



Ministry
of Defence

JEREMY QUIN MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT

Telephone 020 7218 9000 (Switchboard)

MSU/4/8/1/2/is

25th October 2021

Dear Tobias

Armoured Cavalry Programme (Ajax)

Thank you for your letter of 22 September.

I updated the House via WMS on the day that the House resumed. I was pleased to report that we have appointed David Marsh as the dedicated SRO for the Armoured Cavalry Programme. As head of the Project Delivery Profession in the MOD, David is highly experienced and will be running the programme essentially full time. His biography is attached for your interest.

The Health and Safety Report on the noise and vibration concerns raised on Ajax is being subjected to a formal Maxwellisation process. Once this has been completed and the Report finalised, I will publish it in full.

As you know, the independent Millbrook trials started at the Millbrook Proving ground on 6 September, and the Millbrook team have also conducted some of the trials at Bovington. These trials are producing masses of technical data. While I appreciate the Committee's interest, I am keen for this for independent work to be conducted at pace and without distraction. While the data emerging from the trials is highly technical, I will of course share with the Committee the outcomes when these, and their implications, have been determined.

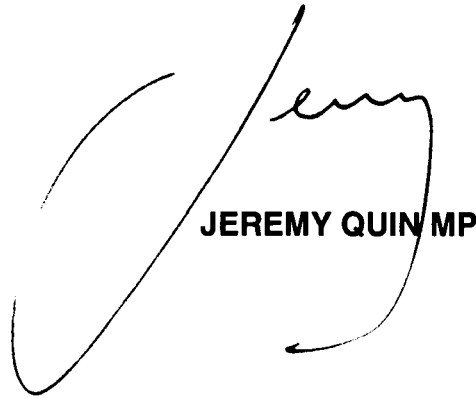
The Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP
Chair
House of Commons Defence Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Enclosure

On the medical assessments I hope you found the detail provided in the WMS helpful.

Finally, we are still exploring with General Dynamics the possibility of providing the Committee with a privileged 'closed door' briefing on the commercial arrangements for Ajax. I remain hopeful this can be delivered, and I will keep you updated on this through the Committee Clerks in the usual way.

With best wishes



JEREMY QUIN MP

Dr David Marsh BSc, PhD, CChem, FRSC, FAPM, ChPP, ACCA (Dip)FM



David is Director of Project Delivery in the UK Ministry of Defence. He has been with the MoD for 30 years and has held previous appointments in a range of major project, programme and operational delivery leadership roles covering major business transformation and capital investment programmes as well as chief operating officer and chief executive roles. He has wider responsibilities as the MoD Head of Profession for Portfolio, Programme and Project Management.

David graduated from Portsmouth Polytechnic in 1986 with an honours degree in Applied Chemistry and was awarded his PhD in Physical Chemistry in 1990. He worked in the electronics industry for a year before joining the MoD as a Research Fellow and Lecturer at the Royal Naval Engineering College, Manadon, Plymouth. In 1994 David joined the MOD Fast Stream Development Scheme for scientists and engineers. He subsequently undertook postings in London covering business management, procurement, environmental policy and research management, before moving to Bristol in 1999 and building his career around major project leadership roles. He is a chartered scientist and project professional and is a graduate of the government Major Project Leadership Academy.

David is married to Chantal and they have three adult children, Isabel, Robert and Dominic. Outside of the day job, he tries hard to maintain his other interests that include playing and listening to music, reading non-fiction, spending as much time as possible with his family, and remembering what it was like to be fit – in his youth, David was the South of England karate champion.



Defence Committee

Chair, Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP

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Jeremy Quin MP
Minister for Defence Procurement
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(by email)

22 September 2021

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 15 September providing further information on the Ajax programme following your appearance before the Committee on 20 July. We have now published this.

We are grateful for your commitment to publish the Health and Safety Report once finalised. We seek a similar commitment from you to publish—or failing that, to provide us with a copy of—the report on the independent trials which have now resumed at the Millbrook Proving Ground. It would also be of great assistance to the Committee's work if the Department could accommodate a visit to Millbrook to observe the trials. We also appreciate your offer to return to the Committee to discuss the findings of the ongoing Ajax workstreams. Committee staff will liaise with your officials on dates for a possible visit and your further appearance.

We note your comments that the Terms and Conditions of the contract with General Dynamics are commercially sensitive and legally confidential. However, we understand from your officials that consideration is being given to providing the Committee with a 'closed doors' briefing on Ajax where you could provide some of the contractual and commercial detail that you are unable to share in an open forum. We very much hope that this can take place at the earliest possible opportunity and Committee staff are available to liaise with the department on this matter.

We are grateful to you for your continual engagement with the Committee on this important programme.

P.P. *Yours sincerely,*
Tobias Ellwood

Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP
Chair of the Defence Committee