

News story: Three shipbuilding teams shortlisted to build new warships in UK

Three shipbuilding teams have been awarded multi-million-pound contracts to push ahead with plans to build five new Type 31e warships in the UK for the Royal Navy, Defence Minister Stuart Andrew has announced today in Portsmouth.

The Minister revealed that teams led by BAE Systems, Babcock and Atlas Elektronik UK have been shortlisted for the competition to build the five frigates for £1.25 billion. Each group has today been awarded a contract worth up to £5 million to fund the next stage of their plans, with the preferred bidder for the design and manufacture of the ships due to be announced by the end of next year. The MOD wants the first ship delivered in 2023.

Speaking at Her Majesty's Naval Base in Portsmouth, Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

This is the first frigate competition the UK has run in a generation, and today we are funding three shipbuilding teams with extremely exciting concepts to continue developing their plans. Next year we will announce the winning bidder, and one of these designs will go on to bolster our future fleet with five new ships, creating UK jobs and ensuring our Royal Navy maintains a truly global presence in an increasingly uncertain world.

The awarding of the contracts is a key milestone in the National Shipbuilding Strategy, which was launched in September 2017. The Strategy met the challenges set by an independent report written by Sir John Parker, a figure with a wealth of leadership and boardroom experience in shipbuilding, and was underpinned by the commitment to build the new Type 31e ships.

The bold Type 31e programme will move through procurement at an unprecedented pace: the vessel will commence production within 3 years of the launch of the programme, far quicker than similar programmes of this type.

The ships will make up the next generation of the Royal Navy fleet, along with eight Type 26 warships which will start being delivered from the mid-2020s. The names of all eight Type 26 frigates have now been announced, and the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has also outlined that they will be based in Devonport. The decision on where the Type 31e frigates will be based is still to be made.

The Minister made the announcement on-board HMS Diamond, which returned to Portsmouth last month having been in the Mediterranean.

[Press release: UK Hydrographic Office appoints Rear Admiral Tim Lowe CBE as Acting Chief Executive](#)

The UK Hydrographic Office has announced the appointment of Rear Admiral Tim Lowe CBE, the current UK National Hydrographer and Deputy Chief Executive, to the position of Acting Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

Rear Admiral Lowe will fill the role whilst a permanent replacement is sought for John Humphrey, the current Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the UKHO, who will leave at the end of January 2019.

Commenting on his interim appointment, Rear Admiral Lowe said:

“I look forward to taking the helm as Acting Chief Executive, whilst we continue to transform the UKHO into a world-leading marine geospatial information agency. It is an exciting time for our team as we transition to a data centric, digital first organisation whilst continuing to deliver on our wide spectrum of responsibilities, including our obligations to support safe passage in UK waters, provide hydrographic services to our Defence customers, work closely with our international partners and play an active role across government to unlock the potential of marine data.”

The Minister with responsibility for the UKHO, Earl Howe, Minister of State for Defence, said:

“I would like to thank John for his leadership as CE UKHO over the last three years. He has established UKHO as a world leading provider of global digital navigational services, defined and delivered a strategy to transform into a digital first organisation, supported wider Government policy aims and played an instrumental role in the organisation’s new build. I am confident that Rear Admiral Lowe and his team will continue to capitalise on this powerful legacy to ensure that UKHO can truly harness the transformative power of marine geospatial information.”

Tim is a Rear Admiral in the Royal Navy and joined the UKHO as UK National Hydrographer and Deputy Chief Executive in 2015. In his role as UK National Hydrographer and Deputy Chief Executive, he has led a number of key projects for the UKHO. This includes the Commonwealth Marine Economies and Overseas Territories Seabed Mapping programmes to support the development of “blue economies” in territories across the world.

[News story: Husband and wife sentenced for large-scale publishing fraud](#)

Mark William Taylor, 51, and Kelie Taylor, 34, of Ellesmere Port, appeared at Liverpool Crown Court on 10 December 2018 following a joint investigation between Merseyside Police and the Insolvency Service's Criminal Enforcement Team.

The case centred on the activities of Global Media Corporation Ltd and Paramount Media Company between 2009 and 2014. The two Wirral-based companies were operated by Mark Taylor, despite being previously disqualified from being a company director.

Following a large number of complaints to Action Fraud in relation to the two companies, investigators found that sales representatives would cold-call companies offering advertising space in various magazines which reportedly supported the emergency services.

The victims were led to believe that they were investing in legitimate advertising space in magazines to assist the emergency services which are printed and then distributed to a large catchment area.

While the majority of the complainants did not pay any money, they were harassed and intimidated by the suspects with threats of debt recovery and litigation.

In some cases, sales staff would inform the victims that they were members of the police service or calling from another emergency service.

Mark Taylor was [banned by the courts for 15 years](#) in April 2016, the maximum term that can be applied, after investigators were able to prove that he acted as a director when he was banned from doing so. Kelie Taylor received an 11-year directorship disqualification from the courts at the same time for allowing her husband to run companies when he had been banned.

And husband and wife were both banned from running companies for allowing Global Media Corporation to fail in its duties to HMRC and carry out dishonest sales tactics.

Following the disqualifications, Mark Taylor was sentenced to 4.5 years having previously pleaded guilty to two counts of fraud relating to Paramount Media Company and Global Media Corporation, as well as one count of acting in the management of a company – GMC Ltd – while being disqualified from being a company director and perjury.

Kelie Taylor pleaded guilty to aiding and abetting Mark Taylor's disqualification and received a 2-year community order, 175 hours of unpaid work and a supervision requirement for 12 months.

John Fitzsimmons, Deputy Chief Investigation Officer for the Insolvency

Service, said:

No matter what type of company you run, you have to comply with all your legal responsibilities. Mark and Kelie Taylor failed to act responsibly when they were involved with Global Media Corporation and in particular, Mark Taylor was a persistent offender having already been banned from running companies.

Working together with Merseyside Police, we sought criminal prosecutions against the pair and we welcome the substantial sentence, which should serve as a warning to others that there are severe consequences if you defy insolvency and company laws.

Detective Sergeant Joanne Devers, said:

Today's sentencing shows that the courts do take the issue of fraud very seriously. Some of the people who were taken in by this fraud were small businesses who were just trying to make a living.

They were contacted out of the blue and asked to take out advertisements to support emergency organisations and these organisations preyed on the fact that most people would be happy to pay to assist the emergency services. They were then given sub-standard examples of work or received no feedback when they asked questions about issues such as circulation figures. Some businesses were also sent invoices for work they hadn't agreed to.

Merseyside Police's Economic Crime team have actively targeted publishing fraudsters over the last four to five years, resulting in a large number of arrests and lengthy convictions. Merseyside Police will continue to target those engaged in this type of crime.

Statement to parliament: Crossrail update, 10 December 2018

The government, the Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL) have today (10 December 2018) confirmed a financing package to deliver the final stages

of the [Crossrail project](#) and open the Elizabeth line to passengers.

Crossrail Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of TfL, announced in August 2018 that the opening of the Elizabeth line through central London would be delayed. Work is ongoing to identify the remaining works required to complete the infrastructure and then commence the extensive testing necessary to ensure the railway opens safely and reliably. Crossrail is a nationally significant infrastructure project which will add up to £42 billion to the UK economy and will transform travel in, to, and across London.

The government remains committed to the rapid completion of the project, in a way that is fair to UK taxpayers, and that enables London – as the primary beneficiary of Crossrail – to bear the additional costs. Independent reviews into Crossrail Ltd's assessment of ongoing funding requirements and governance arrangements are being undertaken by KPMG to ensure the right scrutiny and oversight are in place as the project enters its final phase.

The emerging findings of the KPMG reviews into Crossrail Ltd's finances indicate the likely range of additional capital cost due to the delayed opening of the central section could be in the region of between £1.6 billion and £2 billion. That includes the £300 million already contributed by the Department for Transport and TfL in July 2018, leaving between £1.3 billion and £1.7 billion to cover the predicted additional costs of the project.

The government, the Mayor of London and TfL have agreed a financial package to cover this. The Department for Transport will provide a loan of up to £1.3 billion to the Greater London Authority (GLA). The GLA intend to repay this loan via London's Business Rate Supplement (BRS) and from the Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy (MCIL). The GLA will also provide a £100 million cash contribution, taking its total contribution for this package to £1.4 billion.

As the final costs of the Crossrail project are yet to be confirmed, a contingency arrangement has also been agreed between TfL and the Department for Transport. The Department for Transport will loan TfL up to £750 million in the event that further finance is required for the project.

This combined financing deal will replace the need for the [£350 million interim financing package announced by the Department for Transport in October 2018](#).

The combined total of the financing arrangements outlined above, means that the overall funding envelope for the project is now £17.6 billion.

Crossrail Ltd appointed Mark Wild as CEO on 19 November 2018. Mark is now conducting an extensive review of the remainder of the programme and will provide clarity in the new year on the opening date of future phases. Crossrail Ltd are working to establish a robust and deliverable schedule to open a safe and reliable railway. This will also provide greater clarity on the level of additional funding required.

Furthermore, both the Department for Transport and TfL have recommended to

the Crossrail Ltd board that they appoint Tony Meggs as Chair. Tony Meggs was previously Chief Executive of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and Head of government's Project Delivery Function, following a 30 year career in the private sector leading major projects at global, regional and local levels.

To further strengthen the Crossrail Ltd Board, the Department for Transport have accepted TfL's nomination of Nick Raynsford as Deputy Chair. Nick is a former MP and served as Minister for London on two occasions between 1997 and 2003.

Press release: £40 million personalised support package for long-term unemployed disabled people launched

The support comes from a new £40 million fund and is expected to benefit 10,000 people.

The Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme will provide highly personalised packages of employment support for people who are at least a year away from moving into work.

People will get coaching to help build their independence, confidence and motivation, as well as work experience to help boost their career prospects.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Amber Rudd said:

Everyone, no matter what their background is, should have the opportunity to thrive in the workplace, and having the right support in place for disabled people is one of my greatest priorities.

To truly help people transform their lives, there can be no one-size-fits-all approach.

That's why this new programme is designed to offer people, who may think they will never move into work, tailored support to help them overcome any personal barriers they may have in the first instance, and then to focus on boosting their skills.

There are also huge economic benefits to improving disability employment rates. More than half of disabled people are in work,

but in order to realise the full potential of disabled people in Britain we want to go further and see one million more disabled people in work by 2027.

People on the scheme will get a dedicated key worker who will work with them to overcome complex barriers which may be preventing them from entering work, ensuring they have a personal support network in place.

The voluntary scheme will be rolled out across England and Wales in 2019, and applicants will receive support for up to 21 months, including 6 months of in-work support for those who get a job.

Neil Heslop, Chief Executive of Leonard Cheshire, said:

Many disabled people with complex needs face significant barriers in accessing the workplace. It's crucial that specialised employment support is available and the government responds to the challenges people often encounter.

A more tailored approach can help reach those who are not currently receiving any employment support or skills development. The experiences of disabled people must be central for this support to meaningfully build confidence in an ongoing way, reflecting their individual circumstances and aspirations.

The Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme will support people living with a disability who are unlikely to move into work within the next year or longer and may need additional support.

Other government support to help disabled people get into and thrive in work includes the [Disability Confident scheme](#), the [Work and Health programme](#), the [Access to Work grant](#) and [Jobcentre Plus services](#).

The Secretary of State also announced measures to reduce the most severely disabled benefit claimants having their awards unnecessarily reviewed.

[Personal Independence Payment](#) covers some of the extra costs caused by long term disability or ill-health.

New guidance will ensure that people who are awarded the highest level of support under Personal Independence Payment will receive an ongoing award, with a 'light touch' review every 10 years so they no longer have to have their conditions re-examined.

Previously this was going to only be applicable for new claims, but the Secretary of State has now taken steps to ensure this also applies to existing claims.

This is to ensure that for disabled people who need extra support, the system is designed to be as seamless as possible while minimising any unnecessary

stress or bureaucracy.

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