers know that PE includes clearly defined knowledge that can usefully be categorised as either declarative or procedural.
- Leaders and teachers have thought carefully about what it is to know more and do more in PE. This understanding is informed by the national curriculum's aims, and component knowledge has been identified to develop pupils' competence.
- A strong foundation is built on fundamental movement skills (FMS), starting in the early years and developed through transitional activities into more specialised sport and physical activity.
- Teachers make sure that pupils' movement is not only efficient and effective but intelligent and context-related. They ensure pupils have knowledge of rules, strategies and tactics in order to guide successful movement
- Leaders and teachers select physical activities and sports based on their capacity to develop pupils' competence in PE. They identify key concepts to teach and build pupils' understanding incrementally.

- The PE curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils feel included and able to succeed within the subject.
- Pupils are supported to know more and do more All pupils benefit from high-quality instruction, practise and feedback.
- Assessment approaches should identify the knowledge pupils have and have not acquired.
- Teachers of PE have high levels of subject and pedagogical knowledge.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman said:

For many pupils, those two hours of school PE each week are their only structured physical activity. An ambitious PE curriculum levels the playing field by giving all pupils the benefits of physical activity and sport, despite the advantages that some pupils will have outside the school gates. I hope this review helps raise the quality of PE for all young people.

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[Thousands more leaseholders freed from rising ground rents](#)

- Fifteen businesses to remove costly ground rent terms
- Over 3,400 leaseholders' ground rents will now remain at the amount charged when their home was first sold
- CMA Chief Executive says more housing developers to be put 'under the microscope' as investigation continues

Fifteen businesses which had bought freeholds from housing developer Countryside have now given formal commitments – known as undertakings – to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to remove terms that cause ground rents to double in price. These terms, which kick in every 10 or 15 years, mean people often struggle to sell or obtain a mortgage on their leasehold home. Their property rights can also be at risk if they fall behind on their ground rent. The move comes after the CMA secured undertakings from Countryside in September 2021 to strike out terms that doubled ground rent every 10 to 15 years.

The businesses, which include investment firms and housing associations, will also remove terms which had originally been ground rent doubling clauses, but were converted so that ground rent increased in line with the Retail Prices Index (RPI). The CMA believes that the original doubling clauses were unfair

terms and should therefore have been fully removed, not replaced with another term that increases the ground rent.

The move comes after the CMA launched enforcement action against 4 housing developers in September 2020. These were Countryside and Taylor Wimpey for using possibly unfair contract terms, and Barratt Developments and Persimmon Homes over the possible mis-selling of leasehold homes.

After securing undertakings from Countryside to remove doubling ground rent terms from its contracts, the CMA turned its eye to businesses that bought Countryside freeholds and continued to use the same ground rent terms at the expense of leaseholders. The CMA wrote to these businesses, setting out its concerns and requiring them to remove these terms from their contracts.

Due to the CMA's intervention, thousands of leaseholders will now see their ground rents remain at the original amount – i.e. when the property was first sold – and they will not increase over time.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

“Thousands more leaseholders can now rest easy knowing they will not be forced to pay costly doubling ground rents. We believe these terms are unjust and unwarranted, and can result in people trapped in homes they are unable to sell or mortgage – a major cause of anxiety and stress for so many.

“We welcome the commitment from these businesses to do what is right by their leaseholders by removing these terms, and we will hold them to it.

“While this is a huge step forward, our work here isn't done. We will continue to work hard to free leaseholders from these problematic terms and will now be putting other housing developers under the microscope.”

Secretary of State for Levelling Up Michael Gove said:

“We are restoring fairness in the leasehold system and that's why we asked the CMA to investigate unjust practices, such as doubling ground rent.

“I welcome their ongoing success in eradicating this unacceptable treatment of leaseholders from the housing market and freeing thousands from such inflated costs. Others must now follow suit, as our work to help all leaseholders continues.

“Homebuyers starting a new lease from this summer will now pay nothing in ground rent costs – setting the path to a more equal future for homeownership.”

As part of its ongoing review, the CMA is continuing to investigate 2 investment groups: Brigante Properties, and Abacus Land and Adriatic Land. While both firms have agreed to remove doubling ground rent terms from the leases they bought from Countryside, the CMA is seeking the same in relation to leases they bought from Taylor Wimpey. The CMA maintains that these terms must be removed. The CMA's investigation into possible mis-selling by Barratt Developments is also continuing. Further updates will be made in due course.

For more information on the CMA's ongoing work in the sector and for future updates, visit the [leasehold case page](#).

Notes to editors

1. These undertakings have been provided to the CMA voluntarily and without any admission of wrongdoing or liability. It should not be assumed that any of the 15 businesses have breached the law – only a court can decide whether a breach has occurred.
2. The 15 businesses who have provided undertakings are:
 - Adriatic Land 3 Limited (part of the Abacus Land and Adriatic Land investment group);
 - Brigante Properties Limited;
 - Chris Allnutt and Company Management Limited;
 - Claycourt Limited;
 - Penult 101 Limited;
 - RMB 102 Limited;
 - SF Ground Rents No 15 Limited;
 - Great Places Housing Association;
 - London and Quadrant Housing Trust;
 - Mann Island Properties Limited;
 - Notting Hill Genesis;
 - Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association Limited;
 - RG Reversions 2014 Limited;
 - Tapestart Limited;
 - Weathercourt Limited.
3. The CMA is in ongoing discussions with 2 remaining freeholders who bought freeholds from Countryside but have not yet signed undertakings: D.A.T.S. (Holdings) Limited and Wallace Estates. D.A.T.S. has agreed in principle to provide undertakings subject to finalising arrangements with Countryside.
4. For people who own, or are looking to buy, a leasehold property, [the CMA has produced written and video guidance](#), which offers advice on a number of issues, including what people can do when faced with fees and charges they consider unjustified.
5. In September 2021, [Countryside Properties signed undertakings](#) committing it to strike out terms that mean ground rents double every 10 to 15 years.
6. In December 2021, [Taylor Wimpey committed](#) to remove doubling ground rent terms from their contracts and the CMA is engaging with businesses who bought freeholds from the developer to ensure they also strike out the terms.
7. In June 2021, [Aviva committed to remove doubling ground rent terms, and Persimmon Homes committed](#) to offer leasehold house owners the opportunity to buy the freehold of their property at a discounted price.
8. The remaining housing developer currently under investigation by the CMA is Barratt Developments over concerns about its sales practices in relation to leasehold properties. It should not be assumed that Barratt has breached the law. The CMA has not yet named the other housing developers set to come under review – it will do so once a formal

investigation into a firm has commenced.

9. The investors under investigation who are freeholders of leases – purchased from Taylor Wimpey – with less than 20-year doubling ground rents are Brigante Properties, Abacus Land and Adriatic Land. It should not be assumed that any of these firms have breached the law.
10. The main provisions of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's concerns about ground rent terms are the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999 (UTCCRs), for contracts entered into before 1 October 2015, and Part 2 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA), for contracts entered into on or after 1 October 2015. The UTCCRs and Part 2 of the CRA aim to protect consumers against unfair contract terms, and require contract terms to be fair and transparent.
11. The main provisions of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's concerns about mis-selling are the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs). The CPRs aim to protect consumers from unfair commercial practices such as the misleading provision or omission of information as part of sales processes.
12. As an enforcer under Part 8 of the Enterprise Act 2002, the CMA cannot currently impose administrative fines for breaches of this consumer protection legislation, but it can enforce the legislation through the courts, and where appropriate, obtain additional measures to improve consumer choice, drive better compliance with the law, or obtain redress for consumers. The government is consulting on proposals to give the CMA new powers, including to impose fines for breaches of consumer protection law.
13. The CMA's investigation of potential mis-selling of leasehold properties has benefitted from the support of several local Trading Standards offices which have been the focal point for some consumers to raise their concerns.
14. All enquiries from journalists should be directed to the CMA press office by email on press@cma.gov.uk or by phone on 020 3738 6460.
15. All enquiries from the general public should be directed to the CMA's General Enquiries team on general.enquiries@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6000.

[British Ambassador to Thailand joined the opening ceremony of Ex Panther Gold 21](#)

World news story

This Ex Panther Gold 21 joint collaboration will provide an opportunity for the two defence establishments to deepen their military ties through sharing experiences and lessons from previous deployments.



On 14th March, H.E. Mr. Mark Gooding, British Ambassador to Thailand, and General Supachok Tawatpeerachai, Deputy Chief of Defence Forces, presided over the opening ceremony of Ex Panther Gold 21 at the 3rd Army Area in Phetchabun province. The bilateral exercise aims to develop capabilities and understanding in training processes and infantry tactics between the UK and Thailand.

Ex Panther Gold 21, the biggest defence engagement activity between the UK and Thailand this year, demonstrates the close defence and security relationship between the two nations. The exercise programme comprises two main activities which are Cross Training Exercises (CTX) where the combined armed forces learn how to master their skills in martial arts, jungle survival and weapon familiarisation, and Field Training Exercises (FTX) which enable all personnel to develop competences including close target reconnaissance and contact drills.

Ex Panther Gold 21 is being conducted from 14th March to 1st April with 120 personnel deployed from 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards of the British Armed Forces, along with 160 personnel from the 3rd Cavalry Regiment and Security Battalion of the Royal Thai Armed Forces. This joint collaboration will provide an opportunity for the two defence establishments to deepen their military ties through sharing experiences and lessons from previous deployments.

Mark Gooding, British Ambassador to Thailand said:

Ex Panther Gold provides an excellent opportunity not just for our soldiers to learn valuable military lessons from each other, but also to deepen the longstanding friendly relationship and the mutual respect that our nations share

General Supachok Tawatpeerachai, Deputy Chief of Defence Forces said:

This exercise is the symbol of good cooperation and relationship of our two armed forces. I hope that all of the exercise participants can gain a lot of experiences from this exercise.

Background

- Panther Gold is classified as a combined military exercise between the British Defence Forces and the Royal Thai Armed Forces initiated in 2017.
- The first Panther Gold took place in Kanchanaburi province in 2017, followed by Panther Gold 19 in Nakhon Ratchasima province in 2019.

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