

Foreign Secretary agrees UK-Singapore joint statement

Press release

The UK and Singapore agreed a statement reaffirming both countries' commitment to free trade, climate action, and sustainability as we rebuild after COVID-19.



The UK today agreed a [joint statement with Singapore](#) reaffirming both countries' commitment to free trade, climate action, and sustainability as we rebuild after the pandemic.

The joint statement also sets out a shared approach on technology, knowledge and education, security and resilience, as well as our mutual human rights obligations. It is linked to the [Free Trade Agreement](#) signed by the 2 countries in December last year.

The Foreign Secretary agreed the statement on behalf of the UK earlier today, with his counterpart from Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The UK-Singapore Partnership is based on shared goals on security and climate change, as well as our drive towards innovation and prosperity.

Today, Foreign Minister Balakrishnan and I committed to reinforcing these links and creating new opportunities for cooperation.

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[Remit letter for Police Remuneration Review Body 2021 Northern Ireland pay round](#)

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[Design contract awarded for Dounreay shaft and silo work](#)

News story

Dounreay has awarded an important waste clean-up contract to Jacobs as the site plans for the future of its deepest historic radioactive waste store.



The Dounreay shaft

Jacobs and its supporting partners have been awarded a 6-year contract to provide a design management team to produce a fully integrated design for the shaft and silo project. This includes assisting with the management of several design and build work packages. While some of the contract will be delivered remotely, Jacobs will also sub-contract work to local companies.

The contract forms part of a series of contracts to be awarded through the

site's decommissioning framework and heralds the beginning of work on the shaft and silo. In 2020 Nuvia Ltd and its partner Graham Construction were awarded a contract for "advanced transition works". There are likely to be further major contracts awarded over the next 12 months.

Radioactive waste was historically consigned to the 65 metre deep shaft and the silo, an underground waste storage vault, over several decades starting in the late 1950s. Now the higher activity waste must be retrieved and repackaged, suitable for long-term storage in a safe modern facility.

DSRL's Programme Delivery Director, David Hubbard said:

The shaft and silo contain legacy wastes that must be emptied, and the waste repackaged for long term storage, before the site can be closed. These contracts are one step closer to the clean-up of these historical waste stores.

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[CMA investigates Apple over suspected anti-competitive behaviour](#)

In addition to designing, manufacturing and marketing electronic devices such as smartphones and tablets, Apple also operates the App Store. This is the only way for developers to distribute third-party apps on Apple's iPhones and iPads, and the only way for Apple customers to access them.

The probe has been prompted by the Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) own work in the digital sector, as well as several developers reporting that Apple's terms and conditions are unfair and could break competition law.

All apps available through the App Store have to be approved by Apple, with this approval hinging on developers agreeing to certain terms. The complaints from developers focus on the terms that mean they can only distribute their apps to iPhones and iPads via the App Store. These complaints also highlight that certain developers who offer 'in-app' features, add-ons or upgrades are required to use Apple's payment system, rather than an alternative system. Apple charges a commission of up to 30% to developers on the value of these transactions or any time a consumer buys their app.

The CMA's investigation will consider whether Apple has a dominant position in connection with the distribution of apps on Apple devices in the UK – and, if so, whether Apple imposes unfair or anti-competitive terms on developers using the App Store, ultimately resulting in users having less choice or

paying higher prices for apps and add-ons.

This is only the beginning of the investigation and no decision has yet been made on whether Apple is breaking the law.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA said:

Millions of us use apps every day to check the weather, play a game or order a takeaway. So, complaints that Apple is using its market position to set terms which are unfair or may restrict competition and choice – potentially causing customers to lose out when buying and using apps – warrant careful scrutiny.

Our ongoing examination into digital markets has already uncovered some worrying trends. We know that businesses, as well as consumers, may suffer real harm if anti-competitive practices by big tech go unchecked. That's why we're pressing on with setting up the new Digital Markets Unit and launching new investigations wherever we have grounds to do so.

Today's announcement follows the CMA's July 2020 report on its market study into online platforms and digital advertising, and [the CMA's advice to the Government](#) in December 2020 on the shape of a new pro-competition regulatory regime for digital markets. As the CMA works with the Government on these proposals – which will complement its current enforcement powers – the CMA will continue to use its existing powers to their fullest extent in order to protect competition in these areas.

The European Commission (EC) currently has four open antitrust probes into Apple, which were launched prior to the end of the UK's Transition Period. These include three open investigations into Apple's App Store. The CMA continues to coordinate closely with the EC, as well as other agencies, to tackle these global concerns.

More information can be found on the [Investigation into Apple App Store casepage](#).

1. The competition legislation relevant to the CMA's investigation is the Competition Act 1998. The Chapter II prohibition in the Competition Act 1998 prohibits any conduct on the part of one or more undertakings which amounts to the abuse of a dominant position in a market, and which may affect trade within the United Kingdom.
2. The CMA may launch an investigation under the Competition Act 1998 if it has reasonable grounds to believe that there has been an infringement of competition law.

3. 'Apple' refers to the corporate group in its entirety, including Apple (UK) Limited, Apple Europe Limited and Apple Inc (US parent company).
 4. Media queries should be directed to: press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.
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Belfast firm secures £98-million air defence missile contract

SHORAD is made up of High Velocity and Lightweight Multi-role Missile systems that can intercept air threats including fast jets, attack helicopters and unmanned air systems in a matter of seconds.

Thales UK won the initial contract in 2018, helping to modernise and develop the missile systems as part of the Future Air Defence Availability Project (F-ADAPT). This latest announcement confirms a five-year extension to the contract, sustaining over one hundred jobs at Thales UK's Belfast site and within the wider Northern Ireland supply chain.

Northern Ireland Secretary, Brandon Lewis said:

Northern Ireland has a proud history as a world leader in defence engineering and innovation. Today's announcement shows again the level of confidence in Northern Ireland as a great place to do business.

During these uncertain times, I am delighted that the investment of over £98-million will protect over 100 skilled jobs in Belfast. I would like to congratulate all those involved who have secured this vital investment.

Defence Minister, Jeremy Quin said:

This contract ensures the vital air defence capabilities, capable of dealing with a multitude of threats, are maintained and readily available to deploy.

The £98.4-million investment is the second major contract awarded to Northern Ireland's defence industry in less than three months highlighting Northern Ireland's important contribution to the delivery of our critical defence capabilities.

Delivering rapid potent attack capability, the SHORAD missile systems can be

fired from three platform variants. These include a Shoulder-Launch for single fire; a Lightweight Multiple Launcher capable of firing three missiles via a tripod, and a Self-Propelled launcher designed to fire up to eight missiles from a Stormer armoured vehicle.

DE&S CEO, Sir Simon Bollom said:

Our dedicated team at DE&S has worked closely with industry colleagues to ensure this crucial air defence capability remains primed and ready to support the UK Armed Forces until the end of 2026.

Northern Ireland plays an imperative role within UK defence and its supply chain. This is the second multi-million-pound defence contract awarded to a Northern Ireland-based industry this year. In January, Spirit AeroSystems in Belfast, won a £30 million contract for the [UK's first uncrewed fighter aircraft](#) supporting over 100 local jobs.

Defence has secured a substantial settlement of more than £24-billion over four years acknowledging the responsibility and recognition the UK holds internationally in the Defence realm. Through strategic and pivotal investments, defence will be in a stronger position to tackle challenge future threats whilst advancing UK prosperity.