

Transformation Fund Proposal - Littoral Strike Ships

Executive Summary. The Secretary of State has today announced an investment in an accelerated Concept and Development Phase for Littoral Strike Ships – to understand how and when we can deliver modern, high-endurance ships that exploits technology and automation to increase lethality, agility and reach. These ships will maintain the UK's ability to deliver cutting edge hard power across the globe.

What is Littoral Strike? Littoral Strike is the Royal Navy's transformation programme to harness the breadth of our national security levers, fuse them on to a vessel and enhance the UK's ability to project hard and soft power from the sea. Utilising the Royal Navy's highly trained elite Royal Marine Commandos, remade as the Future Commando Force, and combining them with cutting edge technology, Littoral Strike will increase the UK's points of presence around the globe.

Why is it needed? The UK exists in a world of continual and dynamic competition, conflict in the 'grey zone', below the threshold of 'total war' is the new norm. With threats from state and non-state actors increasing, the UK needs more forward deployed, highly capable forces that can respond across a broad spectrum of tasks, ranging from special operations, deep strike and intelligence fusion to humanitarian aid, trade and diplomacy. These ships will be the embodiment of Global Britain enabling the Royal Navy and Royal Marine to deliver all of this, and project hard power across the globe at a moment's notice.

What are Littoral Strike Ships? Littoral Strike Ships are multi role vessels equipped with state of the art command and control capabilities, helicopters, fast boats, underwater automated systems and a large detachment of elite Future Commando troops. The Concept and Development Phase announced today will look to design these ships for versatility and offer cross-Government utility: vessels that have the flexibility designed-in to be able to accept different "mission-fits", as well as sufficient resilience to operate in a range of environments.

How would the Littoral Strike Ships operate? They will be forward deployed permanently – away from the UK – with Future Commando Forces, providing the UK with options for engagement with our allies and partners and for early response to a wide variety of events. Able to operate independently supporting Special Operations, Littoral Strike Ships would also be a central part of larger aggregations of forces – Littoral Strike Groups. These groups will be scaled according to mission-requirements, drawing on the full suite of the Navy's amphibious and other shipping, including the Landing Platform Dock (HMS ALBION/ BULWARK) and Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) (the RFA BAY Class). As required, these specialist Littoral Strike Groups will be able to operate together with the UK's Carrier Strike Group and/or with Allies and partners to deliver battle-winning effect.

1SL: *"Our Future Littoral Strike Ships will routinely be forward deployed, hosting tailored, high readiness forces to provide persistent presence in areas of strategic national interest."*

CGRM: *"Today's announcement to accelerate the concept and assessment stages of future Littoral Strike Ships brings us one step closer to realising our ambitions for Littoral Strike and the Future Commando Force."*