

Shifting the blame

Press release

An operator brought to public inquiry sought to blame his drivers for all of his failings.



Following a public inquiry at the end of November, Hunter Transport had their licence revoked and the operator was disqualified from holding an operator's licence for a minimum of five years.

Mr Hunter was caught operating too many vehicles for his licence and there were more than two hundred drivers' hours offences within a three-month period. The operator sought to blame all of the problems on his drivers, but it was found that the company had a transport manager 'in name only' for at least a decade.

The operator was also found to have pressured his drivers into the offences and falsified records.

The traffic commissioner for Scotland, Claire Gilmore said "I did not believe the operator's claim to believe that all the journeys he allocated to his drivers could all be completed lawfully and within time. Two of the drivers who gave evidence spoke of a culture of pressure which led to them offending to try and complete their journeys on time. The operator did not ask his drivers to break the law, but the culture of pressure he created, coupled with his deliberate failure to monitor driving activity, actively encouraged it.

"I considered that the operator's willingness to deceive, coupled with his wilful neglect and repeated failings, demonstrated a flagrant disregard for the operator licensing regime on his part. Such behaviour led me to conclude that I was unable to trust this operator in the future."

Further details can be found [here](#).

Published 17 December 2021

Partners launch £249 million steelwork and cladding opportunity

The Programme and Project Partners at Sellafield are undertaking a procurement exercise to engage with steelwork and cladding Key Delivery Partners (KDPs) via a £249 million Multi Project Procurement (MPP) process.

Key Delivery Partners will be expected to deliver 33.3% of their works using small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The Programme and Project Partners places a significant emphasis on social impact and requires supply chain partners to make commitments that will create jobs, apprenticeship opportunities and deliver a whole host of social impact initiatives to benefit the local community.

The Programme and Project Partners is made up of 4 lot partners, with Sellafield Ltd as the 5th partner.

They are working together to support the Sellafield site's 100-year decommissioning programme.

The highly collaborative Programme and Project Partner model has been established to deliver approximately 25 projects, over 20 years, consisting of new build, as well as some upgrade and refurbishment of existing buildings.

This package of work consists of Steelwork – known as KDP2 and external envelope (or cladding) – known as KDP6.

Scope of work

The scope includes all the typical elements of work usually associated with the delivery of steelwork, both structural and other, and the cladding of industrial buildings.

It is intended that the scope includes the following general classifications of work:

- Early contractor involvement, final design, temporary works, structural steelwork, steel frames, general steelwork, structural metalwork, general metalwork, metal decking, metal walkways, edge protection, cladding and roofing.

All works to include supply and erect services.

This list is non-exhaustive and maybe subject to change.

The contracts may be divided into 2 Lots, due to the scale of the undertaking.

This exercise forms part of the partners Multi Project Procurement (MPP) programme and will result in the placement of an 18 year framework agreement(s), aligned with the partners long-term objectives.

The procurement programme will start with a period of market engagement that will inform the interested parties of the requirements of this package.

A full strategy paper outlining the procurement approach, commercial model, timeline, and other important information will be available to the interested organisations at the start of the market engagement phase, which runs until 2 February 2022.

As part of this ongoing phase, the Programme and Project Partners will be undertaking the following activities, in advance of issuing any PQQ documentation:

- Complete Tender Management portal expression of interest – response deadline (7 January 2022)
- Initial supplier briefing – Microsoft Teams briefing to present the package (week commencing 10 Jan 2022) presentation date scheduled for 13 January 2022.
- Questions and answers – Sharing of questions and answers following the briefing
- Online survey – To gather your organisation’s thoughts on the Programme and Project Partners proposals following the briefing (survey responses due by 19 January 2022) Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) issued (2 February 2022)
- Matchmaker process – Promoting the process for SME engagement (ongoing throughout)

Early contractor involvement is seen as one of the Programme and Project Partners key drivers to procure in this way, as it will enable the supply chain to have a long-term influence on the way in which projects are designed and delivered.

The outcomes being projects that are delivered more safely, are better designed (innovative), of a higher quality, whilst being environmentally sympathetic, easier to maintain, and delivered on time and within budget.

The 18-year framework provides an unparalleled opportunity for the partners and supply chain to develop long-term relationships that can grow and adapt organically over time, to create a world class legacy of collaboration and excellence for the design and construction of nuclear facilities.

Expression of Interest

To register interest please email: mppsupplychain@sl-ppp.co.uk

By no later than noon on 7 January 2022

When registering your interest, please provide us with the following information:

1. company name
2. key contact (email address and mobile telephone number)
3. breakdown of annual turnover for the last 3 years

Expression of interest publication

Steelwork and External Envelope (Roofing and Cladding) Works and Services

£249 million in today's prices, spread over 18 years.

REF: KDP-2 / KDP-6

The Programme Project Partners is a 20-year framework between Sellafield Ltd and the lot partners for major projects at the Sellafield site worth approximately £7 billion, aiming to transform project delivery and leave a lasting legacy through the achievement of the Programme and Project Partners critical success factors.

The lot partners are:

- KBR (integration partner)
- Jacobs (design and engineering partner)
- Morgan Sindall Construction and Infrastructure (civils construction partner)
- Doosan Babcock (process construction partner), who have been engaged based on a management contracting procurement model with all construction work to be undertaken by the supply chain.

Detailed information on the Programme and Project Partners can be found [here](#).

Matchmaker Service

The Programme and Project Partners places the involvement of SMEs high in the order of priorities when it comes to undertaking future works at Sellafield.

To ensure this commitment is realised KDPs will be expected to deliver a minimum of 33.3% of their works using SMEs.

To facilitate this requirement the Programme and Project Partners has established the matchmaker service with the aim of encouraging long-term relationships between its KDPs and the supply chain.

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 0.25%.



The Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee voted on 16 December 2021 to increase the Bank of England base rate to 0.25% from 0.1%.

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 late payments will increase.

These changes will come into effect on:

- 27 December 2021 for quarterly instalment payments
- 4 January 2022 for non-quarterly instalments payments

Repayment interest rates remain unchanged.

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

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PM call with President of Ukraine: 17

December 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.



The Prime Minister spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy this afternoon about the situation on Ukraine's border with Russia.

The Prime Minister updated President Zelenskyy on his conversation with Russian President Putin earlier this week.

He reiterated the message relayed to President Putin about the UK's support for Ukraine's territorial integrity. The Prime Minister underlined that the UK will use all its diplomatic and economic powers, in concert with allies, to prevent any Russian aggression towards Ukraine.

The Prime Minister and President Zelenskyy discussed the importance of Ukraine and other European states reducing their dependence on Russian gas and the need to cultivate green and diverse energy sources.

The leaders agreed on value of ongoing dialogue, including with Russia, and resolved to stay in close contact. The Prime Minister reinforced the importance of all parties implementing the Minsk Agreement.

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Arrival of first US F-35 aircraft

marks major milestone for DIO upgrades at RAF Lakenheath

This is an important milestone both for the US Air Force personnel stationed at the Suffolk base, and for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), which has been working to prepare the infrastructure that the state-of-the-art aircraft and their crews will require.

RAF Lakenheath, home of the US Air Force's 48th Fighter Wing, will boast two squadrons of F-35s as well as its existing F-15s, a familiar sight in the skies of Suffolk for a number of years. The 495th Fighter Squadron, nicknamed "Valkyries" was reactivated in October and will have approximately 60 personnel.

To allow for the increase in people and aircraft, the infrastructure at the base is being upgraded. This includes resurfacing the aircraft aprons for the F-15s as well as a new apron for the F-35s, building maintenance hangars, training facilities, storage areas and more.

DIO awarded the contract for the upgrade works to a joint venture of Kier and VolkerFitzpatrick, collectively known as KVF35, in November 2018, with construction beginning in July 2019.

A number of facilities have been completed, with others nearing completion or under construction. A project of this size requires a large and specialist workforce and on average there are between 500 and 600 people working on the project every day. Safety is a key priority for DIO and its contractors and the project recently reached the impressive milestone of 1 million hours worked without a reportable accident or injury under the RIDDOR (reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences) procedures.

The work has generated £83m of social value, far exceeding the £1m target. Of this, £39m social value has been generated over the last 12 months alone, despite the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, members of the programme have volunteered at events for the local community, ranging from tree planting to providing insight on working in construction at school careers events.

There has also been a benefit to the local area, with 36% of project costs being spent with local small and medium enterprises, surpassing the target of 30%.

RAF Lakenheath will be the first permanent international site for US Air Force F-35s in Europe and continues the base's long and proud history of supporting US Air Force capability in the UK. Co-locating US and UK F-35 capability in the UK will help strengthen the historic military ties between the two nations, as well as the partnership between the RAF and US Air Force.

DIO's Programme Director Steve Rix said:

The arrival of the first US F-35 at RAF Lakenheath is an exciting point for all involved at the base. This is a very large and complex programme, which has continued construction through Covid-19 while ensuring workers stayed safe, so it's great to see this very visible sign of progress.

Today we are seeing the first glimpse of the future of RAF Lakenheath when this project is complete and all of the F-35s are here.

However, our job is not yet done and we look forward to continuing to work with our American partners on this important project.

James Hinds, Managing Director for Strategic Projects & Growth, Kier Construction London, South & Strategic Projects, said:

We are extremely proud of our ongoing relationship with DIO and we're delighted to have been trusted to deliver the crucial infrastructure to create the first international base for the cutting-edge F-35 aircraft.

In addition to delivering this highly complex project, I'm delighted that we've also taken the opportunity to build a lasting legacy in the local area through actively supporting the local economy as well as volunteering in the wider community and we look forward to continuing our work at RAF Lakenheath.

Deon Scholtz, Operations Director for VolkerFitzpatrick, said:

It is fantastic to see the project reach this key milestone, with the arrival of the first F-35 aircraft. Improvements to the base's infrastructure are progressing well and the team is also undertaking regular social value initiatives, within the local community. I am delighted that VolkerFitzpatrick is able to support this significant moment at RAF Lakenheath.

The project is the first in a wider programme of work to support US Air Force operations in the UK, with more than US \$1-billion expected to be invested in the UK over the next seven to ten years.