

News story: Welsh Secretary visits DECA, the North Wales home of the global F-35 hub as UK's Industrial Strategy Announced

As the UK Government launched its new industrial strategy, Alun Cairns took the opportunity to highlight the major contribution defence industry makes to the economy in Wales, as well as across the whole of the UK.

In November 2016, the UK was chosen to become the global repair hub for F-35 avionic and aircraft components, securing thousands of highly skilled jobs and millions in investment, with the potential to unlock more than £2bn of future F-35 support revenue over the lifetime of the programme. Mr Cairns viewed the future F-35 facilities and met senior figures from DECA, apprentices, local small businesses, and Joint Venture partners BAE Systems and Northrup Grumman.

Alun Cairns, Secretary of State for Wales, said:

The decision to house the F-35 global repair hub in North Wales is testament to Wales' international reputation for technology and manufacturing. DECA Sealand and companies like Airbus show that this part of Wales is now a leader in aviation technology. The fact Wales is producing the next generation of army fighting vehicles in Merthyr shows we offer a highly skilled workforce and locations that work for business.

The industrial strategy is a plan for everyone; every sector and business in Wales has a stake in it. By pulling together we can build a Welsh economy that works for everyone supported by well-paid jobs for our young people.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon, said:

Britain's selection as a global maintenance and repair hub for F35s is a vote of confidence in our high-tech defence industry, generating billions of pounds for the UK and creating thousands of jobs.

But we want to do more through the industrial strategy to build on our strengths and get every part of the country, including Wales and North West England, firing on all cylinders.

Backed by our rising defence budget, a £4.7bn increase in R&D funding and Defence's £800m Innovation Initiative, we are

determined to make the UK one of the most competitive places in the world to innovate, build business and help deliver security.

The government's Industrial Strategy will seek to make fresh choices about how the UK shapes its economy and presents an opportunity to deliver a bold, long term Industrial Strategy that builds on strengths and prepares for the years ahead.

With over 3,000 aircraft expected to be in service with 12 nations, the F-35 represents a truly international programme and supply chain, including in the UK, with British companies providing approximately 15% by value of every F-35 to be built.

The government will develop this strategy further with industry and ensure the UK remains one of the best places in the world to innovate and do business. Following a period of consultation, the government intends to publish an Industrial Strategy white paper in 2017 that will set out the plan for full and long term delivery.

Notice: Downstream of Town Bridge, Peterborough to the Dog in a Doublet

When: 4 February 2017 between 9am and 3.30pm

What's happening: There is a rowing event taking place on the river Nene at the locations and times stated.

Notice: Doddington Lock and Islip Lock

When: 1 February 2017 between 10am and 2pm.

What's happening: There will be a power outage at the locks during the period stated.

Press release: Zika virus, superbugs and arthritis targeted through £26 million fund

Sixty seven projects will win a share of £26 million funding available through [Biomedical Catalyst 2016](#), which is run by Innovate UK and the [Medical Research Council](#), and aims to develop innovative healthcare technologies and processes.

For the first time, Scotland's economic development agency [Scottish Enterprise](#) have also invested in projects. They have provided additional funding to seven Scottish companies, securing local support for nationally competitive innovations.

Funded projects

- Glasgow-based [SAW DX](#) will create 'ultrasonic holograms' to diagnose sexually transmitted infections much quicker than the current tests allow.
- The [Native Antigen Company](#) from Oxford are developing a quick and easy test for Zika virus, which differentiates the virus from Dengue Fever and hopes to provide reassurance to millions of mothers-to-be who live in tropical countries.
- Cambridge based [Cell Guidance Systems](#) have developed a way to use protein from silk worms to heal cartilage and potentially reduce the need for joint replacement in people with osteoarthritis.
- [Micropharm](#), from Newcastle Emlyn in West Wales are using antibodies produced by sheep to develop a treatment for antibiotic resistant 'superbugs', such as *Chlostridium difficle*.

Supporting the announcements, Chief Executive of Innovate UK Dr Ruth McKernan said:

Our biosciences sector, supported by the Biomedical Catalyst, is a fantastic example of the UK's joined-up innovation ecosystem in action. Our excellent researchers develop new and novel treatments and procedures that are then commercialised by our world-class businesses.

By becoming a co-funder in the Biomedical Catalyst, Scottish

Enterprise will be helping to bring together Innovate UK's national expertise in innovation with their own specific local priorities to boost local and national economic growth.

Sir John Savill, Chief Executive of the Medical Research Council said:

The Biomedical Catalyst is an important collaboration between the Medical Research Council and Innovate UK and we are pleased with the impressive results from the initiative to date. This unique partnership is clearly valued by both academia and industry – as evidenced by this latest investment from Scottish Enterprise.

Julia Brown, Director of Life and Chemical Sciences at Scottish Enterprise added:

We're working hard to create more opportunities for Scottish businesses to secure business innovation funding. This first-of-its-kind partnership with Innovate UK and the Medical Research Council is just one way we're achieving this, while integrating our support with our partners to generate more impact for the Scottish economy.

I'm pleased to see seven Scottish life science companies winning funding to support their innovative healthcare products, which demonstrates Scotland's thriving life sciences industry and our long established reputation for creativity and business innovation.

The Biomedical Catalyst partnership between Innovate UK and the Medical Research Council has provided funding for 384 projects that have led to more than 60 first-in-human studies for innovative products. The programme has also helped bring more than £1 billion of additional investment into the UK bioscience sector.

In Autumn Statement 2016, the Chancellor Phillip Hammond announced £100 million of additional funding to extend and enhance the Biomedical Catalyst to support life science companies and translate cutting-edge medical technologies into commercial success.

[Press release: Final phase of £192 million A556 dual carriageway work](#)

unveiled

Drivers will shortly be able to use the new £192 million A556 Knutsford to Bowdon dual carriageway in Cheshire, with the final phase of work starting next month.

Highways England, which is building the new link road between junction 19 of the M6 at Knutsford and junction 7 of the M56 at Bowdon, today detailed the final phase of road works for the project – paving the way for the new road to open in March , providing a faster and more reliable link between the 2 motorways.

View looking north from new A50 bridge – with finishing landscaping and carriageway works underway

Full weekend closures – of the existing A556, junction 19 of the M6 and junctions 7 and 8 of the M56 – are needed and are scheduled to start in mid-February. The closures will allow the old road to be sealed off from through traffic and the motorway junctions to be tied into the new dual carriageway.

Highways England project manager Paul Hampson said:

We are on course to open the new dual carriageway by the end of March, if not sooner. As well as starting work next month to connect the new dual carriageway to the M6 and M56 link roads, we'll be using the weekend closures to do some preparation along the existing A556 which will become a B road with much-improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

We're working hard with partners and stakeholders like the emergency services and Manchester Airport to plan for these weekend closures and to make sure they'll be well-publicised once the full details are confirmed.

View from new A50 bridge looking south

Drivers are being advised the schedule for the final phase of work is dependent on the weather. The schedule currently involves:

- a full weekend closure of the existing A556 and associated M6 and M56 junctions between 9pm on Friday 17 February and 5am on Monday 20 February
- a full weekend closure of the existing A556 and associated M6 and M56 junctions from 9pm on Friday 3 March to 5am on Monday 6 March – with the new road opening to drivers that morning for the first time
- a final full weekend closure of the old A556 and new A556 between 9pm on Friday 10 March and 5am on Monday 13 March to finalise work to seal off the old road

Highways England is working with partners and stakeholders such as Manchester Airport, major football clubs and the police to plan for and publicise the road works so drivers can plan journeys affected by the weekend closures. More information and advice will be released nearer the time of the closures.

Alternative view looking north up the new A556

Construction of the new A556 link road, between the M56 and the M6, started in November 2014 and is part of a £15 billion government investment in motorways and major A roads by 2021 which is being delivered by Highways England as part of the Northern Powerhouse initiative.

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.