

[News story: Autonomous supply to military front line: apply for contracts](#)

Updated: Updated news story photograph.

The [Ministry of Defence](#) is to invest in projects that look at ways of using autonomous systems in the 'last mile' of the supply chain to front-line military operations.

Up to £1.5 million is available in the first phase of the competition. There is up to an additional £1.5 million in phase 2 that includes proposed system designs. This will only be available to projects funded through phase 1.

A third phase could include a longer period of trials and evaluation of promising proposals.

Last mile supply

Last-mile resupply involves delivery of combat materials from a physical base or logistics vehicle and is often challenging because of the hostile and contested environment. Although described as last-mile, real-life distances could be up to 30km in some instances.

Current ways of supplying the front line involve transport aircraft, helicopters, large trucks, trailers with quad bikes and soldiers on foot.

The challenge areas

This funding competition is particularly looking for solutions in 3 challenge areas:

- unmanned air and ground load-carrying platforms
- technologies and systems that allow load-carrying platforms to operate autonomously
- technologies to autonomously predict, plan, track and optimise re-supply demands from military users

The competition is for fully funded contracts under SBRI (Small Business Research Initiative).

[Find out more about SBRI.](#)

Competition information

- the competition is open, and the deadline for applications is midday on 21 June 2017
- the competition is for fully funded development contracts
- phase 1 contracts are likely to be worth between £40,000 and £80,000 and last up to 6 months
- a networking event for potential applicants will take place on 23 May 2017
- there will be a webinar for potential applicants on 30 May 2017

[Find out more about this competition and apply.](#)

[Green Party: Parties must unite to stop Tories wrecking Britain](#)



19 April 2017

The co-leaders of the Green Party, Caroline Lucas and Jonathan Bartley, have written to the leaders of Labour and the Liberal Democrats urging them to unite to stop the Tories 'wrecking Britain'. [1] Lucas and Bartley are calling for a meeting between party leaders to discuss ways to beat the Tories at the General Election and deliver a fairer voting system.

In their letter to Jeremy Corbyn and Tim Farron, Lucas and Bartley listed a 'crumbling NHS' and a 'bleak future for young people' as reasons for parties to work together. They also said that working together is key to prevent an 'extreme' Brexit inspired by the Tories, UKIP and the DUP.

The call from the Green Party comes after senior figures in Labour – Lisa Nandy, Clive Lewis and Jonathan Reynolds – called on their party to consider standing aside at the Richmond by election last year. [2] In that election the Green Party stood aside, helping the Liberal Democrats defeat UKIP-backed Zac Goldsmith.

The Green Party expects to stand in seats in 'every corner of the UK' in the General Election on June 8th – but are asking Farron and Corbyn to explore options to stand the best chance of beating the Conservatives. At their recent conference the Green Party membership instructed their leaders to explore electoral alliances with other parties to beat the Tories. [3]

Caroline Lucas and Jonathan Bartley will make further announcements in the coming weeks on their plans, but insist that any agreement between parties must be made at a local level by ordinary members who share an interest in

defeating the Conservatives.

Caroline Lucas said:

“Britain is at a crossroads – and this election will dictate the very future of our country. The Green Party will be standing on a unique policy platform – opposing the Tories’ Brexit and putting forward big ideas for a fairer economy and the protection of our environment. Our call for a meeting between party leaders isn’t about the Greens standing aside – it’s about giving people in this country the best possible chance of defeating the Conservatives and bringing in a truly democratic voting system.

“For the sake of our NHS, our welfare state and our environment we need progressive party leaders to ditch partisan politics just for a moment and think about how we can best stop the Tories from wrecking our country for generations to come.”

Notes:

[1] Full letter:

Dear Jeremy and Tim,

We are getting in touch to invite you to meet with us to discuss ways to stop the Tories wrecking our country in the context of the forthcoming general election.

Greens have a powerful and compelling vision for building a better, bolder Britain and, like you, will be using the election to set out our policies and ask for voters’ support. However, we also continue to believe there is a role for some form of cooperation in a handful of seats to create the best possible chance of beating the Tories and, crucially, of thereby delivering a fairer voting system. The latter is critical if we want to build the better politics to which both of you have said you are committed. We are deeply concerned too about the prospect of a further Conservative majority and the impact on our crumbling NHS, the housing crisis, the environment and what for young people is a bleak and uncertain future.

We’d like to meet to explore the best options for beating the Tories in June.

We understand that, in the immediate run up to an election, signalling a willingness to work with other parties might be difficult but we hope you’ll agree that the times we are living in require leaders to be courageous and visionary, to actively build a more positive politics. Britain is at a crossroads – and this election will dictate the very future of our country. Many of the public want us to join forces to help stop the Tories from further wrecking our country for generations to come and we hope you will be willing to at least take the first step and meet with us.

Best wishes, Caroline and Jonathan

[2] Lewis, Nandy and Reynolds call for Labour to stand aside in Richmond:
<http://labourlist.org/2016/10/lewis-nandy-and-reynolds-lets-make-this-a-referendum-on-goldsmith-not-heathrow/>

[3] Green Party Conference backs electoral alliance:

<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2017/04/caroline-lucas-i-think-what-justin-trudeau-did-was-absolutely-outrageous>

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[Green Party responds to John McDonnell on tax](#)



19 April 2017

The Green Party has responded to John McDonnell's refusal to say that the general level of taxation would rise under a Labour Government. Specifically he said that only those earning £70-£80,000 would have to pay more, despite just 15% of people earning over £42,000 and just one in 20 earning £78,000 per year. [1] [2]

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, called for an honest debate about tax to ensure that public services are protected.

He said:

"It's deeply disappointing to hear the Shadow Chancellor back away from a radical shakeup of the tax system to truly redistribute wealth and support our public services. The truth is that that anyone paying higher rate tax is in the top 15% of earners in the country, and we should be asking them to pay more to stop our NHS crumbling and our welfare state being destroyed. Indeed the general level of taxation in the country should be going up. That's why the Green Party will, in the coming weeks, reveal a bold tax plan which would provide Britain with world-leading public services."

Notes:

[1]

<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/economy/2016/11/no-john-mcdonnell-people-earning-over-42000-have-not-been-hit-hard>

[2] <http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/news/article-3621852/More-1m-people-say-earn-100k-year-nearly-50-000-make-1m-survey-finds.html>

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[Hanging Basket Workshop](#)



From Ninewells Community Garden :

Our next volunteer day on Saturday 29th April will include a workshop to create your own beautiful hanging basket – for free!

All materials will be provided and expert guidance given by Alex Graham, who creates beautiful baskets with the Maggie's Centre gardening group.

The volunteer day will run from 10am – in the morning we will attend to a range of gardening jobs in the garden; the hanging baskets workshop will run from 1pm-3pm.

Please bring some lunch if you'd like to come for the day, we will provide tea, coffee etc.

Do let us know if you'd like to attend the baskets workshop as spaces are limited – facilitator@ninewellsgarden.org.uk.

[Winter weather conditions could lead to worsening smog](#)



Heavy smog hits Beijing. [Photo/China.org.cn]

Winter weather conditions that prevent air pollutants from dispersing in Beijing could be affected by climate change and lead to longer and more frequent periods of smog, scientists have found.

Conducive weather conditions are a key contributor to severe haze, when PM2.5 – fine particulate matter measuring 2.5 microns or less in diameter – harms health and causes economic disruption, according to the Qingdao National Laboratory for Marine Science and Technology.

As global warming causes large-scale circulation changes, the frequency and duration of such weather will increase by 50 percent and 80 percent respectively between 2050 and 2099 compared with last century, a study has found.

The lab's findings were published online recently by Nature Climate Change, an international science journal.

"Although it is believed that haze is caused by pollutants from exhaust fumes and industrial emissions, the impact from weather conditions shouldn't be dismissed," said Cai Wenju, the lead author of the report.

Cai said the conducive weather conditions include weaker surface winds in the north and mid-troposphere winds in the northwest, and a stronger thermal stability in the lower atmosphere.

"These conditions are disadvantageous for driving away haze, and instead cause it to accumulate," Cai added.

The report states the predicted increase in frequency and duration is

consistent with atmospheric changes brought about by global warming, such as to Arctic winds, weaker East Asian winter monsoons and faster warming of the lower troposphere.

The Qingdao laboratory is also carrying out major scientific projects, including "Transparent Ocean", in support of the accurate prediction of the marine environment and climate change.

"Haze management is a common responsibility of all countries worldwide," said Pan Kehou, secretary-general of the lab's academic committee. The lab "will take responsibility in leading and promoting international cooperation on energy saving and emissions reduction with scientific research institutions from other countries and regions, and in contributing to a better environment and development of ecological civilization".

Last month, the United States-based journal Science Advances published a study on China's haze.

The study said extreme haze in winter would likely occur at a higher frequency in China as a result of the changing boreal cryosphere, such as Arctic sea ice loss in the preceding autumn and extensive boreal snowfall in early winter, posing challenges for mitigating winter haze.