

# Royal Navy joins NATO allies on major maritime exercise in the Baltic Sea region

Over the next week, HMS Kent and minehunter HMS Ramsey will sail alongside 26 other vessels and 29 aircraft as 3,000 personnel from 17 NATO nations and two NATO partner nations strengthen their combined maritime capabilities and demonstrate their collective resolve to safeguard security in the Baltic Sea Region.

HMS Ramsey will join the exercise as part of her five-week deployment with the NATO Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1. The NATO force is dedicated to eliminating the threat of historic mines in waters of northern Europe, practising dealing with present-day mines and promoting the alliance and freedom of the seas.

BALTOPS will see Allies train together on a variety of maritime exercises including air defence, anti-submarine warfare and mine-hunting.

Minister for the Armed Forces James Heappey said:

HMS Kent represents a Navy that has continued to train and operate throughout the Coronavirus pandemic so that, alongside our allies, we're ready for whatever comes next.

The UK is committed to the independence of the Baltic Sea Region and this exercise along with a range of other UK military activity helps to deter threats and defends our interests in the region. With HMS Kent exercising on BALTOPS, the UK will contribute to the region's security in the sea, the sky and on land.

HMS Kent's Commanding Officer Commander Matt Sykes said:

My ship's company are eager to take part in the exercise and up for the challenge, focussing on our ability to operate seamlessly with our NATO and partner nations.

In these turbulent times, it is also vitally important that we demonstrate our commitment to the region and to upholding the principles of freedom of access to the Baltic Sea.

There are currently over 800 British Army personnel deployed in Estonia, where they lead a multinational battlegroup as part of NATO's enhanced

Forward Presence. Elsewhere, RAF Typhoons are in Lithuania this summer to contribute to the NATO Baltic Air Policing mission.

HMS Kent's participation in BALTOPS represents a return to the Baltic Sea Region for the ship and her crew after she took part in the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) deployment Baltic Protector last year. The JEF is a UK-led high-readiness force of nine north European nations that helps to uphold security in the region.

---

## [Multi-million pound project continues on Ouse Washes](#)

The project to raise the Middle Level Barrier Bank and part of the South Level Barrier Bank will maintain the standard of protection provided to more than 2,000 properties and 67,000ha of agricultural land.

The work will be carried out in line with the government's coronavirus guidance with public footpaths along the crest of the Middle Level Barrier Bank diverted to keep the public and the workforce safe.

The Ouse Washes project is taking place over five years. Works started in 2017 at Welmore Lake Sluice and Sutton Gault.

This summer's works will take place at Welney and in areas between Earith and Mepal. It will see clay material imported from local quarries to raise the crest level of the Middle Level Barrier Bank.

Works started this week to repair damage that occurred over the winter and the main bank works will start on July 15.

In order to minimise the impact on the environment on and around the Washes, work has to be completed by 31 October.

As the Washes are an internationally-important habitat, the work will take place in the summer and early autumn to avoid disturbing breeding and over-wintering birds.

Following construction works there will be a further two years of maintenance works to establish a good grass cover which is important to ensure the stability of the banks.

Grass being cut along the Middle Level Barrier Bank last week.

The evolving design and material inconsistency on site has resulted in a change to the intended bank profile, increasing the footprint of the Middle

Level Barrier Bank and the need to import more material.

This additional work, along with periods of wet weather, has resulted in the construction programme being extended.

Nicola Oldfield, Project Manager for the Environment Agency said:

“This vital reservoir work will maintain the level of protection to homes, businesses and agricultural land, which is why it will go ahead in line with the government’s coronavirus guidance.

“All our staff, contractors and partners will practice social distancing and follow PHE guidance for safe working.

“We’d like to thank the local community for their patience and understanding during this complex programme of work which will take longer than predicted at the outset.”

## **Demountable barrier**

As part of the bank raising work to comply with the Reservoirs Act, a robust demountable flood barrier is needed at Welney where the wash road intersects the Middle Level Barrier Bank.

A demountable barrier option has been sourced that will provide the robust flood protection solution and will be bespoke to Welney.

The Environment Agency wants to hear from the community to help decide the best time period to undertake the work.

It is expected that the total construction time will be 14 weeks. During these 14 weeks, the road will need to be closed for approximately 4-6 weeks to install the concrete slab across the road.

The Environment Agency has published an online survey using the Ouse Washes Citizen Space information page, which people living in and around Welney and connecting communities can access following the link:

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/east-anglia-c-e/ouse-washes-section-10-works/>

The survey has been extended and will remain open for a few more months.

---

## **[New police powers to tackle hostile state activity](#)**

Police at UK ports will be able to stop, question, search and detain individuals to determine whether they are a spy as part of a range of

measures being put before Parliament today.

The new Schedule 3 powers were introduced as part of the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019, in response to the poisoning of five people in Salisbury using a military-grade nerve agent. Dawn Sturgess, one of the victims, tragically later died.

The government has today laid the code of practice in relation to the use of Schedule 3 powers which, subject to approval by Parliament, will see the powers in the 2019 Act come into force. The government has also today updated its code of practice on the use of existing Schedule 7 powers, which give the police the power to stop and detain people at ports in relation to terrorist activity.

Security Minister James Brokenshire said:

Schedule 7 is already a vital tool for police to protect the UK from terrorist threats, and I am pleased that subject to Parliament's approval police will be able to use Schedule 3 to protect us from hostile state actors.

I am grateful to those who engaged with the consultation process to help ensure the codes of practice around the use of both Schedule 3 and 7 strike the right balance between protecting the rights of those who could be stopped and keeping the public safe.

The UK government is certain that the two suspects charged for the Salisbury nerve agent attack are Russian Military Intelligence officers and that the attack was almost certainly approved at a senior level of the Russian state.

The Schedule 3 powers will help to protect the UK from the very real and serious threat from states who seek to undermine and destabilise this country to pursue their own agendas.

Both codes of practice set out the processes governing how these important powers will be used and overseen. They include robust safeguards and provide special protections for confidential material and journalistic sources.

The government also today published proposed revisions to guidance for police and relevant law enforcement authorities about the making or renewing of a national security determination for the retention and use of biometric material for national security purposes.

Publication of the new and updated codes of practice and guidance follows consultation with public authorities, media organisations and the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation.

You can read a copy of both revised draft codes of practice and the full consultation response that is placed in the libraries of [both Houses](#).

A [fact sheet](#) explaining the codes of practice is also available on GOV.UK.

---

## Caroline Dinenage's keynote speech at the CogX Createch Stage

Thank you Tim for that introduction, and many thanks to Janet for inviting me to speak here today. I'm delighted to be participating in Createch 2020 at CogX. Also I'd like to congratulate Tim for his recent appointment as Director General of the BBC, it's well deserved, and I look forward to continuing our work together in the future.

Let me start by saying two things: First, that the importance of the creative industries cannot be overstated.

And second, that many of those creative industries have been knocked off their feet by COVID. That's going to make the relationship between tech and the creative industries more meaningful than ever.

In economic terms, the creative industries punch far above their weight. Before coronavirus, they were worth £112bn to our economy in 2018, and their contribution has grown twice as fast as the rest of the economy since 2010. In total, the Creative Industries are now bigger than UK Life Sciences, Aerospace and Automotive sectors combined.

And these are exporting businesses too: they contribute 12% of all UK services sold overseas, which is twice their share of the economy.

They are also enablers of the wider economy. Creative skills and services such as software, architecture, design, and advertising allow businesses – from aerospace to construction – to improve their products, boosting long-term productivity in the UK; which, as many people here will know, is something government and industry both care deeply about.

Around two-thirds of UK firms use design in some form. The architecture sector is critical to construction and how people live their lives; while the advertising sector underpins the whole economy and ensures creative content can reach consumers in the UK and abroad.

But it's really important to remember that the creative industries aren't just important economically. They make an incredible social and cultural contribution to this country, and help level-up growth and opportunity across our nations and regions. There are almost 50 clusters of creative businesses around the country – from Dundee's games hub right the way through to Silicon Beach in Brighton.

Which gives me the opportunity to make an unapologetic plug for the DCMS-funded Creative Scale Up Programme, this is a pilot project designed to help creative business grow and raise finance in the West Midlands, Manchester and the West of England regions.

Culturally, sub-sectors such as film, music, fashion, games, publishing and architecture enrich all of our lives. Critically, they provide content that reflects the experiences of people and communities across the entire UK; content that otherwise would be undersupplied by overseas providers. They allow us to highlight the prestigious UK brand, and our values around the world, and is one of the reasons why we ranked second globally in the Portland Soft Power Index.

Given that importance, the government is investing more than £150m in supporting the Creative Industries Sector Deal and that launched in 2018.

I'd like to emphasise this expenditure comes alongside investment from industry itself, as a result of dialogue with the Creative Industries Council, that Tim co-chairs along with the Secretary of States for DCMS and BEIS. This council has representatives from 30 trade bodies and companies across the sectors, and Tim knows that the government places incredible value on this forum and the close working relationship that it has with industry.

I've already mentioned the Creative Scale-Up Programme, but another part of the Sector Deal is the Creative Industries Clusters programme, which runs until 2023 and will create at least 900 business-led collaborations, 360 jobs and 65 new businesses. And then there's a very exciting project that I am especially keen on: Audiences of the Future programme, which is harnessing the power of immersive tech to help double the UK's share of the global creative immersive content market by 2025.

The COVID pandemic has given Audiences of the Future added urgency. It's now a central part of a major new coronavirus-linked campaign by the Arts and Humanities Research Council called Boundless Creativity, and it is looking for new ways for culture to thrive in a digital age.

Boundless Creativity involves all sorts of talented thinkers and creatives, from Mary Beard to Bernardine Evaristo, who together with the UK's leading arts organisations and creative businesses will experiment with Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality and other technologies in a series of special projects.

One of those projects which I love the sound of is called "Dinosaurs and Robots", led by London-based factory42, in collaboration with Sky, the Science Museum Group and the Natural History Museum. This project enables people to tour their buildings and enjoy the exhibitions from their own homes this summer, through a mixed reality experience that combines storytelling and cutting-edge technology.

That's exactly the kind of collaboration the government wants to see between technology and the creative industries: finding new and unusual ways to get round the obstacles that coronavirus has presented.

I should also emphasise that although major elements of the Sector Deal are funded for a number of years to come, DCMS is looking to deliver new help and incentives to the Creative Industries – such as through the launch of 5G Create earlier this year.

Up to £30 million of government funding is available in this 5G Testbeds and Trials programme, which is designed to encourage the exploration and development of new use-cases and 5G technical capabilities.

In particular we want to encourage partnerships between creative and infrastructure companies, so that for example, specialist content companies can look at innovative ways of distributing that content over 5G.

In terms of future prospects, the Creative Industries are critical to the UK's recovery from COVID-19, given their role as key enablers of the wider economy and significant contributions to the UK's culture and society.

While we know that some sub-sectors such as gaming and Video on Demand have thrived during the COVID crisis, others have been hit hard. Theatres and music venues are shuttered; Film and TV production has been halted or at least radically changed; and the advertising industry is facing some really widespread disruption. Sectors dependent on advertising like press and commercial broadcasting have been really struggling, even as demand for their services has spiked. The creative workforce, many of whom are freelance, have seen demand fall sharply.

As Tim has said, the existing challenges faced by the Creative Industries are being compounded by COVID, so during this global crisis, Government has provided an unprecedented level of financial support across the economy. Our Creative Industries can benefit from grants and loans for small businesses, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, tax deferrals and the £1.25 billion fund to protect the UK's most innovative companies. That includes the Future Fund which is now open for applications until September 2020.

But as we emerge from lockdown, we need to think about the future of the Creative Industries, and how they can not only survive, but regain the very strong growth path they previously had. We need to think about how over the next decade they will become a cornerstone of our country, accounting for an even greater proportion of the economy and employment, and cementing the UK's soft power around the globe.

That to me is why Createch is so vital to the future of the Creative Industries. We clearly need every tool available, from government policy to innovation and technology, to recover from the current situation and re-start a path of strong growth.

Technology will be central to our recovery, just as it has been a central part of the lockdown – allowing us to work, exercise, socialise and school our kids from the safety of our homes over the last few weeks and months.

The take-up of tech has been staggering over the last few months. Just look at the number of Zoom users, which rose from 10 million in December to 300m in March.

That's just as true for the creative industries. Through necessity, designers, architects and a whole host of creatives are now collaborating

digitally throughout the UK and across borders as never before. I'm sure that not all of this digital work will return to face-to-face working practices in the future.

There is perhaps a new norm going on here, and remote working, or at least spending a greater percentage of the working week at home, may become standard practice in many companies across the economy and the creative industries specifically. In fact, Mark Zuckerberg is already planning for half of all Facebook staff to work from home forever.

But there are other significant changes in terms of technology usage in the Creative Industries. For example, online streaming and delivery of content 'over-the-top' is now penetrating from millennials into all age categories you will be pleased to know. Apparently the UK's so-called peak "hour" for internet use now stretches from noon to 9pm.

Will advertising revenues that have shifted online from traditional media return to their former outlets? That is a question that we are all asking ourselves. Possibly, but it's probable that companies that rely on traditional advertising will have to adapt business models quicker and rely more on digital revenue streams.

Overall, the application of technology to the Creative Industries is providing and will provide both opportunities and challenges. The Government wants to encourage and incentivise the growth of Createch wherever we can.

It has already produced some incredibly innovative collaborations – like the Future Fashion Factory in Leeds, which is part of our Creative Industries Clusters Programme.

Led by the School of Design at the University of Leeds and partnered with fashion houses like Burberry, it uses digital and advanced textile technologies and applies them to the world of fashion.

For example, there is an amazing piece of tech currently being tested that translates the feel of fabrics into code. This code can then be sent digitally, and used to recreate the feel of the fabric by other designers anywhere in the world.

In layperson terms that's done by a piece of kit that, from the code of the original fabric, creates and blows a column of air that combines smaller individual ones. You pass your hand over the column and you can literally feel what appears to be the original fabric, whether rough or smooth.

Digitally conveying the tactile properties of a fabric is a truly groundbreaking application of technology to the Creative Industries. Tech here is directly helping the creativity of our fantastic UK fashion designers, and also reduces the economic and environmental impact of the sampling process.

Another fascinating Cluster Programme is the Bristol and Bath Creative R&D project, which brings together the region's four universities, the Watershed and many industry partners to explore user engagement in new platforms.

The cluster is working at several sites to combine 5G connectivity, Extended Reality technologies and live arts, in order to imagine and develop the future of the Creative Industries.

We need to build on these examples and the success of the Creative Industries Clusters Programme in general. As Tim has mentioned, DCMS is currently talking with industry through the Creative Industries Council – some of whose members are in the audience today – about how the Government can continue to help the adoption of new technologies into all the creative sub-sectors.

Of course achieving this has to come from a joint and ongoing effort from all of us. From government, universities, entrepreneurs and innovators, and from companies within non-tech native sub-sectors themselves. We need the continued contribution of partners such as Digital Catapult, which is leading the early adoption of advanced digital technologies, and companies such as Improbable, which is pioneering groundbreaking tech applications in the games sector.

Government will continue to do its part – and yes I know, we need to do more – but we also need trade bodies, companies and individuals to do their part too as I know you know.

As we slowly start making moves towards recovery, together we'll continue to drive Createch so that the creative industries can maintain their rightful place at the heart of our economy and society.

Thank you.

---

## **Highways England puts the bins out for roadside collections in South West**

The Government company, which is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the country's motorways and major A roads, has pumped £80,000 into an initiative to help keep counties in the South West beautiful.

Councils are responsible for clearing litter from the majority of A roads, and after local authorities in the South West identified the worst littered laybys in their areas, Highways England has installed bins and 'keep it tidy' signs in 14 laybys, to encourage drivers not to litter.

The scheme follows the installation of layby signage along the A30 and A38 in Devon and Cornwall last year, and the initiative is not only targeted at reducing the amount of roadside litter, and improving the lives of both communities and motorists, but it is also aimed at providing a time and cost saving for local authorities.

Chris Regan, South West Head of Service Delivery for Highways England, said:

Litter is unsightly and a threat to wildlife and the environment.

It's a safety hazard for drivers and roadworkers risk their lives collecting it. That's besides the cost which would be better spent on maintaining our roads.

We're hoping this layby work will make a difference, for both communities and our local authority partners. And our advice to drivers is clear: please use the bins, heed the signage, and don't drop litter. Keep a bag in your car to store litter until you can dispose of it responsibly.

The partnership with Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset, Tewkesbury Borough, Gloucester City and Forest of Dean Councils is tackling litter along the A36, A303, A46, A4 and A40.

Councillor Bridget Wayman, Wiltshire Council Cabinet Member for Highways, said:

We are pleased this initiative to reduce litter on Wiltshire's major roads has been completed and we look forward to seeing the impact these bins and signs have, as lockdown eases and people start to travel more.

Wiltshire is a beautiful county and we are committed to keeping it that way, so please, use these bins and help to keep our laybys litter free.

Councillor Steve Reade, South Gloucestershire Council Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and the Strategic Environment, said: "We share our residents' desire to see the South Gloucestershire countryside looking green and its streets clean, and we know that overwhelmingly people do the right thing when we make it easier for them.

This Highways England investment is most welcome as it further demonstrates that keeping our world clean and tidy is something we all need to play our part in. There can be no excuse for littering on the roadside, or anywhere else, as the financial cost to us as a council and the environmental cost to everyone is simply too high.

The scheme includes the following hot spots:

- A303: Longbarrow eastbound; Berwick St James westbound and eastbound
- A36: Berkley northbound; Crockerton northbound and southbound; Cley Hill southbound
- A40: Highnam westbound; Birdwood eastbound, Longford southbound;

Churcham westbound

- A46: Bath northbound and southbound
- A4: Bath westbound

Around 200,000 bags of litter are collected from Highways England's motorways every year, figures have shown, and the company will be taking part in Keep Britain Tidy's Great British September Clean (11-27 September) following the cancellation of the Great British Spring Clean.

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.