

Cross-Party Group on Maritime and Shipbuilding

Date and Time: Wednesday 11 December 2024 at 6pm

Minute

Present:

MSPs:

- Paul Sweeney MSP (Chair)
- Lorna Slater MSP
- Graham Simpson MSP

Invited guests:

- Brigadier Andrew Muddiman ADC, Naval Regional Commander Scotland & Northern Ireland
- Dr Rafet Emek Kurt, Department of Naval Architecture, Ocean & Marine Engineering | University of Strathclyde, Maritime Human Factors Centre

Non-MSP Group Members:

- Andy Newman
- Duncan MacLean
- Andrew Muddiman
- Andy Harmer
- Blair Moglia
- Brian Fulton
- Duncan Cunningham
- Dr Erkan Emek Kurt
- Leonore Frame
- Stuart Gallacher
- Thomas Dowse
- Malcolm Warr

Apologies:

- Kevin Hobbs
- Paul Little
- Warrick Malcolm

Agenda item 1: Welcome

Paul Sweeney MSP welcomed everyone in person and online to the meeting and stated that it was the 2024 AGM for the CPG for Maritime and Shipbuilding and introduced guest speakers Brigadier Andrew Muddiman ADC and Dr Rafet Emek Kurt.

Agenda item 2: Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes from last September 2024 were approved.

Agenda item 3: AGM – Election of Office bearers

Lorna Slater MSP proposed the motion, which was seconded by Graham Simpson MSP.

The chair expressed gratitude to the secretariat for their continued support and noted the significant improvements in quality since the commencement of their services.

The secretariat confirmed their commitment to continue their role through 2025.

Agenda item 4: Agenda item 4

Strategic Defence Review: Brigadier Andrew Muddiman ADC, Naval Regional Commander Scotland & Northern Ireland

Paul Sweeney introduced Brigadier Andy Muddiman, who shared a comprehensive update on the ongoing Strategic Defence Review initiated in early autumn. The review is progressing well and is crucial for both our defense capabilities and our alliances abroad.

Brigadier Muddiman emphasised several key points:

- **Cyber and Digital Capabilities:** Highlighting the need for advanced technologies to stay ahead of adversaries and maintain credibility with allies.
- **Defence Spending:** Noting the UK's commitment to increasing its GDP allocation for defense, with a goal of 2.5% when economic conditions permit.
- **Defence Industry Strategy:** Discussing the appointment of a new National Armaments Director and the importance of consultation with industry to boost jobs and growth.
- Brigadier Muddiman also presented a slide detailing the intricate underwater infrastructure spread across the UK, underscoring the need for protection and strategic management.

During the Q&A session:

- Lorna Slater inquired about handling increased asset challenges. Brigadier Muddiman stressed the importance of coordinating with commercial operators and considering environmental impacts.
- Graham Simpson asked if the review would lead to a different Navy. Brigadier Muddiman highlighted the need for adaptability and making informed decisions based on current and future needs.
- Paul Sweeney inquired about contributions to the National Shipbuilding Strategy. Brigadier Muddiman emphasised the significance of investment and collaboration with NATO partners to maximise expertise and resources.
- Industry representatives, including Stuart Gallagher from Babcock and Stuart from BAE, emphasised the need for certainty and alignment between parliaments to support the Scottish maritime industry. They also stressed the importance of a holistic approach, investment in new technologies, and maintaining a strong defense posture.

The chair thanked all participants for their valuable input.

Agenda Item 5: Strathclyde University research innovation and how significant the naval architecture department is internationally: Dr Rafet Emek Kurt, Department of Naval Architecture, Ocean & Marine Engineering | University of Strathclyde, Maritime Human Factors Centre

- Dr. Rafet Emek Kurt presented the Department of Naval Architecture, Ocean, and Marine Engineering (NAOME) and the Maritime Human Factors Centre at Strathclyde University. He highlighted key projects such as AUTOship and GATERS and discussed their funding

sources and experimental facilities.

- Strathclyde University's involvement with yacht projects in Helensburgh and the Ocean and Energy Research Unit was also mentioned.
- Graeme praised his visit to the university's Life Sciences group and recommended a similar visit.
- Dr. Kurt emphasised the importance of integrating research findings into legislation and improving gender balance among students. He noted their bronze recognition and mentioned a female student who won 'Young Researcher of the Year.'
- Warren Malcolm from ADS Group inquired about defense-related work, and Dr. Kurt confirmed their involvement with BAE and the MOD.
- Dr. Kurt advocated for more opportunities to bring people together and organic growth over foreign investment.
- A suggestion was made to plan a site visit in Summer 2025 to one of the University's research locations.

Paul Sweeney thanked everyone for their contributions.

Agenda Item 5: AOB

Notional dates in the diary for 2025:

March 19

June 25

Sept 10

Dec 10

We may have additional activity in the diary in addition to this. If there is anything else that may be of interest to the CPG, please let us know and we will be happy to share.

Expression of thanks to Brigadier Muddiman and Dr Emek Kurt.