



# Defence Select Committee

**From the Chair:**

Tan Dhesi MP

21 January 2025

**The Rt Hon. John Healey MP**  
**Secretary of State for Defence**  
**Horse Guards Avenue**  
**Whitehall**  
**London**  
**SW1A 2HB**

**Subject: Harland & Wolff**

Dear Secretary of State,

You will be aware that the Committee has taken a close interest in UK Defence shipbuilding. As part of our work we have been following the difficulties encountered by Harland & Wolff, its proposed sale to Navantia UK and any potential impact on the Fleet Solid Support Ship programme and other MOD shipbuilding contracts. Following the company's announcement on 14 January of its intention to file for administration, the Committee would be grateful if you would respond to the questions below:

1. What are the approvals upon which the sale of Harland & Wolff to Navantia UK is dependent and what progress has been made in achieving them?
2. Which parts of Harland & Wolff are Navantia UK purchasing and which parts of the business are not covered by the sales?
3. In the Business Secretary's oral and written statements of 19 December no mention was made of Harland & Wolff entering administration. However, during Northern Ireland questions on 15 January, the Northern Ireland Secretary stated that "the administration announcement, which involves the other side of the runway, is part of a process to ensure that the takeover by Navantia goes ahead". Why was this not mentioned when the sale was announced, as it may have impacted on suppliers' decisions in respect of their contracts with Harland & Wolff?
4. What consultations has the Government had with the company on its decision to enter into administration?



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5. What is the impact of Harland & Wolff entering administration on the Fleet Solid Support Ship programme and other shipbuilding projects such as the M55 project to regenerate the ex-Navy mine-hunting vessel, HMS QUORN, for the Lithuanian Navy?
6. We understand the M55 Project has been suspended since September. What steps is the Government taking to ensure the programme recommences and that suppliers received payments owed?
7. In the House on 15 January, when questioned about the losses that suppliers to Harland & Wolff may incur, the Northern Ireland Secretary stated "ultimately the question of how to relate to those suppliers is a commercial matter for Navantia, but I am sure that it wants to build a good relationship with firms that will help Harland and Wolff to build the three fleet solid support ships". What discussions has the Government held (or does it intend to hold) with Navantia on building relationships with all of Harland and Wolff's suppliers, not just those involved in the Fleet Solid Support Ships programme?"
8. Do the Government or Royal Navy have any liabilities to the suppliers and creditors of Harland & Wolff?
9. What action is the Government taking to support the suppliers of Harland & Wolff?

A thriving shipbuilding sector is vital to the UK economy and the Government's growth plans and it is important that the Government's policies in this area are subject to robust parliamentary scrutiny. Therefore we expect comprehensive answers to our questions, not least to help inform Harland & Wolff's workers, their families and the company's suppliers and the wider shipbuilding community of the Government's plans. We look forward to receiving your response by 3 February.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Business and Trade and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

Tan Dhesi MP