



Ministry  
of Defence

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South Yorkshire's Mayor

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Dear leaders in industry and academia,

On 8 September, the Ministry of Defence published the Defence Industrial Strategy. This landmark strategy is designed to ensure the UK's industrial base is equipped to deliver the Strategic Defence Review, safeguarding our national security while positioning defence as a powerful engine for economic growth across the UK. It will foster a more integrated, innovative, and resilient defence sector, ensuring our Armed Forces are better equipped to meet future challenges.

A key pillar of the Defence Industrial Strategy is the Defence Growth Deal programme, which aims to deliver long-term, sustainable regional growth across the UK. South Yorkshire is proud to be one of the five regions selected to benefit from this programme, alongside Plymouth, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

South Yorkshire is uniquely positioned to deliver on the mission of making defence an engine for growth. With one of the UK's most advanced manufacturing clusters, world-class research assets, and a rich heritage of supporting the nation's industrial and defence needs, the region is ready to play a pivotal role in addressing the UK's future defence challenges.

South Yorkshire boasts a distinctive combination of capabilities that align closely with the UK's defence and security priorities:

- Globally recognised excellence in advanced manufacturing and materials;
- Specialist steel and metals production critical to strategic defence needs;
- Proven expertise in commercialising innovation through translational research facilities, such as the University of Sheffield Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre;
- A fast-growing skills base, R&D ecosystem, and business network integrated into major UK supply chains.

These strengths not only enable South Yorkshire to meet the UK's defence capability requirements but also ensure that defence investment translates into high-value regional growth, increased productivity, and new opportunities across the wider economy.

The Defence Growth Deal will provide £50 million of targeted investment for South Yorkshire between 2026 and 2031, supporting the expansion of defence R&D facilities, securing supply chains, and accelerating the commercialisation of novel, dual-use technologies. This funding will act as a catalyst for growth by aligning with the region's broader strategic initiatives, such as the UK's first Investment Zone, the Local Innovation Partnerships Fund, and the transformative development of the Don Valley Corridor. By weaving these threads together, the Defence Growth Deal will harness defence investment to drive regional growth while using that growth to bolster the UK's defence resilience.

To ensure success, the Defence Growth Deal must be shaped and delivered collaboratively by government, industry, academia, and the wider regional innovation ecosystem. To this end, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority are establishing a flagship South Yorkshire Defence Board, which the Ministry of Defence will sit on. This board will bring together key stakeholders to guide the Defence Growth Deal, accelerate innovation, strengthen supply chain capabilities, and attract long-term public and private investment to the region. We will provide further details on the Board in due course.

The South Yorkshire Defence Growth Deal represents an exciting and transformative opportunity for the region. Together, we can ensure that South Yorkshire continues to play a vital role in strengthening the UK's defence and security while driving high-value, sustainable growth for both the region and the nation.

Thank you for your continued commitment and support.

Kind regards,



**LUKE POLLARD MP**

**MINISTER FOR DEFENCE  
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