



Ministry
of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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JEREMY QUIN MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT

MSU/4/5/2/8/is

8th June 2022

Dear Tobias,

Update on Armoured Fighting Vehicles to HCDC

I am pleased to provide you with an update on the major Army led programmes below, as requested in the Committee's letter of 21 May 2021.

Ajax

The Committee will be aware that as part of the Minister for Defence Procurements' commitment to keep Parliament informed on the programme, a further update on the Ajax equipment project was provided on Thursday 19 May 2022 (Statement UIN HCWS42). As previously outlined the Department remains committed to keeping Parliament informed.

Land Industrial Strategy

Following the publication of the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy (DSIS) earlier this year, the Department launched the Land Industrial Strategy (LIS) on 18 May 2022 at the formal opening of the Defence BattleLab.

At its heart, the LIS seeks to advance equipment onto the frontline more quickly than we have previously managed. It is intended to underpin the British Army's ability to deliver the transformation set out by Future Soldier; that of a more lethal and expeditionary Army contributing to stronger alliances, partnerships, and a more prosperous and Global Britain.

It sets the conditions for a long-term collaborative approach based on shared culture and behaviours that support co-investment in capability delivery and innovation, while building the national industrial readiness and resilience the UK needs to respond to crisis.

The Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP
Chair, House of Commons Defence Committee
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Challenger 3

As a key part of the £1.422 billion investment in Challenger 3 (CR3), the Defence Secretary announced an £800 million contract award for Rheinmetall BAE Systems Land (RBSL) to deliver a fleet of CR3 Main Battle Tanks (MBT) to the British Army. The CR3 programme will upgrade 148 of our existing CR2 MBTs with a digitalised turret, a more capable 120mm smoothbore gun with enhanced munitions, upgraded sights and enhanced survivability based upgraded armour and other survivability enhancements.

RBSL are now on contract to deliver a fleet of CR3 MBTs. The next major milestone is the CR3 Critical Design Review in Autumn 2022. All Tier 1 sub-contracts have now been let, the latest of which was with Pearson's Engineering for the fabrication of turrets. This £25 million contract was announced on 25 March 2022.

BOXER - Mechanised Infantry Programme

The Mechanised Infantry Programme remains on track to deliver its outputs and benefits. Critical Design Review has been undertaken, initial prototypes for integration and trials are in production, UK manufacture facilities and skills transfer are underway and sub-contracts are being placed across the UK supply chain. Training and support solutions, along with infrastructure planning, are also underway. Following the Integrated Review, as part of its modernisation plans, the British Army intends to enhance the Boxer programme to assist in equipping the two new Armoured Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs), uplifting and accelerating the force structure and adjusting the original Strike concept and planned laydown. This will be delivered incrementally with an initial additional tranche of 100 vehicles recently announced. Potential other uplifts including new future variants are being explored on a longer term and more strategic basis with allies and industry in line with the Land Industrial Strategy.

Much of the UK fleet is planned to be built in Telford and Stockport, supported by a nationwide supply chain. Sixty per cent by value of the contract is planned to come from the UK, including the devolved regions, in particular Wales and Scotland. This will protect 400 jobs in the West Midlands, NE Wales and sustain up to a 1,000 nationally, enhancing skill sets and creating an ambitious UK apprenticeship scheme. The aim is to have the first prototype vehicles entering trials in 2023.

Land Ground Based Air Defence (GBAD)

Sky Sabre was declared at Initial Operating Capability on 8 October 2021. Commander 7th Air Defence Group and his 16th Regiment Royal Artillery are now maturing the development of the system towards Full Operational Capability.

The Short Range Air Defence (SHORAD) Lightweight Multi-Role Missile (LMM) was expected to enter service formally in 2022; having had the service-entry process accelerated, it has already successfully deployed.

As announced to the House of Commons on 25 April 2022, we have made a donation of dismounted High Velocity Missile (HVM)/LMM SHORAD and mounted Stormer capabilities to Ukraine.. The laser-beam-riding 'Starstreak' HVM and LMM, are highly effective and more complex than the 'fire and forget' SHORAD systems donated by other nations.

Swift progress is also being made on the introduction of an all-arms counter-small Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) capability to be carried by dismounted soldiers under Project Vikare; this is on schedule to be in service in 2023.

Land Deep Fires Programme (LDFP)

Following the initiation of the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) M270 upgrade work and collaborative development of the Extended Range - Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GMLRS) missile, work continues to develop warheads and payloads that match the most critical of expected targets.

The Land Precision Strike (LPS) Project is developing momentum fast; it will be fired from the upgraded MLRS to leverage investment in that platform, achieve efficiencies, and deliver the vision of 'One Launcher, Many Payloads'. This will be a transformational capability from 2028 to counter mobile, fleeting, armoured, and high value threats out to at least 80km.

Close Support Fires Programme

The Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper 2021 outlined significant structural enhancements to the Army and confirmed its continued commitment to the delivery of the Mobile Fires Platform (MFP); its increased range will be complemented by more accurate and longer range artillery ammunition (known as the Tactical Guided Munition Indirect, or TGMI); it remains a critical element of the close battle and will contribute to the Army's pivot towards the deep battle. Work continues to ensure that MFP's characteristics, including mobility, enhanced lethality, digitisation and automation, will continue to match those required by the Armoured BCTs and 3rd (UK) Division.

The Land Environment Tactical Communications and Information Systems (LE TacCIS)

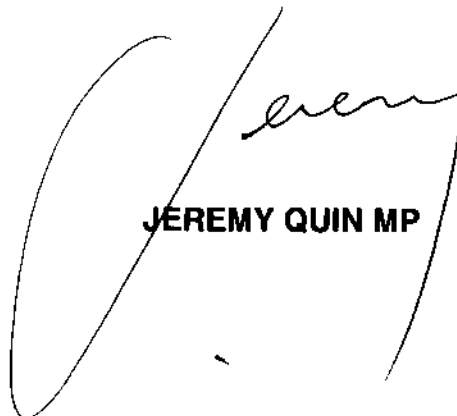
The LE TacCIS programme will deliver the forward edge of the Defence digital backbone through the sustainment, evolution or replacement of CIS and associated applications. It consists of multiple projects, all with an overarching focus on vendor independent and open architectures with multiple suppliers instead of a prime contractor, thus enabling capability and commercial agility for the MOD. It has notable dependencies with the other Defence Information Communication Services (ICS) programmes and most Land platforms.

Morpheus

The MORPHEUS Evolve to Open (EvO) Transition Partner (TP) contract is currently under review by the Investment Approvals Committee (IAC). There has been significant engagement with the IAC relating to the MORPHEUS project, specifically the Evolve to Open (EvO) Transition Partner (TP) contract with General Dynamics Mission Systems UK (GDMS(UK)). This review and discussions with GDMS(UK) are ongoing.

I hope this is helpful and I will continue to keep the Committee updated.

Yours sincerely



JEREMY QUIN MP