

Defence Procurement Minister speech at Defence Vehicle Display 2022

It's my pleasure to welcome you all to this year's Defence Vehicle Display.

Especially as this is not just my first DVD but my first official engagement as a defence minister.

It is an excellent venue to showcase our finest vehicles and equipment.

I'm not entirely new to Defence, having spent six years as the UK representative to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and latterly Chairman of the Defence and Security Committee on the assembly.

So, I am well aware of your many successes as well as some of the challenges you face.

But the truth is, for all of us here today, this event comes at a time of great change.

The passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has brought with it not merely a sense of deep loss for the wonderful monarch that led by example for more than 70 years.

But also, a sense of uncertainty, as the values she came to embody – kindness, tolerance, and a belief in democracy – now seem at risk across the world.

Indeed, even as we speak, Ukrainians are bravely pushing back the invading Russian force, and as we discover the atrocious war crimes committed by the Russians, our resolve must remain resolute.

If we are to protect our values and safeguard the international order in this new era, we need to strengthen Defence.

That's why last year our Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper began transforming our forces to make them more resilient, more persistent and more agile.

Our Armed Forces are now being instilled with a campaigning mindset, that enables them to be ever present wherever we are needed around the world.

A mindset epitomised by our new self-sufficient Brigade Combat teams and Ranger Regiments.

But those documents were also clear that we couldn't achieve our aims without the very best capability.

You only need to look to Ukraine and the incredible gains they've made in recent weeks to see the difference the most advanced kit can make on the

ground.

I am proud that the UK has played a key role, foremost among European nations, in supporting those efforts, whether it's our armoured Wolfhounds or Stormer vehicles fitted with anti-air missile launchers.

And that kind of cutting-edge capability is what we're all here for today.

Take a stroll around the exhibition and you will see some of the finest examples of equipment in the land domain on display.

Not least our Boxers – the cornerstone of our Armoured Brigade Combat Teams – able to swiftly cover long distances no matter the environment nor the weather. And I am pleased to see so many of our partner nations on the Boxer programme here today.

As well as Boxer, you will find everything from our Challenger 3 main battle tanks in the Off-Road Area, to the latest drones and four-legged robots from our Future Capability Group, and much more besides.

Whilst we are still learning the lessons from Ukraine, it is clear that we cannot take anything for granted.

In the coming years, it is vital we continue to build on these successes in order to stay ahead of the curve.

That's why we launched the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy, which provided the foundations for a step-change in relations between government, industry and academia.

What's crucial about DSIS is the way it finally recognised industry as a strategic capability in its own right.

The purpose of the Land Industrial Strategy, which was published earlier this year, was to take those partnerships to the next level.

We've seen the success already of our Defence BattleLab in Dorset, which is uniting industry and academia with the facilities they need to test-drive innovative kit.

And today you will hear about how the Army are taking a major step forward in shaping investment over the next three years in new integrated protection systems for our land forces.

This funding marks an exciting opportunity for industry to work with our Defence Science and Technology Laboratory to make our vehicles so much stronger and more resilient.

Whether it's improved sensors and compact energy storage or new counter munition systems and directed energy weapons.

This isn't just a great chance to transform our Army but to drive growth in the economy at the same time.

The land industrial base already supports around 20,000 jobs across the UK, while our ground combat system exports comprise 7% of total defence exports – which is almost £6 billion over the past 10 years.

But as more and more nations increase their investment in Defence, there will be more and more opportunities arising to sell kit to trusted allies and increase our share of that £45 billion-plus ground combat systems market.

This will bring investment back so that we can then reinvest in the continued strengthening of our forces.

I began by talking about the end of an era. But I firmly believe that if we work together we can not only preserve the mighty values that were the hallmarks of Queen Elizabeth II, but seize the moment to turn this age of challenges into an age of opportunity.

Speaking of new eras, I'm delighted to hand over to Lieutenant General Sharon Nesmith, newly appointed Deputy Chief of the General Staff.

Sharon's appointment comes at a crucial time for Defence and I'm looking forward to hearing her thoughts as someone else who is adjusting to a new role.

I'm also looking forward to hearing the Director General for Land plans for how DE&S will equip and support our armed forces now and in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you.

No further role for charity regulator over sale of Trevalga estate in Cornwall

Press release

The Charity Commission has concluded that it has no further regulatory role regarding the trustees' decision to sell the Trevalga estate.



The Charity Commission has concluded that it has no further regulatory role regarding the decision of the trustees of the Gerald Curgenvin Will Trust (registered charity number 1147365) to sell the Trevalga estate near Boscastle in North Cornwall.

The regulator has been examining the decision-making of the trustees to seek assurance that they have been acting in line with their legal duties and responsibilities in relation to the proposed sale.

Local residents had raised concerns about the validity of the sale, pointing to their interpretation of the provisions of the charity's governing document.

Officials for the regulator met with the trustees of the charity, and thoroughly assessed the matter, including the concerns raised by those affected. The trustees demonstrated to the Commission that it is within their powers to sell the Trevalga estate, and that their decision was made independently and in compliance with their legal duties.

The Commission has therefore determined that it has no further role regarding the sale.

Under charity law, trustees have wide discretion to make decisions in the best interests of their charity. The Commission has no remit to make decisions on behalf of trustees, or to overrule decisions legally made by trustees. Instead, the Commission's role is to determine whether the trustees have followed proper processes, and acted in line with their legal duties in reaching any decision concerning their charity.

Tracy Howarth, Assistant Director of Casework, said:

This has been a period of great uncertainty and anxiety for the residents of Trevalga and I know that this outcome will come as a further disappointment for those impacted.

However, having thoroughly assessed the matter, we have concluded this is not a matter in which the Commission can intervene. In this instance, we are satisfied that the trustees' decision-making and the process followed have complied with the law and our guidance. It is therefore right that we have concluded our case.

Notes to Editors

1. The [Charity Commission](#) is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

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[World's first International Plant Health Conference to set global agenda on biosecurity and address challenges in plant health](#)

The world's leading authorities on plant health and biosecurity will come together for the world's first ever International Plant Health Conference (IPHC), co-organised by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the Secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and Defra.

More than 500 policymakers, academics and experts from over 74 countries will convene at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London to address current and future plant health challenges, including the impacts of climate change, food security, environmental protection, facilitating safe trade, and new pest and disease pathways, such as e-commerce. Held on 21-23 September, delegates will share knowledge and discuss global scientific, technical and regulatory issues, alongside actions to tackle these existential threats to our society, economy and environment.

The [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#) of the [United Nations](#) estimates that each year up to 40 percent of global crop production is lost to plant diseases, costing the agricultural trade over USD 220 billion, whilst invasive insects cause losses of at least USD 70 billion. The risks to food security, international trade, biodiversity and our precious natural environment as a result of current and future outbreaks are all too real. Strengthening global standards of biosecurity, applying the IPPC and international plant health standards, as well as fostering greater international collaboration and raising public awareness and engagement with these challenges will be paramount to safeguard the global economy and environment for generations to come.

Nicola Spence, United Kingdom Chief Plant Health Officer, said:

Plant health and biosecurity are fundamental to life on Earth. Plants provide 80 percent of the food we eat and 98 percent of the oxygen we breathe. In a changing climate, ensuring their continued health and vitality will be critical to safeguarding food security, safe international trade and a thriving natural environment for future generations.

The United Kingdom upholds amongst the highest standards of biosecurity in Europe but there is much more to do to secure our future resilience – here and around the world. I look forward to coming together with international experts from a range of disciplines to discuss how to tackle the varied and mounting challenges facing our precious plant life.

Jingyuan Xia, Director of Plant Production and Protection Division said:

Climate change and human actions have altered ecosystems and created new niches where plant pests and diseases can thrive. When combatting pests and diseases, farmers should adopt, and policymakers should encourage the use of, environment-friendly methods such as integrated pest management.

Applying international plant health standards helps reduce the use of pesticides and poisonous substances, which kill pollinators, natural pest enemies and organisms crucial for a healthy environment. These result in healthier crops with less residues, leading to better human, plant and animal health.’’

Osama El-Lissy, Secretary, International Plant Protection Convention, said:

The first International Plant Health Conference is an important advancement of our work in protecting plants from pests and diseases. We are very pleased to partner with Defra who shares FAO’s and IPPC’s common goals. We cannot underestimate the impact that plant pests and diseases have on global food security, livelihoods, the environment and economies.

To achieve our goals and contribute to food security, protect the environment and facilitate safe trade, I encourage donors and governments to invest in building plant health capacity, research and outreach. Let us keep our collective efforts going and take bold action to sustain the momentum. When we protect plants, we protect our health and our lives.

Across the three days of the IPHC, plenary sessions will explore a range of scientific, regulatory and technical issues, including:

- Regional perspectives on tackling ongoing pest and disease outbreaks, including *Xylella fastidiosa*, fall armyworm and coconut rhinoceros beetle.
- How to increase the use of electronic phytosanitary certificates to make trade safer, faster and cheaper.
- The development and adoption of early warning systems for pests and diseases to increase vigilance and preparedness for future outbreaks.

Moreover, the IPHC aims to promote positive behavioural change through greater public engagement with biosecurity issues. For example, the importance of not bringing home plants, trees, fruit and seeds from overseas, as doing so could inadvertently cause pests, diseases and invasive species to be introduced or to spread in new areas. This aligns with the United Kingdom Government's long-running 'Don't Risk It!' campaign, which featured on the Animal and Plant Health Agency's Gold Medal-winning stand at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2022.

Protecting plant health is critical in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Healthy plants contribute to achieving food security for all (SDG 2 Zero Hunger) and promotes responsible food consumption and production (SDG 12). Protecting plants helps protect biodiversity and the environment from the impact of plant pests (SDG 13 and 15), and facilitates safe trade, in turn providing decent work and boosting economic growth (SDG 8). The International Plant Health Conference supports the delivery of the [IPPC Strategic Framework 2020-2030](#).

For more information, visit the [International Plant Health Conference website](#).

[Funding boost for protection systems for the British Army](#)

Press release

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) confirms new investment that will increase scalable protection options for the UK's armoured land vehicles



New investment will exploit and build on the MIPS standard to demonstrate a modular, flexible Active Protection System

Funded by the British Army, the investment of £15 million over three years will enable Dstl to deliver the follow-on phase of the successful Icarus Technology Demonstrator Programme ([TDP](#)). The Icarus TDP, through Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) funding, developed and demonstrated the Modular Integrated Protection System (MIPS) Open Architecture Standard (the MIPS standard) to Technology Readiness Level 5 (TRL 5).

This new investment will exploit and build on the MIPS standard to demonstrate a modular, flexible Active Protection System (APS) at high maturity (TRL 7).

The next stage of MIPS will enable the UK to continue to develop future capabilities, with advances through to 2040 to include:

- Improved sensors – multi-spectral devices are combined with increasingly sophisticated fast signal processing
- Improved information processing – including data fusion and artificial intelligence (AI)
- Improved effectors – current counter-munition and directed energy technology projects deliver precise effects to defeat a wider range of threats
- Improved high-speed directors – compact and affordable energy storage and motor drive technologies
- Improvements in electronic infrastructure component technologies – exploiting safety and security features being developed elsewhere for industrial robotic and autonomous systems

Minister for Defence Procurement, Alec Shelbrooke said:

“Our Armed Forces keep us safe around the clock and it’s incumbent upon us to do all we can to protect them and adapt to future threats.

“The war in Ukraine has highlighted the importance of well protected armoured vehicles. We are supporting the Army to modernise and remain at the forefront of cutting-edge capabilities.

“This is an important step forward in researching the latest technology to improve protection for armoured vehicles, helping them prevent and repel

attacks from the ground and air.”

Advanced APS is a critical enabler to achieving operational advantage and is a key function to enable survivability of the Army’s fleet of vehicles. MIPS provides a modular framework to exploit high maturity APS components and/or systems into a sovereign-designed solution that can be procured at pace, be supported through life, and be effectively integrated into mission systems.

The new activity will:

- Exploit previous CSA investment of £10 million into MIPS development
- Be an essential step towards developing an enduring approach for vehicle protection Research and Development (R&D)
- Boost UK industry by securing UK industrial capability in APS. It promotes Land APS activity with Industry as part of the Land Industrial Strategy
- Seek to build a UK industrial partnership in MIPS that increases exploitation opportunities and enables Army to benefit from the delivered capability options
- Work with a range of industry partners, including the UKACIA group (the UK APS Community of Interest and Action).

Dstl’s Active Protection expert Tom Newbery said:

“This is such an exciting opportunity for Dstl and Industry to work together to deliver a step change in vehicle survivability by taking MIPS to the next level of maturity. MIPS has the potential to open up a range of capability options for Army, improving vehicle survivability against the most challenging threats now and in the future.”

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SLC delivers more than £1bn in student Maintenance Loan payments

The last two weeks have been unprecedented for many people across the country following the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Throughout the period of national mourning, we have continued our essential work, ensuring Maintenance Loan payments are being made to students as they start university or college. We have paid £1bn of Maintenance Loan funding to students since the beginning of September*, with payments continuing over the coming weeks as the academic year gets underway.

We were scheduled to make our largest payment of the first term on Monday (19

September). However, due to the Bank Holiday and the historic events taking place, we brought this forward, making more than 300,000 payments, to the value of £655m, last Friday (16 September). In some cases, students had yet to enrol or their confirmation of attendance had not been received from their university or college, so haven't yet received their funding. Further payments will be made today and over the coming weeks as we receive information from the education providers.

We remain on track to increase the number of students we have processed and ready to pay by term start – enabling them to invest in their futures through access to higher and further education.

It will come as no surprise that September remains our busiest time and this is reflected in the high demand for our contact services, with lots of customers wanting to speak to us. To help students get quick access to the information they need, we have added a 'common questions' area to their online accounts. Students are advised to check here for answers to their questions first, instead of contacting us, to avoid having to wait to speak to an advisor.

We understand that many students will be looking forward to starting the new term and will be keen to know what stage their payment is at. The good news is that they can also check this easily via their online accounts. This is by far the fastest way for students to get an update on their payment's progress – Watch our short film below to find out more.

[payment status film](#)

Similarly, students can use their accounts to update details, such as their bank account information or term time address or to submit any outstanding evidence they have been asked for.

In addition, we have made a wide range of information available [online](#) that students can access at any time to help them with their questions about payment or student finance more generally.

As we get closer to term start, there may still be students who are only applying now and may have questions about when they will get their funding. The message to eligible students in this position is not to worry! While it can take six to eight weeks to process an application, our team will do their best to make sure they have some funding in place as soon as possible, by awarding the minimum Maintenance Loan first, followed by a top-up payment if they are entitled to more funding. [Find out more about applying late online.](#)

Throughout the rest of the month, we will make the remainder of Maintenance Loan payments to students before switching our attention to paying Tuition Fees to Higher Education Providers on their behalf.

To those who are starting university or college over the next couple of weeks, I'd like to wish you the best of luck from the team here at SLC and we look forward to supporting you as you progress through your studies.

*Please note these are provisional figures. Full year figures are published

in our Student Support for Higher Education statistical release which will be published on 24 November.