

Government response: EU consultation: questionnaire on proposed US tariff increases on certain steel and aluminium products

The Commission has today (16 March 2018) issued a consultation for stakeholders affected by the announced US tariff increases, or by the possible EU commercial policy measures that the Commission may take in response. Stakeholders should [send comments on this consultation to the Commission](#).

On 8 March the US President announced the imposition of a 25% tariff on steel and a 10% tariff on aluminium imports. These increased tariffs are expected to take effect on 23 March 2018.

Dr Liam Fox, Secretary of State for International Trade, responded to this announcement in a [statement to Parliament](#) on 12 March 2018.

News story: UK-US military links strengthened after ministerial visit to Washington DC

Increased co-operation between the nations was agreed in key meetings with the American Secretary of the Army, Mark Esper, and Secretary of the Navy, Richard Spencer.

Russia, cyber warfare and the ongoing fight against Daesh were also on the agenda during discussions in Washington this week.

Minister for Armed Forces, Mark Lancaster, said:

British and American personnel are standing side by side, defending our shared values around the world. We are countering Russian aggression, defeating Daesh and strengthening NATO; and our special relationship will continue to strengthen as we face these evolving threats together.

Both nations are undergoing significant upgrades in defence policy, with the

UK currently consulting on its Modernising Defence Programme and the US publishing its National Defense Strategy in January. The two programmes are already closely aligned, with a strong emphasis on modernising forces to tackle the increasing shared threats faced on several fronts, while strengthening international alliances and forging new ones.

The US and UK are the two largest contributors to NATO, and among just five countries pledging at least 2% of their GDP to defence. Both countries have been calling on other nations to match this contribution, ahead of the NATO summit in July.

The UK's defence trade partnership with the US is worth £3billion, including collaboration on several key projects such as the F-35 programme, Unmanned Air Systems and a Common Missile Compartment for UK-US Ballistic Missile Submarines.

An even closer bond is expected after Brexit, as the UK establishes new relationships and trade deals outside of Europe.

The Minister will head to the Arctic Circle this weekend to observe the annual Ice Exercise (ICEX) between the British and US navies, highlighting the capability of both nations' submarines to operate in the most extreme conditions.

Minister for Armed Forces, Mark Lancaster, added:

From partnering on the F-35 programme, to training together in Norway, our Navies and Marines continuously build capability together, and ICEX is another important opportunity for our two nations to show what we can do.

[News story: Bristol seminar: We need to talk about Women](#)



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News story: Penny Mordaunt statement on the Rohingya humanitarian crisis

Reacting to the release of the Joint Response Plan for the Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

I urge the international community to continue to support the Government of Bangladesh to find the best solutions to protect Rohingya victims of ethnic cleansing who are in dire need. The UK has led the way to help alleviate suffering and meet humanitarian needs in Cox's Bazar, and will continue to be a leading donor.

The sprawling camps have provided safety for those who have fled cruel violence, but this place of refuge is becoming unsustainable with over-crowding compounding the risks of the coming monsoon and cyclone season. Rohingya families and host communities urgently require smaller and more manageable facilities for the future, and planning for the medium term.

At the same time we must remember that the origins of and solution to this crisis lie in Burma. The UK will continue to maintain international pressure on Burma to create the conditions for safe, voluntary and dignified returns overseen by the UN.

This crisis has not left the minds of the British public and I would like to thank them for their remarkable generosity in raising millions of pounds for

lifesaving food, water and shelter which is making a real difference.

Press release: Homes England invests in Otterpool Park

The land that Homes England has bought from Somerston Capital lies near junction 11 of the M20, between Lympe and the Lympe Industrial Estate. It was always included in the area within which the plans for Otterpool Park are being drawn up.

Otterpool Park is a proposed garden town of up to 12,000 homes near Folkestone. It is being put forward by Shepway District Council and Cozumel Estates Ltd the owners of the former racecourse at Westenhanger. This investment is further evidence of government support for a new generation of garden towns to help deliver the high quality homes the country needs.

When the government announced the formation of Homes England it said it would play a major role in securing land in areas where people want to live to help deliver an average of 300,000 homes a year by the mid 2020s.

Paul Kitson, General Manager for the South East for Homes England, said:

Buying this land shows how Homes England is determined to use our finance and expertise to expand the delivery of affordable new homes and connect ambitious partners.

We have been very impressed by the ambition shown by the Council and landowners to deliver Otterpool Park – a garden town for the 21st century. Owning this land will give us a voice in delivering a community that will meet the local need for homes in a place that is truly environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.

David Monk, Leader of Shepway District Council welcomed the news:

I am delighted that Homes England has co-invested with the Council to deliver Otterpool Park. It shows the government has faith in our plans for this garden town.

This investment will help us deliver an even better place so that our children and grandchildren can have the homes they need in a

community that will also meet their needs for jobs, access to the countryside, transport links, schools, health centres and a great quality of life.

Notes to editors

Homes England is the new housing delivery organisation that has been created to adopt a more commercial approach to respond to the long term housing challenges facing this country. The new, expanded agency will play a far bigger role in investing in supply and intervening in the market to help deliver 300,000 homes a year by the middle of the next decade.

Homes England will act differently from its predecessor, bringing together money, land, expertise and planning and compulsory purchase powers to accelerate the supply of new homes and address affordability issues in areas of highest demand.