

# News story: British companies get green light to press ahead with new Army vehicle plans, Defence Minister announces

The Army intends to make an initial purchase of over 500 Boxer vehicles, and the Defence Minister has today announced that British suppliers have been given the green light to bring forward concrete plans for the project, which is set to support at least 1,000 UK jobs.

Artec, the consortium who lead on the production of the troop carriers, have been given the go-ahead to invite industry to bring forward actual contractible proposals for work on the vehicles. A big step towards making a purchase, the news means that Artec will now ramp up work to complete their supplier selection process before returning to the MOD with a formal proposal next year.

The Defence Minister made the announcement whilst speaking at DVD2018 at Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire, which showcases equipment and technology for the British Army and is one of the biggest land equipment events in the world.

Speaking at the event, Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

A new 8×8 armoured vehicle is a key part of our British Army's future, and today marks a big step towards equipping our soldiers with this brand-new troop carrier. British companies are stepping up to the plate yet again for a project which could support up to 1,000 jobs across the country, and it is great to give industry the green light to now pull together a full plan of action. I am looking forward to pressing ahead with negotiations in our pursuit of a vehicle which works best for the Army, the taxpayer and British industry.

British companies get green light to press ahead with new Army vehicle plans, Defence Minister announces. Crown copyright.

The MOD [announced that the British Army had re-joined the Boxer programme back in March](#), as it looks to modernise its vehicle fleet and meet the Mechanised Infantry Vehicle (MIV) requirement, which is central to the Army's plans for fast-moving 'strike brigades'.

Artec will now complete supplier selection and confirm their proposal to manufacture and support Boxer in the UK, offering new opportunities to British suppliers for what is set to be their largest single order.

The UK played a major role in the original design, development and testing of the Boxer, and would reassume the rights it had as a project partner if a deal was to go through – allowing the option for the vehicle to be built and exported from the UK.

Artec has already made commitments to UK industry by signing partnership agreements with various British companies in anticipation of a deal being struck, whilst there are a number of British firms which already supply systems for the vehicle, which is already in service with the Netherlands, Lithuania and Germany.

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The MOD conducted a comprehensive market analysis of Mechanised Infantry Vehicles in service, entering service and in development. The analysis was guided by the British Army's requirements and how best to deliver them. The Boxer delivered on protected mobility, capacity, flexibility, utility and agility. The first vehicles are set to be in-service by 2023.

Production of the £4.5 billion Ajax family of armoured vehicles is already ramping up, and they are set to enter service in 2020. The Defence Minister also revealed today that Lockheed Martin UK has successfully delivered the first eight production turrets to Ajax's prime contractor, General Dynamics Land Systems.

Lockheed Martin UK is under contract to manufacture, test and certify 245 turrets for the reconnaissance variant of the Ajax fleet at its multi-million pound Ampthill site, which is just a five minute drive from the testing centre which hosts DVD.

Welcoming the news, Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Ajax is the UK's biggest order of armoured vehicles in a generation, supporting thousands of jobs across the country and modernising our frontline fleet. Having been expertly produced just a few miles away in the same county, it is apt that this first batch of turrets have been delivered in time for Bedfordshire's Army showcase, marking another step towards bringing these vehicles onto the battlefield.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew addresses the crowd at DVD18. Crown copyright.

While at the show the Minister also revealed that the MOD has recently taken delivery of the 200th Cased Telescope cannon – the innovative weapon, developed between UK and French industry, which will provide the stopping power for the armed Ajax variant, as well as the upgraded Warrior vehicle being developed through an MOD Capability Sustainment Programme.

DVD is the premier defence land equipment event in the UK and one of the biggest of its type in the world. Attending UK companies ranged from SMEs to

larger suppliers. Manufacturers marking recent export successes at the show included QinetiQ which has won two contracts to supply armoured vehicle drive and suspension systems for the US Office of Naval Research.