

# British Armed Forces Minister arrives in Cairo

World news story

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UK Minister for the Armed Forces James Heapey MP met with Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces Lieutenant General Mohamed Farid to discuss ways to boost British-Egyptian defence cooperation. The meeting came as a part of the Minister's current official visit to Egypt.

The two sides discussed the latest military developments in Libya and in the Eastern Mediterranean region. The war on terrorism and opportunities for joint exercises were also discussed in the meeting. British Ambassador to Egypt Sir Geoffrey Adams and British Defence Attaché Captain (Royal Navy) Stephen Deacon accompanied the Minister.

The visit is considered the second significant visit for a senior Defence Minister following the successful visit to Egypt of the Former Minister of State for the UK Armed Forces in June 2019.

Minister Heapey said:

I was delighted to meet with Lieutenant General Mohamed Farid to discuss how we might further deepen our existing partnership and cooperation. There are shared challenges the UK and Egypt can work together to address: ensuring that a ceasefire holds in Libya, and provides a chance for peace, and combatting the scourge of terrorism. This is exactly what we need: an exchange of ideas, experience and capability between our two countries. I look forward to further developments in future.

The British Ambassador to Egypt, Sir Geoffrey Adams, said:

This visit by our Minister for the Armed Forces is a clear sign of the importance the UK places on bilateral defence cooperation between our two countries. The UK is ready to enhance our partnership with our Egyptian friends and counterparts, working together to face shared challenges with agility, expertise and strategic focus on the issues that matter.

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## [Spotlight on corporate crime laws](#)

News story

Corporate criminal liability laws will come under fresh scrutiny as a Law Commission review begins this week.



- Law Commission begins review of corporate economic crime
- potential reforms could include new offences to crack down on corporate criminality
- part of pledge by Ministers to ensure laws are fit for purpose

Requested by Ministers, it will examine whether laws are sufficiently equipped to tackle economic crime. It will also consider whether reforms are needed to better hold companies to account for criminal wrongdoing undertaken by them, or on their behalf.

It comes as a [government response](#) to a call for evidence into the issue published today (3 November 2020) revealed that further investigation was required before any decisions on reforms can be made. The responses showed strong feelings on a range of issues with no clear consensus on how to

proceed, meaning this work would benefit from additional time and scrutiny.

The review will consider whether any new offences need to be created to make it easier for enforcement agencies to prosecute crimes such as fraud, money laundering and false accounting. The Law Commission is expected to present recommendations for reform next year.

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice Robert Buckland QC said:

Corporate economic crime undermines trust in business, distorts markets and damages people's livelihoods and futures.

Firms that aid and abet this behaviour should know that it will not go unpunished and I look forward to the Law Commission's recommendations on how we can strengthen this area of the law further.

The review was requested by the Ministry of Justice, HM Treasury, Home Office, Attorney General's Office, and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

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## [Defra launches the Healthy Bees Plan 2030 to help protect honey bees](#)

Defra and the Welsh Government have today (Tuesday 3 November) published the [Healthy Bees Plan 2030](#) to protect and improve the health of honey bees in England and Wales.

The plan sets out four key outcomes for beekeepers, bee farmers, associations and government to work towards to help protect honey bees, which continue to face pressure from a variety of pests, diseases and environmental threats including the invasive non-native species Asian hornet.

Honey bees contribute directly to local food production and make an important contribution, through pollination, to crop production and the wider environment. The [economic benefit of pollination to crop production in the UK is approximately £600m each year](#), based on yield.

The Healthy Bees Plan 2030 was developed in consultation with bee health stakeholders and is aimed at sustaining the health of honey bees and beekeeping in England and Wales over the next decade.

The plan sets out four key outcomes to help protect honey bees:

1. Effective biosecurity and good standards of husbandry, to minimise pest and disease risks and so improve the sustainability of honey bee populations.
2. Enhanced skills and production capability/capacity of beekeepers and bee farmers.
3. Sound science and evidence underpinning the actions taken to support bee health.
4. Increased opportunities for knowledge exchange and partnership working on honey bee health and wider pollinator needs.

Launching the Healthy Bees Plan 2030, Pollinators Minister Rebecca Pow, said:

During the coronavirus pandemic we have seen an increased connection with the natural world, and the new Healthy Bees Plan provides a blueprint to look after the health of some of our most important insects – the bees – our unsung heroes.

Bee health stakeholders have had a key role in developing our plan, and we look forward to working together to help ensure our bees can survive and thrive for future generations.

Action to implement the plan will now be taken forward together in collaboration with beekeepers, bee farmers, associations and government.

Defra's landmark [Environment Bill](#) and [Agriculture Bill](#) will enhance and protect our precious natural environment and diverse ecosystems and improve habitats for pollinators.

Thriving plants and wildlife are public goods identified in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and one of the six environmental outcomes the government has committed to delivering through the new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme. Helping farmers to provide rich habitat for pollinators is one way in which ELM will help deliver the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and support farmers to produce world-class food in a sustainable way.

The Government's [Nature Recovery Network](#) will restore 75% of protected sites as well as creating or restoring 500,000 hectares of additional wildlife-rich habitat.

The NBU maintains a voluntary database of active beekeepers called BeeBase. Beekeepers that are not registered with BeeBase are strongly encouraged to get in touch with [the NBU online to register with BeeBase for free](#). Registration provides the beekeeper with a free visit from their local bee inspector and access to a wide range of information on their craft.

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## National recognition for UK Atomic Energy Authority's apprenticeship scheme with two awards

The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) has underlined its status as one of the country's best employers for apprenticeships with two national awards.

UKAEA, based at Culham Science Centre near Abingdon, [has been named as a Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer for 2020](#). The Top 100 showcases the very best of England's large apprenticeship employers, with companies recognised for providing some of the most successful apprenticeship programmes over the previous 12 months. UKAEA is ranked alongside the British Army, BT and Lloyds Banking Group on the independently judged leaderboard.

UKAEA has also won [Advanced Apprenticeship Training Provider of the Year Award 2020](#) from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, one of the UK's top engineering professional bodies.

Apprentices at UKAEA get to work on one of the world's most exciting engineering projects: the quest to turn fusion energy – the process that powers the stars – into a limitless energy source with minimal environmental impact. Trainees learn alongside experienced professionals, working on exciting and challenging projects in a supportive environment. The apprenticeship programme equips them with the skills and the qualifications they need to succeed in their career.

Apprenticeship training at UKAEA is boosted by its state-of-the-art [Oxfordshire Advanced Skills](#) apprentice centre, located at Culham. The centre opened in 2019 and equips engineering apprentices for 16 local employers, including UKAEA. It already has plans to expand to offer training for the robotics, power engineering, space and nuclear industries.

UKAEA's People Development Manager Clare Davis said: "We were delighted with these awards – it's exciting to see our Apprenticeship Scheme recognised at a national level.

"Currently there are more than 100 apprentices on our scheme, studying a wide range of subjects, from engineering, to project management and finance. We also have new degree level apprenticeships which complement the existing level 3-5 apprenticeships.

"Our apprentices work on exciting and challenging projects and are supported by the experienced professionals working alongside them."

UKAEA's recruitment for next year's apprenticeship programme will start early in 2021 – for details go to <http://www.culhamapprenticeshipscheme.com/>.

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## Construction milestone for M56 upgrade

The four-mile section of motorway between junction 6 at Hale and junction 8 at Bowdon is one of the busiest in the North West – carrying 100,000 vehicles a day as part of the important corridor between Manchester and Manchester Airport and the Midlands.

As part of the project, an extra running lane will be added to both the westbound and eastbound carriageways to tackle congestion and provide more reliable journeys for city centre commuters and businesses as well as tourists and workers using the airport. Technology will also be installed to manage vehicles through the upgraded motorway – providing smoother journeys – and four emergency areas will provide refuge in the event of break downs or other emergencies.

Highways England's preparations for the £85 million upgrade started in the spring but the main construction work will get underway at the end of the month with traffic management along the motorway for the first time. A contraflow system will be in operation from the start – helping to reduce the number of carriageway or full motorway closures needed during construction.

Highways England project manager Clare Bond said:

The start of the main construction work is a significant milestone for this project which will ease congestion and make journeys more reliable once it opens to drivers in 2022.

This is one of the busiest sections of motorway in the North West but using the contraflow system during construction will allow us to keep all the motorway lanes open during the day with occasional overnight lane and carriageway closures.

The eastbound hard shoulder will be converted into a running lane first with work switching to the westbound hard shoulder late next spring, followed by construction of a concrete central reservation barrier between the three junctions from September. Systems installation and testing after that should see the smart motorway to open to traffic by spring 2022 at the latest.

In detail, the work involves:

- Providing new electronic information signs, signals and CCTV cameras on overhead gantries. These will show variable mandatory speed limits and manage traffic flow and incidents
- Installing remotely-operated temporary traffic management signs along the entire route to aid traffic management during carriageway closures due to incidents or routine maintenance

- Constructing four new emergency areas to provide drivers with safety and rescue areas following an incident or breakdown
- Erecting new emergency roadside telephones in each emergency area to provide a direct, location-pinpointing connection to the regional operations centre near Warrington
- Replacing the steel safety barrier in the central reservation with a new concrete barrier to help increase safety
- Resurfacing lanes with new low-noise surfacing.

Highways England is working closely colleagues on other projects in the area such as the M6 Junction 19 roundabout scheme and M62 junction 10 to 12 upgrade, as well as with key stakeholders like the Manchester Airport Group (MAG), local football clubs and shopping centres, to coordinate and plan the overnight closures and other traffic management.

To install the contraflow there will be one full, 10pm to 6am, closure of the eastbound carriageway on Friday 13 November. This will be followed on Monday 23 November by a single overnight closure of the westbound carriageway. The outside lane of the eastbound carriageway will operate in lane three of the westbound carriageway – with westbound traffic using the remaining two westbound lanes and hard shoulder. A speed limit of 50mph will operate through the roadworks backed by average speed cameras.

Major motorway upgrades in the region are supporting the Northern Powerhouse agenda to improve connectivity and provide the infrastructure to support future jobs and housing.

As well as tackling current congestion, the upgrade will help support future homes and jobs in the area – including the Airport City project bordering the motorway. It will also complement other major improvements along the important Midland to Manchester corridor including motorway upgrades along the M6 in Staffordshire and Cheshire, the M6 junction 19 roundabout improvement and the new A556 Knutsford to Bowdon bypass.

More information, including an option to sign up for regular project updates by email, is available on the [M56 project website](#).

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.