

# Defence Procurement Minister RUSI Land Warfare Conference 2021

I know it has been an endlessly fascinating day – to use your words – and certainly busy, and I sincerely hope a useful day and I want to begin by thanking RUSI and CGS for hosting this important event on behalf of those online, as I was this morning, and those of us in person at Church House. This building played a vital parliamentary role in the Second World War. Among many actions first relayed here was Churchill's announcement of the sinking of the Bismark.

The place is rich in the history of a past conflict but as we've been reminded during the course of the day, the character of warfare continues, of course, to constantly change.

Yes, the nature of war remains constant – a visceral and human activity, the 'contest of wills' – but the characteristics that we have discussed here today are undergoing changes of the most profound significance. Speed and Adaptability must be our mantra as we approach the new challenges that we face.

It is vital that we in this room help inform those outside of the pace of change and how the threat is evolving. Now I have to share with you, that rather alarmingly, whilst on-line this morning, I misheard CGS, I thought I heard him say that we live in an era of 'tooth decay.' He of course said 'truth decay', and he is right, as we do all have a message to get over.

I was particularly glad and honoured that CGS and his colleagues at RUSI specifically wanted to hear about our enthusiasm for the Land Industrial Strategy and our determination to make it succeed.

I hope, indeed I'm convinced it marks a turning point in how the Army is thinking and in due course potentially, what the population at large may think about the Army.

The British people are deeply grateful for the commitment, the dedication and resolve of the Army defending peace, our interests and our allies globally. They recognise that it is a task that this country has always taken on and will do so even more as IOpC reaches fruition.

However whatever the huge and genuine admiration for what the Army does so brilliantly there is another source of pride from which the other services undoubtably benefit in public perceptions.

The Royal Navy is synonymous with shipbuilding and those extraordinary Aircraft Carriers are alive in public perceptions right now as HMS Queen Elizabeth embarks on CSG.

The Royal Air Force conjures up memories of Spitfires, jet engines, the Harriers and the ongoing skills and jobs supporting Typhoon and a Future

Combat Air System.

Even though we all recognise the fundamental differences between the services I cannot help but think the Army has been missing a trick in not adding to public perception not only the sense of security and gratitude for its professionalism, but a greater recognition of its positive impact on national skills on prosperity.

As CGS himself this morning, a Land Industrial Strategy will be an important lever to change both perception and reality, and I say very truly that I'm delighted that Simon Hamilton just earlier stole much of my thunder, and many of the points I will be making today, so well done him.

I am delighted with this emphasis on building the Army's industrial partnerships, of upskilling and of driving our Land Systems export potential and international participations.

We can indeed through a Land Industrial Strategy do so much more.

"Supporting prosperity" is after all a Defence Task.

Driving forward technology with civil applications and the capability of Land Equipment joining Combat Air and Maritime to secure the UK's position as the second largest Defence exporter globally. Leveraging off the excellent and expanding network of DAs an increasing number of whom I have had the privilege of working with on export campaigns.

Building on the cutting-edge capabilities that make the UK the partner of choice in the international programmes on which we all rely. CGS again referred from the outset to our people and their skills being central. Let us be clear about the importance of the military role of identifying, testing and shepherding through new capabilities. These SROs have a vital role in delivering real operational advantage into the front line and I know they will receive investment and support.

So, let us put the Land Industrial Strategy in context. Three decades ago, land power played a critical role in the Gulf War with our tanks racing across the desert to liberate Kuwait.

That was a sight then familiar to many veterans of the time and a vision which still informs the views of many who would regard themselves as current friends and allies of defence.

Today we recognise that picture has changed profoundly. Our adversaries have taken giant steps forward and the threats are almost unrecognisable.

In the conflicts between Armenia and Azerbaijan we've seen how low value drones used at standoff distances can target forces and their supply chains.

While across the world nations are having to defend themselves from daily cyber-attacks, from heavily armed proxy forces, from malicious misinformation and from a host of other covert tactics.

Increasingly, our enemies seek to blur the boundaries between peace and war and to undermine our democracies without provoking an armed response.

That may not be without precedence, but given the evolution of their techniques and the proliferation of their tools they represent a constantly evolving array of threat. One thing is clear, we must adapt and we've got no time to lose.

All of this has compelled us to radically rethink the way we do Defence.

Starting with last year's Integrated Operating Concept, we are now readying ourselves to respond rapidly and persistently to dangers, especially those in the 'grey zone', the arena of constant competition in which we now find ourselves.

And thanks to our recent Integrated Review and the Defence Command Paper, we're making sure the right kit will be delivered to a more agile and more lethal Army to ensure that's done at the speed of relevance.

Now these are, I accept, bold claims, given some would argue, the departmental track record. So how are we going to inject speed? And what does that mean for the Army? As the Minister responsible, I would highlight three aspects that give me confidence:

## **1. INVESTMENT**

First, we are investing – we're investing to give you what you need.

The hard truth is that the Army relative to other TLBs needs to catch-up on long term investment. The pressing need in recent decades to deliver UORs and the focus on difficult and complex conflicts, in common with many of our allies, has led to insufficient future proofing of our land equipment.

Germany, as many of you will be very aware, has upgraded its Leopard main battle tank 15 times since it was brought into service, exported it to 18 countries and built over 3000. By contrast the UK has only delivered a single core upgrade to Challenger 2.

But we're going to turn that around.

The Prime Minister has committed to spending £188bn on Defence over the coming four years – an increase of £24bn.

Over 10 years, some £24bn again will be invested in the Army, more than any other Command.

That new funding has been earmarked for new vehicles, long-range rocket systems, air defences, drones, electronic warfare and cyber capabilities.

We are getting on with the task of making that spend a reality.

Last month we announced invested on a new fleet of 148 Challenger 3 Main Battle Tanks. Thirty years after the original Challenger charged across the

desert , its overdue upgrade will give us one of the most protected and most lethal tanks in Europe.

We're investing in Boxer armoured fighting vehicles. Swiftly covering long distances, no matter the environment, no matter the weather, these 8x8 vehicles will be fully digitised and connected.

I had the great privilege to get the guided tour of their factory in Stockport recently and officially open their state-of-the-art facility.

And then there's the new Ajax vehicles, bringing a step-change in versatility and agility to the Army. I was in Merthyr seeing the production line last week and yes for the eagle-eyed amongst you, inevitably, with a Demonstration phase, there are issues that are being addressed. They are being addressed in partnership with industry to ensure the rapid delivery of these impressive vehicles. It is plain for me to see the capability leap AJAX will provide. Able to Hoover up data from the ground, air and cyber space, it can build a four-dimensional picture of the battlespace and help coordinate our response with the wider force.

At the same time, we'll develop new artillery systems improving our standoff lethality against emerging threats, as well as enhanced electronic warfare and signals intelligence capabilities.

We're investing in Ground-based Air Defence to give the Army the ability to counter modern airborne threats, as well as investing in Tactical ISR.

And all our kit will be underpinned by our digital backbone providing modern, cohesive, secure communications from the command post to the frontline.

So this is a very positive starting point.

By enhancing our equipment we will make every part of our Army more effective. And deliver greater power and punch.

## **2. INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP**

This brings me to my second point because investment is only one part of the speed equation. We also need to accelerate our acquisition processes.

We need to make our investment work better and quicker for us and work better for industry.

It's not enough to get the right equipment. We must get it at the right time. That's why, as Malcolm mentioned, we recently published our Defence and Security Industrial Strategy (DSIS) which provides a framework of greater integration between Government, industry and academia.

I know the Army have already worked with the other services, as Simon mentioned earlier, where the principles of DSIS are already being applied and to share their lessons.

They've been considering, for example, what's happening to Future Combat Air

System (FCAS), how we're putting in £2bn to leverage up hundreds of millions of pounds of industrial expenditure, training 2,000 apprentices and galvanising an entire sector – making the most of a vital project.

They've seen what we're doing with shipbuilding – where we're providing the Royal Navy and British shipbuilding industry with a drumbeat of orders from OPVs to aircraft carriers to Type 26 and Type 31 and future Type 32.

And they recognise how our approach to complex weapons can make a difference through the adoption of a portfolio management approach – assisting the open exchange of information and ideas and providing the security that comes from working closely together.

### **3. LAND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**

And drawing on these principles we will soon be releasing our Land Industrial Strategy, as a part of DSIS.

It's a strategy that will provide long-term industrial investment in R&D like FCAS.

A strategy that will provide the consistency of a drumbeat of orders like with shipbuilding.

And a strategy willing to embrace a portfolio approach as in complex weapons.

I don't underestimate the difficulty involved in making this work. In particular, it seems to me there will be three obvious challenges we will have to overcome:

#### **1. Change culture inside Defence**

First and foremost, we need to challenge our culture and focus on speed, agility and adding value.

We need to have close relationships with onshore industry and with our international partners.

We need to recognise the longer term consequences and social value that our investment can unleash.

And we must recognise that being clearer about our requirements will ensure they are better placed to invest in upskilling and focusing their R&D.

#### **2. Challenge to bring things into frontline more quickly**

Next, we must advance our equipment onto the frontline more quickly. We must have the courage of our convictions. Be satisfied with jumping through fewer hoops, taking decisions earlier and pulling them through with purpose.

The lesson of recent times is that to refine endlessly in the expectation of achieving exquisite and decisive advantage can be self-defeating.

We've got to go with 80 per cent solutions and be prepared for onward spiral

development, I think General Bowder and Alex both made that point, but to do so comfortable that Defence will find the resources.

That makes sense for us and makes sense for industry. Those 15 Leopard upgrades weren't just providing better kit – they were maintaining a skilled industrial base with an incentive to innovate.

And speed and innovation is the nature of modern warfare.

Our new approach must focus on open physical, electronic and digital architectures, on commonality and modularity.

On working with industry to integrate upgrades into through-life support contracts.

Only then will we get the enhanced kit in real time that enables us to maintain our pace against adversaries, and retain and enhance on-shore and with our allies the critical 'technological advantage' these times demand.

### **3. Gamechangers**

But we don't just want to get faster in producing and replacing existing kit and capabilities.

So, our final challenge is to go for gamechangers that enable us to leap ahead of our adversaries.

Everything we currently buy, we buy because someone says, "We see a threat and we need to meet and respond to it". That remains, of course, our cornerstone, but we have to take a leaf out of our adversaries' book and do more.

We have to be prepared to think laterally about how we can unsettle and destabilise our adversaries' calculations and make our deterrence even more effective.

As we all know those famous 'Dreadnought' moments – the hay-nets into fuel cans, which completely change the face of modern warfare do occur. We need to be able to generate those moments and do so for the land environment as much as any other.

It is to such projects that we will be committing part of our £6.6bn plus of R&D investment: turning around the long-term decline in Defence R&D since the end of the cold war.

We're going to embrace the opportunities offered through AI, automation, Human Machine Teaming.

We will be investing a greater share of our money into such technologies as directed energy, drone swarms, electric drives, systemic protection systems or long-range deep fires.

We must be ready to support industry – and all parts of the private sector,

not just the traditional primes – to pursue what may occasionally seem like off-the-wall ideas.

We must be ready to take risks, be ready to fail fast and move onto the next idea if they don't work.

An impetus driven through the supercharging of experimentation as mentioned this morning including through the Army's Warfighting Experiment and its Battlelab in Dorset. There, we'll work with industry to combine the latest tactics with the latest technology.

And that's why we're setting up the land equivalent of Tempest and FCAS – to co-develop with industry the next generation of land combat systems.

###WORKING INTERNATIONALLY

Our Land Industrial Strategy will make manifest our commitment to partner with onshore UK industry.

Bolstered by our significant investment in R&D.

We remain as committed as ever to international partnerships.

We know we are so much better off when working collaboratively with our allies.

Better off in terms of economies of scale. Better off in terms of interoperability.

However by making the investment we are, by building strong partnerships, by focusing on R&D and skills we know that we can "bring more to the party," drive international collaboration and ensure our Allies and we continue to generate the equipment our troops require.

## **Conclusion**

We will continue to ensure we provide the capabilities the Army needs for its demanding tasks. But in doing so we will be more long term, more thoughtful and as we look to the future in a more contested world, we recognise that speed and adaptability must be our watchwords.

Operationally with the Army.

Internally with industry, acquisition and R&D.

And externally through our international partnerships.

This combination will forge a virtuous circle.

Strengthening our forces, galvanising our industry, boosting our exports.

For industry achieving the return on investment to be reinvested in the R&D that will continue to generate new capabilities at the speed of relevance.

It won't be easy, but this is an exciting time for Defence in the UK.

And I look forward to working with you all to make this grand vision, truly, a reality.

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## G7 Chair's statement on vaccine confidence

Today, the G7 Working Group on Vaccine Confidence convened the Global Vaccine Confidence Summit, which saw partners from all sectors commit to building trust and confidence in vaccines globally as a way to promote health worldwide and accelerate the world's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vaccines were recognised as one of the most successful and cost-effective public health actions and investments in history, currently saving between two and three million lives every year. They have an indisputable track record – eradicating smallpox and greatly reducing the incidence of other vaccine preventable diseases.

Partners celebrated the unwavering efforts of scientists across the globe to develop life-saving COVID-19 vaccines. Working in partnership with regulatory authorities responsible for setting the standards for the safety, efficacy and quality of vaccines and other health products, safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines have been developed and approved at historic speed thanks to unprecedented funding and global cooperation.

It was acknowledged that vaccine confidence is essential for the global uptake of any vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccines, which are critical to our collective recovery and reducing the risk of further outbreaks.

Partners agreed that misinformation is damaging perceptions of the importance, safety, and effectiveness of vaccines. Left unaddressed, it will impede global uptake of COVID-19 vaccines, routine immunisations programmes, and diminish trust in public health bodies.

The availability and equitable accessibility of COVID-19 vaccines is currently posing a barrier to global uptake, however partners committed to ensure that confidence in vaccines is built early to allow prompt and mass uptake of vaccines when they become available.

Through the G7 Vaccine Confidence Working Group, the UK as Chair will push forward an ambitious agenda to build global confidence in vaccines and address the misinformation that is undermining it.

To be successful in addressing this complex issue, global cooperation spanning all sectors will be encouraged, including government and non government organisations, academia, the private sector, and trusted community leaders. By mobilising partners from these sectors, we hope to amplify the

reach and impact of our work.

Together with leading researchers we will seek to build a greater understanding of the drivers of and barriers to vaccine confidence. This evidence-based approach will inform the shared tools, campaigns and best practices that are developed, with the recognition that these must be context-specific.

Partners recognised communications as an important lever in our collective recovery from the pandemic, as well as for global change, and supported the development and adoption of best practice communications principles. It was also acknowledged that communication activity to build vaccine confidence must be underpinned by strong science, community leadership, and policy mechanisms that promote the availability and equitable accessibility of vaccines to all populations locally and globally.

A collective global recovery from the pandemic will be one of the most important achievements of our lifetimes. As Chair, we resolve to undertake ambitious action on vaccine confidence in order to drive uptake of vaccines, bring an end to the acute phase of the pandemic, and protect countless lives around the world.

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## [World-leading experts commit to building vaccine confidence at UK hosted Global Vaccine Confidence Summit](#)

- The Global Vaccine Confidence Summit convened world leading experts to commit to greater international collaboration to build vaccine confidence globally.
- Speakers at the Summit included: Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, UK Government, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General at World Health Organization (WHO), Helle Thorning-Schmidt, former Prime Minister of Denmark and former CEO of Save the Children International, and Co-Chair of Facebook's Oversight Board.

LONDON: As part of its G7 Presidency, the UK Government convened the Global Vaccine Confidence Summit today, a first-of-its-kind event, bringing together global experts from across the public and private sector to build and maintain confidence in vaccines.

Recent data published by YouGov shows the UK continues to top the list of nations where people are willing to have a COVID-19 vaccine or have already

been vaccinated.

During the Summit, world-leading experts at the forefront of efforts to build vaccine confidence and tackle misinformation about vaccines offered their perspectives on the critical global actions that governments and partners from across sectors can take to address the issue.

It was acknowledged that increased levels of vaccine confidence, accessibility and availability are needed globally in order to end the pandemic. One of the biggest threats to confidence in vaccines is misinformation, which can damage public perceptions of vaccine safety and efficacy.

Speaking at the Summit Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, UK Government:

Vaccine confidence is an international challenge and one that needs international action. At the G7 Health Ministers meeting this week, we'll be talking about how to beat this pandemic worldwide and also how to beat the worldwide pandemic of misinformation and mistrust that can hamper the responses.

We're launching, leading and championing a Global Vaccine Confidence Campaign led by the G7 Global Vaccine Confidence Working Group with a mission to promote confidence and trust in vaccines globally.

Delivering a keynote speech at the Summit Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General at World Health Organization (WHO), showed his support stating:

A key driver of vaccination is public trust. Trust must be earned. To succeed in vaccinating the whole world, governments will have to deploy a range of strategies and tailor them to each country.

Helle Thorning-Schmidt, former Prime Minister of Denmark and former CEO of Save the Children International, and Co-Chair of Facebook's Oversight Board, who spoke at the Summit said:

We know a lot about vaccine hesitancy which means we should know what to do and do it fast. A debate in one country impacts trust and hesitancy in others. The world is a small place. As a global community we have to understand that no one is safe until everyone is safe.

Will Cathcart, Head of Whatsapp, said:

If we are to reach billions of people with vaccines – down to the last person – we need to meet people where they already are. I believe that private messaging services can play an important role in helping to bring this pandemic to an end globally, and I am proud of WhatsApp's partnerships with over 150 health organizations to connect people to official sources of information and to schedule their vaccine appointments.

Other speakers at the Summit included Dr Anthony S. Fauci, Director of the U.S National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and Chief Medical Advisor to The President, and Dr John Nkengasong, First Director, Africa CDC who debated the relative success and challenges of building vaccine confidence in the US and Africa respectively, and what lessons are relevant for other regions.

Dr Anthony Fauci, Director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said:

Science evolves with the epidemic and there was a feeling that there were mixed messages as the pandemic evolved. However, science is self-correcting. New evidence and new data will require us to modify our approach to a pandemic, the recommendations and the guidelines.

Wendy Morton MP, the UK's Minister for European Neighbourhood and the Americas, expressed the UK and its G7 partner's on-going commitment to support efforts to ensure vaccines are accessible, available and trusted globally.

Caroline Dinenage MP, the UK's Minister for Digital and Culture, called for greater international and cross-sector collaboration to tackle the threat of misinformation.

At the Summit, the UK Government announced ambitions for its G7 vaccine confidence activity designed to support global cooperation and more effective responses on vaccine confidence and addressing misinformation globally.

- An innovative digital insight platform, which will provide global and local insight, as well as trends on vaccine confidence and the harmful misinformation that is seeking to undermine it. More details will be announced soon.
- A coalition of some of the world's best academic organisations to understand 'infodemics' and promote healthy information ecosystems. The coalition called IRIS is a collaborative project between the Vaccine Confidence Project (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine), University of Cambridge, Sapienza University of Rome, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, City University of London (and the Alan Turing Institute) and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

An interactive photo mosaic created in partnership with the UK Government and

the People's Picture, titled 'The Luminaries', was also unveiled today. Using video and images it showcases the many global 'Vaccine Luminaries' who are taking to social media to build confidence in vaccines, including health care professionals on the front line. The platform is available on a [dedicated website](#) with plans to feature more 'Vaccine Luminaries' from around the world over the next year.

The Global Vaccine Confidence Summit forms part of the UK's wider work as G7 President this year to bring an end to the pandemic, with vaccine uptake, access and confidence a key component.

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## **SIA supports the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals COVID-19 crisis fund**

Launched in January 2021, The Worshipful Company of Security Professionals Charitable Trust, crisis fund seeks to help those working within the security industry in a front line, security role who have suffered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes those in private security as well as blue light services and the military.

The Worshipful Company of Security Professionals Charitable Trust is offering two types of grants:

- £250 for applicants who have been hospitalised due to COVID-19
- £500 to dependents of those who have died because of COVID-19

Members of the private security industry who fit the criteria can apply for the grant by downloading the [application form here](#). For more information about the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals Charitable Trust COVID fund, please visit the website [here](#).

A business can also apply for the fund on behalf of their employees and funds are paid directly to the employee.

The SIA's grant comes from monies recovered from the proceeds of crime confiscation orders under the [Proceeds of Crime Act 2002](#) (POCA). Since 2017 the SIA has been pursuing financial recovery from convicted criminals following prosecution. Where the SIA has brought a prosecution and there has been a conviction, the SIA may undertake confiscation proceedings against those convicted. If successful, the SIA receives a percentage of the confiscated money. The proceeds must be used to either fund good causes or further SIA financial investigations.

Pete Easterbrook, the SIA's Head of Criminal Investigation, said:

We are delighted to be making a significant contribution to support victims of the pandemic, as well as building firm relationships with the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals. The purpose of confiscation under the Proceeds of Crime Act is to ensure that crime does not pay and it feels like suitable restorative justice to return money to individuals in the private security industry that was originally gained illegally.

Yasmeen Stratton, Master of the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals said:

Our front line personnel continue to play a vital role protecting our businesses and people. The crisis fund is a simple process that provides a swift response to security staff who have been adversely affected by COVID-19, and with a fund capability that will respond to the anticipated high number of grant applications. The company and the charitable trust have always supported the most vulnerable people working in – and retired from – the security profession, and that work continues. I am delighted to see the launch of the COVID-19 fund as it offers almost immediate support to people in our industry where a small financial cushion can make a big difference.

Claire Palmer, Chair of the Charitable Trust, said:

Early on in the pandemic the research expressed that those working in front line security had been particularly affected by COVID-19. We wanted to do something about that and provide a focal point for industry to make donations and with a straight forward easy process for those affected. Whilst the sum granted to individuals is relatively small, to those applying for the grants, it is a vital form of support and ensures we can reach the maximum number of front line security workers. We are particularly grateful to the SIA for their support of this initiative.

The SIA's grant to the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals is the third that it has made from the proceeds of crime reparations. In 2020 the SIA donated £25,000 to the EY Foundation Secure Futures initiative. It also invested £20,000 in The Prince's Trust 'Get into Security' initiative in Northern Ireland.

The SIA will announce when there are opportunities for national and regional charities to bid for a donation from the SIA's grant for good causes. Further details are [available on GOV.UK](#).

Further information:

- The SIA has held powers under POCA since 2015, which allows us to

undertake financial investigations and seek confiscation orders against companies and individuals who make a profit from criminal activity. POCA is a law that means any money made from criminal activity can be recovered.

- Read the SIA's blog '[The Proceeds of Crime Act \(2002\)](#)', published in 2019.
  - The Security Industry Authority is the organisation responsible for regulating the private security industry in the United Kingdom, reporting to the Home Secretary under the terms of the Private Security Industry Act 2001. Our main duties are: the compulsory licensing of individuals undertaking designated activities; and managing the voluntary Approved Contractor Scheme.
  - For further information about the Security Industry Authority visit [www.gov.uk/sia](http://www.gov.uk/sia). The SIA is also on [Facebook](#) (Security Industry Authority) and [Twitter](#) (SIAuk).
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## [Virtual drop in sessions offer post flood advice for Buckingham](#)

The Environment Agency is inviting people living in Buckingham to two virtual drop in surgeries on Thursday 10 June to discuss the winter 2020/21 flooding.

Anyone who has been affected by or has concerns about the winter flooding is welcome to attend and share their experiences with Environment Agency officers.

The 2 sessions are at 1:00pm and 6:30pm, and will include short presentations plus a live question and answer session.

The 2 hour sessions will be hosted on Zoom and include information about the winter flooding, the flood warning service, how rivers are maintained and operated, and what residents and the community can do to become more flood resilient.

Tamsyn Ellway, Flood Resilience Advisor, said:

We can't stop flooding, but we work to limit the impact from main rivers and we help communities to prepare along with our partners. These surgeries are an excellent opportunity for residents to share their concerns and discuss flooding issues with the Environment Agency.

We want to understand the extent of flooding in Buckingham, gather views and evidence for subsequent investigations. Under normal circumstances, we would have gathered this information in person

but we have been unable to do this. Understanding flood risk at a local level and taking appropriate action can help communities become more flood resilient.

## Take part

Residents can join the Zoom session by using this [link](#) and entering the passcode 072814.

Zoom is an online audio and web conferencing platform. If anyone needs help with accessing Zoom, or has any questions relating to these virtual sessions, please email us at [flood.resilience.eastanglia.cb@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:flood.resilience.eastanglia.cb@environment-agency.gov.uk).

## Further information

### December 2020 flooding

In December 2020, East Anglia received an exceptionally high amount of rain with a total averaged rainfall of 108 millimetres, which was 195% of the monthly average.

Up to 55 millimetres rain fell in less than 24 hours between 23 and 24 December 2020. Falling on an already wet catchment this intense rainfall led to widespread flooding across the River Great Ouse, through Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and parts of Suffolk.

The Environment Agency issued 27 flood alerts, 41 flood warnings and a severe flood warning between 23 and 24 December. Over 30 communities recorded property flooding resulting from either surface water or rivers, with at least 567 properties being affected to some degree.

A flood warning was issued in Buckingham on 23 December on the River Great Ouse. At least 30 properties flooded as a result of a combination of river and surface water flooding overwhelming roads, rivers and gullies in the area.

## What has happened since the flooding?

The Environment Agency has worked with communities affected by the flooding and its professional partners on the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) including the police, fire and rescue service, local authorities and others to understand the full extent of the flooding.

As part of working more closely with a strengthened Flood Group for Buckingham we will be able to discuss future needs and explain maintenance plans.

## Sign up for flood warnings

Residents and businesses in flood-risk areas are encouraged to sign up to our

[flood warning service](#) or phone Floodline on 0345 988 1188.