

UK defence procurement spend worth almost £2 billion a year to Scotland

This is the equivalent of £360 per person in Scotland. For the whole UK, the figure was £20.5 billion, working out at an average of £310 per person.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

These figures show that defence not only plays a crucial part in the security of the United Kingdom but also contributes significantly to delivering high-skilled jobs and investment in Scotland, not least through shipbuilding.

The prosperity generated by defence employment in Scotland and around the UK, alongside our Plan for Jobs, is helping us build back better from the pandemic.

Defence investment in Scottish shipbuilding will see order books full until the 2030s.

Over the last 15 years, Scotland has delivered six Type 45 destroyers, two aircraft carriers, five offshore patrol vessels and already has orders for eight Type 26 frigates from BAE Systems at Govan and five Type 31s from Babcock's just-completed Frigate Hall at Rosyth.

Last year, steel was cut on two more ships for the Royal Navy (HMS Belfast in Glasgow and HMS Venturer in Rosyth).

Defence's footprint in Scotland also includes the Ministry of Defence directly employing around 4,000 civilian staff.

The Future Soldier programme announced a £335m investment in the Army's Scots estate, which is expected to unleash £1bn in wider economic benefit.

And last week, the ninth submarine hunting Poseidon aircraft – vital to maintaining the security of the UK and our NATO allies – arrived at RAF Lossiemouth.

Lossiemouth will also see its ranks rise by around 500 in preparation for the arrival of the E-7 Wedgetail, the RAF's new early warning and control aircraft.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-regional-expenditure-with-uk-industry-and-supported-employment-202021>

Lord Offord of Garvel makes maiden speech in House of Lords

UK Government Minister for Scotland Malcolm Offord has today made his maiden speech in the House of Lords.

Minister Offord was invited to speak at the end of a debate from from Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb.

The question was posed to ask the UK Government what steps they have taken to ensure that subsidies and licensing decisions related to the oil and gas industry are not subject to undue influence from outside interests.

An excerpt from Lord Offord's response follows:

My Lords, it is a great honour to make the final contribution to this short debate as a newly appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland, making my maiden speech today in your Lordships' House.

Please allow me to start by thanking your Noble Lords for the warm welcome you have extended to me in this House, to my supporters, my noble friends The Lord Kirkham and Lord Forsyth of Drumlean, and to Black Rod, the Clerk of the Parliaments and especially the Doorkeepers who exercise great patience as I wander around in circles.

I should also give special thanks to my noble friend and mentor Lord Leigh of Hurley and my noble friend and whip Lord Younger of Leckie for sharing their invaluable knowledge of the workings of your Lordships' House.

My Lords, before turning to the substance of the important question posed today by Baroness Jones, may I crave your indulgence with some personal remarks. I was born in a modest but homely tenement at 33 Bank Street in Greenock, an industrial town west of Glasgow on the Firth of Clyde.

I was educated at my local schools Ardgowan Primary and Greenock Academy and, my Lords, what a first-class education I received for free. I'm not the first alumnus of that school to be associated with this House: my noble friend Baroness Goldie of Bishopton served as a distinguished Head Girl of Greenock Academy as did the wife of my noble friend Lord Leigh of Hurley.

I was dismayed when my old school was closed in 2011 having been founded in 1855. It was determined by the local council that, with Inverclyde de-populating post-deindustrialisation requiring the local schools to reduce from eight to six, Greenock Academy should be closed because it conferred too great an advantage on the students who were fortunate enough to study there.

Surely, an egregious example of levelling-down in Scotland, and a personal motivator for me in joining this government's levelling up agenda.

So why Lord Offord of Garvel? If you walk down Bank Street past the Wellpark

to my parish church the mighty Mid Kirk, and cross the road to the magnificent Georgian Customs House on the Clyde, and then turn right along the river bank, you will come to Garvel Point.

Garvel has long been a landmark in Greenock because it is where the deep water is located and it was originally a safe harbour for the fishing fleets before the first industrial revolution transformed the town into a thriving trading port and shipbuilding hub.

Greenock's most famous son is the inventor and engineer James Watt and the dock which bears his name remains in use today at Garvel Point. In fact, two of the three dry docks on the Clyde were located at Garvel and a recent renovation project has re-purposed one into the award-winning Beacon Theatre.

Which brings me neatly to the question before the House today. Because one of my first ministerial duties was to participate in COP26 in Glasgow, and how fitting that the world came back to the Clyde to seek new solutions for this climate emergency. What a tremendous achievement for the UK's two-year presidency to increase the global commitment to net zero from 30 per cent to 90 per cent of world emissions.

Some say that the UK has a limited role to play in climate change as we account for only 1 per cent of world emissions. Yet COP26 proved our leadership still counts as we show it is possible to simultaneously grow our economy whilst cutting our emissions.

My Lords, this is what I learned at COP26: that we have the capital, the brains and the political will to meet the climate challenge. Participating as I did in the Net Zero Technology forum (funded by the Aberdeen City Deal), I was so encouraged to hear technologists from the oil and gas sector in Aberdeen collaborating with Houston, Calgary, Perth and Canberra as they re-purpose their assets and people into low carbon energy sources. And how gratifying that Scotland has such a prominent and world leading role to play in re-balancing the UK's energy programme to net zero by 2050.

We have all the natural resources, the existing infrastructure plus the scientists, engineers and skilled workforce required to build a balanced score-card in Energy. Scotland contributes 60 per cent of the UK wind generation plus 40 per cent of the 160,000 highly skilled jobs already working in Energy across the UK. This is called punching above our weight in a United Kingdom where we contribute just 8 per cent of the population but 33 per cent of the geography.

However, my Lords, we must remember that a key word in this climate debate is "transition" and that it's to net zero not to zero carbon. With 35 per cent of the UK's Energy needs in 2050 still coming from carbon (halved from 75 per cent today), we would be foolhardy and irresponsible to ditch our world-class oil and gas sector in the North Sea to then increase our carbon footprint by importing inefficiently from Russia and Qatar.

The North Sea Transition Deal is an exemplar in the G7 of an industry working in partnership with Government to ensure net zero is met by 2050. By 2030,

the cashflow generated in oil and gas will contribute £15bn long term investment into renewables. And by 2030, the UK offshore energy sector will support 200,000 high-quality jobs of which two thirds will be in low carbon.

My Lords, to answer the Question, in short, the UK Government does not give subsidies to fossil fuel companies and licences are awarded by an independent regulator Oil & Gas Authority (OGA) within the framework of achieving net zero by 2050. In fact, the High Court on Tuesday dismissed a case brought by climate activists against the regulator, rejecting their argument that the OGA's actions amount to a type of unlawful subsidy of the fossil fuel sector.

Licensing decisions are made by OGA which is an independent regulator. Their staff are classified as public servants and are subject to rigorous standards and codes of conduct.

My Lords, in closing this debate, may I be quite clear that HMG does not believe that decarbonising our economy means shutting down the oil and gas industry as soon as possible.

A broad range of stakeholders from entrepreneur Sir Ian Wood to the GMB trade union have warned politicians against creating an adverse investment environment for this vital sector. There is nothing fair or just about that and it will set us back on the road to net zero.

[STEP siting process update](#)



The STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production) programme is a UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) programme to design and build a prototype fusion energy plant in the UK, targeting operations around 2040.

We have, this week, confirmed that we will cease assessment of the Ratcliffe-on-Soar site, one of our five shortlisted sites, and restart assessment of the West Burton site, named as a reserve site when the shortlist was announced in Autumn 2021.

Tris Denton, STEP's Head of Commercial and Programme Development, said: "Since last autumn we've been assessing Ratcliffe-on-Soar in Nottinghamshire

along with four other sites across the UK in the search for a home for our prototype fusion power plant.

“Ratcliffe is a very good site with several potential development options and plans. However, with new information now before us on land availability we think other sites on our shortlist will likely be more suitable for the specific needs of the STEP programme. As such we will not be continuing assessment at this location, but we’d like to thank Uniper and the other parties involved in the nomination for the excellent collaboration and support to date.

“The site of the West Burton A coal fired power station, also in Nottinghamshire, was also proposed as a candidate for STEP and has been held in reserve based on a number of strong features. The potential for this site to compare favourably with the remaining sites on our shortlist means that we will now restart assessment at this site to further consider its merits. This will maintain the strength and diversity of the options we have. We look forward to continuing to work with the nominating partnership, including Nottinghamshire County Council and the site owner, EDF.”

Published 20 January 2022

Last updated 21 January 2022 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 21 January 2022

Change

2. 20 January 2022

First published.

[“The conflict is causing untold suffering and must end” – Minister for Africa statement following visit to Ethiopia](#)

News story

The Minister for Africa has visited Ethiopia for talks on the ongoing conflict in the north of the country, as well as economic development and regional cooperation.



Africa Minister Vicky Ford has concluded a visit to Addis Ababa, part of a three-country trip to the region. The Minister met Prime Minister Abiy, State Minister Redwan and Finance Minister Shide to discuss concerns over the ongoing conflict and pathways to peace, as well as economic development and regional cooperation.

The conflict in the north of Ethiopia has been going on for 14 months and escalated significantly at the end of last year. The UK is supporting the African Union's mediation efforts between the Government of Ethiopia and Tigrayan forces, to bring about a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

The fighting has created a dire humanitarian situation, with more people facing famine-like conditions in the north of the country than the rest of the world combined. In addition to humanitarian crisis in the north, the south is facing one of the worst droughts in decades. The UK is announcing £5 million of new funding for the drought in the south, £5 million for health and education services for people affected by conflict and £4.5m for peacebuilding and human rights. This is on top of more than £76m of humanitarian support provided by the UK to support people affected by the conflict in Tigray, Amhara and Afar.

Minister for Africa Vicky Ford said:

The UK is standing with Ethiopia as it faces the worst drought in decades in the South and ongoing conflict in the North, but I have made absolutely clear on this visit that the conflict is causing untold suffering and must end.

The UK continues to call on all parties to stop fighting and stands ready to support a peace process, and I have urged my counterparts to engage with the African Union-led mediation efforts. We welcome the establishment of a National Dialogue Commission and the release of some political prisoners as positive steps forward.

The support package I have announced on this visit will provide life-saving nutrition for 200,000 people facing one of the worst droughts in decades, support survivors of gender-based violence and build the capacity of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.

The UK is ready and willing to play a central role in the recovery

from conflict. As well as our new aid package, the UK will work closely with our Ethiopian partners to deepen our economic co-operation and boost growth, prosperity and opportunity in both our countries.

Published 20 January 2022

Teenagers honoured by Lord-Lieutenant of Powys

Cadet Colour Sergeant Stephanie Chaplin and Cadet Corporal Grace Buschini both of Gwent and Powys Army Cadet Force; Cadet Sergeant Erin Nodland of No 2 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets and Cadet Lance Corporal Antonia Scott-Howell of Llandovery Combined Cadet Force were presented with the badge of their appointment, which will last for one year, by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Powys, Mrs Tia Jones.

The four were selected for the prestigious Lord-Lieutenant's cadet role after being put forward for nomination by cadet group leaders and the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Wales. The role includes attendance with Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Powys, Mrs Tia Jones, who acts as the Queen's representative, at a number of official engagements, including Remembrance events, Royal visits and parades.

Mrs Tia Jones said,

So much still remains uncertain and unpredictable because of the pandemic, but tonight we are delighted to reward some of those who have made the time to give something back to society and serve their community

The Cadet Forces are truly amazing organisations, where the mixture of military training, youth work, civilian qualifications and community work helps develop our young people ready to take their place in society.

Stephanie from Neath who joined Gurnos detachment of B Company is following in the footsteps of her brother Kyle who was a Lord-Lieutenant cadet in 2019. The teenager who is studying at Ysgol Gyfn Ystalyfera is highly motivated and has gained all the various star levels in both the Army Proficiency Certificate syllabus and music.

Grace who aspires to become an Army doctor joined Newtown detachment in 2018

is studying at Llanidloes High School. She has been instrumental in 'keeping the flame alive' during lockdown through leading virtual training sessions which she planned and delivered using social media platforms.

Erin from Welshpool who hopes to join the Royal Air Force as a cyberspace communication specialist excels as a squadron senior non-commissioned officer and throughout lockdown supported virtual parade nights. She has a natural aptitude for teaching cadets in a variety of subjects. Erin of 2364 (Welshpool) Squadron is a keen participant in field craft, adventurous training, sports plus shooting and marksmanship.

Antonia from Brecon, who attends Llandovery College, has been a cadet for three and a half years during which time she has developed resilience, teamwork and confidence in her abilities. This included overcoming anxieties following a traumatic skiing holiday to carry on and apply for Ski Canada as well as trips in Italy and Germany. She has been on the Welsh Judo team for six years, training eight hours a week to compete at national level.

The four will follow in the footsteps of Cadet Company Sergeant Major Lucy Vermeire of Gwent and Powys ACF and Cadet Warrant Officer Cerys Ball of No 2 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets. Two adult volunteers – Sergeant Major Instructor Hayley Davies and Staff Sergeant Instructor David Pope both of Gwent and Powys ACF were also recognised for their outstanding service and devotion to duty and awarded the Lord-Lieutenant's Certificate of Merit.

Hayley, from Hay on Wye, has gone from strength to strength since joining the Army Cadet Force in 2005, rising to become Detachment Commander in 2014. She also became a member of the Professional Support Staff as the Cadet Administration Assistant in February 2019.

She is the 'go to' person to fill gaps and support other Detachments where they are struggling with sufficient Cadet Force Adult Volunteers to open the Detachment. In one week alone, Hayley supported two other Detachments as well as opening her own. She is also the Detachment Commander of Crickhowell High School.

Her citation says,

Hayley is a very busy volunteer who will step up where others will step back, she always leads by example and she will never let you down.

Sergeant Major Instructor Hayley Davies is an outstandingly successful example of combining Cadet Force Adult Volunteer and Cadet Administration Assistant roles. She is loyal, determined and dedicated to the Army Cadet Force.

Staff Sergeant Instructor David Pope of Hay on Wye, instantly made an impact on joining the Army Cadet Force in 2018, quickly attending various courses that qualified him to be an all-round instructor and ultimately Detachment Commander for Cwrt-Y-Gollen Detachment within a few months. During the

pandemic – he led a seamless move into the virtual training for his adults and cadets.

Since returning to face-to-face training, Staff Sergeant Instructor Pope has had to commit more to his day job, which has meant him having to relinquish the coveted role of Detachment Commander. He is now a Detachment Instructor with Hay on Wye Detachment.

There are nearly 5,000 Cadets in Wales who gain skills and qualifications through working with local communities, charities and taking part in a variety of practical activities. The cadet syllabus is delivered by 1,500 volunteering adult Instructors and civilian assistants, who give up their spare time on weeknights and weekends.

The virtual awards event held on Thursday 13 January 2022 was organised and broadcast by the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) for Wales – an organisation that has supported the Armed Forces for over 100 years.