

# Chief of Defence Staff declares new DIO head office at DMS Whittington officially open

The Chief of Defence Staff has visited DMS Whittington, in Staffordshire, to officially open the new head office of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). The co-location of DIO with its Armed Forces customers not only brings benefits for working relationships, but also strengthens Staffordshire's position in supporting UK Defence.

St George's House has been purpose-built to accommodate more than 550 Ministry of Defence (MOD) staff who have relocated to the site following the closure of DIO's former home in Sutton Coldfield. The Sutton Coldfield site was closed under the Defence Estate Optimisation Portfolio, which aims to modernise the defence estate over the next 25 years and will invest £4.3 billion in new facilities over the next decade. The money raised by the sale of previous head office will be reinvested in defence.

The exterior of the new office, St George's House. Crown Copyright / MOD 2021.

The opening was marked by a parachute display from the Royal Logistic Corps' Silver Stars and speeches from various dignitaries. The Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Sir Nick Carter and DIO's Chief Executive Graham Dalton addressed staff before Peter Homa, Director General DMS Whittington, welcomed DIO personnel to the DMS Whittington community.

The new building not only offers a modern working environment, but has also been designed to reduce carbon contribution through the use of renewable energy, low water usage systems, improved insulation and electric car-charging points. An area outside has been planted with wild grasses to encourage natural wildlife.

All of the building's energy requirements come from renewable energy sources, with half provided by rooftop solar panels. The panels generate enough electricity to power five houses and will reduce CO2 emissions by nearly 29,000kg annually, the equivalent of eight flights from London to New York. Overall, these and other measures are predicted to reduce building running costs by £18 million over the next 25 years.

Additionally, the building was designed around an oak to avoid needing to fell the tree, which was planted by the Cheshire Regiment as a sapling in about 1969. The sapling is believed to originate from a tree grown from an oak sprig given to the 22nd Regiment of Foot. They were predecessors to the Cheshire Regiment and were given the oak sprig by King George II in gratitude for saving him from capture at the Battle of Dettingham in 1743.

Graham Dalton, DIO's Chief Executive, said:

DIO's new head office is a flagship building for Defence. It demonstrates how we can use building design to enable our people to work in a modern, flexible way. And it demonstrates how we can use a smaller footprint and modern designs to minimise energy use – bringing a new standard of sustainability to Defence infrastructure.

We have moved from an old site in Sutton Coldfield, and are looking forward to DIO being part of the Defence community at DMS Whittington. This is a vibrant modern site and we're happy to join other progressive Defence organisations here.

General Sir Nick Carter, Chief of the Defence Staff, said:

DIO makes a significant contribution to the readiness and resilience of the Armed Forces, enabling them to live, work, train and deploy at home and overseas. DIO is also leading Defence's approach to Net Zero. Mitigating emissions from the estate and making it increasingly sustainable – these are vital contributions to all our futures.

DIO's new head office is a great example of smarter ways of working and of effective teamwork. I look forward to it becoming a recognised exemplar of a modern and inclusive working environment and a home to infrastructure specialists.

Peter Homa, Director General of Defence Medical Services, said:

I am delighted to extend the very warmest of welcomes to the Defence Infrastructure Organisation to DMS (Whittington). Joining our community provides tremendous opportunities to collaborate, deepen relationships and develop a greater understanding of each other as one community serving our Armed Forces.

DMS (W), fondly referred to by the local community as Whittington Barracks, has a longstanding military history dating back to 1875. Already home to the Defence Medical Academy, the Headquarters Defence Medical Services Group, the Army Recruitment Assessment Centre, the Staffordshire Museum and the Mercian Regiment Headquarters; DIO joining our community will only serve to further cement Staffordshire's position in support of UK Defence.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with DIO colleagues and know that you will join me in extending a warm welcome to our community.

The construction contract was awarded to Kier, with work commencing in January 2020 and completing in August 2021. The £12 million project covered the demolition of an existing building, construction of the new head office as well as a new secure car park with 230 additional spaces.

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## [UK-led international summit sets new horizons for innovation](#)

Initiatives agreed by 7 nations at today's Agile Nations conference, spearheaded by the UK, range from improving cyber-security in the Internet of Things – where everyday items are equipped with computing devices to connect them to the web – to greater collaboration on experimental approaches to regulation like the use of 'sandboxes' – where ground-breaking products are tested under supervision.

The Agile Nations – made up of the UK, Denmark, Canada, Italy, Japan, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – account for 15% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These countries were also joined by observer member Finland who is contributing on an ad hoc basis.

Launched in December with the support of the World Economic Forum and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the network's mission is to make it easier for businesses to introduce and scale innovations across markets while upholding protections for citizens and the environment.

Business Minister Lord Callanan said:

Unleashing innovation and entrepreneurship will be key as we look to build back better from the pandemic, and the UK is ready to work with like-minded countries to make this happen.

The projects agreed today will blaze a trail for regulators around the world, promising new opportunities on the horizon for our most innovative businesses, helping them thrive across borders.

As inaugural chair of the group, the UK led today's event, which saw Business Minister Lord Callanan and international counterparts agree to an ambitious programme of 10 projects, including:

- to bolster access to justice, the UK's Solicitors Regulation Authority will lead a project aimed at helping create a global market for legal services
- the UK, Canada and Singapore will work together to iron out potential cyber-security issues in the 'Internet of Things'
- to tackle food production challenges in countries that face water scarcity, the UAE will lead a project developing standards around the use of treated waste-water in agriculture

The projects will see the Agile Nations work together to share cutting-edge ideas and evidence, test new solutions, and identify new opportunities to encourage innovators and entrepreneurs.

Over recent weeks, the UK has also made significant domestic strides to refine regulation and foster a dynamic economy. This includes setting out bold strategies and proposals on:

- [artificial intelligence](#) to supercharge its place in the UK economy, to grow investment, support research and development, and boost the nation's skills – setting the standards for other countries to follow
- [transport](#) to unleash the UK's potential as a world leader in future technologies like autonomous maritime vessels, self-driving cars and drones by modernising outdated EU vehicle standards
- [farming](#) to reform the regulations around gene-edited organisms, which will enable more sustainable and efficient farming and help produce healthier and more nutritious food

The members of the Agile Nations are:

- UK (Chair - Lord Callanan, Minister for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility)
  - Singapore (Low Yen Ling, Minister of Trade and Industry & Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth of Singapore)
  - Canada (Tina Green, Assistant Secretary, Regulatory Affairs, Treasury Board of Canada)
  - Italy (Camilla Sebastiani, Chief of Policy, Cabinet of the Minister for Technological Innovation and Digital Transition)
  - Japan (Seitaro Fujita, Deputy Director-General for IT Strategy, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan)
  - Denmark (Tatiana Juel, Representative from Danish Business Authority, Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs)
  - UAE (Noora BinKalban, Project Manager, Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, Prime Minister's Office)
  - OECD (Miguel Amaral, Senior Policy Analyst, Public Governance Directorate)
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# HMS Prince of Wales hosts Pacific Future Forum

The Royal Navy's next generation aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales is hosting the international defence, security, trade and technology summit, the Pacific Future Forum (PFF).

PFF provides a platform for the UK to meet with allies and partners to drive collaboration with an eye toward resolving challenges of the future, from advances in technology and cyber to the impact of climate change.

Following the recent Atlantic Future Forums, this year's conference theme looks eastwards and builds on the ambition outlined in the Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper to increase our presence and engagement in the Indo-Pacific.

Over the two-day summit, the comprehensive agenda includes expert panels and keynote speeches, to help foster deeper relations in the Indo-Pacific to support shared prosperity and regional stability, with stronger diplomatic and trading ties.

## **Attending the event, Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said:**

"The Indo Pacific will soon represent over 40 per cent of global GDP and is increasingly important to the UK. Building on our strong partnership in the region is vital for long term security and prosperity.

"The Pacific Future Forum provides a fantastic platform to discuss the future and did so on board one of the Royal Navy's fantastic platforms of the future

"As the joint largest and most technically advanced warship ever built for the Royal Navy, HMS Prince of Wales provides a great backdrop to showcase the best of British innovation in the defence and security sectors"

The Pacific Future Forum is a seminal moment to bring nations together, strengthen alliances and explore how we build a stronger, more united world. Key topics spread across the two days include handling the economic aftershock of COVID-19, harnessing new technologies to address climate change and the importance of defence and intelligence partnerships in the Pacific region.

The event comes as HMS Prince of Wales' Carrier's ship, HMS Queen Elizabeth, begins leading Carrier Strike Group back through the Indo-Pacific as she navigates the South China Sea with ships and aircraft from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States.

The busy period of military engagement in the Indo-Pacific has been mirrored by diplomatic progress. In a landmark moment, the UK became a Dialogue Partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 5 August,

the first new country in 25 years. This comes as the UK and Japan announced that formal negotiations will begin this month to increase bilateral defence cooperation.

This also follows the recent 'AUKUS' partnership between the UK, US and Australia to enhance the development of joint capabilities and technology sharing to protect and defend our shared interests in the Indo-Pacific.

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## [Air Gunner on board secret WW2 flight identified and buried in Albania](#)

On Wednesday 20 October, on what would have been his 100th birthday, Sergeant (Sgt) Peter Twiddy RAFVR, was finally laid to rest with military honours by members of the Queen's Colour Squadron, Royal Air Force during a service that was organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), also known as the 'MOD War Detectives'.

The ceremony took place for 22-year-old Sgt Twiddy at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) Tirana Park Memorial Cemetery, Albania and was conducted by the Reverend (Squadron Leader) Chrissy Lacey, Chaplain RAF High Wycombe.

Tracey Bowers, JCCC said:

"This has been a fascinating case to research and work on. I am grateful to the families who gave their DNA so we could identify Sgt Twiddy.

"We remember all the crew and passengers who were killed 78 years ago today on what was a brave mission."

On the night of 19 October 1943, a Halifax HR674 aircraft was allocated to carry out a secret operation code-named "Sapling 7". Sgt Twiddy along with six other crewmen from No.148 Squadron accompanied two passengers, Captain A. Careless and Signaller D.W. Rockingham, who were attached to the Special Operations Executive (SOE).

The purpose of the mission was to drop supplies and the two SOE personnel. The drop zone was high in the mountains above the village of Tragjas, Albania. The aircraft took off from Tocra, Libya on 19 October 1943 at 2325 hours local time and did not return.

Attempts to trace the aircraft, including searches of the sea, came to no avail until 22 October 1943 when a signal was received from the field telling that the plane had crashed in the early hours of 20 October with the loss of all persons on board.

Following information about the location of the Halifax crash site given to the Defence Section in Tirana, a team from the Embassy deployed to investigate. Human remains were recovered from the wreckage and DNA was used to confirm they were those of Sgt Peter Twiddy.

The family of Sgt Peter Twiddy said:

“ We are all grateful a positive DNA match was obtained and the mystery as to what happened all those years ago to our brave family member has been finally solved.”

The Reverend Lacey said:

“For 78 years Sgt Twiddy’s resting place has been unknown. Now, on his special day (the anniversary of both his birth and death), we come together to say that he is known; at his final resting place we recognise the ultimate sacrifice he made. We stand in remembrance in the peace which he and the crew gave their lives for, and pray that will have peace as they rest.”

Peter Twiddy was born on 20 October 1921 in Stockwell, Surrey, to Albert Arthur Twiddy and Elsie Edith Ward. Peter had one older sister who died as an infant and a younger brother, Eric, who died in 2013 aged 89. Throughout his career Peter’s character was always described as very good. Peter was killed on his 22nd birthday.

The grave will be marked by a headstone provided by the CWGC, who will care for his final resting place in perpetuity.

Mel Donnelly, CWGC’s Commemorations Case Manager, said:

“On this significant date, Sgt Twiddy can now be laid to rest. We are proud to be able to mark his grave with a CWGC headstone bearing his details and a personal inscription chosen by his family, ensuring that neither he nor his sacrifice will ever be forgotten.”

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## **WTO Trade Policy Review of China: UK Statement**

Thank you, Chair.

The United Kingdom’s Trade Secretary, Anne Marie Trevelyan, has asked me to relay her thanks to the Chair, as well as our discussant Ambassador Mlumbi-Peter, for facilitating this Trade Policy Review. I would like to convey my thanks to the WTO Secretariat for their hard work in producing the report. I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to the Chinese delegation – led by Minister Wang Wentao and Vice-Minister Wang Shouwen – and of course to the

team here in Geneva.

As others have said, it is now twenty years since China joined the WTO and the global trading landscape has been transformed during that period. And as others have noted, China's share of global trade has jumped from approximately 8.5% to almost 11% in the decade to 2019 and is expected to increase yet further to 12% by 2030. That increase in trade has of course been a major contributor to China's growth and has helped lift millions out of poverty. I would like to congratulate China on behalf of the United Kingdom for that significant achievement.

All of this is possible because we have an open, rules-based, transparent, and non-discriminatory global trading system. We look – like others – to China to play a full and responsible role upholding this arrangement, including by agreeing to take up commitments which are commensurate with its level of development and economic capability. So in the context of the fisheries subsidies negotiations – which others have referred to – we have heard China say that it does not intend to take up wide-ranging Special and Differential Treatment. We very much welcome that direction of travel and we look forward to seeing how that commitment is made concrete through the negotiations and indeed wider discussions here at the WTO.

We recognise the recent progress China has made to open its markets to international trade and investment. We welcome China's engagement with plurilateral initiatives such as the JSI on investment facilitation, E-Commerce and domestic regulation, as well as the Trade and Health Initiative, the Informal Dialogue on Plastics Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics – all good initiatives. The changes made by China to reform and liberalise will – in our view – benefit both the WTO membership and Chinese citizens alike. And they also support China's own economic development.

The success of that economic development means China has reached a point where the pace, scale and implementation of its market opening needs to accelerate. This will give more meaning to China's own calls for an open, rules-based, transparent, and non-discriminatory trading system.

Madam Chair – if I may – I would now like to highlight several areas which we believe require China's attention and action.

First, Chinese firms continue to enjoy much higher levels of access in overseas markets than their foreign counterparts enjoy within China. This lack of reciprocity is accompanied by a growing perception of unfairness amongst many WTO members which should be a concern to China too.

The challenge is not merely one of formal market access. Despite improvements in detection and seizure of infringing goods, counterfeits – for example – continue to be produced and exported at high levels. Foreign businesses continue to report significant concerns relating to equal treatment with local companies, inconsistent application of regulations, subjective licensing regimes, opaque phytosanitary requirements, hidden subsidies, and restricted public procurement.



As the Secretariat's report makes clear to us, the size of China's economy and government support programmes to industrial sectors can and do significantly distort the market in China's favour and to the detriment of foreign firms and free and fair international trade.

Secondly, like others, we are also concerned about the centrality of state-owned enterprises to China's industrial strategies, and the opacity of their operations. These SOEs number at around 326,000 and account for over 20 of China's 25 largest businesses. That market dominance and the way such SOEs operate, disadvantages both domestic private firms and foreign investors. We recall, in this context that China has committed through its Accession Protocol (and since repeated in the Chinese government's report to the WTO ahead of this review) not to interfere with the operation and management of state-owned enterprises.

For us, the onus is on China to be much more transparent in demonstrating that such enterprises do operate as normal market actors.

Indeed, increased transparency is key to raising confidence in China's policy intentions. With that in mind, we call on the Chinese Government to commit to publishing all materials related to its three-year reform plan for its state-owned enterprises, so that it is clear what is and what is not being directed by government.

Staying on the same topic of transparency, we also share the concerns raised by other Members about China's continued lack of compliance with transparency obligations under the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures.

We would like to highlight, Madam Chair, that we closely monitor reports of China's trade actions being deliberately targeted against goods of some countries for political reasons – as others have cited here today. Market participants will draw their own conclusions. But in the long term, such actions undermine market confidence that China does indeed want the open, rules-based, transparent, and non-discriminatory system, to which I referred to earlier. This is another area where China could act – we believe – with greater transparency.

Finally, forced labour, wherever and whenever it occurs, is unacceptable. So we call on China to ratify and effectively implement the ILO Forced Labour Convention including the 2014 Protocol and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention. We will continue to monitor Chinese actions through the WTO – but also through the ILO.

To conclude, Chair: China's transformation in the last 20 years has been remarkable, and China should take great credit for that. But as a trading superpower, China now has a special responsibility to ensure it practices free and fair trade. The UK, for its part, looks forward to continuing working with China with a sense of shared responsibility to safeguard and strengthen the multilateral trading system, of which we are both such proud members.