

Integrated Review outlines future for defence

The review is the most comprehensive articulation of a defence, foreign and national security approach published by a British Government in decades.

Building on the £24 billion multi-year settlement announced in November, defence will continue its shift in thinking to modernise our forces across sea, land, air, space, and cyberspace. All while targeting reforms to improve procurement support the government's climate change and research priorities.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I am profoundly optimistic about the UK's place in the world and our ability to seize the opportunities ahead.

The ingenuity of our citizens and the strength of our Union will combine with our international partnerships, modernised armed forces and a new green agenda, enabling us to look forward with confidence as we shape the world of the future.

Defence is fundamental to the Prime Minister's vision for a stronger, more secure, prosperous, and resilient Union bound by fundamental interests in Sovereignty, Security, and Prosperity.

Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace said:

The Integrated Review is modernising Defence to counter future threats and promote our interests and values in a more competitive age.

The Defence Paper being published next week will detail the new ways of operating and modern capabilities required to deliver on this vision and support our partners and allies around the world.

Across all four corners of the UK, defence supports over 300,000 jobs which is set to increase with a planned spend of over £210 billion on equipment programmes across the next ten years.

Defence will also benefit from the UK Government's £14.6 billion investment into research & development and science and technology, using it to influence new designs and capabilities for vital equipment. The Department will spend at least £6.6 billion on research and development over the next four years.

The Review addresses the challenges and opportunities the UK faces in a more competitive world, where new powers are using all the tools at their disposal

to redefine the international order and – in some cases – undermine the open and liberal international system that emerged in the wake of the Cold War.

As a nation the UK is uniquely international in its outlook and interests. Whether it's the millions of British jobs created by global trade, the sheer number of Brits who live and work overseas or the importance of our international alliances for keeping us safe – particularly NATO, which is the bedrock of defence and security in the Euro-Atlantic.

The UK Armed Forces will continue to work together with our global partners deployed on critical missions around the world. In support of this, HMS Queen Elizabeth is to deploy for the first time later this year and will lead the Carrier Strike Group operational deployment across the Mediterranean, Middle East and Indo-Pacific.

[The Integrated Review](#) sets out the UK Government's objectives for defence, security and foreign policy until 2025, focussing on becoming a prosperous and resilient nation with a global perspective.

The Defence Command Paper will be published on 22 March and will outline further details on how defence will adapt and modernise to meet future threats.

[Call for volunteers to play vital role during flooding](#)

Press release

The Environment Agency is calling on residents in a Northumberland village to register as Flood Wardens.



The Environment Agency is seeking volunteers to play a vital role in protecting a Northumberland community from flooding.

Working with Corsenside Parish Council, they are calling on residents in West Woodburn to register as a Flood Warden.

Colin Hall, the Environment Agency's Flood Engagement Officer in Northumberland, has supported the council to create its own Community Flood Plan, but needs more volunteers to ensure the plan is effective in the event of a flood. West Woodburn is at risk of flooding from the River Rede.

Colin said:

Flood Wardens play a vital role – they are the eyes and ears on the ground and act as a link between the Environment Agency and communities at risk, helping to get information out to local residents quickly during an incident.

They ensure the flood plan remains up to date and have direct links with emergency responders. There's already 16 Flood Warden groups in place across Tynedale, including groups in Acomb, Corbridge and most recently in Prudhoe playing a really important role in their community.

Flood Warden groups help get the Environment Agency's flood warning messages to the local community and ensure they are acted upon. They also have important information about vulnerable residents and properties which can help emergency services during an incident.

Anyone interested in volunteering can contact Corsenside Parish Council at corsensideparishclerk@hotmail.com or Colin Hall at colin.hall@environment-agency.gov.uk

For more information and to find out how to Prepare. Act. Survive. visit the ['what to do in a flood' page.](#)

Those living in an area at risk of flooding are encouraged to download the Environment Agency's [simple flood plan](#) so you'll know what to do when there's a flood warning in your area.

Over 5 million homes are at risk of flooding in England alone, the average cost of flooding to a home is £30k and the mental health-impacts long-lasting.

A record government investment of £5.2bn to better protect 336,000 properties was announced last year, through the creation of around 2,000 new flood and coastal defences in England by 2027.

Published 16 March 2021

Neil Sachdev appointed as Permanent Chair of EWR Co

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has appointed Nilesch (Neil) Sachdev as Chair of the [East West Railway Company \(EWR Co\)](#).

Neil has been appointed for a term of 3 years and will oversee the delivery of the [East West Rail project](#), which will deliver a new direct rail link between Oxford and Cambridge, serving towns and cities along the Oxford-Cambridge arc.

He replaces Rob Brighthouse, who has served as the founding chairman of EWR Co since 2017.

Neil brings a wealth of leadership experience at board level and strong commercial and business acumen. He is currently a Non-Executive Director of Network Rail Property Limited and Chair of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation Board for the [Ministry of Defence](#). He has previously held a variety of senior leadership positions in the energy, property and retail sectors.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

I'd like to welcome and congratulate Neil, who joins this project at a hugely exciting time, following an injection of £760 million to kick off a new phase in delivering the railway. East West Rail will serve as a catalyst for growth along the Oxford-Cambridge arc by creating jobs and improving connectivity.

I am also very grateful to Rob Brighthouse for the excellent job he has done as founding chair, establishing the company, preparing the ground for the recent investment decision and leading the organisation through its considerable growth.

Neil Sachdev said:

I thank Rob, who has not only initiated this project, but provided strong leadership in delivering the first stage of the project and building a great team at EWR Co.

I am looking forward to working with the EWR Co team, all our local stakeholder communities and businesses to deliver growth for the local economy and build on the exciting vision of the EWR project.

Rob Brighthouse said:

It has been my privilege to be the Founding Chair of the East West Railway Company. We have built an amazing team of individuals who have brought together a wealth of experience from within and beyond the rail industry, from the UK and overseas – all with a common purpose.

After 4 years, it is now time for me to move on, and I will continue to support the industry in delivering for passengers and freight operators, in the first instance through my Senior Independent Director role on the Network Rail Board.

I wish everyone in the company every success as they go on to deliver a cost-effective railway for the good of the Oxford-Cambridge arc.

EWR Co was set up as an operational arms-length body in 2018 to explore new and better ways of delivering infrastructure by accelerating the pace at which projects are built, while driving down costs to secure a better deal for customers and taxpayers.

Neil's appointment comes as the project enters a new phase of delivery, following the [confirmation in January of £760 million in government funding for works between Bicester and Bletchley](#).

These works are expected to create 1,500 jobs and will include the construction of a new station at Winslow, as well as enhancements to existing stations along the route, including Bletchley.

UN Human Rights Council 46: UK statement for the Universal Periodic Review Adoption – Republic of Maldives

World news story

The UK delivered this statement during the Universal Periodic Review Adoption for the Republic of Maldives.



The Human Rights Council takes place in Geneva.

Thank You, Madam President,

The United Kingdom welcomes Maldives' engagement with the UPR, and recognises the progress made since the 2015 review. We commend recent developments, particularly in the field of consolidating democracy, improving governance and promoting respect for human rights. We encourage Maldives to continue this work, and hope that the ongoing judicial reforms will lead to greater access to justice and to effective prosecutions.

The UK is pleased that the Maldives supports our recommendation to strengthen existing national legislation to ensure all modern slavery crimes are fully criminalised in line with international conventions. We believe this is an important step to safeguard the most vulnerable, and we hope changes to legislation will be implemented as soon as possible.

We also welcome Maldives' support of our recommendation to expand and protect space for civil society organisations to operate. Freedom to discuss social issues of all kinds is important to promote inclusive and cohesive communities.

The UK welcomes the Maldives' robust, open and merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN treaty body elections. We continue to advocate strengthening the quality, independence and diversity of Treaty Body membership to all States.

Thank you.

Published 16 March 2021

UN Human Rights Council 46: UK

statement for the Universal Periodic Review Adoption – Mongolia

World news story

The UK delivered this statement during the Universal Periodic Review Adoption for Mongolia.



The Human Rights Council takes place in Geneva.

Thank you, Madam President.

The United Kingdom welcomes Mongolia's engagement with the Universal Periodic Review process. The UK commends Mongolia on the progress made since its last review and we remain committed to continue helping Mongolia strengthen human rights and democratic institutions.

We welcome Mongolia's acceptance of all three of our recommendations and urge Mongolia to work to implement these. Namely, to strengthen domestic legislation to ensure all forms of modern slavery are criminalised, including criminalising human trafficking in line with the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; to adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections; and to Protect freedom of expression by abolishing article 6.21 of the Law on Administrative Offences.

The UK also welcomes Mongolia's commitment at the UPR to implement activities aimed at protecting the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, migrant workers, stateless persons and persons with disabilities. We commend Mongolia's gender equality record and support its Government's efforts to end violence against women and girls and increase women's economic empowerment. It is important to commit government resources to ensure that Mongolia's existing anti-discrimination laws are fully implemented.

Thank you.

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