

Scottish Secretary Alistair Jack marks 2020 Armed Forces Week

News story

This year's annual celebration of the UK's military community is also marking 75 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe.



Scotland Secretary Alister Jack said:

“Beginning today [Monday 22 June], Armed Forces Week sees the whole country unite to celebrate and say thanks to our military community of service personnel, reserves, veterans, cadets and families – for their unwavering commitment in helping keep us safe.

“While this year's celebrations will, by and large, be virtual due to coronavirus, this does not diminish it's importance, with 2020 being 75 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe, followed by the end of the War in the Far East.

“As we are all too aware, this year the UK and the rest of the world have been embroiled in a new battle – against coronavirus. The UK's military have been front and centre in that fight, providing additional specialist skills and expertise in Scotland.

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Driving the change to greener vehicles: apply for funding

The UK is seeking to put green technologies at the heart of economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Zero emission vehicle technologies are a key part of the country's efforts to meet its carbon reduction targets.

The power electronics, machines and drivers required are also a significant global opportunity for UK manufacturers.

The government has launched the £80 million [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Driving the Electric Revolution Challenge](#) to help businesses to meet this need.

Its aim is to accelerate the UK's ability to deliver the next generation of electric vehicles, hybrid aircraft, energy generation, smart grids, industrial drives, consumer products, agricultural vehicles, ships, and rail.

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, has up to £15 million from the fund and from the [Office for Low Emission Vehicles](#) (OLEV) to support business research into these new technologies and to support the development of a supply chain. The funding competition has 2 strands.

Strand 1: Projects must develop supply chain improvements

Up to £5 million is available to support business-led projects that aim to improve the UK supply chain for power electronics, machines, and drives.

Projects could work on one or more of the following:

- manufacturing process development such as improving productivity, implementing new tools, automating processes, reconfiguring processes to improve productivity or flexibility
- design for manufacture such as designing or redesigning a product for more efficient production, specification of a manufacturing process, improvements in modelling and simulation software, developments to allow manufacture of products with recycling taken into consideration
- circular economy approaches such as scale-up of processes for recycling and recovery of materials, lifecycle and embedded carbon analysis, and waste reduction and process energy efficiency
- innovative testing and validation such as virtual product validation, and scale-up or automation of testing and validation processes

Competition information

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is at 11am on 29 July 2020

- businesses of any size may apply and must work with at least one other organisation
- we expect projects to range in size between £100,000 and £500,000 and last between 3 and 9 months
- [view the online briefing event](#)

Strand 2: work must target zero or very low emissions

Up to £10 million is available to support feasibility studies and research and development projects looking to develop technologies for zero emission vehicles or that target emissions significantly lower than 75g of CO₂ per km. Projects developing electric vehicle charging are also eligible for support.

Projects must build on a previous research project or feasibility study and could work on niche or mainstream vehicles including motorcycles, cars, goods vehicles and emergency vehicles.

Work could include:

- battery technologies
- electrification of conventional powertrains
- hybridisation technologies
- technologies that increase the efficiency of powertrain or auxiliary systems
- hydrogen technologies
- range extender technologies
- EV charging services including charging solutions, roaming, integration and grid services

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- an online [briefing event](#) takes place on 22 June 2020

[Driving the change towards Net Zero: apply for funding](#)

The UK is seeking to put green technologies at the heart of economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The manufacturing of power electronics, machines and drives (PEMD) required across sectors present a significant global growth opportunity for UK companies.

Further, zero emission vehicle technologies are a key part of the country's efforts to meet its carbon reduction targets.

The government has launched the £80 million [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Driving the Electric Revolution Challenge](#) to help businesses to meet this need.

The Challenge will accelerate the UK's ability to deliver; next generation electric vehicles, hybrid aircraft, energy generation, smart grids, robotics & industrial drives, consumer products, low-carbon off-highway vehicles for construction and agriculture, low-carbon maritime and rail supporting the realisation of Net Zero targets through clean innovation.

Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, has up to £15 million co-funded from Driving the Electric Revolution and the [Office for Low Emission Vehicles](#) (OLEV) to support business-led research that will develop supply chains and manufacturing capability for PEMD technologies across all sectors and support the development of new technologies that enable zero-emission vehicles. The funding competition has 2 strands.

Dr Will Drury, Challenge Director for Driving the Electric Revolution said: "This competition is an exciting opportunity for UK businesses to engage with Driving the Electric Revolution, collaborate and innovate delivering clean growth of the UK Power Electronics, Machines and Drives (PEMD) supply chains.

"The projects that we fund will catalyse the development of manufacturing capability and resilient supply chains for PEMD activities: the building blocks for all sectors undergoing electrification. Driving the Electric Revolution will facilitate the economic growth opportunities from the shift to Net Zero carbon emissions and ensure the UK is placed to deliver and grow the sovereign supply chains of the future."

Strand 1: Projects must develop PEMD supply chain improvements

Up to £5 million is available to support business-led projects that aim to improve the UK supply chain for power electronics, machines, and drives.

Projects could work on one or more of the following:

- manufacturing process development such as improving productivity, implementing new tools, automating processes, reconfiguring processes to improve productivity or flexibility
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[How a Manchester motorway could soon get its missing link](#)

The anomaly was created when the M60 was formed 20 years ago, connecting several existing motorways with a new stretch of motorway to form a 36-mile ring road around Manchester.

The current set up means drivers travelling eastbound on the M60 at junction 18 near Prestwich, known locally as Simister Island, soon find themselves on the M62 on their way to Leeds if they don't use a roundabout to reach the southbound section of the M60.

Highways England is now developing plans to cut journey times for the 90,000 drivers who use the junction every day to travel between the M60, M62 and M66. Drivers, residents and business owners will be able to have their say on the proposals in a new eight-week public consultation which launches today (Monday 22 June).

One of the options being considered involves creating a new link road in a loop from the eastbound to the southbound M60 so that drivers travelling clockwise could continue their journeys without leaving the M60. A [virtual reality video has been released](#) showing how the new link road could look.

Jim O'Sullivan, Highways England's chief executive, said:

We want to provide quicker and more reliable journeys for drivers across the North.

Simister Island is one of England's busiest motorway junctions, and the improvements we're planning will make it easier for people travelling between the M60, M62 and M66.

We now need your views to help make that much-needed motorway upgrade a reality.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Today's announcement is a step forwards in making the M60 easier to use, less confusing and more efficient for drivers.

I welcome this vital improvement which has the potential to cut journey times, improve reliability and boost businesses in the North.

Highways England is encouraging as many people as possible to share their views in the public consultation over the next eight weeks to help develop the designs for the motorway upgrade.

Other proposals being put forward as part of the consultation include creating a new two-lane link road for drivers travelling from the northbound to the westbound stretches of the M60 at Simister Island, as well as a new link road from the eastbound M60 onto the northbound M66.

The hard shoulder could also be converted to a permanent extra lane along the mile-long stretch of the M60 between junctions 17 and 18 to improve the flow of traffic, providing five lanes in both directions.

Peter Molyneux, Major Roads Director at Transport for the North, said:

Simister Island is a well-known anomaly in the area which causes delay and disruption for thousands of vehicles every day.

It is included in our Northern Infrastructure Pipeline as a vital scheme for improving road connections in the North West, and on completion the upgrade will better serve local traffic and improve reliability for east-west journeys across our region.

This consultation is welcome news as the next stage in progressing this scheme and we urge everyone to give their views.

Highways England is changing the way it carries out consultations during the Covid-19 pandemic, and is no longer holding face-to-face public events.

The organisation will instead arrange a series of telephone and online chats, where people will be able to speak directly to a member of the project team. Almost 10,000 consultation brochures are also being posted to homes and businesses near Simister Island.

The project team will be available to answer your calls on 141 0117 2444 061 every Tuesday for four weeks from Tuesday 30 June between 11am and 7pm, as well as on Saturday 11 July and Saturday 18 July during the same times. Using 141 at the start of the number will withhold your phone number.

The online chats will take place on the project web page between 10am and 5pm on Thursday 9 July and Thursday 16 July.

A preferred option for the scheme is due to be announced in the winter once the consultation responses have been considered and, if the project is approved by the government, construction work could start by 2024. You can find out more about the proposals and complete a consultation response form on the [scheme 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.