Defence Asset Management Community of Practice (DAMCOP)
12 March 2026 Generated by AI.

Meeting notes:

- **Defence Asset Management Community Updates and Strategic Context:** Liam McKenna and Tim Ingram provided a comprehensive update on the current restructuring within Defence, the establishment of the National Armaments Directorate (NAD), and the evolving role of asset management, with contributions from Phil Williams, Stuart Chambers, and other participants highlighting industry concerns and the importance of collaboration.
    - **Defence Restructuring Overview:** Liam McKenna explained the ongoing reorganisation within Defence, driven by the Strategic Defence Review and Defence Reform, which consolidates seventeen organisations into four main areas: Department of State, Military Strategic Headquarters, Defence Nuclear Enterprise, and the National Armaments Directorate. This aims to simplify structures, improve agility, and enhance decision-making.
    - **NAD Group Formation and Purpose:** Liam described the formation of the NAD Group, which will formally launch on April 1st, and its role in providing functional authority, commissioning portfolios, and fostering greater transparency and agility in Defence operations. The group is expected to facilitate improved collaboration with industry and streamline procurement and delivery processes.
    - **Industry Engagement and Innovation:** Stuart Chambers and Phil Williams raised questions about Defence's engagement with innovation hubs and the integration of lessons from recent conflicts, such as Ukraine. Phil clarified that innovation leadership and funding are being established within the NAD, and that industry is seeking clearer signals and investment plans to maintain engagement and resource allocation.
    - **Defence Investment Plan Concerns:** Phil Williams and others expressed concern about delays in the Defence Investment Plan (DIP), noting the impact on industry planning and resource management. Liam acknowledged these concerns, confirmed his involvement in the DIP, and assured participants that publication is imminent, with an emphasis on getting it right for all stakeholders.
    - **Funding and Decision-Making Structures:** Tim Ingram queried whether the NAD would become a Top Level Budget (TLB) holder or if TLBs would remain as they are. Liam responded that discussions are ongoing regarding the management of investment and readiness funds, and that the resolution of these funding lines is a major topic within Defence.
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- **Professionalisation and Capability Development in Defence Asset Management:** Liam McKenna detailed the evolution of asset management as a recognised profession within Defence, the establishment of strategic planning and capability frameworks, and ongoing efforts to align with government-wide standards, with input from Allan Goody and Tim Ingram on parallel developments in logistics and support professions.
    - **Strategic Planning Function and Asset Management:** Liam outlined the creation of the Strategic Planning Function (SPF) within Defence Infrastructure, which elevates asset management into an integrated capability.

The SPF is responsible for long-term planning, aligning infrastructure capability with Defence strategy, and embedding asset management principles across the organisation.

- **Common Approach and Data Standardisation:** Efforts have been made to unify asset management approaches across Defence, including the development of common lexicons, data dictionaries, and decision-support tools. This enables evidence-based decision-making and supports the professionalisation of asset management.
- **Capability and Career Frameworks:** Liam described the introduction of a capability model and career frameworks that define roles, competencies, and pathways for asset management professionals. Collaboration with the Institute of Asset Management (IAM) and other government departments aims to secure chartered status for the profession and elevate its recognition.
- **Alignment with Logistics and Support Professions:** Allan Goody and others highlighted parallel efforts to professionalise logistics and support functions, including the development of competence frameworks and accreditation routes. There is a shared intent to avoid siloed approaches and foster cooperation between asset management and logistics communities.
- **Taxonomy and Language Harmonisation:** Tim Ingram and Pierre Delamotte emphasised the importance of harmonising language, taxonomies, and role descriptions across asset management and support professions to prevent tribalism and ensure effective collaboration both nationally and internationally.

- **Defence Housing Service Asset Management Transformation:** Bryn Turner presented the Defence Housing Service's (DHS) innovative approach to asset management, focusing on data-led decision-making, technology adoption, and pragmatic workforce engagement, with follow-up questions from Michael Puckett and others regarding applicability and future plans.
  - **Strategic Direction and Organisational Change:** Bryn Turner explained that the DHS, now a distinct entity within MOD, has a clear mandate to place families at the centre of its operations and to embed asset management from the outset. The Defence Housing Strategy 2025 sets out requirements for improved data coherence and long-term stability.
  - **Data-Driven Decision-Making and Technology Integration:** The DHS has aligned all properties to government UPRNs, enabling integration with national data sources such as EPC registers. Automated workflows, validation processes, and pilot projects using LIDAR, IoT sensors, and smart manuals are being implemented to enhance data quality and support predictive maintenance.
  - **Phased Roadmap and Innovation Trials:** Bryn described a three-phase roadmap: foundation (data rectification and workflow automation), integration (predictive analytics and IoT deployment), and transformation (fully IoT-enabled homes and AI-led assurance). Trials include damp and mould sensors, boiler performance monitoring, and LIDAR-based project scoping.
  - **Pragmatic Asset Management and Workforce Engagement:** The DHS avoids technical jargon and instead focuses on solutions that enable staff to participate in asset management without requiring deep expertise. The approach emphasises augmented information, robust feedback mechanisms, and incremental engagement to build capability across the workforce.

- o **Future Plans and Contractual Embedding:** The DHS is preparing to launch its inaugural asset management strategy, expand technology trials, and formalise information requirements for future contracts. There is an emphasis on embedding asset management principles into procurement processes and ensuring value is defined by diverse stakeholder needs.
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- **Conference Planning and Community Engagement:** Liam McKenna, Tim Ingram, and Phil Williams discussed upcoming conferences, the timing of Defence-industry engagement, and the importance of maintaining open dialogue and collaborative planning, with suggestions from Manuela Belle and others on structuring future events to address real-world challenges.
  - o **Conference Scheduling and Format:** Due to ongoing Defence reform and the establishment of the NAD, the main Defence-industry conference is likely to be scheduled for September, with smaller internal MOD gatherings planned earlier. Hybrid formats and face-to-face options are being considered to maximise participation.
  - o **Industry Collaboration and Agenda Setting:** Phil Williams advocated for ongoing industry engagement during the NAD's formation, rather than waiting for finalised structures. The group agreed to use upcoming meetings, such as the June session, for open dialogue and collaborative agenda development, including the use of surveys to gather member input.
  - o **Problem-Focused Working Groups:** Manuela Belle suggested structuring future conferences and working groups around specific Defence challenges, enabling industry to contribute targeted expertise and best practice. This approach was well received and will be considered in future planning.
- **Options and Commissioning Function in NAD:** Liam McKenna and Phil Williams clarified the establishment of an Options and Commissioning function within the NAD, which will act as the entry point for Defence requirements, facilitate option development with industry, and streamline the commissioning and procurement process.
  - o **Function Definition and Process Flow:** Liam explained that the Options and Commissioning function is being established to manage how investment and sustainment funds are deployed and how contracts are commissioned. The process is designed to involve both internal Defence subject matter experts and industry partners in developing options before formal commissioning.
  - o **Industry Collaboration and Procurement Efficiency:** Phil Williams elaborated that the function will enable Defence to articulate mission requirements, seek innovative solutions from industry, and then move efficiently to commissioning and procurement, with the aim of reducing timelines and improving alignment between Defence needs and industry capabilities.
- **Route to Market and Ethical Collaboration Principles:** Fergus Hawkins raised the importance of including route-to-market considerations in the group's manifesto, prompting a discussion led by Tim Ingram and Phil Williams on maintaining ethical boundaries between pre-contract collaboration and formal procurement.
  - o **Manifesto Scope and Ethical Boundaries:** The group debated whether the community of practice should explicitly address the route to market in its manifesto. Tim and Phil emphasised the need to maintain a clear distinction between collaborative solution development and the formal commercial process, ensuring transparency and impartiality.

- o **Technical Expertise in Shaping Requirements:** Fergus noted that technical forums like this one play a crucial role in helping Defence commercial teams articulate requirements and shape contracts, especially as technical expertise within government has diminished. The group agreed that sharing knowledge and best practice is valuable up to the point of formal procurement.
- **Asset Management Training for Royal Engineers:** Liam McKenna confirmed in response to Michael Puckett that asset management training is included in the induction syllabus for Royal Engineers at Chatham, with his team regularly delivering sessions to new intakes.
  - o **Training Content and Delivery:** Liam stated that asset management is a formal agenda item in the Royal Engineers' induction process, and his team is responsible for delivering relevant training to ensure new engineers are familiar with asset management principles.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Housing Community of Practice Formation:** Evaluate establishing a housing community of practice or working group to facilitate sharing of best practice and industry examples, involving partners such as Arcadis and others. (Eion, Michael)
- **Conference Planning and Agenda Development:** Develop the agenda for the 4th of June community of practice session to focus on open dialogue and exchange of ideas between MOD and industry, ensuring collaborative input on frameworks and best practices. (Liam, Eion and Tim)
- **Conference Purpose and Content Survey:** Arrange and distribute a survey to members to gather input on the purpose and content of the upcoming conference, ensuring the event addresses community needs and interests. (Eion, Liam and Tim)
- **Integration with IPS Functions:** Explore the integration of IPS functions and consider making it a conscious agenda item for the June meeting, including discussions with Pierre and the support community to identify relevant approaches and lessons. (Eion, Liam, Tim)
- **Manifesto Enhancement for Route to Market:** Consider adding a point to the group manifesto regarding achieving an effective and efficient route to market, balancing collaboration and commercial interests, and discuss with Pierre and Tim for consensus. (Liam, Pierre, Tim)