

New defence BattleLab to drive innovation

- Defence BattleLab opens in Dorset to help drive innovation across Armed Forces
- Hub will foster collaboration between Armed Forces, industry and academia
- First ever Land Industrial Strategy to modernise military operations

Building on successful global models of innovation and other work across UK Defence, the Defence BattleLab will bring together military personnel, academic institutions and private sector companies to trial and experiment cutting-edge technology.

By utilising the same space, the facility will foster collaboration and creativity to push new technological boundaries – an approach that has proved successful with many global innovation hubs.

Facilities at the Defence BattleLab include:

- Access to the UK's only multi-domain ranges at Lulworth, comprising 15,000ft of cleared airspace, available sea area and a live fire capable range
- A live trial and showcase workshop for digital and physical technology
- Three 5G testbeds which will allow for testing in a secure, closed network
- Over 100 rentable desks for companies and half a floor for Defence staff across a large open plan office

While there is no one single focus for the organisations involved, the BattleLab seeks to encourage free thinking and novel approaches for challenges across the land, sea and air military domains.

Defence Procurement Minister, Jeremy Quin said:

As the pace of technological change continues to spiral, Defence must be forward leaning and innovative in its approach.

Collaboration and innovation will be the catalysts to maintaining advantage over our adversaries. The BattleLab will bring together the best talent and expertise in industry and push technology boundaries to equip our Armed Forces with the latest state of the art kit.

This will be supported by our new Land Industrial Strategy, which will increase transparency with industry to help drive joint working.

The Defence BattleLab is a joint project between the Defence Innovation Unit, single Services, Dstl, DASA, Dorset Council and Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership. It will help bridge the gap between the MOD and the UK's world class innovative companies, especially in the small to medium sector.

Since soft launching last summer, the Defence BattleLab has hosted numerous Hackathons, defence technology showcases and workshops across emerging technologies for all areas of defence.

The facility seeks to take advantage of Dorset's location, with Portsmouth, Plymouth, Bovington, Blandford, Warminster and Salisbury Plain all in easy reach.

Defence Innovation Director Clare Cameron said:

Defence Innovation is excited to co-fund the new Defence Battlelab as we boost our partnerships with talented industry innovators, to more rapidly deliver the battle winning technologies of tomorrow.

Head of NavyX Col Tom Ryall said:

Our commitment to meaningful innovation is measured in actions not words and the Defence BattleLab is a shining example of this. As a centre of excellence for collaboration between SMEs and Defence users, it's a vital cog in the developing Defence innovation ecosystem and vector into wider networks. It brings together the most innovative companies with users, under one roof, and alongside a world class test range. Today's opening of the BattleLab marks a watershed moment in Defence's relationship with industry.

Dorset LEP Chair Cecilia Bufton said:

We share the Army's ambition to grow an ecosystem of highly innovative companies. In providing a collaborative space where SMEs can benefit from the smart technology we've brought in, where they can explore how to apply their technology to the defence industry, and where there is opportunity to test and develop innovative solutions for the sector. We believe the Defence BattleLab has real potential to attract investors, inspire collaborations and encourage more SMEs into the county.

Today's ribbon-cutting is an exciting moment for our partnership, for this Enterprise Zone site and for the county of Dorset, and I'm delighted that this Local Growth funded project has met this pivotal milestone.

In addition to the opening of the Defence BattleLab, today sees the launch of

the new [Land Industrial Strategy](#) (LIS), underpinned by more than £85 billion investment in equipment and support for our Armed Forces over the next four years.

The LIS – the first strategy specifically for the Land sector – recognises past delivery challenges and the rapid increase in the sophistication of land technology.

Deputy Chief of the General Staff Lt Gen Sir Chris Tickell KBE said:

The Army is undergoing its most radical transformation in more than 20 years to deliver Future Soldier, including spending more than £40bn in the next ten years. This demands more from us, our delivery agents, and our industry partners.

Our commitment to innovate and to work more closely with industry are underpinned by the Land Industrial Strategy and made manifest in facilities such as the Defence BattleLab. I could not be more excited to be a part of the launch for these fundamental aspects of our modernisation.

The Strategy seeks to modernise equipment and advance it onto the frontline more quickly. It will empower defence to take decisions earlier on the viability of programmes and bring the right equipment into service faster.

Key platforms, such as armoured vehicles, will serve for decades, so the focus will be on working with industry to integrate iterative physical, electronic or digital upgrades during their lifespan, helping maintain a decisive battlefield advantage.