

# News story: New frigates opportunity for Ferguson as Defence Secretary visits

The Defence Secretary launched an ambitious National Shipbuilding Strategy last month, in which he laid out plans for a first batch of five of another new class of frigates – the Type 31e. Industry has been invited to provide high level plans to build an initial order of five ships at a maximum average price of £250 million per ship.

The Defence Secretary has personally committed to visiting all of the UK's major shipyards in the run-up to industry bringing forward its solutions for the Type 31e class, as he looks to grow the Royal Navy fleet for the first time since World War Two.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

With our cutting-edge Type 26 frigates already being built on the Clyde, I know Scottish skilled engineers will relish the chance to compete to build a brand new class of warships for the growing Royal Navy. We want to make the most of the renaissance in UK shipbuilding, delivering the latest ships that will help protect our nation and our interests across the world.

Part of the MOD's £178bn equipment plan, the contract for the first three Type 26 frigates has already been signed. Safeguarding 4,000 jobs in Scotland and across the UK supply chain until 2035, they are being built at BAE System's Govan shipyard on the Clyde.

The Defence Secretary cut steel on HMS Glasgow, the first Type 26, in July. Along with her sister ships she will have a truly global reach, protecting the UK's strategic interests, alongside the UK's nuclear submarines, and delivering high-end warfighting capability wherever it is needed. In a further commitment to Scottish shipbuilding, five Offshore Patrol Vessels are being built at BAE Systems' Scotstoun shipyard in Glasgow, sustaining around 800 jobs. Ahead of his trip to Ferguson, the Defence Secretary also visited the Scotstoun site where his wife, Lady Wendy Fallon, formally named the second OPV.

With the Government committing to build the Type 31e warships in the UK, Ferguson has the opportunity to compete for this latest programme to build ships for the Royal Navy. One option is to build the Type 31e frigates in blocks around the country, assembled at a central hub. This reflects how the biggest ship ever built for the Royal Navy, the 65,000-tonne HMS Queen Elizabeth, was constructed.

The Type 31e Frigates will not only be designed to meet the needs of the

Royal Navy, but also the export market. The Government will work together with industry to provide the certainty and support needed to become internationally competitive. Such a move will boost the British economy and jobs, while also helping to create a more stable and well-protected world.

The Defence Secretary has already paid visits to Cammell Laird in Merseyside and Harland and Wolff in Belfast as he continues to reach out to shipyards across the UK. Earlier this week BAE Systems and Cammell Laird outlined their proposal for the Type 31e.