



Submarine
Delivery Agency

Corporate Plan 2024-2027

August 2024



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Introduction – SDA Chair and Chief Executive Officer

The Continuous at Sea Deterrent is the cornerstone of our national security, protecting the people and values of the UK and our allies. The SDA is the Defence Nuclear Enterprise's (DNE) delivery agent for submarines. We lead on the design, construction, maintenance, and disposal of submarines for the Royal Navy. Our work is amongst the most complex of challenges undertaken by the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

Over the last five years, the Agency has continued to deliver submarine maintenance and upgrades to support the Continuous at Sea Deterrent, including the life extension of HMS Vanguard. We have delivered HMS Audacious and HMS Anson to the Royal Navy and achieved significant milestones on the Dreadnought programme, including completion of the first common missile compartment. We have laid strong foundations for our next generation of attack-class submarines, known as SSN-A, which we will deliver alongside our American and Australian partners. We are making substantial progress on a range of infrastructure projects to improve availability of today's fleet and prepare for future fleets, whilst removing some 300 tonnes of low-level radioactive waste from decommissioned submarines in preparation for their dismantling.

This is a significant and interconnected portfolio, and we are proud of the achievements we have made and their contribution to our mission.

As our portfolio of work continues to grow, we will need to enhance our own capabilities and those of our supply chain to rise to the challenges ahead of us. Our strategy sets out the improvement work we will drive from within the SDA, with our suppliers and with our DNE partners to improve on-time delivery of major projects and increase submarine availability. Essential to this is enhanced collaboration across the entire Enterprise and simplification of how we deliver.

The UK's nuclear deterrent is a true national endeavour requiring talented people from many backgrounds with a wide range of skills and experience. We must continue to invest in attracting, developing, and retaining great people, whilst ensuring they are supported to give their best. To do this, we will enhance our tools, information management, and ways of working.

There is much for us to do, and we do not underestimate the hard work ahead. But we are united by a determination to succeed for the submariners who will deploy in the boats that we help design, manufacture, and support – and for the nation. Both expect us to keep them safe. Both require us to live up to our name – the Submarine Delivery Agency. We must do 'just that', and deliver.



Jonathan Simcock,
SDA Chair



Sir Chris Gardner KBE,
SDA Chief Executive
Officer (CEO)

The role of the SDA – who we are

The UK's independent nuclear deterrent – a nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed submarine system – helps deter the most extreme threats to our national security and that of our allies. Our Continuous at Sea Deterrent relies on a network of programmes, equipment, and people within the MOD and industry – a true national endeavour. We work together to design, produce, maintain, and dispose of submarines while ensuring the right infrastructure, people, and support are in place for the success of the Enterprise.

The construction of new submarines and support of in-service submarines are some of the largest and most complex programmes undertaken by the MOD and UK industry. The Integrated Review Refresh (IR2023) and the DNE Command Paper describe the critical importance of our nuclear deterrent, particularly when set against deteriorating global security. Recent investments in infrastructure, skills, and materiel all highlight the priority of our work and shape the portfolio we need to deliver.

Together with colleagues in the Defence Nuclear Organisation (DNO) and the Royal Navy, we form the core of the DNE – the multi-organisation, integrated team responsible for delivering this critical national endeavour. Delivering our portfolio requires collaboration beyond the DNE and throughout our supply chain – from those companies we engage with directly, including our three Tier 1 suppliers (BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce Submarines and

Babcock International) to those overseen by others in the MOD, most notably Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S). We provide capable and available submarines to the Royal Navy, including those that are critical to sustaining the Continuous at Sea Deterrent. Within our workforce we have some of the nation's most experienced submarine and defence nuclear experts, as well as highly professional and experienced project managers and procurement specialists. In April 2024 we had approximately 2,500 employees – made up of civilian and military personnel across a range of functions such as Engineering, Finance and Commercial, supported by approximately 160 graduates and apprentices across the Agency. Our people are at the heart of our success, and we are determined to create the environment and conditions which will enable them to deliver the best outcomes for the Enterprise (see 'Our People', page 15).

As a delivery organisation, our focus is on operations alongside the Royal Navy at His Majesty's Naval Bases (HMNB) in Clyde and Devonport, and with our key suppliers and international partners. Three-quarters of our people are employed at our headquarters in Bristol, with the remainder based alongside our suppliers, the Royal Navy, and with our international partners. We have colleagues based in the United States of America (USA), where we work collaboratively with US Department of Defense colleagues.

About the SDA – what we do

Defence purpose

The Defence purpose is ‘to protect the nation and help it prosper’.

DNE mission

The DNE is a cohesive network of organisations and arrangements responsible for maintaining the UK’s nuclear deterrent and submarine forces. It works together to deliver its shared mission: deliver nuclear capabilities, deter the threat, protect the nation.

The DNE delivers some of the most complex projects and programmes, bringing together the breadth of scientific, technical and delivery capabilities, all made possible by the collaboration of the people and functions that support the organisation. Recognising the huge responsibility entrusted to it, the DNE aims to attract and retain the right skills and partner effectively with industry to deliver outputs to schedule and budget.

SDA vision

Our vision is ‘to be recognised for excellence in submarine delivery’.

This recognition comes from many places: the public, the UK Parliament (who approve and fund our activities), our allies (who support our endeavour), our supply chain (with whom we achieve success), and from our people – both past and present, and the future talent we want to attract.

SDA mission

Our mission is ‘to deliver available, capable submarines to the Royal Navy for the defence of the nation’.

Every activity undertaken by the SDA has its mission at heart. Working as part of the DNE, our mission unites us, inspires us, and motivates action. It ensures we never lose focus on the critical national endeavour we support.



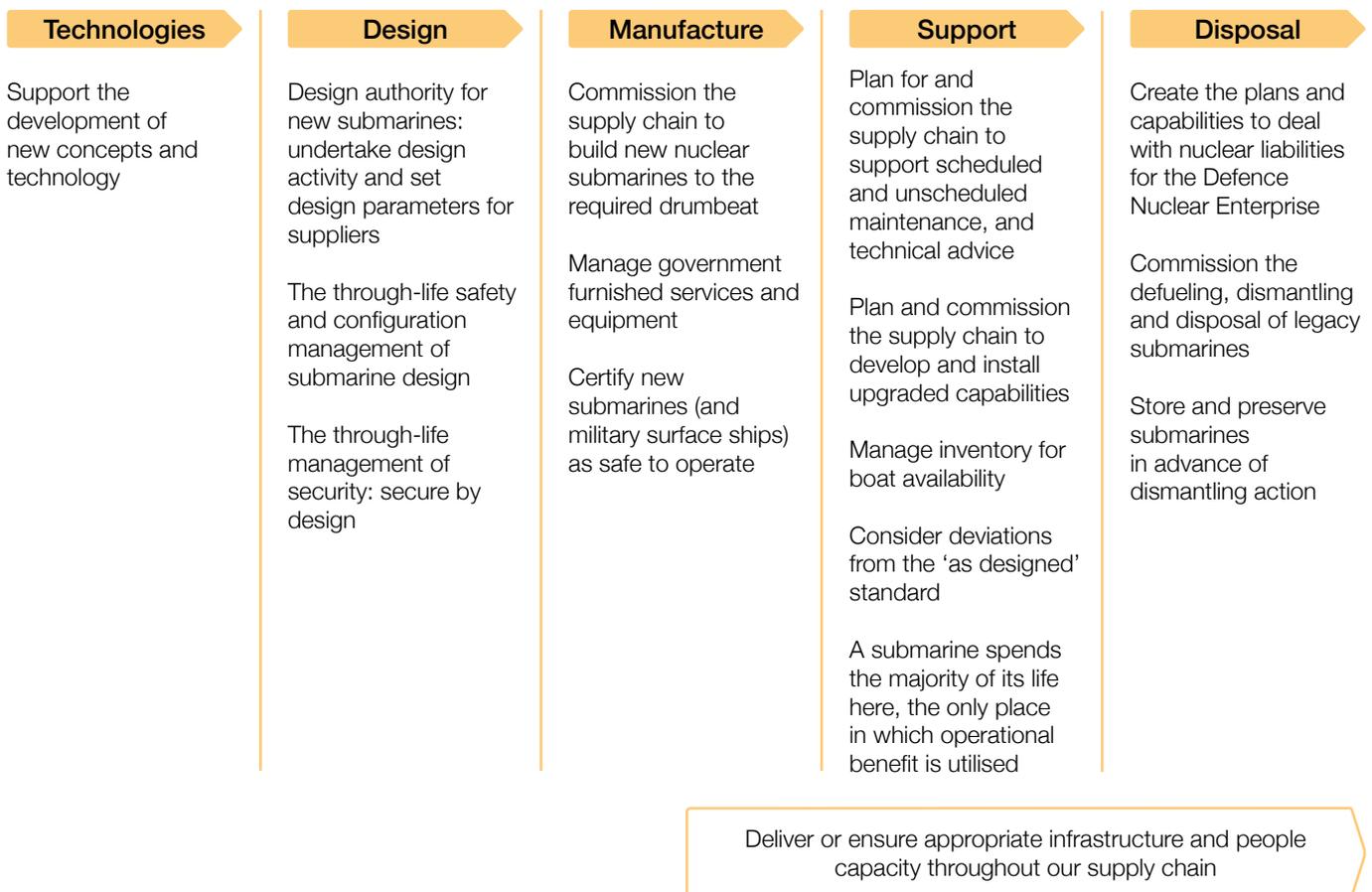
SDA purpose

We are ‘the Defence Nuclear Enterprise’s delivery agent for submarines’.

Our work spans the full life-cycle of a submarine, from design and manufacture to in-service support and disposal. We are the technical, safety and design authority, the

commissioning agent and commercial lead for our suppliers.

In support of the activities shown below, the SDA also nurtures its international relationships, particularly with the USA and increasingly Australia, to fulfil its role in international partnerships (see page 13).



SDA values

The SDA Code brings together our values, purpose, and behaviours, outlining the individual commitment everyone in the SDA makes to the values we hold ourselves to.

The Code ensures that we understand our core values and aim to live by them daily. Our values are:

- **support** – we are committed, inclusive and thrive on teamwork
- **deliver** – we are accountable, open, and sincere in all that we do
- **aspire** – we are ambitious, trustworthy, and proud of what we achieve together

The Code also lays out our commitment to developing the SDA, driving ever-improved performance to deliver our mission on behalf of the DNE and achieving our vision of excellence in submarine delivery. It helps our people, industry partners, and those considering working with the SDA to understand our values and ways of working.

DNE behavioural principles

The SDA, alongside our DNE colleagues in the DNO and Navy Command, are fully committed to our shared DNE behavioural principles. The behavioural principles sit at the core of how we must work together as an integrated team across the Enterprise to deliver our collective mission.

This approach underpins everything we do; from how we work together and deliver the outcomes expected of us, to ensuring we equip and support our people and partners with the skills they need to deliver their best for the Enterprise. These principles are critical to fostering the required teamwork and momentum for our collective success.

We want all our people – regardless of job, grade, or function – to role model behaviours that support our strong diversity and inclusion ethos.

 Defence Nuclear Enterprise

DNE Behavioural Principles ▶

- ▶ **Mission First:**
Lead as a team, committed to the programme, prioritising its objectives.
- ▶ **Stand Together:**
Feel jointly responsible and accountable for the overall outcome.
- ▶ **Best for Enterprise:**
Deliver those objectives as a single, integrated team, acting in the best interests of the Enterprise.
- ▶ **No Surprise, No Blame:**
Work in an open and transparent manner.
- ▶ **Best Athlete:**
Allocate clear responsibility and accountability for those objectives to those best placed to discharge them.
- ▶ **Our Problem, Not Your Problem:**
Always look to improve and help others.
- ▶ **One Plan, One Voice:**
Decide based on a shared, jointly agreed management information.
- ▶ **Every Day Counts:**
Execute with pace, urgency and precision.
- ▶ **Celebrate Successes:**
We have a large mountain to climb, and we need to recognise our wins on the way.

Our strategy – developing defence delivery

Since the SDA was established in 2018, our ability to achieve our mission has improved while the challenges we face have become greater and more complex. This includes expanding our programme of work to include the trilateral AUKUS programme – delivering conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability to Australia. We recognise the importance of accelerating our improvement trend and using our strategy as a route map to achieving this.

Our strategy targets improvements in on-time delivery, submarine availability, and organisational effectiveness. Most notably, a stable and resilient plan that enables delivery of our interconnected portfolio and ensures our own capabilities, and those of our supply chain, are fit-for-purpose. It further enables an empowered Enterprise that works as one team, with aligned goals and incentives, and clear accountabilities. Our underpinning change efforts are focused on ensuring

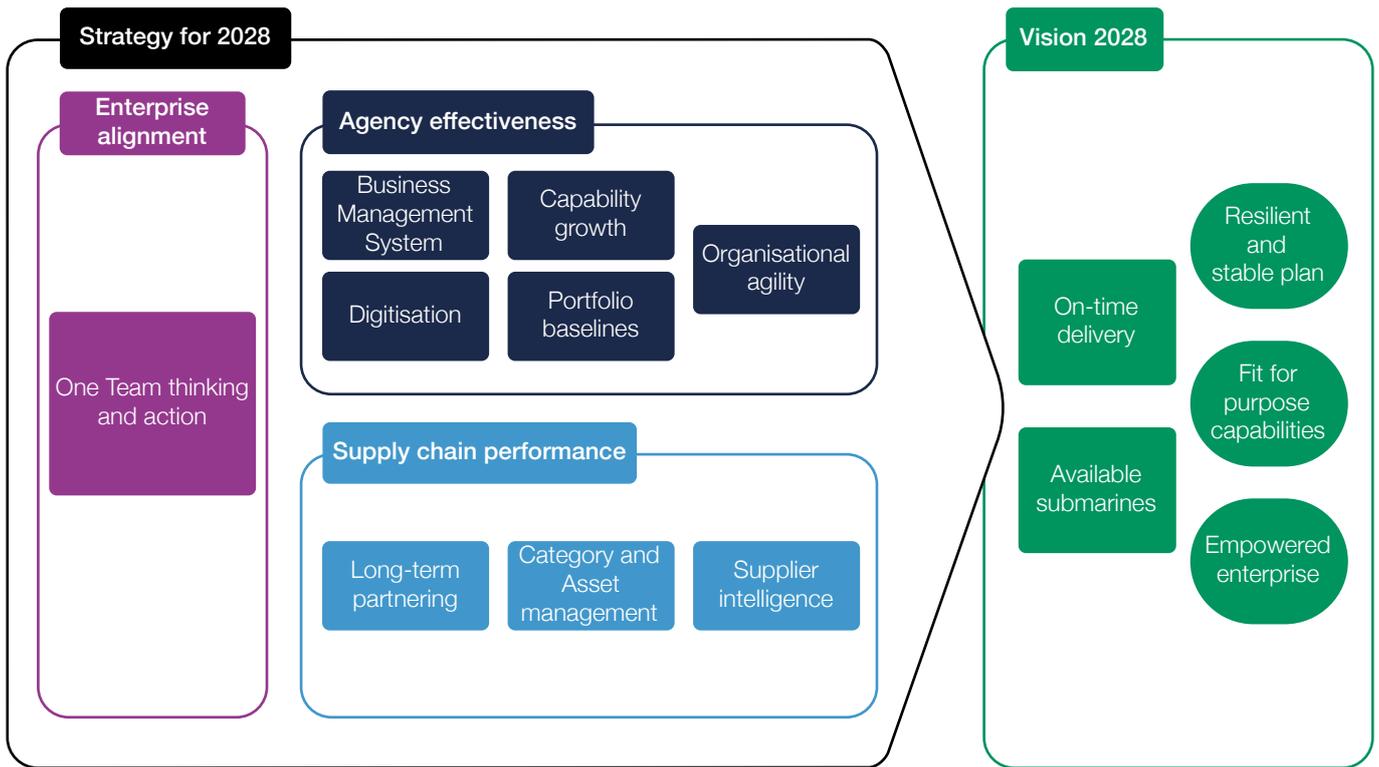
alignment across the Enterprise, enhancing Agency effectiveness, and driving supply chain performance (see ‘Strategy for 2028’ diagram, page 8):

- **Enterprise alignment** – ‘one team’ thinking and action to ensure clarity of organisational roles and authorities, promote accountability and align governance arrangements
- **Agency effectiveness** – accelerating improvements to our ways of working (operating model, tools, information, and processes) along with investment in the capabilities of our people to aid delivery and enhance effectiveness
- **Supply chain performance** – robust, partnered relationships with our key suppliers using long-term commercial arrangements, category and asset management, and supplier intelligence to optimise collaboration and interventions



Since launching our strategy in summer 2023, we are making steady progress in its delivery, including the publication of supporting strategies covering our people, digital and data, and commercial arrangements. Progress is regularly monitored by our SDA Board and Executive Committee (further information on

page 19 and 20). We also draw on feedback from our people, including through the annual Civil Service People Survey and engagement events held across our own sites and with our stakeholders. These provide a rich source of data on what is working well and where we need to continue to improve.



Our plans – delivering our mission

Design and manufacture of new submarines

The Astute programme

The Astute Class submarines are the largest, most advanced, and powerful attack submarines ever operated by the Royal Navy. Built in the BAE Systems shipyard in Barrow-in-Furness for the Royal Navy, there will be seven vessels in the class. Five are in-service: HMS Anson, delivered to the Royal Navy in April 2024, joined HMS Astute, HMS Ambush, HMS Artful and HMS Audacious. The remaining two boats are at an advanced stage of construction, with the naming ceremony of the sixth boat, HMS Agamemnon, in April 2024 representing a major milestone toward boat launch.

The Dreadnought programme

The Continuous at Sea Deterrent is currently delivered by the four Vanguard Class ballistic missile submarines. These are being upgraded to ensure they remain highly capable until they are replaced by the Dreadnought Class. This will ensure that the UK has a credible, independent, and capable nuclear deterrent for as long as the global security situation necessitates it.

The Dreadnought programme is focused on both the successful entry into operations and in-service support of this future class of four submarines. It remains within overall budget and on track for the first boat in class, named

Dreadnought, to enter service in the early 2030s.

In May 2022, the MOD announced the Dreadnought programme had reached a significant milestone in moving into delivery phase 3. Investment in this phase has seen enormous progress throughout 2023 and into 2024, with construction underway on the first three submarines in class – Dreadnought, Valiant and Warspite. Cut steel for the fourth boat, King George VI, is on track for 2025, with all boats progressing in line with the overall programme schedule. The completion of the common missile compartment in 2023 represents a significant milestone for the Dreadnought programme.

SSN-AUKUS

Work on the next generation of nuclear-powered attack submarines, known as SSN-A, entered its detailed design and long lead phase in 2023. The design being taken forward as part of the SSN-A programme incorporates technology from all three nations, including cutting-edge submarine technologies from the USA. Australia and the UK will build and operate SSN-A as their attack submarine of the future and work will begin to build SSN-A in Australia's domestic shipyards within this decade. On current plans, the UK will deliver its first SSN-A to the Royal Navy, which will replace the current Astute Class, in the late 2030s. The first SSN-A for the Royal Australian Navy will be completed by Australia in the early 2040s, with all nuclear reactors built by the UK.

Supporting the in-service flotilla and maintaining the Continuous at Sea Deterrent

The SDA is responsible for maintaining and developing operational platform and combat system capabilities, as part of the Enterprise's role in keeping safe and capable submarines at sea. Alongside upgrading and supporting the current Vanguard Class of submarines, the SDA works closely with the Royal Navy to maintain the in-service Trafalgar and Astute Class submarines. We work with our DNE colleagues at HMNB Clyde and Devonport, as well as across the submarine supply chain, on a range of initiatives covering engineering and associated design efforts, logistics and facilities.

We continue to drive a step-change improvement in output from our dockyards, working alongside our industry partners, DE&S, and the Royal Navy to increase availability and resilience across the Enterprise and achieve greater value for money.

We are progressing our targeted programme of work to co-ordinate and sequence existing change activity while introducing a data-driven approach to the in-service support of submarines. This includes generating greater capacity and productivity at waterfront locations, initiatives to improve reliability and a through-life approach to equipment, system, and platform management.

We are continuing to introduce ISO55000 asset management requirements into our new contracts wherever possible. This collaborative

approach to optimising budgets with aligned and agreed priorities is informed and endorsed by both the DNO and Navy Command. Our Strategic Asset Management Plan outlines what will be an iterative journey toward implementing a robust asset management approach.

We continue to work closely with our industry partners – Babcock International who provide submarine maintenance and Rolls-Royce Submarines who provide naval reactor plant support and technology – throughout the submarine life-cycle. Through-life support is provided to two classes of pressurised water reactor (PWR) – PWR1 fitted to the Trafalgar Class submarines and PWR2 to the Astute and Vanguard Class. We are focused on sustaining these technologies to ensure they remain available and safe to operate until each class leaves service. The new Dreadnought Class will be fitted with PWR3 and we are working on the support and maintenance requirements of this future capability.

The cornerstone of the UK's nuclear deterrent is the Trident Strategic Weapon System. Procured through the Polaris Sales Agreement with the USA, the SDA is the lead agency for the Trident Strategic Weapon System in the UK and hosts the Polaris Sales Agreement Project Officer, the Chief Strategic Systems Executive (see 'Our Executive Committee', page 21). In April 2023 we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Polaris Sales Agreement with USA colleagues. This remains one of the most important inter-governmental agreements in the history of our two nations and is as essential today as it was 60 years ago.

Nuclear infrastructure to support the submarine life cycle

Nuclear infrastructure projects are large and complex, with bespoke designs. As required, the SDA contracts for enhancements to our infrastructure capacity for the building of submarines. We are investing significantly in infrastructure across the DNE and will continue to work closely with regulators and industry partners to sustain improvements.

To deliver the Dreadnought Class, the BAE Systems shipyard in Barrow-in-Furness has been undergoing a redevelopment programme which will support a more efficient submarine production process. The primary build facility comprises two new facilities where submarine reactor systems will be manufactured and assembled. The first facility, known as D59, has been operational since 2021. The second, known as D58, achieved initial operating capability in spring 2024.

At the Rolls-Royce Submarines site in Raynesway, progress has been made to enhance the facilities where construction and testing of the new Dreadnought Class PWR3 nuclear reactor cores takes place.

The ambitious pace of the SSN-A build programme places greater demands on the Barrow-in-Furness and Raynesway sites, as well as BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce Submarines. The Submarine Enterprise Acquisition Capability programme was established in 2023 to co-ordinate the investments in infrastructure, workforce and supply chain needed to meet those demands, with initial investments being made to benefit elements of the Dreadnought programme.

Working closely with the DNO, Navy Command, and industry partners (particularly Babcock International who own and operate Devonport Royal Dockyard), we are conducting forward planning and programme management of projects to ensure coherence across the DNE. Three significant programmes will continue at pace throughout the duration of this Corporate Plan:

- **Submarine Waterfront Infrastructure Future (SWIF) 10 Dock Readiness** – conversion of 10 Dock and a five-basin berth at Devonport to deliver Astute Class deep maintenance facilities. Following contract commitment in 2023, the facility design is nearing completion, with the physical infrastructure in place to prepare for construction
- **SWIF 15 Dock Readiness** – upgrade of 15 Dock to create an enduring fleet-time docking facility for the Astute Class
- **14 Dock Readiness** – completion of a nuclear defueling facility in 14 Dock to facilitate PWR1 defueling.

Safely disposing of the UK's submarines

The disposal of decommissioned nuclear submarines is a complex and challenging undertaking. This is the first time the UK has attempted full submarine dismantling that includes the nuclear reactor. The SDA is developing and benchmarking its dismantling and waste disposal techniques, which will meet all safety, environmental and sustainability standards, achieve value for the taxpayer and address intergenerational liability expectations. The SDA's Submarine Dismantling Project will deliver a dismantling and disposal solution for decommissioned nuclear submarines up to and including the Vanguard Class. There are currently 22 submarines in safe storage:

Seven at Rosyth Dockyard and 15 at Devonport. The submarines receive regular maintenance and safety checks are carried out by the MOD, the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator, and the Office for Nuclear Regulation to comply with the required safety, environmental and security standards.

We are currently demonstrating and refining our dismantling approach. We have made significant progress with the majority of reactor components forming low-level radioactive waste, having already removed these from the decommissioned submarines Swiftsure, Resolution, Revenge and Repulse. This activity was completed safely, on time, within budget and with minimal environmental impact. To date, more than 300 metric tonnes of low-level radioactive waste have been safely removed from the four submarines. The Agency recognises the importance of circular economy and seeks to re-use any component that can be safely and appropriately re-purposed into the operational fleet. Any remaining metals and other non-hazardous waste materials will be recycled wherever possible.

In July 2023, Swiftsure was dry docked and will be the first submarine to be fully dismantled by the end of 2026, ahead of being recycled in line with our Public Accounts Committee commitment.

Submarine technology and capability development

A nuclear submarine is a technically complex and high-risk environment. The SDA delivers a range of engineering governance services that support our engineering activities, products, platforms and infrastructure. These include:

- management of nuclear safety and environmental protection
- systems engineering policy

- processes, standards, and assurance
- development of submarine technology, stealth technology and training
- nuclear skills development

In acquiring commodities and equipment for submarines, we also support the development of engineering capabilities through the exploration of future technologies. We work closely with the Royal Navy and industry on the development of underwater autonomous systems, recently confirming our involvement in the Cetus project – the Royal Navy’s first venture into large-scale, uncrewed submarines. In addition to enhancing our engineering and technical skills, we continue to build on the strong foundations established in recent years to develop our programme and technology management tools and processes.

As part of wider Defence maritime programmes, including those delivered by DE&S, we provide Naval Authority Safety Assurance, including certification activities and technical support. We lead the development and management of a range of maritime technical publications and standards.

As the design authority for all UK nuclear submarines, the SDA is the principal professional authority for the procurement, through-life support, safety, and effectiveness of the Trident II (D5) Strategic Weapon System (see ‘International Partnerships’, page 13).

Our ‘never silent on safety’ approach remains a key ethos for the SDA, and we will continue to focus on three critical areas:

- **culture** – establishing a stronger, more inclusive safety culture
- **organisation** – ensuring everyone is clear on their safety responsibilities
- **capability** – demonstrating that we have the right safety capability now and for the future

Our safety and environmental policies and practices have been updated to strengthen our commitment to sustainability principles and meet the MOD's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach. This includes adhering to specific policy measures such as the Greening Government Commitments 2021-2025 (see 'Sustainability', page 18).

Supply chain development

The SDA leads and develops a complex supply chain through:

- negotiating and managing commercial arrangements with increased focus on long-term relationship development
- increasing our understanding of supply chain risks and remedies
- assuring the capability and capacity of our industrial base

We work collaboratively with our Tier 1 industry partners – BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce Submarines, and Babcock International – our wider supply chain, and our public sector partners to ensure our supply chain has the technology, skills, manufacturing, and maintenance capability to safely deliver the UK's submarine requirements. In support of government industrial policies and wider strategies, we seek to develop a high performing, responsive and resilient industrial base. We are also working hard to ensure that our entire supply chain, including our small and medium-sized suppliers, can best support the DNE through harnessing of innovation and supporting the government's Levelling Up prosperity agenda throughout the UK.

We continue to seek the optimum balance of risk and reward within our supply chain, driving value and performance through appropriate incentivisation. Collaboratively with our industry partners, and as part of MOD-wide programmes, we lead the delivery of category

management to develop long-term strategies for the products we source and buy. We seek an in-depth understanding of customer needs and market trends to deliver risk reduction, supply chain resilience, improved availability, and support with coherence across programme and through-life. We align to asset management as a discipline to build knowledge and enable informed decisions in optimising assets.

We aim to achieve value for money for the taxpayer over the long-term and demonstrate corporate responsibility through strengthening our commercial principles and practices, and our approach to social value and net zero.

International partnerships

The UK works closely with the USA on nuclear defence cooperation, underpinned by the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement (renewed in 2014) and the 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement (amended in 1982 to provide the Trident II missile system). These agreements allow the UK to work closely with USA counterparts on nuclear propulsion and the Trident Strategic Weapons System to improve effectiveness whilst maintaining full operational independence. As part of our procurement and support for submarine programme life-cycle, we proudly support these agreements. Working both here in the UK and the USA, we collaborate to ensure effective programme co-ordination, safety and assurance activity, and knowledge sharing. A key example of this cooperation being our collaboration with the USA to develop a common missile compartment for the Dreadnought Class and USA Columbia Class submarines.

Under pillar 1 of AUKUS, the countries committed to supporting Australia in acquiring a conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine. In March 2023, the country leaders

announced the 'Optimal Pathway' to realising this commitment, a phased approach that culminates in Australia building and operating the SSN-A platform. Based on the UK's next generation design, it has been announced that BAE Systems will build Australia's submarines in partnership with ASC – an Australian submarine corporation – demonstrating a great success for British industry.

Enabling SDA delivery

To deliver our purpose, we manage and run the SDA as an effective and cost-efficient Executive Agency of the MOD. As such, we:

- ensure we have in place, and account for, the funding required to deliver our portfolio
- develop baselines to fully understand our performance and focus our efforts where they are needed most
- develop our business strategy and governance activities
- effectively oversee our facilities, information assets and Information Technology to ensure our organisation is fit-for-purpose

- ensure our people are engaged and can contribute to their fullest through a learning culture that ensures we have the skills, policies and procedures needed to maintain delivery momentum

In addition to the high volume of engineering, project, operational delivery, and commercial skills needed to manage our programmes, our activities draw on wider areas of expertise including finance, human resources, security, information management, strategy, and change, business management, and communications. Our aim is to ensure that, while supporting the ongoing development of the Agency, we continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our services, evolving our operating model so that it is fit for today and the future. Our operating landscape continues to evolve at pace and it is vital that we ensure the SDA provides a safe and secure organisation that aligns with MOD and Civil Service best practice.



How we deliver

Who we support

Our people

Our strategy sets out the capabilities we need to ensure we are fit-for-purpose, including those gained through development of people capability. A competent, professional, engaged, and motivated workforce that collaborates both across the SDA and DNE is critical to delivering effectively today, and even more effectively in the future.

Our Capability Growth Model was introduced in 2022, forming a key element of our pay review. It recognises and rewards our people as they grow both their individual and our organisational capability throughout their careers. It evolves our performance management processes to help us identify and support individual and organisational capability growth to embed the skills required to deliver our work in line with the SDA Code. We continue to enhance this approach through the provision of learning opportunities and investment in continuous professional development.

A thriving, diverse, inclusive community that reflects our society is key to supporting our organisational effectiveness and continually developing a competent workforce. We are determined to create the best possible working environment we can, one where everyone feels included, valued and confident in challenging all forms of discrimination and unacceptable behaviour. We act upon feedback from the Civil Service People Survey to improve ways of working and provide an environment where health and wellbeing are actively promoted. We are committed to growing a strong reputation as an employer of choice, focusing our efforts

on maximising our employee value proposition and offering a fair and competitive reward package.

We will continue to improve our workforce planning and resourcing processes to ensure the Agency is the correct shape and size and has the capability it needs to sustain organisational performance. We will minimise reliance on third parties and work in collaboration with our DNE partners to effectively attract, deploy, support, and retain a diverse workforce with the right skills and behaviours to deliver high quality outputs for Defence.

We are proud of our incredibly skilled workforce, and recognise continual growth and development – both individually and organisationally – as key to delivering our technically challenging programmes. We actively support our people to perform to a high standard and achieve their potential in both their role and their function throughout their careers. We will continue to enable all employees, including our most technical specialists, to understand their career pathway and access the development opportunities required to achieve individual and organisational goals. We are improving our performance management processes to support our people in building their capability and our leaders in managing poor performance. Expanding our entry talent strategy to become a provider of high-class talent will further build capability for both the SDA and the DNE. We recognise the critical role that our leaders play in inspiring and engaging with our people to achieve their potential and seek to develop excellence in leadership and management at all levels.

Working with industry

As the sole UK buyer of nuclear submarines, we have a critical relationship with our Tier 1 industrial suppliers. We balance commercial tension with the appropriate partnering behaviours, as underpinned by the Single Source Contracting Regulations. We work collaboratively throughout our supply chain, providing opportunities for engagement that supports innovation, focuses on long-term strategy and carefully monitors programme delivery. Through the Submarine Enterprise Acquisition Capability programme, we are working with our Tier 1 partners to develop and deliver the investments needed across UK industry to meet the demands of future submarine acquisition programmes over the coming decades.

The Submarine Delivery Leadership Board looks across the entire SDA delivery landscape to identify and sponsor joint activity between the SDA, BAE Systems, Babcock International, and Rolls-Royce Submarines to optimise collective performance. Current activities focus on supply chain optimisation, through-life improvements, and Enterprise-wide people capability.

Our Dreadnought Alliance is a joint managerial team comprising of the SDA, MOD, BAE Systems, and Rolls-Royce Submarines to share the effective and efficient delivery of the Dreadnought design and build programme. Governance is delivered through an Alliance Leadership Board, comprising of representatives from each of the three parties, the Dreadnought Alliance Managing Director, and an independent Chair. The team is united in driving pace throughout the programme, embodying the 'every day counts' mantra to ensure a 'best-for-programme' approach that

will deliver the first Dreadnought submarine to the Royal Navy in the early 2030s.

The detailed design phase of our SSN-A programme is being delivered through a similar collaboration between the SDA, MOD, BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce Submarines and Babcock International. This collaboration is underpinned by a multi-party agreement and joint governance arrangements that embed a 'one team' ethos and agreed set of behaviours.

Our resources

The SDA Annual Report and Accounts outlines our performance in each financial year and gives a detailed account of our operating expenditure. Our [22/23 Annual Report](#) is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and our 23/24 Annual Report will be available later this year.

Programme funding, as part of the Defence Equipment Plan, is delegated to the SDA by the Chief of Defence Nuclear and allocated in line with the Submarine Acquisition and Support Plan and associated investment plans. As Accounting Officer, the CEO is responsible for managing funding to operate the Agency effectively and efficiently, including governance of workforce salaries and travel and expenditure costs. While the SDA operating expenditure is reported in the SDA Annual Report, the spend relating to the Equipment Plan the SDA delivers is reported in the MOD Annual Report.

Budget ¹	23/24	24/25	25/26
Total equipment plan	£5.7 billion	£6.9 billion	£7.6 billion
SDA operating costs	£263 million	£345 million	£337 million

¹ Note: all figures are subject to annual budget confirmation.

Measuring our performance

To facilitate action in the SDA, we maintain a clear line of sight between what we do – our vision, mission, and purpose – and how we measure and communicate our performance. This year, in recognition of the importance of driving continual improvements in performance, we have adopted a new performance framework that is referred to as our OGSM: Objectives, Goals, Strategies, and Measures.

Our OGSM:

- has three Objectives linked to our vision that serve as key performance indicators
- has Goals associated with each Objective against which improvements can be measured
- highlights where our Strategy contributes to achieving improvements in our Goals
- describes a range of Measures, both metrics and milestones, that chart the successful delivery of our Strategy

Our three Objectives, described further at Annex A, are:

1. increasing submarine availability
2. improving on-time delivery of our major projects
3. enhancing organisational effectiveness

Due to security and commercial sensitivity, we do not disclose our Goals or Measures in our Corporate Plan. This information is kept within government and used internally to measure our performance.

The SDA Performance Committee reviews our delivery performance against our OGSM. It has representation from the SDA Executive Committee, DNO and Navy Command Headquarters and aims to increase

understanding and collaboration between the SDA and its key stakeholders. It provides a forum for time, cost, and performance barriers to be discussed and necessary action to resolve problems and mitigate future issues to be agreed. Progress is reviewed quarterly by the MOD, Chief of Defence Nuclear, the Royal Navy and the SDA Board.

We will continue to strengthen our approach to planning, scheduling, and controlling our work. This includes developing a comprehensive understanding of the inter-connectivities within our portfolio, where the actions of others that enable our performance take place, and the mitigations needed to address our identified delivery risks. We consider such risks at several levels:

- at individual project level, where scope, cost and time parameters are defined
- at programme level, where we are primarily delivering projects in an integrated manner in support of the DNO and Royal Navy
- at strategic level where we focus on ensuring the SDA is a robust, compliant, and sustainable Executive Agency of the MOD

We work collaboratively across the DNE to share our understanding of risk and the associated mitigation activities required to ensure we develop a shared view across the Enterprise. We will continue to utilise and improve the links between our risk data and supporting project control tools such as schedules, assumptions, cost portfolios and our Submarine Acquisition and Support Plan. By improving our analysis and management of strategic, as well as project and programme risk, we will reduce both SDA and wider DNE risk exposure.

Sustainability

Our SDA Environmental Strategy 24/25 aims to align our sustainability management arrangements to ISO14001:2015 and embed environmental protection strategies into everyday activities. To assist with this, the SDA Central Environmental Management Team and Environmental Centre of Excellence will ensure resources are available to project teams to deliver the strategy's outcomes. Training will be offered to increase understanding of environmental protection and sustainability issues and a network will be developed to enable SDA environmental professionals to collaborate.

The SDA is committed to delivering sustainable products and operations. To achieve this, the Agency will align with Defence carbon emission reduction targets and support the UK legal commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050. We will ensure resilience in our operations through the assessment of climate change risks and identification of mitigative actions. Further sustainable goals will involve managing hazardous and non-hazardous materials, understanding and minimising the risk of potentially invasive species and ensuring safe, secure, and environmentally appropriate disposal of submarines. As this work can only be achieved with support from our suppliers, our sustainable procurement policy mandates suppliers to consider social value and provide carbon reduction plans.



How we are governed

The Secretary of State for Defence is accountable to Parliament for all aspects of our performance, including our strategy, operation, outputs, and the effectiveness of our governance arrangements.

Reporting to the Chief of Defence Nuclear, our corporate performance is overseen by the SDA Board, which operates under the provisions of the Ministerially approved SDA Framework Document. A planned update to the Framework Document is undergoing final review by HM Treasury for approval by the Secretary of State. The updated document considers our changing landscape and reflects advancements in wider MOD and DNE operating models, including the creation of the Chief of Defence Nuclear role. This updated framework re-enforces the SDA Board's advisory role in overseeing SDA performance on behalf of the Chief of Defence Nuclear.

Our sponsor

The DNO is the Agency's departmental sponsor, engaging with and advising the SDA on corporate governance and performance. As an Executive Agency, the SDA sits within the DNO top level budget. Our CEO receives his delegations and operating expenditure from the Chief of Defence Nuclear.

Our Board

The SDA Board, chaired by Jonathan Simcock, endorses our strategy, and ensures it is reflected in our plans. On behalf of the Chief of Defence Nuclear, the Board oversees the CEO's financial and operating controls, providing insight, support, and challenge to the Executive Committee. The Board has a critical role in ensuring the operational effectiveness of the SDA.



Our Executive Committee

The SDA is led by our CEO and Executive Committee. This structure continues to bring focus and ensure that the Agency's programmes are delivering effectively in support of the DNE mission.



Sir Chris Gardner KBE

As CEO, Sir Chris leads and manages the SDA. The CEO sets the strategy for the successful delivery of the Corporate Plan and the Agency's programme of work, as detailed in the Submarine Acquisition and Support Plan. The CEO is the Accounting Officer for the Agency's operating expenditure and is supported by the Executive Committee, who provide clear direction and operational focus.



Rear Admiral Jeremy 'JJ' Bailey

As Director Submarine Support, RAdm Bailey's priority is driving improved submarine availability, enhancing through-life support and guaranteeing current and future submarine capabilities. He is also responsible for the delivery of submarine disposal and our Devonport Infrastructure programme.



Keith Beckett CBE

Technical Director and Deputy CEO Keith Beckett leads the Agency's engineering, technology, safety, environmental, and quality deliverables. He is responsible for the Nuclear Propulsion team, Combat Systems Delivery team, Platform Equipment Delivery team and the effectiveness of Naval Authority Certification. He is also SDA lead for AUKUS.



Georgina Benzies

As Chief Finance Officer, Georgina Benzies is responsible for all aspects of finance, including financial assurance and reporting. She supports the CEO in the Accounting Officer role by controlling and reporting to Parliament on the operating costs of the Agency.



Commodore (Cdre) Martyn Boyes

As interim Director Submarines Acquisition, following the departure of Dr Tim Sheldon in April 2024, Cdre Martyn Boyes is responsible for the SDA's delivery of the Dreadnought programme, the Astute Class build programme, and the replacement for the Astute Class, known as SSN-A. Cdre Boyes oversees the acquisition portfolio to ensure coherent delivery and sustainable design and build capability for future acquisition programmes.



Jim Carter

As Director Commercial, Jim Carter is responsible for procurement and supply chain matters across the Agency that enable the acquisition and support of nuclear submarines. Jim develops the Agency's commercial arrangements and supplier relationships to drive maximum value for money across the supply chain.



Ian Craddock

As Director Strategy and Operations, Ian Craddock provides a broad portfolio of vital project delivery and business services to the SDA and its supporting personnel. These include information, security and resilience, corporate operations and governance, internal communications and policy secretariat across all SDA locations. Ian oversees the delivery of our future strategy, and the associated change and continuous improvement activities that enable it.



Rear Admiral Robbie Lauchlan

RAdm Lauchlan is the UK Project Officer (Chief Strategic Systems Executive) for the Polaris Sales Agreement. He is responsible for the delivery and support of the Trident strategic weapon capability.



Alex McMillan

As Dreadnought Alliance Managing Director – a triparty relationship between the SDA, BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce Submarines – Alex McMillan leads the day-to-day delivery of the Dreadnought build programme.



Andrew King

As Director Human Resources, Andrew King leads our People strategy and is responsible for the delivery of HR services to the SDA, either directly or through shared services with DE&S/MOD. Direct provision services include HR business partnering, leadership, reward, capability and talent management.

Further information on the SDA can be found on our [gov.uk page](#).

Annex A: 24/25 SDA Performance Framework

Objective 1: Available submarines

1.1	SSBN availability – This tests the ability of the SDA and its partners across the MOD and in its supply chain to deliver available nuclear-armed submarines for use by the Royal Navy.
1.2	SSN availability – This tests the ability of the SDA and its partners across the MOD and in its supply chain to deliver available nuclear-powered attack submarines for use by the Royal Navy.
1.3	Reliability – This tests the ability of the SDA and its supply chain to effectively address operational deficiencies.
1.4	Inventory – This tests the ability of the SDA and its supply chain to provide availability equipment to meet the demand of our maintenance programme.

Capability (to be developed in FY24/25)

This seeks to establish a test of the SDA's ability to ensure the lethality of our operational submarines and mitigate future availability risks.

Objective 2: On time delivery

2.1	Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) schedule variance – This tests the SDA's ability to deliver our GMPP projects within the schedule approvals.
2.2	GMPP cost variance – This tests the SDA's ability to deliver our projects within the GMPP projects within cost approvals.
2.3	Submarine Acquisition Support Plan strategic milestones – This tests the SDA's ability to deliver agreed milestones within the Submarine Acquisition Support Plan on time.

Earned value (to be developed in FY24/25)

This seeks to establish a test of the SDA's ability to deliver within the schedule and cost baselines across its portfolio.

Objective 3: Organisational effectiveness	
3.1	Effective financial controls – This tests the SDA's ability to deliver in-year forecast expenditure and secure efficiencies.
3.2	Contract and supply chain performance – This tests the SDA's ability to deliver through-life value from its commercial arrangements and to manage risks to its supply chain.
3.3	Health, safety, and environmental management – This tests the SDA's ability to deliver against safety and environment requirements and assure submarines are safe to operate.
3.4	Security – This tests the SDA's ability to operate securely and safeguard its assets.
3.5	Engaged, enabled, skilled and valued people – This tests the SDA's ability to resource its portfolio of work with appropriately capable people.



Submarine
Delivery Agency

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