

£330 million sonar contract for Dreadnought submarines

BAE Systems Submarines, which is building four nuclear submarines for the Royal Navy, has awarded work worth around £330 million to Thales UK.

The Dreadnought sonar system will be developed at the global technology firm's sites in Templecombe, Somerset, and Stockport. The periscope – known as the 'Combat System Mast' – will be developed and manufactured in Govan with technical input from the workforce in Crawley.

Thales UK has been a trusted Continuous at-Sea Deterrence (CASD) partner with the MOD and Royal Navy since the first operation in 1969.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said:

I am delighted to continue our 50-year strong partnership with Thales. These next-generation sonars and sensors will ensure our nuclear deterrent retains a stealth and detection advantage over adversaries.

With over 500 jobs created or secured by this contract, we are clearly acting on the government's commitment to level-up across the UK.

The fleet will also be equipped with Thales Sonar 2076; providing them with the latest in acoustic detection capability. The visual and situational awareness sensor will combine electronic warfare technology with cameras to provide the Dreadnought crew with a visual link to the sea surface.

The next-generation Dreadnought submarines will be the Royal Navy's most advanced submarines ever when they enter service from the early 2030s and will be vital in providing the UK's nuclear deterrent, as they replace the Vanguard class of ballistic missile submarines.

Most of the jobs being created by the sub-contract to Thales UK are highly-skilled and in manufacturing, engineering and design. There will be 30 new posts in both Templecombe and Cheadle Heath, where 50 jobs will be secured at each site respectively. In Govan, 35 jobs will be secured while another 30 will be maintained in Crawley. Thales directly employs more than 7,000 people in the UK across ten sites.

Thales Chief Executive Victor Chavez said:

Thales is immensely proud of our contribution to the Continuous at-

Sea Deterrent over the last 50 years. This announcement represents a £330m investment in world-class sonar and optronics systems; providing the battle-winning edge for the Royal Navy.

Having supported the deterrent since its inception, and with over a century of supplying periscopes to the Royal Navy, I am proud that our engineers continue to deliver cutting edge innovative technology at sites across the UK.

Steve Lloyd, BAE Submarine Solutions' Dreadnought programme director, said:

This major step, reflecting collaborative working between the Dreadnought Alliance and Thales UK, will make a direct contribution to the sustainment of Continuous at-Sea Deterrence through the delivery of the next generation of the UK's ballistic missile carrying submarines.

The £31 billion Dreadnought programme is one of the most complex engineering projects ever undertaken by the UK Government and remains on schedule and within budget.

[Letter to IOPC Director General and progress report published](#)

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) oversees the police complaints system in England and Wales and scrutinises allegations of serious police misconduct.

In October, the Home Secretary wrote to IOPC Director General Michael Lockwood asking him to provide a comprehensive plan for delivering improvements, to ensure that police officers can work as effectively as possible and so that the IOPC was held to account. The Home Secretary has requested a further update from the Director General in May this year.

She asked for a response addressing specific concerns around the following areas:

- timeliness of investigations
- quality of investigations
- scrutiny of decision-making

- impact of the IOPC, including plans for transparency and evidence

The IOPC report details its plans for changes and improvements in these areas, as well as a timeline of key milestones to April 2021.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The vast majority of police perform their duties with the utmost professionalism – and I have been clear they have my full support.

The progress made by the IOPC on the effectiveness and timeliness of investigations is positive for both officers and the public, but clearly further improvement is required and I will continue to scrutinise the IOPC's performance.

Proposed actions detailed within the report, many of which are already underway, include:

- a new streamlined investigation process for lower-risk cases, which has helped to reduce the average time it takes to complete investigations
- a multi-disciplinary Critical Case Panel, chaired by the Director General, which now oversees particularly complex or high-risk cases to ensure cross-organisational support and assurance that work is properly resourced
- new opportunities for users to feedback and challenge the IOPC's work, including the introduction of restorative practice debriefs, which will allow users to discuss any concerns directly with IOPC staff
- an External Stakeholder Reference Group consisting of a range of statutory and non-statutory external stakeholders, to challenge and influence work
- developing a three-year communications strategy to raise better awareness of the IOPC's role and impact

IOPC Director General Michael Lockwood said:

This report highlights the significant progress the IOPC is making in our work as we continue to strengthen our impact and make a real difference to policing, operationally, organisationally and culturally.

Our plans are ambitious, and we are determined to bring about continued further improvements in our own work and across broader policing practice.

The [letter to Michael Lockwood from the Home Secretary and the IOPC report have been published on GOV.UK](#).

[IOPC: efficiency, effectiveness and profile](#)

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[Up to £50 million on offer in first stage of criminal legal aid review](#)

- consultation addresses areas identified by the legal profession as needing accelerated action
- between an estimated £32 million and £50 million increase in criminal legal aid funding proposed by government
- proposals follow extensive engagement with legal professionals

The proposed reforms include a variety of changes to the way legal aid fees are paid to criminal advocates and solicitors and could reach up to £50 million depending on the volume of cases.

The consultation, published by the Ministry of Justice, marks the first step of a comprehensive review of criminal legal aid and aims to address some of the most pressing concerns of the criminal defence profession. The aim of the fuller Criminal Legal Aid Review will be to ensure an efficient, effective and sustainable system, while delivering legal aid for the most vulnerable in society and value for money for the taxpayer.

Proposals out for consultation include:

- new payments for litigators and advocates for reviewing unused material
- additional payments for advocates with high volumes of pages of prosecution evidence

- increased payments for advocates on cracked trials
- additional payments for litigators for work done on sending cases to the Crown Court

Taken together, if implemented, they would result in an additional £32 million – £50 million for legal aid, which it is estimated would be split evenly between solicitor firms and barristers. This would ensure more funding in the areas professionals identified as needing immediate action.

Lord Chancellor, Robert Buckland, said:

These proposals are an important first step towards reviewing sustainability in the long term, ensuring fair fees, and delivering value for the taxpayer.

I am grateful for the engagement of defence practitioners to get us this far, and I look forward to working with them as we progress.

The proposed measures follow considerable engagement with defence practitioners, who have helped the government build an evidence base to underpin the proposals. They include:

- Paying litigators and advocates the equivalent of 1.5 hours work for up to 3 hours spent reviewing unused material disclosed to the defence. For those cases where more than three hours is spent, payment would be at hourly rates equivalent to the existing special preparation hourly rates for litigators and advocates.
- Additional payment for advocates in cases involving an unusually high amount of evidence, based on pages of prosecution evidence.
- Increasing the basic fee for advocates in cracked trials from 85% to 100% of the brief fee and extending this to all cases that crack after the first Crown Court hearing.
- Increasing litigators' fees to better pay for the work done ahead of cases being sent to the Crown Court.

The changing nature of crime and new measures to crack down on it, including 20,000 extra police officers, longer sentences for serious offenders and a new digital landscape, means the criminal legal profession is facing an increase in volume and complexity of criminal cases.

These areas for consultation represent a first step towards delivering the wider aims of the fuller Criminal Legal Aid Review. This will ensure a sustainable system where legal aid services are delivered by practitioners with the rights skills and experience, efficient and effective case progression and value for money for the taxpayer while ensuring access to justice.

Notes to editors

1. The [consultation document](#) was published on 28 February 2020
2. It will be open for 4 weeks, closing on 27 March 2020 following which

the government will respond with final proposals.

3. A [blog from the Lord Chancellor outlining the proposals](#) has also been published today (28 February 2020)
4. The Criminal Legal Aid Review was announced in December 2018 and will look at criminal legal aid throughout the lifecycle of a case, including all fee schemes and the wider market.
5. Five accelerated areas were fast-tracked after agreement with the professions in June 2019.

These are:

- how litigators and advocates are paid for work on unused material
- how advocates are paid for work on paper heavy cases
- how advocates are paid for cracked trials in the Crown Court
- how litigators are paid for work on sending cases to the Crown Court
- how litigators are paid for pre-charge engagement

6. The government will consult on a proposal to pay litigators for work engaging the police or prosecution ahead of a decision to charge following the issue of new disclosure guidelines by the Attorney General. This is currently out for public consultation.

[CMO for England announces 2 new cases of novel coronavirus: 28 February 2020](#)



Two further patients in England have tested positive for COVID-19.

The virus was passed on in Iran and the patients have been transferred to specialist NHS infection centres at the Royal Free Hospital.

The total number of cases in England is now 17. Following confirmed cases in Northern Ireland and Wales, the total number of UK cases is 19.

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