

CO-POL-FR20-EST-Reports

**THE UNITED KINGDOM RESERVE FORCES
EXTERNAL SCRUTINY TEAM ANNUAL REPORT**

2015 REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Defence Reform Act 2014 placed a statutory requirement on the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations to report annually on the well-being of the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces. This first report of that nature builds upon two earlier annual reports submitted at the request of the Secretary of State for Defence.
2. The Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) Commission identified that the Reserves had been subjected to sustained neglect and what thus needed to be put in train to redress matters. The report, largely accepted by the MOD, set out a clear purpose for the Reserves as an integral and integrated element of Defence capability. Reserves offer a wide range of utility and the UK, although having a relatively smaller Reserve component than most developed nations, nevertheless can call on its Reserves to meet the full spectrum of that utility. We note that the RN, the Army and the RAF necessarily use their Reserves in different ways and it is thus important to accommodate single Service nuanced approaches to their organisation and management. However, there is sufficient commonality to encourage greater cross-pollination of ideas and best practice as the FR20 programme matures.
3. Many of our recommendations from previous years have been accepted by the MOD. In the main we have attempted to identify areas in which further work should be encouraged, but resisted overly prescriptive recommendations on how issues might be resolved. We are concerned that two earlier observations have been too quickly rejected and recommend revisiting them. The first is the advisability of keeping convergence of the Armed Forces Act and the Reserve Forces Act under review. The second seeks clarity on how the MOD will safeguard the ability of Reserves to be used for national resilience tasks, once they reach full manning.
4. The success of FR20 depends first (but not exclusively) upon increasing the size of the Reserve. Each Service has challenging manning targets to meet, with heavy emphasis on recruiting and initial training. This year the Services appear to have turned the corner on growing numbers, after poor achievement over the first two years. We have seen ample evidence of strong performance and innovative methods to deliver this. A key step in this improvement has been a refinement of the Reserve narrative, which spells out with greater clarity, especially for the Army, how it intends to use the Reserve and hence qualifies and makes more manageable the obligation upon reservists and the implications for employers and families. Notwithstanding some excellent work-arounds on in-flow, we are not convinced that they are sustainable into the medium-term, suggesting that systemic problems with the recruitment process still need to be rooted out. Medical screening sits prominently as an area of concern.
5. The sustained health of the Reserves is highly dependent upon the quality and quantity of officers available at unit level, in order to plan and lead the challenging training on which the Reserves thrive. Progress in attracting and recruiting young volunteer Reserve officers needs attention. The Services need to initiate some analysis to determine the eventual requisite officer manning levels and to take specific measures to increase recruiting and training effort to address the deficiency. Officers themselves

need a fulfilling proposition which includes individual development and an operational role which can be used.

6. Healthy manning levels are not just a function of effective recruiting campaigns. Retention of trained and experienced personnel is arguably even more important. The Reserves' age profile is currently too heavily skewed towards older reservists who are closer to the end, rather than the start, of their service and therefore outflow will be relatively high for the next few years as they leave due to natural factors. Consequently equal attention needs to be paid to retention during earlier stages of the Reserve service spectrum. In the main retention should be significantly enhanced by the provision of challenging individual and collective training, at every phase of service. Such provision cannot rely solely on opportunities structured around the Regular ecosystem; bespoke, Reservist-friendly development and training needs also to be available.

7. An integrated Reserve is fundamentally there to be used, albeit in a different way to the Regular component. Thus far we have looked at the processes to generate individual trained Reservists but not at how the Reserve is to be used. We believe that work still needs to be done on developing the required capability, such that there is a consistent approach being taken within each Service. To assess this further we intend to look at capability development in our next report and hence plan to use part of 2015/16 to examine how the fighting formations are using and will integrate their Reserves. A positive attitude towards Reserve employment by the fighting formations of the three Services will be critical in engendering a sense of their worth ("valued and valuable").

8. Since Ministerial announcements in 2013 several important factors have changed and a considerable body of evidence has emerged which throws far more light on the efficacy of the separate measures that have been introduced to implement FR20. It is now timely, without slowing the recruitment and retention measures already in place, to undertake a stock-take in order to ensure that the original design remains optimal and achievable. We understand that this is planned for the Army and encourage it within all three Services.

9. The MOD has moved quickly to introduce no less than 40 separate measures identified in the 2014 White Paper to remove impediments to Reserve service and to enhance the Reserve proposition. Our assessment is that all but one of these measures are either substantially achieved or on track; only the operating effectiveness of the Army recruiting partnership is behind schedule. A number of other necessary changes remain under consideration or at the early stages of implementation, such as the future estate requirements, contracted support and personnel management; we intend to keep these under review.

10. At the senior political and military level we have no doubt of the determination to introduce FR20 or acceptance of the overall utility of a well-trained, well-equipped and well-motivated Reserve. Having interviewed a very large number of recent recruits we know that they share this view and, given their individual determination to overcome recruiting hurdles, we have no doubt about their personal commitment. Elsewhere, although we have a sense that attitudes are changing, we still hear too many examples of cultural dissonance between the Regular and Reserve components. Achieving acceptance of change amongst this cohort, while in all probability needing

generational change, remains the long-term strategic risk to the future well-being of the Reserves and of FR20 success. We judge that although the balance will soon need to shift to capability development, for the moment stemming outflow (at all stages of service) and increasing inflow remains the short-term risk.

11. Our assessment is that FR20 remains on or near track for delivery. The main 2014/15 objectives have been met and Reserve Manning levels appear to have turned the corner. That said, it is a long corner before the home straight and successive annual inflow targets are typically far more challenging. Although not within the reporting period we feel obliged to point to an emergent potential risk to the programme. We are acutely aware of the current tautness the Defence budget, with significant risk in many programmes. Any further budgetary pressure resulting from the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review, if realised, is likely to have a direct bearing on the Services' ability to deliver FR20 – whether as a consequence of direct cuts to the programme or indirectly through reductions in activity which exacerbate recruiting and retention risk.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin Brims". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and 'B'.

R V Brims
Lieutenant General (Retired)

22 June 2015

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INTRODUCTION

1. Having provided annual reports at the request of the Secretary of State for Defence¹ in 2013 and 2014 on the progress of Future Reserves 2020 (FR20), on 1 October 2014 the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations (RFCA) had a statutory duty placed on them to report annually to Parliament on the state of the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces². This, our first report in that new guise, is intended to satisfy the statutory requirement.

2. Our earlier reports were intended to inform the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces, from an external perspective, on progress with one of several large change programmes. They took as a baseline the report of the Independent Commission³ established by the Prime Minister in October 2010 to examine the Reserves, following the Strategic Defence and Security Review⁴, and set out to determine progress against Defence plans to implement the recommendations. The statutory remit now tasks us to look more widely at the general well-being of the Reserves and becomes an enduring task beyond 2020.

3. Recognising that this is our first statutory report which now reaches a new readership we have deliberately tried to capture the essence of our earlier reports to provide context and continuity to this year's observations. Perhaps more importantly, the on-going implementation of FR20 currently has a major impact on almost every facet of the Reservists' world and therefore we felt that it was essential to look at the current snap-shot of Reserve well-being against FR20 progress and trends, to explain our judgements on the future. Finally, in previous reports we have majored on the need for MOD and the Armed Forces to look at how they develop a better corporate memory of the Reserves and therefore we hope that the approach taken in this report will assist them in carrying forward part of that memory.

4. As Defence enters the fourth year of implementing FR20, we sense that there may be a tendency occasionally to overlook the reasons why the change programme was so urgently needed. We do not see this as any deliberate attempt to change course - far from it, at senior levels we see strong evidence of absolute commitment to the plan - but recognise it as a natural consequence of staff-turnover. Throughout the report we therefore make reference extensively to the findings of the independent commission and the reasons that led to their conclusions and recommendations. To assist those less familiar with this history we have therefore included a digest of those findings as a start point in this report.

¹ MSU 4/4/2/10 dated 31 Jul 2012; for convenience these Terms of Reference are at Annex A.

² Defence Reform Act, 14 May 2014, Chapter 20 Part 3 Paragraph 47. Extract at Annex B.

³ Future Reserves 2020: The Independent Commission to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces, July 2011. (ID: P002442608 07/11)

⁴ Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: Strategic Defence and Security Review, Cm 7948, 19 October 2010. (ID P002394077 10/10).

5. With that in mind we have therefore drafted a more extensive report than we hope will be necessary in the future. We have tried to use layman's language where possible but, inevitably when dealing with Defence matters, it has occasionally been necessary to use some Service acronyms and technical expressions.

THE PURPOSE OF RESERVE FORCES

6. Almost all developed western nations recognise the need for Reserve Forces and maintain them as part of their Defence capability. But the size, balance, employability, commitment level, availability and roles of Reserves vary considerably between nations. It is therefore not always possible or desirable to determine how the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces should look or what they should be for purely on the basis of international comparison, albeit there remains much to be learned by continued examination of close allies' Reserves⁵ (that is, those emanating from a similarly advanced, democratic society, with common doctrines and similar ethos). Indeed, internally there are often considerable differences between the Reserves of the separate Services, not least because of how they are used; the relative technical complexity of equipment; and the perishability of expertise in its use.

7. Typically, a developed nation might reasonably expect to be able to call on its Reserves to meet a range of requirements where, in some instances, the Reserves are better placed than Regulars to do so or offer a more affordable option when judged against the likelihood of use.

- a. Niche Tasks. In some instances the skills required in some roles are more easily found in Reserves because their skill sets can be better sustained outside the Services; specialist medical skills, 'stabilisation'⁶ and evolving cyber expertise are commonly cited examples but over time there are likely to be others in which the commercial world or other parts of the public sector lead the Services.
- b. Augmentation. Regular Forces often experience manpower shortages for a range of reasons (medical fitness, recruiting problems and the like) but rarely, if ever, are authorised to carry a surfeit of trained personnel. Indeed, it is fairly common deliberately to hold down the strength of Regular units below their authorised liability or establishment. In times of operational stress this under-manning can be ameliorated by augmenting regular units with individual Reservists who are able to top up deploying units or, alternatively, to backfill home-based Regular units in order to release their higher readiness personnel to join the under-strength deploying units.
- c. Reinforcement. As operations and campaigns evolve it often becomes necessary to increase the capacity of Regular units above their authorized strength; one option to do so is to attach Reserve sub-units to cover additional tasks. This is most easily done when Reserve units are 'force generated' in kilter with a regular unit or formation.

⁵ Typically those of Canada, Australia and New Zealand and to some extent the United States.

⁶ Defence's contribution to cross-Government tasks to tackle instability overseas.

- d. National Resilience. Most Reserve units are geographically dispersed, compared with Regular units which increasingly tend to be concentrated in large dockyard establishments, garrisons and airbases which are often more remote from population centres. At times of regional and national emergency which risk overwhelming the civil authorities it is often Reservists who provide the first line of support, because of their local availability - but also because many such events do not call for high order military skills. In these eventualities tasks can frequently be managed within a wholly Reservist unit command structure.
 - e. Regeneration. In prolonged operations, in which the bulk of a nation's forces are committed to an enduring campaign, Reserve units and infrastructure are sometimes used to regenerate defence capacity by growing new units or by quickly training new augmentees.
 - f. National Security. Since the end of the Cold War, when a clear existential threat provided NATO countries with a sound rationale for their security posture, defence planning has relied on assumptions about how the security environment will look and thus how Defence needs to be shaped - not least to cope with a wide range of potential contingency tasks and a limited and often shrinking defence budget. A properly structured Reserve is therefore a cost effective means of creating some capacity to cope with unexpected challenges, particularly so when they directly threaten the nation.
8. Reservists invariably bring several other attributes, above merely being trained as part-time Servicemen. Many already have established themselves in civilian employment and therefore bring extra vocational skills. Most generally tend to have greater maturity than their Regular counterpart, principally because they tend to be older and have more life experience. All connect more immediately and extensively with the communities from which they are drawn. Harnessing these aspects of the Reservist is an important part of building the capacity of the Armed Forces, drawing on a wider talent pool and connecting the Armed Forces with the nation.

THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION REPORT

9. The Independent Commission was directly tasked by the Prime Minister and guided by his desire to meet four requirements:
- a. First, that the overall capability and utility of our Armed Forces would be enhanced.
 - b. Second, that Defence would better harness the talents and the volunteer ethos of the country.
 - c. Third, that the Armed Forces would become better integrated with and understood by the society from which they draw their people.
 - d. Fourth, that Defence would become more cost effective to run.
10. The Commission reported in 2011 that the UK's Reserves were "in need of significant revitalisation and re-orientation". They concluded that the Reserves were in

decline; that their roles had not been updated to match modern security demands; that their potential had not been exploited and that their use was inefficient. These observations were made despite many Reserves having been used extensively on operations over the past decade. In short the Reserves had suffered a protracted period of institutional neglect in which their ability to contribute to any of the purposes detailed above had been severely curtailed or lost.

11. The report noted that, in the previous thirty years, the UK's approach to Reserves had not developed in the same way or at the same pace as thinking for the Regular component and that significant work was needed to address this. They made 6 far-reaching, top-level recommendations, which for convenience are repeated at Annex C to this report. These were supported by 26 detailed recommendations, which shaped our first report in 2013, and further more specific recommendations for each of the Service environments. Crucially they advocated a sequenced approach which relied on three distinct stages to effect the necessary change⁷:

- a. **Stage 1: Investment and Betterment.** To arrest the decline of our Reserve Forces the Commission recommends that an immediate period of investment and betterment is required. This would put our Reserves on a healthier footing in respect of recruiting, manning and the Reserve Proposition and be coupled with an immediate commitment to a larger Reserve and a set of clearly defined roles.
- b. **Stage 2: Enabling the Future.** At the same time, we believe there is a requirement to put in place a range of enabling measures, some based on changed legislation, to help guarantee the availability of Reservists. This will potentially alter the nature of the relationship between Government, Society, the Reserves and their Employers. This is a necessary precondition for the third stage. c.
- c. **Stage 3: Realising the Potential.** The third stage, following withdrawal from Afghanistan, would be a calibrated change in the Regular:Reserve force balance, but within a more integrated force structure. This stage would enable the full realisation of revised Reservist roles and the cost-effectiveness which derives from a Whole Force approach.

THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

12. Following consideration of that report the then Secretary of State made a statement to Parliament⁸, placing the Commission's report in the Library of the House and announcing a £1.5Bn investment package over 10 years, of which £400M would be spent by 2015. His successor reinforced this with a Written Ministerial Statement on 5 July 2012⁹, accepting the "broad thrust" of the report; identifying additional funding of £1.8Bn over 10 years to the programme; and detailing some of the specific recommendations that would be taken forward, key amongst which was the intention

⁷ Quoted in its entirety from paragraph 54 of the Commission's report

⁸ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm110718/debtext/110718-0002.htm#11071817000001>

⁹

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm120705/wmstext/120705m0001.htm>

to increase the strength of the Reserve of all three Services as a more integrated element of a "Whole Force".

13. Within that statement the Secretary of State also announced a consultation exercise to be conducted in the autumn and winter of 2012/13, setting out more detailed proposals following which *"we will be able to make informed decisions early next year on terms and conditions of service, employer engagement, the Government's own commitments as an employer, and on any legislation necessary to underpin and support our vision for the Reserves"*.

14. The Green Paper¹⁰ was published on 9 November 2012 and consultation concluded on 18 January 2013. This resulted in the publication of a White Paper¹¹ on 3 July 2013 which reaffirmed the MOD's commitment to revitalising the Reserves. It confirmed that an additional £1.8Bn had been allocated to the change programme and was already having effect. Some aspects of change required additional legislation and the first important elements were incorporated into the Defence Reform Act, which then came into force on 1 October 2014.

15. Separately the Secretary of State made two other relevant statements in Parliament. The first¹² on 3 July 2013 covered decisions which had been taken on the structure, organisation and basing of the Army Reserve which in turn led to decisions to rationalise the estate used by Army reservists, following a protracted period considering the regular estate. Within it he detailed specific changes that would result in the Army Reserve vacating 27 sites. The second¹³ on 19 December 2013 notified Parliament that a paper had been placed in the Library which set out the planned growth of the trained strength of the reserve forces, together with the enlistment targets for the next five years which would support that growth.

16. In taking forward our own work we have been heavily guided by the intent set out in both the Commission's report, which makes such a compelling case for change, and the White Paper and subsequent Ministerial Statements, which set out the precise goals, qualify some of the process and supplement much of the detail. We remain persuaded that, in the main, the recommendations of the Commission align with Government intent and delivery.

17. It is worth noting that the original SDSR which initiated the change programme concluded in October 2010. But it took until December 2013 to confirm important policy elements of the design. In one specific regard we note that the implementation of change differs from a fundamental recommendation: whereas the Commission recommended a staged approach, the MOD and the Armed Forces have elected to move straight to phase three of the proposed sequence, effectively superimposing the actions to stabilise, enable growth and realise capability. We recognise that this has been forced upon Defence by other pressures but observe that it has inevitable consequences on the coherence of the FR20 change programme, especially in the early years, much of which forms the meat of this year's report.

¹⁰ Future Reserves 2020: Delivering the Nation's Security Together. A Consultation Paper, Cm 8475, November 2012. (ID: P002522791 11/12).

¹¹ Reserves in the Future Force 2020: Valuable and Valued. Cm 8655, July 2013. ISBN: 9780101865524

¹² www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130703/wmstext/130703m0001.htm

¹³ www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm131219/wmstext/131219m0001.htm

PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

18. We submitted our last report to the Secretary for State for Defence on 23 June 2014; a digest of its recommendations (for completeness with recommendations from the 2013 report) together with our proposals for further work, are shown respectively at Annex D and Annex E. On 16 December 2014 he responded¹⁴ to our report, updating us on progress and commenting on our recommendations. We have taken this into account in this year's work.

19. Within his response the Secretary of State was not in full agreement with two of our recommendations and we return to them here.

- a. The first was to keep **under review** the desirability of merging the Armed Forces Act with the Reserve Forces Act, as Future Force 2020 and the Whole Force Concept mature. We did not actually recommend merging now but only that the prospect should be kept under review on the basis of emerging experience. In making that recommendation we were influenced not just by the desirability of easing movement between Regular and Reserve service but more by the need to manage many aspects of personnel regulation within two similar Acts, in which consideration of Regular issues tend to dominate within the Armed Forces Act. We remain of that view.
- b. The second was to consider restoring the Commission's proposal for a contingency fund to support short-duration, domestic resilience operations involving Reserves. On reflection our recommendation might have been worded differently. Our goal was to remove impediments to Reserves being used on resilience operations. In the future a fully manned reserve will be routinely funded to cover only its training commitment. In domestic operations - where Defence and the Services are required to cover their own costs - it will always be easier to fall back on only Regular involvement, whose availability costs are by definition already covered, rather than use Reserves who would incur additional costs above their training days. **We would like to understand how Defence will ensure that Reserve involvement can be safeguarded in the future, especially to reinforce their 'connecting with the nation' purpose.**

Recommendation 15.1. The MOD give further consideration to how it will safeguard the ability of Reserves to play a proportionate part in resilience operations, especially once the Reserves are at full manning and would otherwise have to dilute funds for annual training to offset costs. (Paragraph 19)

FUTURE RESERVES 2020

Overview

20. We took the firm view last year that FR20 remained achievable, albeit not without difficulty. Our view then was that although the Army would probably meet

¹⁴ Ministry of Defence 4.4.2.10 dated 16 December 2014 (copy placed in the Library of the House).

their recruitment targets by 2018 they would still struggle to achieve the overall required capability until perhaps 2019 or even 2020 (sufficient trained strength, appropriately equipped and at sufficient readiness). That being so, and assuming no further set-backs, we considered current progress should have negligible detrimental impact on overall operational capacity, particularly so if training priorities and training capacity could be rigorously aligned with unit readiness requirements and priorities in the last few years of the programme. We had few concerns about the RN and RAF targets; while undoubtedly challenging they were of a different order and, because of the way in which the two Services use their Reserves, managing any temporary undershoot in numbers posed fewer operational risks. Inevitably within this general assessment there were - and remain - pockets of concern which carry higher risk for all 3 Services.

21. This year we have seen sustained effort to keep the programme on schedule and to introduce initiatives which address identified risks and weaknesses. We see absolute commitment to the programmes at the highest political and military levels and sustained determination to deliver the change from the staff now dedicated to the work. And nowhere is that energy more evident than within the Reserve units directly affected, where we have seen ample examples of local zeal, innovation and initiative paying dividends. That said, we believe that some of this work would be still more effectively achieved if there were less evidence of silo mentality in some quarters. To be fair, some stove-piping is a consequence of staff structures, which once identified can be eliminated. But in other areas there may be an insidious or unconscious demarcation instinct creeping in, especially given the way that elements of the change programme have come under such intense scrutiny. Successful progression to FR20 in all Services will be more easily achieved with a 'one team' ethos.

22. Progress in the RN and RAF remains generally good. To some extent both are affected by similar factors to those facing the Army Reserve and therefore there is some read-across from the paragraphs that follow on manning, where our observations are more related to Army Reserve issues. However, each Service has different operating models, slightly different ethos and different needs. It is therefore quite understandable that their change programmes should be different. That does not mean that there is not room for sharing experimentation and exporting best practice: there is and too often we find our team members being the conduit for it. Indeed, we occasionally see evidence of inter-Service nervousness about single Service initiatives. A case in point is the application of financial incentives for recruiting: initially treated with suspicion, then resisted in some camps, financial incentives have now been considered by all Services but they continue to cause inter-Service friction, exacerbated when there is little evidence available on which to judge their efficacy. **There is a strong case within the existing governance system to build more inter-Service cooperation on experimentation and best practice on recruiting and retention, whether or not initiatives are universally adopted.**

23. All that said, if only on the evidence of numbers, the FR20 programme is on track against this year's inflow and trained strength targets¹⁵, as Annex G shows. Next year's targets (2015/16) are going to be harder to achieve but the Services' knowledge on how

¹⁵ The details of the recruiting and trained strength targets announced by the Secretary of State are shown at Annex F.

to mitigate manning risk is sufficiently improved to give confidence that this remains possible. We believe that volunteering remains a part of the British psyche, as evidenced by our example last year of the police experience, at least in sufficient numbers and quality for the relatively modest requirement of just over 35,000 trained reservists from a UK population of 64.1M. More objectively the MOD now operates a comprehensive continuous attitude survey¹⁶ to monitor internal and external views of Reserve service. Findings thus far, notably amongst employers and managers as well as the target population, suggests that awareness, understanding and interest are growing in a most positive way. **We therefore believe that the recruiting ground is fertile.**

Recommendation 15.2. Working within the existing governance system, build more inter-Service cooperation on experimentation and best practice on recruiting and retention, whether or not initiatives are universally adopted (Paragraph 22).

24. Despite improved recruitment campaigns and expedients to manage the necessary screening of recruits, aspects of the recruiting process remain cumbersome. Too many applicants were deselecting themselves during their passage along the pipeline and in the earlier years of FR20 we heard frequently that the time taken to progress to attestation was the main reason - albeit this assumption, while seeming intuitively correct, needs to be tested periodically more empirically¹⁷. Thus it has been reassuring to see the Services grasp the nettle of early attestation: conditionally enlisting candidates while still awaiting their final medical clearance.

25. Early attestation has allowed many units to build on other measures to bind applicants into the unit while the process is underway. These include 'early joiners clubs' (social connection with the unit before formal training can begin); military preparation courses (rudimentary teaching in Service and regimental knowledge that prepares the candidate for interview); and 'Phase Zero' training (preparation for Phase One training short of military fitness training, while final medical clearance is still awaited). Little things matter here; a sense of belonging can be invoked by something as simple as being given a sweatshirt emblazoned with a unit logo as a sign of early acceptance (and we have seen them worn not just at drill nights as a probationer but also on recruiting stands). Old hands will frequently explain to us that the most important first step to retain a recruit is to imbue them quickly with 'the habit', the sense that a specific weekday evening is reserved for drill nights, and this early constant attention is therefore crucial. Of equal importance is the proactive participation of the unit in managing each of their candidates through the pipeline; time and again we have been told by new recruits that this was the main thing that kept them committed. Local nurturing at sub-unit level is arguably even more important because sub-units are often widely dispersed and have to be more self-sufficient.

26. During the Cold war such nurturing was commonplace and well understood. Then, virtually the whole recruiting activity was a local enterprise. Today there are more players in the process. We see some evidence that this can create tensions, some which cause us to question whether the role of each is properly understood. For example, although we understand the theoretical relationship between the national call

¹⁶ This Survey, known as ResCAS, builds on previous single Service surveys with a common question set.

¹⁷ While we have extensive access to interview recruits while they are in the pipeline we have far less exposure to those that walk away unless they or a colleague/family member volunteer the information. While this does happen the sample size is small.

centre, the Armed Forces Careers Office (AFCO), the recruiting field force and the local unit, there appear to be wide variances on how the practical relationship works on the ground. This is most manifest in the frustrations of potential recruits as they turn to different mentors to sort out, for example, changes to appointments for assessment interviews or medicals. We sense this might be the consequence of running on a system optimised for Regular recruiting but now being applied to a Reserve situation in which unit primacy has recently been reintroduced. As a simplistic example, we advocated in our first report that the opening hours of the AFCOs should be adjusted to convenience Reservist as well as Regular recruits; as far as we can tell that suggestion has not been adopted. It may be that the lead Service arrangements for individual AFCO offices (rather than Defence having a common lead for all of them) may also be a factor. **We believe that this now needs to be revisited but as part of a wider appraisal of the specific roles of the Reserve recruiting players.**

27. Without exception we are told by every recruit we talk to that the time taken to pass the medical screening is the greatest disincentive to join. Although recent interviews suggest that this is being overcome, the consequence is that the process still takes too long and, we sense, defaults too easily to an assumption of unfitness. We also hear of good and poor examples which suggest there may be evidence of regional variance in its application. All Services now run their medical screening in parallel with other activity rather than in series, as was the prescribed system at the start of FR20. Within the Army, who operate a contract under their recruiting partnership but not yet the RN and RAF (who share a different contract but with the same contractor), there have been other sensible work-arounds to try to accelerate the process: bringing the medical screening to the individual, by running it at the same time and in the same place as the assessment interview. We accept that concentrating effort like this is less likely to work for the RAF and RN because of the opportunity of scale. Notwithstanding the improvements, we believe that more can still be done:

- a. Language is important, especially to those unfamiliar with the way the Services work. "TMU" (Temporarily Medically Unfit) means nothing to most recruits under review; they tend to believe that they have failed their initial medical (and we are occasionally told that "failed" is the word that has been used). It may seem petty but until a candidate is definitively unfit his/her handling needs to be more positively managed.
- b. We are unclear how the contractor is incentivised to deliver their part of the medical process as expeditiously as possible, irrespective of the role of an individual's GP on referral. We would also hope that the contractor is not inadvertently incentivised to introduce delay, for example by encouraging needless or petty re-shows.
- c. Finally, as the MOD/Services set the criteria against which the contractor is required to make assessments, we are bound to ask whether the entry medical standards remain valid, not just because of the evolving nature of the society from which we draw recruits but also because of the later age at which most Reservists join; the typical length of service we expect from them; and the less physically and environmentally challenging roles in which some of them are used. Fundamentally we sense that the common medical criteria used for

Regulars (who might be expected to serve a full career) might be less valid for Reservists (whose fitness might be periodically reviewed, say, every 5 years).

28. Given the continuing concern expressed by units and candidates from all 3 Services about the medical screening process, we suggest that this is an area that should be reviewed with some urgency by Defence, to ensure that the requirement is appropriately set, that the contract properly incentivised and the process managed from a perspective of achieving success. We mention earlier the importance of a one-team approach; the contractor needs to be part of that one-team.

29. Impressed as we have been by the energy, enthusiasm and inventiveness of units to deliver more recruits, our observations made this year persuade us that there remains an underlying systemic problem in the recruiting process. To some extent this is compounded by an occasional inflexibility of approach: the system is not well suited to units that need to recruit in batches to match training course concentrations; neither is it sufficiently flexible for individuals to manage their medical screening around their working week. All three Services have been obliged to apply more in-house resource to make it work effectively and that, at the least, should tell us that the system is not yet running optimally. We are told that the management information system necessary to get Army recruiting to a full operating capability is due imminently; we do not doubt that it will improve the process but early overreliance on its utility may well deny earlier evidence about other flaws in the system. Although predominantly an Army Reserve issue, we are particularly concerned that current heavy reliance on local support (ie the receiving units) to shore up problems with the national process (managing candidates through the attestation stepping stones) will be unsustainable as the Services necessarily redirect their attention to re-establishing operational capability elsewhere. Bluntly, Op FORTIFY is a necessary expedient but will and should be unsustainable. **All three Services need to look now at the permanent recruiting arrangements that will be necessary to sustain their Reserves as FR20 completes, to ensure that they do not fall back into a period of decline and neglect.**

Recommendation 15.3. The three Services should review the separate roles played by the national call centres, the Armed Forces Careers Offices, the recruiting field forces and Reserve units to ensure that they are clearly optimised for Reserve recruiting (Paragraph 26).

Recommendation 15.4. The MOD and the Services should review the medical entry standards required of recruits and ensure that the screening contracts are appropriately incentivised and assured to achieve success (Paragraph 28).

Recommendation 15.5. The Services should initiate work to determine the recruiting resources necessary to ensure steady state manning of the Reserve beyond the FR20 period (Paragraph 29).

Officers

30. We believe that the priority for Reserve recruiting should now be on officers¹⁸. The long term viability of the Reserves and its sustainability turns on the ready availability at unit and sub-unit level of an officer cadre of intelligent, talented, energetic and committed young men and women to plan and lead challenging training and with the potential to compete for command and higher rank within the Reserves. Irrespective of single Service pairing, whole force cross-flow or other equally good initiatives to draw on Regular expertise, it falls to volunteer Reservist officers to lead, train, administer and motivate Reservists as a matter of routine. Without them in adequate numbers Reserve units quickly atrophy. The inflow of young officer talent had all but dried up and, despite recent successes, we still have too great a shortfall¹⁹.

31. The Services, if not wholly sharing our view on priority, have certainly renewed efforts in this area. Such effort needs to be sustained and improved. We have visited all three Service officer training establishments and have been impressed by the approaches being taken. Refreshingly all three embrace the idea that no single operating model suffices; potential Reserve officers tend to face greater additional burdens than their Regular counterparts, such as maintaining demanding civilian jobs, and therefore commissioning paths which themselves demand a very challenging level of personal commitment need to accommodate these stark and competing pressures.

32. Little things could be improved. For example, in recognition of their commitment and status, the RAF have authorised the issue of mess kit to Reservist officer cadets at Cranwell so that they would be indistinguishable from their Regular colleagues at the commissioning ball; they were also encouraged to graduate with them on the same parade. We were told, though, that to ensure a common high pass-out standard they would – perhaps understandably - be required to do several days' additional drill. But these additional days attracted no extra man training days and were therefore covered at personal expense. At Sandhurst we met a course of graduating cadets who were justifiably proud of their achievement. We were surprised that less than half of them had identified (or been courted by) a Regiment or cap badge to which they would next move. Without this level of attention and continued nurturing we believe that the risk of these high calibre candidates leaving prematurely is needlessly heightened. At Dartmouth we met a course within days of completion who could not speak highly enough of the quality of instruction they had received. However, many of them were highly critical of the lack of detailed instruction they had been given at unit level beforehand to prepare themselves for the course (a shared experience with the Sandhurst cadets - but perhaps less so for those who had joined through a University Service Unit). Those who were less critical of their preparation said they had been helped significantly by ready access to a dedicated and effective development officer who monitored their progress.

33. Little things matter. Given the fragility of officer recruiting, attention needs to be paid to those little things, which can build up to become such a running irritant that it ultimately leads to a promising candidate drifting away. Much of this can be exorcised by assiduous nurturing, an activity which used to be mainstream Reserve unit business

¹⁸ Including the processes for talent-spotting and advancing officer cadet from the ranks.

¹⁹ Recent historical manning levels for officers are shown at Annex G Appendix 4.

but which seems to have been a little forgotten as other more centralised arrangements have been made for potential officer training. Unlike junior rank Reserve recruits, officer cadets tend to sit on the sidelines of unit activity until they are trained and usable. They need to feel involved - even if only socially - and they need to be prepared. Potential officer nurturing needs to be seen as unit business. **We will continue to monitor closely progress with officer inflow.**

Retention

34. As we have said before, FR20 had a somewhat ignominious start, especially for the Army. Manning had already slumped and outflow was out-stripping inflow. The political and media focus became purely on numbers. Yet reversing the decline - the key first step to stabilising the situation - was being overshadowed by a determination to infuse new blood quickly. In the background, but as importantly, initially poor internal recruit marketing of the proposition (that clear understanding of what the Reserve is for and what an individual gets from Reserve service) was probably also having an adverse impact on retention. Ultimately it is the proposition which attracts and retains the individual, so it must encompass not just training and development activities but also to imbue the sense of purpose engendered by having an operational role; all ranks, including officers, need to see that they have operational purpose which can be deployed and used.

35. During 2014-15 we have seen significant improvement. In the main outflow has slowed a little. Inflow has picked up markedly. By the end of March 2015 overall numbers across all 3 Services have grown, to at least match and in some cases modestly exceed the growth targets set in December 2013. This good situation will now need to be capitalised upon, particularly within the Army Reserves, as the next two years' targets are significantly more challenging. To ensure numbers grow, equal emphasis on retention will become as important as recruiting; we judge that moment is now here for the reasons explained below.

36. When we visit units we spend as much time talking to established reservists as we do to new recruits. They speak candidly and have interesting views; the vast majority have a deep affection for their Reserve service and a passionate belief in its future. A few - not many - question whether FR20 is achievable but, on deeper questioning, this mainly stems from misconceptions about the new narrative for Reserves and earlier, mistaken interpretations of it. While many of them recognise their Reserve service is close to ending²⁰ most still want to be part of Reserve regeneration. But they will also point out that their commitment to FR20 to some extent also depends on their own proposition being met. They too need to be stimulated by challenging and rewarding training. Over-zealous focus on recruiting effort which dominates their unit programmes is becoming an issue for them, although all of them recognise that the sooner trained numbers grow, the sooner the quality of their local training improves. But the bottom line is that they will leave if their only prospect is endless recruiting weekends.

37. Most commanding officers understand this but some have indicated that success on recruiting, rather than on manning, is how they are being judged by their chains of

²⁰ Current statistics show that the Reserve demographic is heavily skewed to an older cohort of Reservists.

command. One problem is that Reservist inflow now has a well-developed range of metrics and supporting trend analysis; outflow, on the other hand, has fewer predictable indicators and, worse, can be stimulated quickly and in mass by unexpected catalysts. Many commanders have therefore attempted, with some success, to merge rewarding retention activity with recruiting events. In one instance in Merseyside one unit ran a high-ropes confidence-building exercise for their trained soldiers at a public venue as the attention-grabber for background recruiting. The sense of achievement and enjoyment of the soldiers generated notable interest at the nearby recruiting stand. In others, units tell us they are using 'Look at Life' (a practical PR exercise to show potential recruits what the Unit does) as much for collective training (retention) purposes as they are for recruiting.

38. We are told that units often feel constrained in their flexibility to merge this sort of activity. For example, in the instance in Merseyside the unit was obliged to use non-public Regimental funds to cover the commercial costs of hiring the high-ropes course, because they could not access other public funds from recruiting budgets which were locked within another contract. There is a saw which tells us that Reservists recruit Reservists; if true (and we think it is) it is likely that they will do so far better when they are seen by the public in more dynamic activity, enjoying the experience. That also holds true for when they are involved in local operations; many units involved closely with the public when conducting flood relief in 2014 have told us that it resulted in a surge of interest in their units.

39. Regardless of the ongoing demands of local recruiting, **it seems clear to us that increasing attention now needs to be paid to retention.** The critical importance of interesting and demanding training, and ideally collective training, lies at the heart of this because this is what retains reservists, stimulating their high morale and ensuring effective integration. But irrespective of the legitimate goal of greater integration, Reservists are often energised and hence retained by different activity to their Regular counterparts. For example, whereas weekend sport enjoys interest from Regulars, weekend shooting is often a greater draw for Reservists. It will be important to ensure that both are encouraged but in the context of the separate eco-systems that support the two components – and here it is vital to remember Reservists' family interests given the greater sacrifices Reserves make in this area. Equally, military career development and broadening has always been more difficult for Reservists when the opportunities have been mainly found in weekday Regular-run activities or courses. In the past the Reserves themselves therefore created mechanisms and organisations which provided them with equivalent opportunity in the free time available to them. Some are now being assimilated into single amalgamated Regular and Reserve bodies (eg the Sports Boards and the Rifle Associations) but a few cling on separately, for good reason. One such joint organisation, the United Kingdom Reserve Forces Association (UK RFA) not only supports and organises grant-funded bespoke Reserve activity but also provides unparalleled access to international Reserve counterparts; it is run by Reservists for Reservists. While some may see this sort of body as anachronistic in an increasingly integrated force, we would suggest that before such bodies are allowed to wither they are first assessed for their retention positive effect on Reserves who would not otherwise be able to access equivalent activity.

40. **The recast narrative is most welcome and we believe that it has great utility. For best effect and to avoid unintended confusion, it needs be applied consistently**

across the whole manning landscape, from attracting interest to all aspects of retention – not least in the messages it sends to external stake-holders, such as employers and gate-keepers. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the specific differences required by the RN and RAF narrative are not conflated with or overshadowed by those of the Army. In the context of achieving the FR20 goals, the narrative must be used continuously until such time as the narrative is fully understood and accepted, not just by the Armed Forces but also by other parts of Government.

Recommendation 15.6. The Services should examine what more could be done to enhance manning through retention-positive measures, at least in the short term, including bespoke extra-mural activities targeted at the Reserve (Paragraph 39).

Regular to Reserve Crossover

41. One specific measure to grow Reserve numbers deserves special mention: the initiative to encourage and incentivise personnel leaving Regular service to join the Reserves appears to have been very successful. Indeed, its success is partly responsible for the three Services meeting this year's trained strength targets, as self-evidently these recruits come with minimal training risk, even for those that change Service or function. For the moment this is a measure that should be continued with vigour. Not only does it inject trained capability which would otherwise be lost to Defence (and, in the wake of Service redundancy, frequently well before its sell-by-date) but it also quickly ameliorates the affect of long-term gapping in key unit and sub-unit posts. Far from being a training liability, many of these new faces can quickly become the trainers.

42. Without in any way diminishing this success, we believe that within the FR20 time-frame this measure may soon need some moderation. First, we have been told of instances where placing responsibility too quickly on recently retired ex-Regular officers and SNCOs has over-faced them, placing unreasonable, competing pressures on their other imperatives of securing civilian employment and setting up home. Therefore Reserve unit commanding officers will need to manage their introduction in a measured way. Second, over time it seems reasonable to assume that the available pool of ex-Regulars will reduce commensurately with the shrinking Regular force. And third, in time it may be necessary to apply active controls for the inflow of officers and SNCOs with expectations of retaining their rank, so as not to stifle ambition and advancement amongst existing volunteer Reservists. There is a linked cultural issue to address here, to ensure that ex-Regulars progress on equal merit with their Reserve counterparts and are not seen to be able to cherry-pick appointments as a condition of their cross-over.

Training

43. Thus far we have concentrated mainly on manpower numbers, as this has dominated planning in the early days of turning around the Reserve manning situation. We have no doubt that numbers will remain the main agenda item for a year or two yet. However, **to achieve its goal of achieving an integrated force, FR20 planning and risk mitigation now needs to turn more attention to the growth of capability within the Reserve component.** In doing so we believe that the Services will need to address some, so far untested, aspects of training. This is not to suggest that numbers do not

matter; they do – capability development rests heavily upon it - and as we say earlier, recruiting and retention will need sustained effort.

44. Since the early years of FR20 very low initial inflow coupled with already severely reduced overall manning should not yet have had much impact on the Service training organisations' capacity to progress Reservists through Phase Two and Three training²¹. In 2014/15 modest but pragmatic increases to inflow targets should still not have placed the later parts of the training pipeline under any pressure. Nevertheless, our unit visits suggest that in some areas there is either very limited capacity to offer Reservist places on Phase 2/3 courses or that the courses do not attract a sufficiently high Reserve allocation priority; driver training has been cited frequently as but one example. In the welcome event that the Services meet their 2015/16 recruiting targets, subsequent training capacity will then come under significantly greater pressure. We suggested last year that, even if only on paper, Service training establishments undertook some form of stress testing to reassure themselves that the training pipeline would be viable. **Although we have visited a few training establishments this year, we remain to be convinced that sufficient capacity does exist to manage an increased throughput.**

45. Our visits have exposed that more work also needs to be done to reassess the operational output standards required of Reservist trainees, especially as there is an emerging sense in many roles that Reserve utility is better described as "interoperable rather than interchangeable". In other words, training output standards and subsequent continuity training recognise that there would be some parts of role that could not, immediately, be undertaken by a Reservist without top-up training. The RAF appear to have moved already to this position, energised by a determined effort last summer to ensure that the reservist bar was set appropriately, but not too, high. A necessary first step, now largely achieved, then made it easier to reconfigure courses and modular training from which there is an accepted, tolerable delta. The RN have been slower to cover this ground, partly because they were already in the process of reassigning RNR roles; they have acknowledged our observations and seem now on course to rectify the situation, with early emphasis on the Communications and Seaman Reserve specialisations, which look most out of step. **Within the Army we detect different approaches within each capability area; we will want to watch how this emerges to be confident that Army Reserve standards are consistent, coherent and achievable.**

46. We make these points now because hitherto we believe that potential recruits' "stickability" was being tested pre-attestation. Now that inflow measures are improving the time to attestation, that stickability will come more to the fore post-attestation. We have already implicitly suggested that improving pace through medical screening is needed to enhance retention post attestation; so too is confidence that Phase One, Two and Three training can be delivered in line with recruits' expectations and availability.

Recommendation 15.7. FR20 planning and risk mitigation should increasingly turn more attention to the growth of capability within the Reserve component, rather than a slavish pursuit of numerical growth. (Paragraph 43).

²¹ The formal, stepped training modules and courses that progress Reservists from a generic military capability to the stage where they are able to take on more specialised tasks pertinent to their unit role.

Collective Training

47. Once recruits have passed Phase Two training we have very clear feedback from them that their motivation is heightened by periodic involvement with collective training and exercises. For the Army, improved access by Reserve units and individuals to many more overseas training exercises has been enormously well received and has arguably been the most important thing in demonstrating top-level commitment to the Reserves. Sustained availability of these exercises is likely to remain a key part of enhancing Reserve retention; with reduced opportunity over the next few years for mobilisation on operations, this is where Regular personnel test themselves and Reserves are no different in this regard.

48. Important as collective training is in any Reserve unit for building unit spirit and cohesion, collective training should not be limited to in-unit training. Independent training by Reserve units can only go so far in complexity and realism because of the capacity of the unit to run such activity and the need for a wider 'all-arms' context. It is therefore no surprise that that an equal prize is the opportunity to work alongside and within regular units as well, the more so within joint environments in which exposure to other Services is highly valued. Of course, this should be a matter of routine within an integrated force but it is not yet fully established practice. Some measure of active management may be necessary to force behavioural change here, such as direction to include a proportion of Reserve involvement in Regular exercises and vice versa. **We will want to look at collective training in the coming years to judge the degree to which integration is being effected.**

Pairing

49. The now Chief of the General Staff (CGS) directed last year whilst Commander Land Forces that he would introduce pairing of Regular and Reserve units in order to improve access to resources and to make better use of them. His clear intent was that Regular commanding officers should help offload some of the challenge facing their Reserve counterparts. We have looked at these arrangements and have seen them in action over the course of this year. In most respects they work well but in places some pairings have not developed as well as one would hope. In many cases this has little or nothing to do with personal commitment of the respective commanding officers. Geography, operational commitments, re-rolling and re-basing appear to have been constant obstacles for some units to overcome. And inevitably, where pairings are temporary or ad hoc they tend not to be as energised.

50. Despite our earlier apprehension that the Reserve unit might become subordinated to an alpha-male, Regular paired unit, this appears not to have been the case. We now see real advantage in the initiative; it should be further refined and exploited. There will be some problems to overcome. In an ideal world "operational pairing" and "recruiting/training pairing" should coincide. The different tempo of force generation between some pairings makes this impossible, mainly in Combat Service Support units of the Army Reserve with operational roles assigned to the Reactive Force. We suggest that this is an area for further work between 3 (UK) Division and Force Troops Command. Equally, despite the Army's return from Germany, geographical separation makes routine joint activity extremely difficult: Reserves do not join to spend most of a weekend on a bus. In these instances more innovative approaches will help.

We have seen several Regular units detach personnel for protracted periods to its Reserve unit pair and the results look outstanding; not only has this allowed the Reserve unit to fill key training and administrative gaps in its own establishment but it has also vastly improved mutual understanding. We sense that this aspect of pairing potentially offers real benefits, where the Regular unit has the capacity/opportunity and the Reserve unit is struggling with gaps in key posts. On the evidence we saw, we also believe that the involved Regular personnel derive near equal benefit from the breadth and variety it introduces to their Service lives and wider knowledge.

51. Because of their differences, pairing of this sort is far less easy for the RN and RAF. The RN tell us that they have already introduced a variant in which Reserve units have been paired with individual Flotillas, through which Reservists should more easily gain access to sea time. The RAF has now re-subordinated their Reserve units such that they now become more clearly accountable to the RAF's operational Groups, whose commanders can more easily integrate their personnel into operational training. We feel that this is appropriate given the differences but we would like to understand how the integration works once the Reserves are operationally engaged. **So far we have looked mainly at the generation of Reserves and not their employment within an integrated force; we therefore intend to address this next.**

Equipment

52. An early win in the FR20 programme came from the decision to provide Reservists with personal equipment to the same scale and standard as Regulars. The roll-out has been successful and appreciated, reinforcing a belief amongst Reservists in the Services' commitment to them. It will be more difficult to sustain this approach when it comes to unit equipment. As the recovery from Afghanistan goes on and units reset for contingent operations, we understand the Army particularly will experience a protracted period of equipment shortages at unit level, with priority necessarily going to units generating to cover high readiness periods. It will therefore be very important to manage Reserve expectations but also to treat them equitably with those Regular units which are at a comparable point on the readiness and force generation wheel.

53. With that in mind, there will be a higher premium on the serviceability of equipment and vehicles that are able to be held at unit level to enable training. With such limited time available it is crucial that Reserve units have good access to serviceable equipment on which to train; they should not become frustrated by diverting effort to constant maintenance and repair. We are acutely aware of the anxiety felt at Army Reserve unit level over the restructuring of the REME and the consequent loss of their dedicated first line support. The relevant capability director has told us that this should make no difference but there is a widely held view on the ground that it will. Commanding Officers tell us that they relied heavily on their embedded REME support team, not just to maintain and repair equipment but also to quality assure the work of contractors. Some are also concerned that it might lead to a limited loss of disaffected reservists resulting from the decision. Certainly the evidence points that way, as we have noted on at least one unit that the shortage of technical support has forced a decision to withdraw all vehicles from sub-units and centralise them at the RHQ location, thus removing even white vehicle support for administration purposes. **We suggest that the Army Reform team will need to monitor this as it evolves, as will we.**

Estate

54. In our role as RFCAs we have been closely involved in assisting the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to develop a strategy for the Reserve footprint. In common with much of the Defence estate, that used by the Reserves is in a state of decline, although overall it has mostly been maintained to a slightly better standard. Our work with DIO suggests that the *status quo* will become far harder to sustain and more investment and/or different approaches to its occupancy will be necessary to make the infrastructure workable up to and beyond 2020. Initial background research suggests that the Reserves will contribute some 20% of uniformed manpower yet attract only 2.5% of infrastructure funding, while occupying relatively aged estate²². Even allowing for the considerable differences in technical complexity between the Regular and Reserve estate, these statistics both demonstrate the financial benefits accruing from Reserves and suggests that some modest rebalancing will become necessary over time. Joint work with DIO in the coming year should provide the opportunity to make more substantive comment on the likelihood of this and the prospect of progressing toward more strategic change. At the same time it offers an opportunity to examine not just the strategic footprint but also the future requirement for Reserve centres, in terms of capacity and the facilities necessary to inform future build, disposals and acquisitions.

55. More immediately FR20 (Army) Basing decisions announced by the Secretary of State in December 2013 detailed some important infrastructure changes that would be necessary to achieve the Army programme. Other changes were mooted, dependent on recruiting performance within their footprint. Many, but by no means all, of these changes related to small detachments whose longer-term viability looked suspect within the bigger basing plan. Changes for the RN and RAF are already underway from funding previously allocated from the FR20 £1.8Bn and/or reallocation from core funding. At the same time we are told that the amount of funding available for routine maintenance of the estate used by Reserves is likely to shrink in the near-term, with almost no funding available for condition improvement or site modification. This situation seriously compounds an already difficult position but with a concomitant risk to Reserve recruiting and retention should the estate materially and cosmetically be further degraded.

56. We counselled last year that basing may need a second look, not least because we were convinced that some detachments were (or could be made) viable; because some closures would result in 'self-harm' (to manning levels) as there were no practicable alternative Reserve units for the current incumbents to move to; and because we sensed that there were synchronisation problems with unit restructuring, re-subordination and moves. Some moves, mainly those pump-primed by existing funding, have been possible. But the majority of sites identified for unit moves or change of role are still awaiting approval and funding to adapt them. Informally we have been told very recently that these moves will not attract a sufficiently high priority for funding. Presumably this now forces **a re-examination of the short-term basing requirements necessary to deliver the Army element of FR20 and any consequential effect on the RN and RAF basing plan.**

²² Current analysis suggests that over half the estate is more than 50 years old; less than 10% is under 25 years old.

Recommendation 15.8. Army Reserve basing requirements should be revisited as a consequence of availability of funds to deliver the original basing concept and on the evidence of other FR20 achievement; link to Recommendation 15.10. (Paragraph 56).

Operational employment

57. Earlier in this report we cover the need increasingly to provide Reservists with the opportunity to train alongside Regulars, as a necessary step to becoming an integrated component of their respective Service. We also talk of the apparent pragmatic and conscious shift to temper the output standards required of Reservists, at least to a point prior to pre-mobilisation training. In essence the Services appear to be moving the output standard from hard-edged "identical", through "interchangeable", to a more tolerable and realistic "interoperable". Given the generally lower states of readiness for Reserves, the limited time for training and the additional force generation time that most should have, this seems eminently sensible. We would like to test that philosophy with those formation and force commanders that will ultimately be expected to use Reserves on operations and who, with the exception of the RN, are increasingly taking responsibility for line management of Reserve units. **We would also like wider access to the formations²³ which will be expected to take on Reserves on operations, to judge how attitudes and culture is changing.**

58. We still sense a possible air gap between the single Services' and Defence Medical Services' approaches to the use of medical Reserves. Although we have visited medical units and personnel of all three Services this year and seen the progress they are making, we cannot yet be sure that their plans are consistent. During the year we were made aware of changes still being made to single Service responsibilities but we still struggle to understand how single Service and Defence Medical Services aspirations and plans gel. More significantly it is difficult to see whether the plans are ultimately viable given the critical shortages all medical services are experiencing in too many specialist skills - a problem which greatly overshadows theoretical planning. On the ground Medical Reserves punch well above their weight; witness operations in Sierra Leone. On paper it is difficult to be confident that we could recruit medical reserves in sufficient numbers to fully satisfy any large scale, enduring, operational requirement. Good progress is being made with the NHS to work more collaboratively in order to generate suitably qualified and motivated personnel, but **we judge medical Reserves to be one of the high-risk areas of the FR20 programme and again plan to examine it more next year.**

Enabling Measures.

59. In the background to all this work a vast amount has also been achieved centrally to progress the specific enabling measures identified in the White Paper. We do not underestimate the effort expended or the importance of the effects consequent upon it. Indeed the Council of RFCAs was intimately involved in much of the conceptual work at

²³ Typically at Flotilla, Brigade and Force/Wing level for the RN, Army and RAF respectively.

inception and took direct responsibility for delivery of one practical aspect, the Defence Relationship Management organisation.

60. Some 40 separate measures were announced of which all but one have been substantially achieved or are on target to deliver to the required standard and to time. We detail at Annex H the specific measures and our own commentary on achievement, based in part on MOD briefings and in part from our own observations. This level of progress is no mean achievement, given that many of these measures carried significant policy and budgetary implications and some required amendment to primary legislation while Defence was simultaneously confronting a number of other politically challenging issues. In our view, while most measures have been delivered or are on track to do so, three require continued closer scrutiny:

- a. The Army Recruiting Partnership (measure 6) is still not at a full operating capability and has significant hurdles to overcome during 2015/16, despite a White Paper aspiration to have reached FOC by April 2014. This delay, coupled with our concern that some of process may still be systemically flawed, suggest that it needs close FR20 attention.
- b. Although initial Army Reserve force structure and basing decisions (measure 9) were made in July 2013, other developments discussed above now suggest that this plan will need to be revisited.
- c. Similarly, although the Army initiated an early and largely successful pairing plan, elements of it, especially for Combat Service Support (CSS) units, now need review in the light of experience and other changes to organisation, basing and operational attribution.

Contracts

61. Last year we reported our perception that many Reserve activities, especially those requiring access to facilities used mainly by Regulars, were unduly constrained by limitations of support supplied under fixed contracts. We continue to see examples of this, even to the extent where one contract - say for transport - appears to work in opposition to another contract on the same site - say for messing and accommodation. Some of these contracts have been in place for some time but, more worryingly, we have been told that others have been relatively recently renewed without fully addressing the constraints which are imposed on Reserve activity. This, and the fact that on some sites there are several different support contracts which renew at different periodicity²⁴, suggests that we are sleep-walking into a position where we become fixed by support arrangements and thus incapable of effecting necessary operational change to achieve better integration.

62. By contrast, and hopefully stimulated in part by our last report, we are told that RMA Sandhurst has renegotiated its Multi Activity Contract to facilitate training throughout the summer, thus significantly improving options for Reserve officer

²⁴ On a visit to one training establishment we were told that 5 training and support contracts of this nature were in place which, while permitting Reservists to be trained on some weekends, severely limited the ability to provide messing and accommodation.

training. With this exemplar **we firmly believe that the Services and DIO must look at their soft facilities management contracts to ensure that are sufficiently Reserve friendly.** Moreover, the circumstances of FR20 that have caused us to look at contracts suggests that many support contracts have probably been too rigidly specified in other ways which inhibit change, presumably to drive down costs. We assess that this is a false economy, especially as the Services' track record of contract amendment is arguably poor and we end up paying far more later when change becomes imperative.

Recommendation 15.9. DIO and the Services should review their multi activity and support contracts and, where relevant, explore ways in which they can be amended to ensure that they are Reserve-friendly. (Paragraph 62).

Stock-take

63. In our last meeting with CGS he told us that he was considering a wide-reaching stock-take this Autumn on progress with FR20 (Army), to assess what was likely to succeed; what could be made to succeed; and what might need a changed approach. We welcome and encourage this command-led review, the more so as we understand that his intention is not to suspend FR20 implementation while it is underway. In the last year CGS has spoken of the "Darwinian approach to survival of the fittest": those sub-units and detachments that can survive will survive, those that cannot will not. We have no difficulty with such an approach when it is comprehensively tested. We do, though, point out that some units are currently struggling with factors well beyond their own control and this must be factored into an assessment of their progress thus far. We stressed in our 2014 report the limited ability of some units to respond adequately to the FR20 (Army) plan because of legacy issues consequent upon sustained earlier neglect²⁵; we remain of the view that this should heavily condition how the stock-take is addressed. Most units are having to cope with unit and sub-unit moves; changes of cap-badge and role; re-subordination in and out of their own sub-units; sub-unit and detachment disbandment; or sequenced re-subordination of their own unit under different brigade and divisional headquarters. Many are coping with more than one. A few are coping with all of the above - and often with large gaps in their command team - against a challenging deadline of having a force element operationally ready. These are the units that we contend are in need of special measures, rather than defaulting immediately to the Sword of Darwin.

64. **We suspect that there is much to learn and adjust from such a stock-take and recommend that it similarly conducted at senior level in all three Service, with lessons identified being shared.**

Recommendation 15.10. The Services should conduct a command-led stock-take on all aspects of FR20 implementation by the end of FY 2015/16 and share lessons learned. (Paragraphs 63 & 64; link with recommendation 15.8)

²⁵ 2014 External Scrutiny Team Report, paragraphs 18-21.

OTHER RESERVE ISSUES

Personnel Management

65. This year we have looked specifically at career management of the Reserves. Arrangements differ markedly between the Services. In itself this does not surprise us, given the different purpose, structures and scale. However, the Army's invitation to involve us in reviewing Army Reserve arrangements has caused us to look more closely at the overall situation.

66. Last year we stated an intention to look at personnel management in light of comments we had received from various sources that it was in places dysfunctional. The Army did not demur from this observation, instead initiating a review of its own, led by a senior Reservist²⁶. We commend them on the speed and comprehensiveness of this review. It threw up a number of anomalies in the way that careers were managed and we understand its findings have already been endorsed by the Executive Committee of the Army Board and most of its recommendations have been agreed for early implementation. Our visit to the Army Personnel Centre (APC) in Glasgow provided opportunity separately to test the observations and recommendations and, again, we found that the senior team at APC recognised and accepted them. For example, last year we commented that it appeared that an unrealistic commitment was being asked of Reservist officers when being offered command appointments; it was reassuring to see APC directly bearing down on commitment levels when job descriptions were being drafted. Since this work is now in hand we will not rehearse the reasons for which change had become necessary, other than to say that we have confidence that the study appears to have produced a solution that is both representative of the way that Regulars' careers are already managed yet sympathetic to the particular needs of Reservist.

67. Taking this work forward now relies heavily on the Field Army and the Capability Directors to shape a more transparent and objective career pathway for Reservists; it is again a 'one-team' responsibility, not solely an APC problem. **Given the scope for divergence as this unfolds, we will continue to monitor progress in its implementation.**

68. The study has also caused us to question whether the other two Services are too comfortable with their own career management arrangements for Reserves. While we were reasonably confident that they worked for those that emerged at the top of the Reservist tree we felt that current arrangements probably deserved more objective scrutiny. In places, perhaps more so in the RAF, it had a slightly cottage industry feel to it which might too easily be vulnerable to nepotism with so much devolved to internal unit management.

Cost and Cost Comparison

69. During SDSR 2010 there was considerable and often poorly informed consideration of the relative costs of Regulars and Reserves in determining the optimum force balance. We still sense that these comparative costs are not well understood, although we note that considerable work has been done to drill down on the analysis in

²⁶ Brigadier Simon Bell, supported by a predominantly Reservist team

order to gain a better understanding. Nevertheless the 'cost of ownership' and 'cost of use' comparators which we have since seen in the public domain still seem relatively crude. During our work last year we were exposed to a different costing model – Land Environment Military Capability Costing (LEMCO) - which was sufficiently granular to differentiate between capabilities vested in the Regular or Reserve component. Comparing the two models we were struck by how much more utility the latter appeared to have in making judgements on force balance. Our knowledge of both approaches is not sufficiently mature to make recommendations yet but **we would like to look again at cost comparison models** to be able to do so. However, should force balance become an issue in SDSR15 we would suggest that the LEMCO model also be used to test more traditional modelling.

Reservist Mental Health

70. The Defence Reform Act places a specific onus on us to report on Reservist health and specifically mental health. We understand the reasons why this is so important, given the protracted exposure of Reservists to intense operations recently, and we intend to do so in future. But currently we struggle, given the paucity of official data on this aspect of Reserve service. Herein lies one of several fundamental problems, in that we doubt that Defence Statistics is in a position to furnish any better data given the circumstances of Reservists' healthcare provision:

- a. First, notwithstanding Defence's acceptance of the potential impact of deployed operations on mental health, we suspect that their formal ability to track individual cases is very limited for Reserves, whose first point of contact is not with Defence Primary Healthcare but with the NHS.
- b. Second, we are told that most mental health issues manifest some time after return from combat. Service personnel are now better educated in watching for the signs and, not least through buddy-buddy engagement, report suspicions to the medical officer, unit welfare personnel or the chain of command. But while this is more easily achieved within Regular units, Reservists have little buddy-buddy contact with experienced colleagues or family and are remote from Service safety mechanisms once back from operations (no matter how well they might be tailored for Reservists).
- c. Next, many Reservists who might well be suffering mental problems might also be more inclined to be in denial, particularly where they perceive it might affect their full-time employment.
- d. And finally, irrespective of the provisions of the military covenant, we sense that few GPs yet make the Service connection when Reservists do present with symptoms, hence they do not automatically refer them back into the military healthcare system. This may well be a point better addressed by the Armed Forces Covenant team than by us.

71. **In the coming year we will work with MOD to determine how our reporting on mental health can be made more effective.** At this stage reporting against MOD statistics or our own layman's fieldwork seems of limited value. Our sense is that we should be commissioning work through MOD and bodies such as the King's College

Academic Department of Military Mental Health, who have already published respected studies from which we can, in time, extrapolate more objectively.

CONCLUSIONS

72. Although there is still much to be done, our briefings and visits this year reassure us that the FR20 programme has turned the corner. Some early set-backs were inevitable, especially in growing the overall numbers, because trained outflow was bound to outstrip inflow over the first two years. That trend has now been reversed. For the Army particularly the challenge increases in the next 3 years. But we remain convinced that the targets can be achieved provided momentum can be sustained; systemic problems driven out; and emphasis progressively shifted to capability growth rather than merely recruiting targets as numbers increase. Sufficient work has now been done to identify measures that materially assist the programme and these should be maintained and if possible reinforced. It seems certain that while basic recruitment can be ramped up to reach the basic target, maturing that into trained strength will take a little longer. Our assessment from last year still holds: provided that the training pipeline remains resilient, then sensible and sequenced prioritisation should ensure that resources can be allocated to those units taking on higher levels of preparedness from 2017/18, which in turn should render negligible the impact on operational readiness.

73. Our feeling is that universal acceptance of and belief in an integrated whole force – what we have previously called cultural change – remains the overriding long term risk to the programme (and beyond). We know that the whole force goal is firmly embedded in the psyche of the highest levels of the Service and amongst many of the most junior ranks. Paradoxically, though, we hear and see far too many doubters amongst those middle ranks who have previously served alongside and praised Reservists on operations but who fall back too easily on hackneyed and prejudiced stereotyping on return to barracks. This jaundice is not limited to Regulars. We also see ample example of old-stager Reservists who will not easily adapt to the new paradigm. To some extent driving cultural change is a generational issue; it rarely happens overnight. Therefore treatment requires constant attention from the senior leadership of MOD and the Services, in a way that inculcates rather than dictates the requisite behavioural change.

74. Although falling outside our reporting period, as we put the finishing touches to this report it is becoming clear that the Defence budget is coming under renewed pressure to make further savings, notwithstanding that the last coalition Government had declared it had at last balanced the Defence books. It is not within our remit to argue the case for overall Defence funding. However, it is clear from our work that Defence will now find it exceptionally difficult to service its full range of capability requirements and meet all the Government's manifesto pledges for defence, while absorbing an additional £500M saving mooted in advance of the Comprehensive Spending Review. In these circumstances we feel strongly that FR20 outcomes are now likely to be prejudiced by such additional pressure. The long term capability delivered by Reserves offers MOD policy options to contain manpower costs; far from introducing 'efficiencies', savings applied to the Reserve invariably lead to cost growth in the Regular component. The circumstances that led to the need for the FR20 Commission's report show that too often MOD uses the Reserve as a short term savings expedient. MOD now needs to guard against such short-termism.

Annexes:

- A. Original terms of reference.
- B. External reporting provisions of the Defence Reform Act 2014
- C. Summary of the FR20 Commission's main recommendations
- D. Previous report recommendations.
- E. Previous proposals for further work.
- F. MOD targets for strength and recruitment.
- G. Defence Statistics tables detailing manning achievement.
- H. Summary of Progress against FR20 White Paper initiatives.
- I. Summary of 2015 Report recommendations.
- J. Priorities for future EST work.
- K. External Scrutiny Team – Membership.

FR20 IMPLEMENTATION EXTERNAL SCRUTINY
COUNCIL OF RESERVE FORCES' AND CADETS' ASSOCIATIONS
SCRUTINY TEAM TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

1. The FR20 Report²⁷ was commissioned by the Prime Minister in October 2010 in recognition of the relative decline and neglect of Reserve Forces. The Independent Commission concluded that the state of some elements of the Reserve was so fragile that resources and action were required immediately to arrest their decline; also, it sought to promote a wider vision to be realised over several years.

PURPOSE

2. The Commission identified²⁸ a requirement for an annual report on the overall health of the Reserve Forces. It recommended that the Council of Reserve Forces and Cadets Associations (CRFCA) was best placed to meet this requirement given its existing provision by (non-discretionary) statute to provide independent advice to the Defence Council and Ministers on Reserve Matters.

ROLE

3. The CRFCA External Scrutiny Team is to report to the Secretary of State for Defence on implementation of the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) Programme and provide independent assurance to Parliament.

MEMBERSHIP

4. Lt Gen (Retd) Robin Brims CB CBE DSO DL is appointed to chair the CRFCA External Scrutiny Team to provide external assurance on the implementation of the FR20 Programme.

5. Membership of the External Scrutiny Team should comprise no more than six, to be decided by the Chair after consultation with the MOD through VCDS. It should provide representation from the three single Services, appropriate Regular and Reserve experience and independent expertise. Whilst its composition may change over the course of the five years, the External Scrutiny Team must retain the expertise that enables the Chair to perform his duties effectively.

SCOPE

6. The External Scrutiny Team's work is to be set in the context of the ability of the Reserves to deliver capability required by Defence, and is to assess:

- a. Progress against delivery of the FR20 Mandate²⁹

²⁷ Future Reserves 2020: The Independent External Scrutiny Team to Review the United Kingdom's Reserve Forces. July 2011.

²⁸ Para 104 (p. 43)

²⁹ DCDS Pers/RFC/FR20/5/09 dated 5 Jun 12.

And in the context of the Recommendations of the FR20 Report:

- b. The condition of the Reserves.

BASELINE AND METRICS

7. 1 April 12 is to be taken as the baseline date from which progress will be assessed, and anniversaries of this date thereafter, to baseline their findings.

8. The FR20 Programme Management Office (PMO) will undertake coordinating activity with the single Services to ensure that the External Scrutiny Team has the assistance it requires to enable them to assess trends based on monthly manning and demographic information (such as age). Metrics to be routinely monitored are to be agreed in consultation with the MOD but may include:

- a. Outflow rate and return of service;
- b. Fit for Employment; Fit for Role; Fit for Deployment;
- c. Percentage achieving bounty;
- d. Gapping levels of Regular, Reserve, FTRS and Civilian Permanent Staff who support the Reserve community.

ASSESSMENT

9. The External Scrutiny Team's report should assess the state of the programme including:

- a. Progress against the Plan and milestones;
- b. Risk management and corporate governance;
- c. Definition of benefits and progress in delivering them;
- d. Communication with key stakeholders;
- e. Effectiveness of application of resources under the Programme.

10. CRFCA will be involved in the development of the Plan through the Reserves Coordination Group and the FR20 Programme Board.

ACCESS

11. The FR20 PMO will assist in facilitating access to serving military personnel, sites and furnishing additional data as required.

EXTERNAL REPORTING PROVISIONS OF THE DEFENCE REFORM ACT 2014

The Defence Reform Act 2014 placed a responsibility on Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations to submit an annual report on the state of the UK's Reserve Forces under the following provisions³⁰:

113A Duty to prepare report on volunteer reserve forces

(1) An association must prepare an annual report on the state of the volunteer reserve forces so far as concerns the area for which the association is established.

(2) A report on the state of the volunteer reserve forces is a report that sets out the association's assessment of the capabilities of the volunteer reserve forces, having regard to the duties that may be imposed on members of those forces by or under this Act or any other enactment.

(3) The assessment referred to in subsection (2) must, in particular, include the association's views on the effect of each of the following matters on the capabilities of the volunteer reserve forces—

- (a) the recruiting of members for the volunteer reserve forces;
- (b) the retention of members of those forces;
- (c) the provision of training for those forces;
- (d) the upkeep of land and buildings for whose management and maintenance the association is responsible.

(4) A report under subsection (1) must also set out the association's assessment of the provision that is made as regards the mental welfare of members and former members of the volunteer reserve forces.

(5) An association must send a report under subsection (1) to the Secretary of State—

- (a) in the case of the first report, before the first anniversary of the day on which the last Future Reserves 2020 report prepared before the coming into force of this section was presented to the Secretary of State, and
- (b) in the case of subsequent reports, before the anniversary of the day on which the first report was laid before Parliament under subsection (6).

(6) On receiving a report under subsection (1), the Secretary of State must lay a copy of it before Parliament.

(7) The duties under this section may, instead of being performed by an association, be performed by a joint committee appointed under section 116 by two or more associations in relation to their combined areas.

(8) Where by virtue of subsection (7) a joint committee has the duty to prepare a report—

- (a) references in subsections (1) to (5) to an association are to be read as if they were to the joint committee, and
- (b) section 117(1)(a) (power to regulate manner in which functions are exercised) has effect as if the reference to associations were to the joint committee.

(9) In subsection (5)(a), "Future Reserves 2020 report" means a report prepared by the External Scrutiny Group on the Future Reserves 2020 programme."

³⁰ Inserted in Part 11 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 (reserve associations), after section 113

SUMMARY OF THE FR20 INDEPENDENT COMMISSION'S MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Stabilisation and Betterment. Resources are needed immediately to arrest the severe decline in the state of the Reserves. Included in this is the need for a revised Proposition which provides the challenge and reward that makes Reserve service worthwhile and sustainable. This will require enhancements to individual, collective and command training. It will also require increased command opportunities, in peacetime and on operations. The Reserve will require new roles, more viable structures and better mechanisms to integrate with the Regular component. We estimate that a betterment package, when coupled with the need to abate other savings measures against Reserves, will cost £590M over four years.

Revised Roles. The National Security Council should examine the breadth of roles which Reservists undertake. We recommend that Reservists should play a greater part in Homeland Security (for example maritime coastal protection) and UK Resilience. We are not advocating a third force, rather that Reserves should have a more formal role in support of specific security tasks and their local civil communities. More widely, specialist tasks should expand, specifically in areas such as cyber, stabilisation and medical roles in humanitarian crises. Beyond individual operational augmentation, Reserves should be able to meet some operational tasks as formed sub-units and units. And our Reserves must form the framework around which military regeneration can be effected.

Enablement. The availability of a larger and more usable Reserve has to be guaranteed. Such a guarantee has to be underpinned by legislative changes which permit greater ease of mobilisation, better employee protection and greater recognition of employers, perhaps through a nationally endorsed Kitemark. We should exploit the potential for innovative partnerships between Defence, Education and Industry to optimise the sharing and development of human talent. And we need modern administrative systems for enlistment, processing and transfer between the Regular forces and the Reserves.

Adjusting the Regular: Reserve Balance. Defence should adopt a Whole Force Concept which optimises the most cost-effective balance of Regular, Reserve, Contractor and Civilian manpower. Within this, the Reserve element should proportionately increase. By 2015, the trained strength of the Reserves should be: Royal Navy Reserves/Royal Marine Reserves 3,100; Territorial Army 30,000 and Royal Auxiliary Air Force 1,800. Thereafter the size of the Reservist component should increase further to maximise the cost effectiveness of having a larger Reserve component within the Whole Force. The Commission's view is that, in the future, the trained strength of the Army – Regular and Reserve – should be about 120,000.

Force Generation. In order to improve the efficiency of Force Generation, the Reserve estate should be rationalised in a way that is sensitive to maintaining geographically dispersed local links whilst providing access to training. Once we have rebuilt the officer and non commissioned officer structures, and in the context of more effective Regular:Reserve twinning, the requirements for Regular Permanent Training Staff should

be reviewed. And the overall Force Generation ratio within the TA should be optimised so that, if required, a 1:8 ratio of mobilised to non-mobilised Reservists could be sustained.

Governance. A revised governance structure for the Reserve is recommended to: first, oversee the implementation of recommendations arising from this Review; second, to provide an independent mechanism to report to the Ministry of Defence and Parliament on the state of the Reserves; and third, to help ensure the appropriate influence of certain Reserve appointments. The Commission believes that, if these recommendations are carried through, then the overall capability, utility and resilience of our Armed Forces will be enhanced, in a way that meets the security, financial and societal challenges of the day, and in a way that maintains continuity with historic British practice.

PREVIOUS REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF 2013 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 13.1. (Link to the Commission's recommendations 3, 4 & 8).

As a matter of priority the Department should issue a plain-English narrative which sets out the Reserves proposition: a narrative which is commonly adopted across all the Services and, as a minimum, covers the purposes of the Reserves; the manner in which they are likely to be used; and individual levels of obligation.

Recommendation 13.2. (Link to the Commission's recommendations 6 & 12).

FR20 manpower metrics should be more granular for the period to 2018 to demonstrate changes within the recruit inflow pipeline and should not concentrate solely on the achievement of Phase-2-trained Reservists.

Recommendation 13.3. (Link to the Commission's recommendation 26)

Priority must be given to fund and introduce quickly an effective management information system which accurately captures Reservists numbers; states of training, preparedness; availability; attendance; and skill sets.

Recommendation 13.4.

More analysis is undertaken to determine the causes of 'manning churn', to better inform how retention measures could be better targeted.

Recommendation 13.5. (Link to the Commission's recommendations 2 & 21)

In parallel to development of pairing/parenting responsibilities, further analysis is needed for scaling of equipment and vehicle holdings at Reserve unit level, including the provision of low-tech simulation alternatives.

Recommendation 13.6. (Link to the Commission's recommendations 5, 6, 17, 18 & 23)

FR20 Army basing should take account of regional capacity to recruit, not just to facilitate proximity, and should also be phased to initially preserve current TA manpower until such time as alternative inflow is more fully developed.

Recommendation 13.7. (Link to the Commission's recommendations 8, 22 & 23)

That work is initiated to look at the potential to employ Reserves with critical skills, where their employment was best served in a reach-back rather than deployed role; and that their TACOS be examined for appropriate adjustment.

Recommendation 13.8. (Link to the Commission's report, Annex C, paragraph 8.)

That senior military and political leadership initiate a comprehensive information campaign with the Services' middle management to address the cultural change necessary to secure FR20, drawing on the narrative we recommend above.

SUMMARY OF 2014 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 14.1. Further work on Whole Force and the New Employment Model, coupled with the desirability of easier transfers between Regular and Reserve service, suggest that the necessity of merging the Armed Forces' Act and the Reserve Forces' Act should be kept under review.

Recommendation 14.2. The narrative developed for the White Paper should be updated to take account of FR20 delivery to date and used more extensively to market the value of Reserve service and the recruiting offer. It should also be used more extensively cross-Government.

Recommendation 14.3. FR20 measures which seek to bring down the average age of Reservists should be phased to follow those measures which will rely heavily on Reservist knowledge and experience for their introduction.

Recommendation 14.4. The single Services should examine the scope to apply a 'special measures approach' to turning round those units and sub-units most in need of assistance in reaching FR20 targets.

Recommendation 14.5. The single Services should examine a range of measures which better preserve the corporate memory of their Reserve components, including procedures for recording whether and how savings measures are planned to be restored during programming.

Recommendation 14.6. Recruiting processes should be subject to continuous improvement measures, with recognition that central marketing and advertising campaigns must be complemented by appropriately funded local/unit activity to nurture and retain applicants through the process.

Recommendation 14.7. Final decisions on Reserve Centre laydown and unit/sub-unit closures should be re-tested against local recruiting capacity and retention factors.

Recommendation 14.8. In order to ensure that necessary differences between Regular and Reserve service are appropriately managed, the single Services should consider the reintroduction of a dedicated Reserve career management staff branch (predominantly manned and led by Reservists) within their Personnel Headquarters.

Recommendation 14.9. Command appointments of Reserve units should continue to provide opportunity for part-time volunteer officers. When part-time volunteers are appointed, command team manning of the unit should be reviewed to ensure that the commanding officer is fully supported with no gapping in key headquarters posts.

Recommendation 14.10. The MOD should consider the option to restore the FR20 Commission's proposal that a contingency reserve fund should be established to be available for short duration domestic operations making use of Reserves.

PREVIOUS PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER WORK

2013/14

Medical Reserves, to ensure coherence with single Service plans.

Manpower metrics.

Manpower MIS.

Unit and sub-unit leadership and management.

The recruiting & training pipelines and process effectiveness.

Development of integrated training and (where relevant) pairing mechanisms.

Harmonisation of training directives and resources.

Enhanced measures for engaging with employers

Improved relationships with employers.

Families' welfare.

Terms and Conditions of Service.

Cost of Reserves.

2014/15

Terms and Conditions of Service for Reserves.

Medical screening process and regional performance.

Maritime Reserves pipeline improvement pilots.

Reserve officer recruiting, training and development.

The Reserve recruiting and training pipeline to Phase 2.

Concepts of employment and manning for the Medical Reserves.

Contractual constraints.

Single Service arrangements for personnel and career management of Reserves.

MOD TARGETS FOR RESERVE STRENGTH AND RECRUITING

This paper sets out the planned growth of the trained strength of the Reserve Forces, together with the enlistment targets for the next five years to support that growth. Recruitment figures have, historically, shown significant short-term variation but, across the five year time horizon, we are confident that we have the measures to deliver this growth.

Maritime Reserve

The Maritime Reserve plans to deliver a modest growth in trained strength between now and Financial Year (FY) 2015, which will be achieved by maintaining current output from the training pipeline, whilst improving retention, and increasing the number of personnel transferring to the Reserves after completion of Regular service. More rapid growth in trained strength from FY 2016 will be achieved by enhanced recruitment activity and initiatives to reduce both the length of, and drop out rate during, training.

Army Reserve

As anticipated, recruitment in FY2013 has been well below historic levels. We currently expect 2,500 enlistments this year made up of circa 1,750 untrained recruits and 750 former Regulars. Our estimates for this year are informed by the difficulties experienced in the recruiting organisation as the Army moves to a new recruiting structure in partnership with Capita and, in particular, the problems with the IT system supporting the application and enlistment process. These issues are being addressed with a range of initiatives that will make it progressively easier and quicker for an applicant to enlist. In 2014 these include:

- the introduction in January 2014 of a new Army recruitment web application;
- a simplified on-line application form;
- more streamlined medical clearance processes; and
- greater mentoring of recruits by local Reserve units through the application, enlistment and training process.

From early 2015, the management of the recruitment process will be further improved with the introduction of the advanced IT system currently being developed in partnership with Capita.

Currently those in the target recruitment group have a low awareness that the Army Reserve is expanding. The general impression of the Army is one of restructuring and downsizing. Whilst the Regular Army has had a redundancy programme, both the Reserves and Regulars are actively recruiting. It will take some time after the redundancy process ends in 2014 to reverse this perception. A focus on strategic communications will help during FY 2014, but the targets reflect the likely residual impact of this perception through 2014 and into 2015.

The Army is already improving the experience for Reservists through better and more challenging training, the pairing of Army Regular and Reserve units, increased access to modern equipment, improved administrative support and enhanced terms and conditions of service. This new offer will underpin the growth in the Army Reserve that is required between FY 2014 and FY 2018 and will be promoted through a recruitment campaign that will be launched in January 2014. The trained strength of the Army Reserve is expected to fall to 18,800 at end FY 2013, before reversing the long term trend with an increase by end FY 2014. The target for recruits to the Army Reserve in FY 2014 is 4,900 made up of 3,600 new recruits and 1,300 former Regulars. Recruitment is expected to improve through the year, as the measures set out in this paper progressively take effect. Enlistments of new recruits in the first quarter of the year are expected to be around 600, rising to around 1,200 in the final quarter.

Refinements to the training regime and the introduction of an accelerated stream, providing more flexible courses that allow those who are able to do so to complete their training and join the trained strength more rapidly, will make an important contribution to enlistments. If required, targeted incentives – both to Reservists and to employers – could be used to encourage increased accelerated training in later years of the programme.

The Army will also continue to encourage more former Regulars to join the Army Reserve. This is already showing early signs of success.

Royal Auxiliary Air Force (RAuxAF)

The RAuxAF's recruiting campaign has been successful to date, with applications currently running at twice the normal rate. We expect to maintain this over the next two years. The RAuxAF is also seeking to improve retention including by increasing adventurous training and offering more challenging operational training opportunities. Additionally, the RAuxAF intends to recruit more ex-Regulars.

Employer Engagement

Engagement and support from employers across the public and private sectors is key to the success of the Reserves agenda. We will continue to work with major employer organisations, such as the Confederation of British Industry, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Business Services Association. We will also encourage individual employers to support the Reserves agenda by signing the Corporate Covenant and working with us to recruit and manage Reservists in their workplaces.

During FY 2014, we will roll-out a programme of workplace-based recruiting initiatives that we expect will have an increasing impact on enlistments as the financial year progresses.

Projected Growth

The tables below set out the targets for trained strength and recruitment.

Table 1 shows trained strength targets for the Maritime Reserve, Army Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force up to FY 2018.

Table 1	Target	End FY 13	End FY 14	End FY 15	End FY 16	End FY 17	End FY 18
Maritime Reserve	Trained Strength	1,780	1,790	1,900	2,320	2,790	3,100
Army Reserve	Trained Strength	18,800	19,900	20,200	22,900	26,100	30,100
Royal Auxiliary Air Force	Trained Strength	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,860	1,860	1,860
Total	Trained Strength	21,780	23,090	23,700	27,080	30,750	35,060

Table 2 shows recruitment targets for the Maritime Reserve, Army Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force up to FY 2018. It also provides a breakdown between trained entrants (who immediately count against the trained strength – largely former Regulars) and new recruits.

Table 2	Target	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18
Maritime Reserve	Trained Entrants	100	120	170	230	230
	New Recruits	640	640	630	550	540
	Total	740	760	800	780	770
Army Reserve	Trained Entrants	1,300	1,270	1,270	940	910
	New Recruits	3,600	6,000	8,000	8,000	7,000
	Total	4,900	7,270	9,270	8,940	7,910
Royal Auxiliary Air Force	Trained Entrants	100	100	100	100	100
	New Recruits	500	420	380	380	380
	Total	600	520	480	480	480

Notes on Tables

a.) All Maritime Reserve, Royal Auxiliary Air Force targets and Army trained entrants targets are rounded to the nearest 10. Other Army Reserve targets are rounded to the nearest 100.

b.) The relationship between trained strength (Table 1) and recruitment (Table 2) is complex. Trained entrants will normally join the trained strength immediately. New recruits, however, will first need to undertake both phase 1 (initial) and phase 2 (specialist) training. It takes longer to train an individual for some roles than for others, but the norm is around two years, with the constraint typically being the availability of the individual to be trained. Inevitably some individuals will fail the training or drop out during it. Work is in hand to look at how to reduce both the length of, and the drop out rate during, training. Trained strength is also affected by the number of people who leave the Reserves.

c.) Progress against these targets will be reported as part of Table 9 of the Defence Statistics publication 'UK Armed Forces Quarterly Personnel Report' (QPR). The targets for Army trained entrants, in Table 2 above, refer only to those former Regulars who join the Army Reserve within six years of leaving Regular Service; the definition of trained entrant in Table 9 of the QPR is slightly broader and so the number reported may be slightly higher.

DEFENCE STATISTICS - RESERVE MANNING ACHIEVEMENT & TRENDS³¹

Headline Figures

Table 1 Total and trained strength of the Future Reserves 2020 (FR20) Volunteer Reserve population¹

	2012 1 Apr	2013 1 Apr	2014 1 Apr	2015 1 Apr	Change 2014-2015
All Services					
Total strength	30 070 ^e	29 390 ^e	28 150 ^e	30 810 ^e	+ 2670 ^e
Trained strength	22 960 ^e	22 880 ^e	23 360 ^e	24 630 ^e	+ 1270 ^e
Maritime Reserve					
Total strength	2 570 ^e	2 610	2 850	3 160	+ 310
Trained strength	1 830 ^e	1 760	1 870	1 980	+ 110
Army Reserve					
Total strength	25 980 ^e	25 240 ^e	23 580 ^e	25 440 ^e	+ 1860 ^e
Trained strength	20 000 ^e	19 930 ^e	20 060 ^e	21 030 ^e	+ 960 ^e
RAF Reserves					
Total strength	1 520 ^e	1 540 ^e	1 720	2 220	+ 500
Trained strength	1 130 ^e	1 190 ^e	1 430	1 620	+ 190

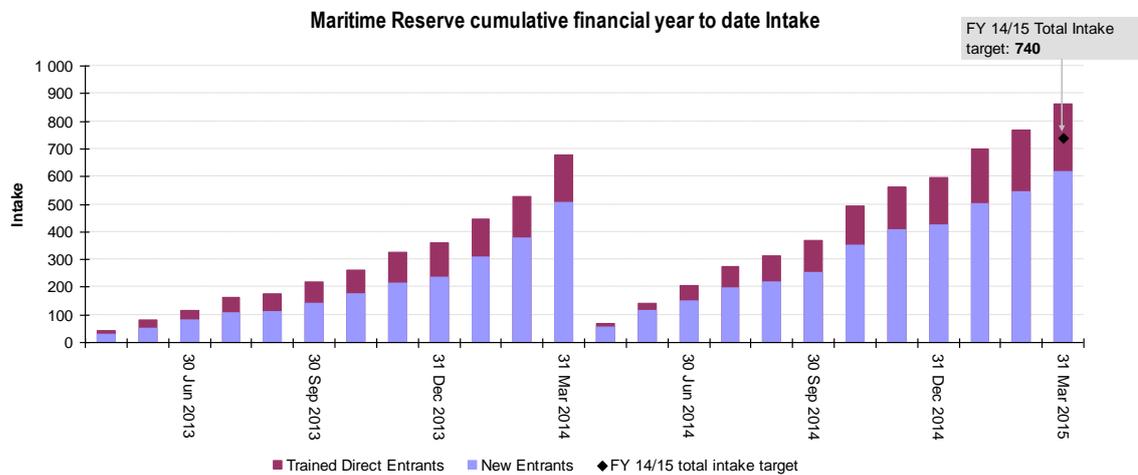
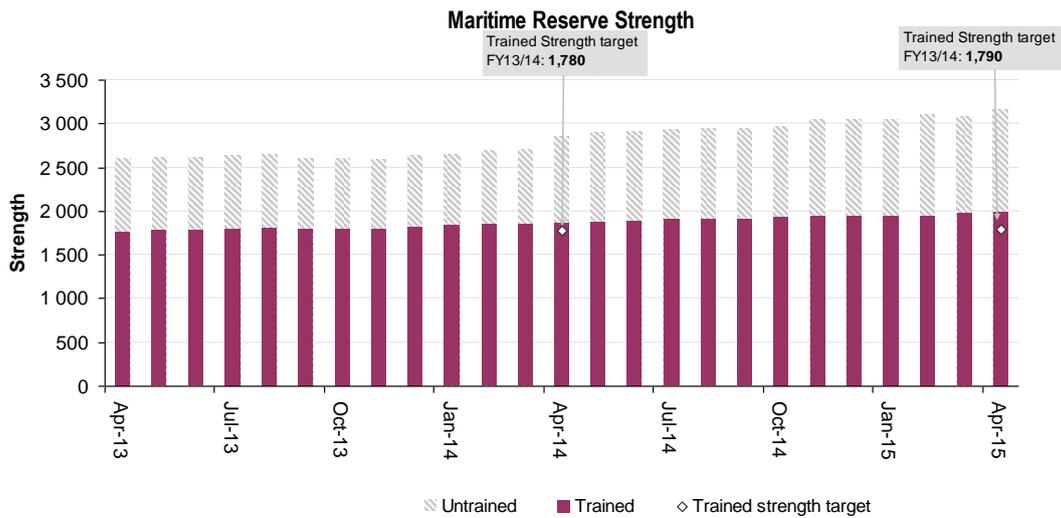
Source: Defence Statistics (Tri Service)

Appendices:

1. Maritime Reserves
2. Army Reserves
3. RAF Reserves
4. Officer data
5. Qualifying notes

³¹ Data is drawn from Defence Statistics Quarterly Report as at 1 Apr 2015, presented in the dashboard format used by the FR20 Sponsor Group.

Maritime Reserve



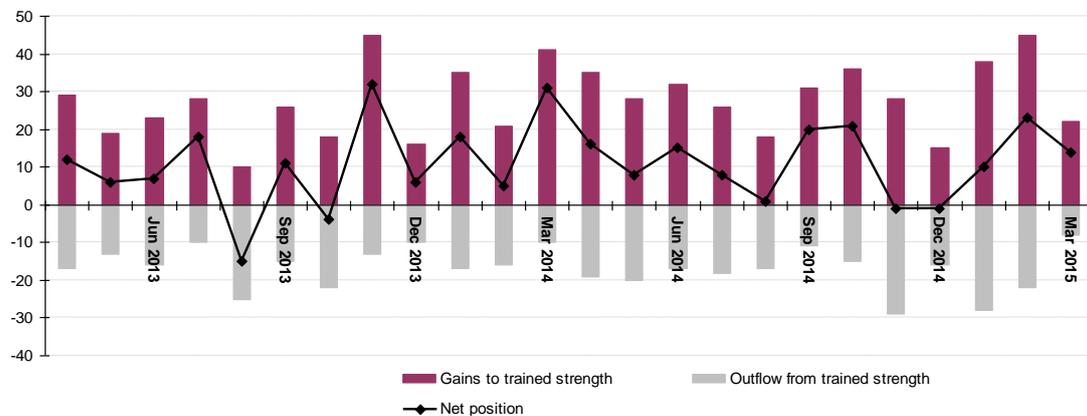
Note:

Total target Intake comprises New Entrants and Trained Direct Entrants.

New Entrants comprises of all intake into untrained strength. It includes new recruits, untrained ex-Regulars (either direct transfer or following a break in service), and untrained Reserve re-joiners (following a break in service or transferring from another Reserve Force)

Trained Direct Entrants comprises all intake into the trained strength and includes trained ex-Regulars (either direct transfers or following a break in service), and trained Reserve re-joiners following a break in service.

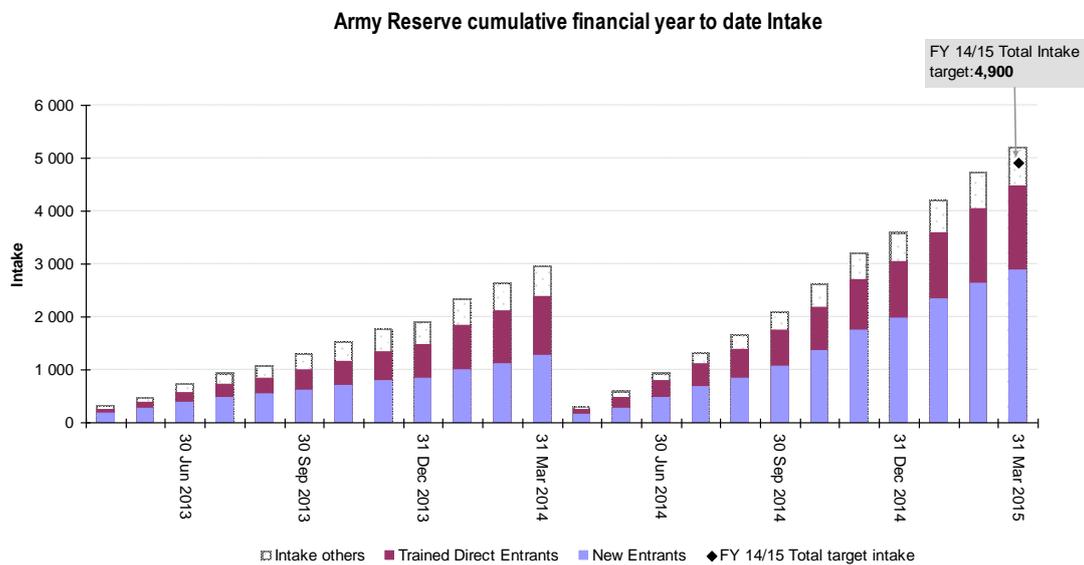
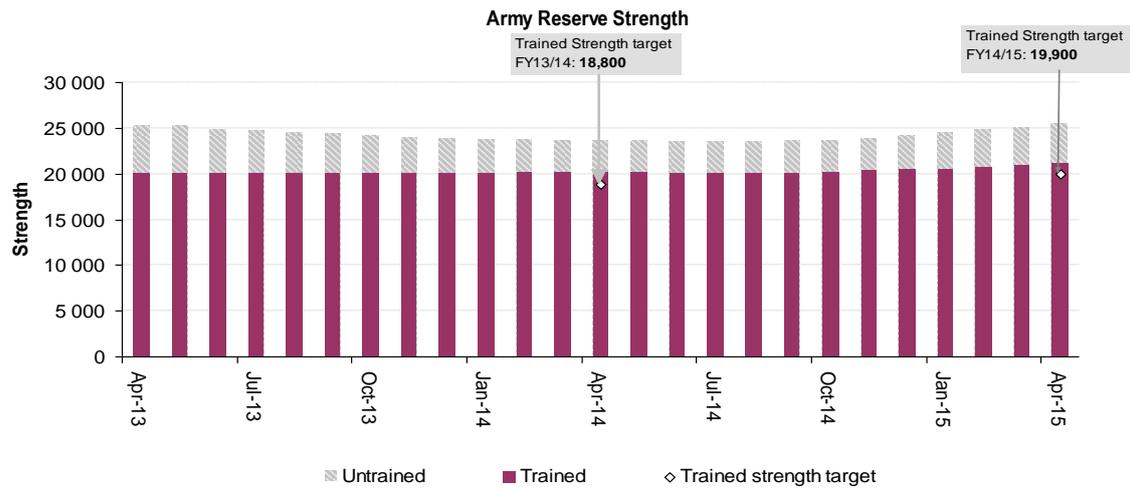
Maritime Reserve monthly gains to trained strength and trained outflow



Note:

Gains to trained strength figures comprise personnel who complete Phase 2 training and personnel who enter directly onto the trained strength of the Maritime Reserve.

Army Reserve



Note:

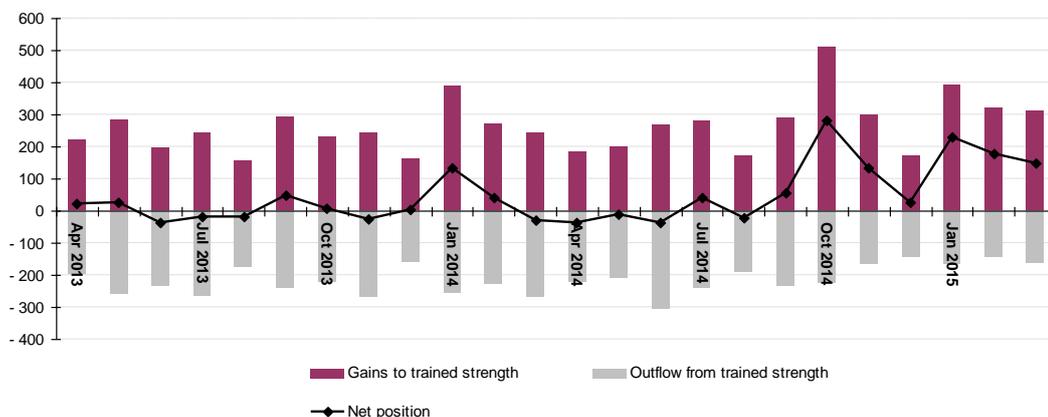
Total target Intake comprises New Entrants and Trained Direct Entrants.

Trained Direct Entrants comprise of ex-Regulars who directly enter the trained strength and have been discharged from the Regular Army trained strength within 6 years of enlistment to the Army Reserve trained strength.

New Entrants comprise of intake into phase 1 training only and comprise new recruits, plus ex-Regulars and Reserve re-joiners that require training.

Intake others do not count towards the total target intake however upon completion of Phase 2 training they will count against the trained strength target. Intake others comprises intake directly into Phase 2 training where the individual has some prior Armed Forces service and intake directly into the trained strength where the individual has previous Armed Forces service other than as a trained Army Regular.

Army Reserve monthly gains to trained strength and trained outflow

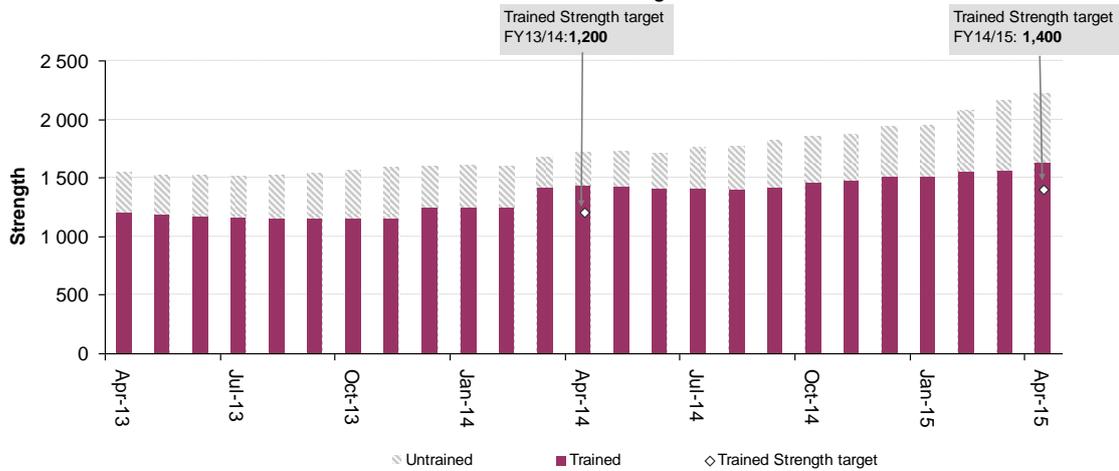


Note:

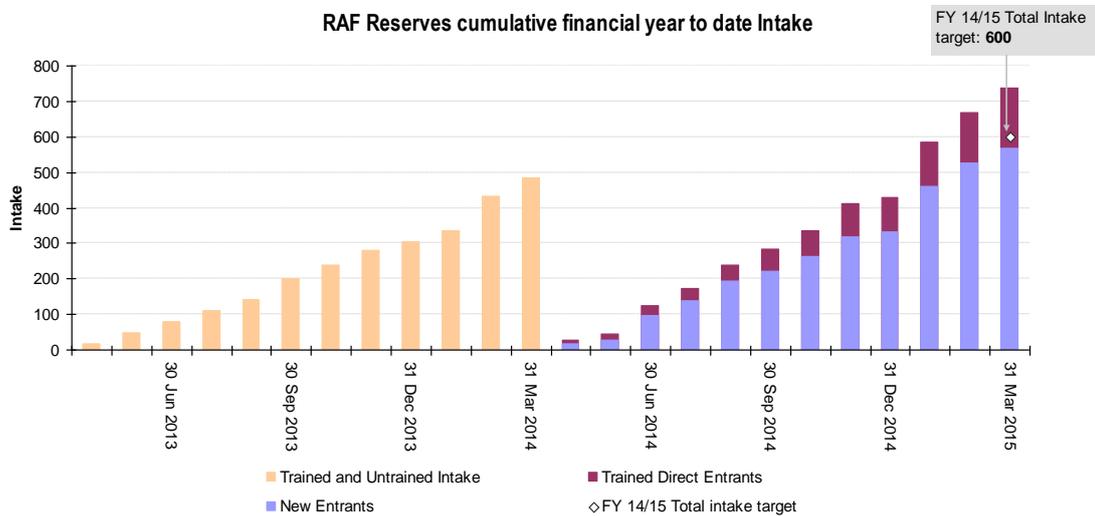
Gains to trained strength figures comprise personnel who complete Phase 2 training and personnel who enter directly onto the trained strength of the Army Reserve.

RAuxAF

RAF Reserves Strength



RAF Reserves cumulative financial year to date intake



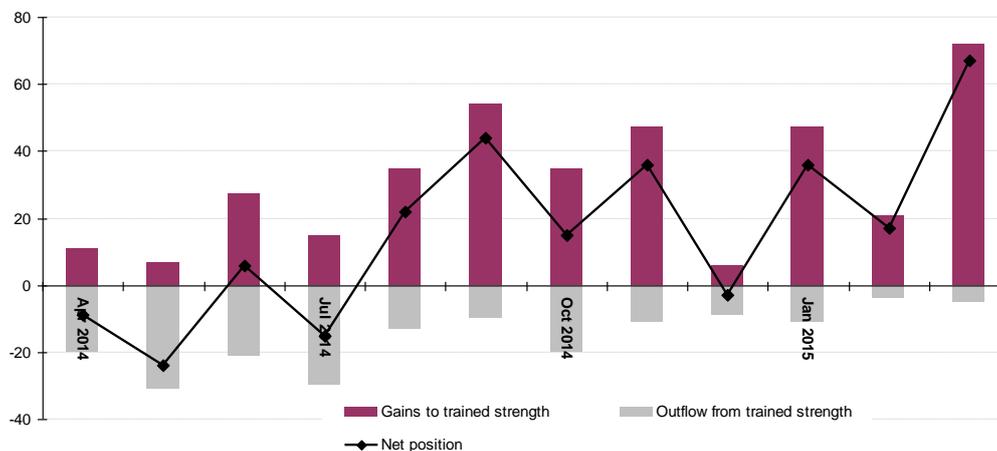
Note:

Total target Intake comprises New Entrants and Trained Direct Entrants.

New Entrants comprises of all intake into untrained strength. It includes new recruits, untrained ex-Regulars (either direct transfer or following a break in service), and untrained Reserve re-joiners (following a break in service or transferring from another Reserve Force)

Trained Direct Entrants comprises all intake into the trained strength and includes trained ex-Regulars (either direct transfers or following a break in service), and trained Reserve re-joiners following a break in service.

RAF Reserves monthly gains to trained strength and trained outflow



Note:

Gains to trained strength figures comprise personnel who complete Phase 2 training and personnel who enter directly onto the trained strength of the RAF Reserves. RAF Reserves training information for intake and outflow is unavailable prior to 1 April 2014.

Officers

Table 2a Intake to and **outflow from**² Officers in the Maritime Reserve (Trained and Untrained)

	1 Apr 2012 to 31 Mar 2013	1 Apr 2013 to 31 Mar 2014	1 Apr 2014 to 31 Mar 2015
Officer strength at start of period	..	820	840
Intake to Officers ³	..	100	150
<i>from</i>			
Another part of the Armed Forces	..	80	140
<i>of which</i>			
Rank to Officer within the Maritime Reserve	..	20	30
Regular Forces ⁵	..	50	80
University Service Units ⁶	..	~	10
No previous Service	..	10	10
Outflow from Officers ⁴	..	70	110
<i>to</i>			
Another part of the Armed Forces	..	20	30
<i>of which</i>			
Regular Forces ⁵	..	~	10
Left the Armed Forces	..	50	70
Officer strength at end of period	820	840	890

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri Service)

Table 2b Intake to and **outflow from**² Officers in the Army Reserve (Trained and Untrained)

	1 Apr 2012 to 31 Mar 2013	1 Apr 2013 to 31 Mar 2014	1 Apr 2014 to 31 Mar 2015
Officer strength at start of period	4 300 ^e	4 300 ^e	4 350 ^e
Intake to Officers ³	520^e	530^e	620^e
<i>from</i>			
Another part of the Armed Forces	480 ^e	490 ^e	540 ^e
<i>of which</i>			
Rank to Officer within the Army Reserve	150 ^e	120 ^e	80 ^e
Regular Forces ⁵	150 ^e	220 ^e	250 ^e
University Service Units ⁶	90	60	130
No previous Service	40	30	70
Outflow from Officers ⁴	520^e	480^e	470^e
<i>to</i>			
Another part of the Armed Forces	120 ^e	110 ^e	130 ^e
<i>of which</i>			
Regular Forces ⁵	50 ^e	60 ^e	60 ^e
Left the Armed Forces	400 ^e	360 ^e	340 ^e
Officer strength at end of period	4 300 ^e	4 350 ^e	4 490 ^e

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri Service)

Table 2c Intake to and **outflow from**² Officers in the RAF Reserves (Trained and Untrained)

	1 Apr 2012 to 31 Mar 2013	1 Apr 2013 to 31 Mar 2014	1 Apr 2014 to 31 Mar 2015
Officer strength at start of period	..	220 ^e	290
Intake to Officers ³	..	90	80
<i>from</i>			
Another part of the Armed Forces	..	90	70
<i>of which</i>			
Rank to Officer within the RAF Reserves	..	~	10
Regular Forces ⁵	..	50	40
University Service Units ⁶	..	-	~
No previous Service	..	~	10
Outflow from Officers ⁴	..	30	30
<i>to</i>			
Another part of the Armed Forces	..	10	10
<i>of which</i>			
Regular Forces ⁵	..	~	-
Left the Armed Forces	..	20	20
Officer strength at end of period	220 ^e	290	340

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri Service)

Qualifying Notes

Table Notes

- 1 The FR20 Volunteer Reserve population includes Mobilised Volunteer Reserves, High Readiness Reserve (HRR) and Volunteer Reserves serving on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) and Additional Duties Commitment (ADC). Non Regular Permanent Staff (NRPS), Expeditionary Forces Institute (EFI) and Sponsored Reserves are excluded.
- 2 Intake and outflow statistics are calculated from month-on-month comparisons of officer strength data.
- 3 Intake to the FR20 population show the most recent previous service recorded on JPA including those serving in another reserve service. Personnel may have had a break in service and may have served in more than one role.
- 4 Outflow from the FR20 population include those personnel moving to another part of the Armed Forces within the calendar month. "Left the Armed Forces" may include those who have a break in service before joining another part of the Armed Forces.
Intake and outflow from the Regular Forces includes transfers to another service.
- 5
- 6 University Service Units includes University Royal Navy Units, University Officer Training Corps, University Air Squadrons and Defence Technical Officer and Engineer Entry Scheme

Rounding

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10, though numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Totals and subtotals have been rounded separately and may not equal the sum of their rounded parts.

Symbols

- e Denotes estimate, and reports the best available data at the time, these figures are not expected to be revised.
- ~ 5 or fewer
- Zero
- .. Not available

COMMENTARY ON DEFENCE ACHIEVEMENT OF WHITE PAPER MEASURES

The following table details the explicit measures outlined in the FR20 White Paper, with our own assessment of progress to date, based upon periodic briefings from the MOD and single Services and our own observations on the ground. They are set out in the same groupings used by MOD to assess progress.

1. Sufficient Trained Strength.

As a snap-shot, at the end of March 2015, all 3 Services had materially achieved their respective targets as set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of 19 December 2013, albeit minor shortfalls in achievement of ab initio targets had been shored up by Regular to Reserve crossovers.

Ser.	Recommendation	Observations
1	Regular to Reserve transfer processes streamlined and incentivised	Navy processes have been streamlined but not financially incentivised. The Army re-published instructions on streamlining Regular to Reserve transfer and introduced a Reserves Commitment Bonus to incentivise. The RAF has also streamlined processes and from 1 Nov 14 (with eligibility back-dated to 1 Apr 14) offered a financial incentive to those ex-Regulars who join as part time volunteers. All three services have exceeded their targets for Trained Entrant inflow for 2014/15.
2	Single Service and tri-service recruitment campaigns underway	Various recruitment campaigns are underway. The Army's More Than Meets The Eye campaign was re-launched in Jan 15. A Maritime Reserves campaign is running on an 'always on' footing for FY 14/15 and 15/16. 'One RAF' advertising campaign commenced on 1 Sep 14,
3	Army initial selection and training procedures streamlined	A new "target operating model" was implemented 31 Jan 14 with the Recruiting Partnership Enhancement Programme, agreed in Sep 14, now implemented. Initiatives include online applications, improved medical processes and potential Reservists being offered assistance through the application process by their chosen unit.
4	Fast track Territorial Army (now Army Reserve commissioning Course (TACC(+)) piloted	Army Reserve Commissioning Course Plus pilot completed in 2013. Two courses took place in 2014, the first in Summer, commissioning 29 candidates and the second in Autumn, commissioning 11. Plans for 2015 include 2 further courses. The option to complete commissioning under traditional arrangements continues.

5	Pilot scheme to inform future generation of cyber Reserves	Selection Boards and single Services induction weekends continue at a pace with Cyber Reserve Induction Package and Workplace Induction Programmes also running regularly. The programme is on track and has delivered a number of recruits through to trained strength on time.
6	Army Recruiting Partnering Project with Capita fully operational	The Recruiting Partnering Project (RPP) delivers both Regular and Reserve recruiting. The last two quarters of 14/15 demonstrate improvement over previous performance. The RPP Enhancement Programme has shown some improvement in processes combined with an updated marketing campaign. We understand that Capita submitted their a revised commercial proposal on 16 Feb 15, which is currently being reviewed Following negotiation, approval of a commercial and contractual way ahead will not occur before Jul 15. Full operating capability of the partnership was planned for April 2014, placing this measure well behind schedule.

2. Usable Reserve Forces

Our main report outlines our concerns about the overall capacity of the training pipeline, especially for Phase 1 and 2 training, on the evidence of achievement at lower rates of throughput. The Employer Recognition Scheme is now well established. Requisite primary and secondary legislation changes are now in place.

Ser.	Recommendation	Observations
7	Introduce legislation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rename the Territorial Army the 'Army Reserve' • Enable mobilisation for the full range of military tasks • Enable payments to SMEs when employees are mobilised • Give additional employment protection to reservists for unfair dismissal claims 	Royal Assent was received on 14 May 14. Primary legislation commenced on 1 Oct 14. In addition, amendments to SI859 (2005), titled SI460 (2015), came into force on 27 Mar 15. These amendments will provide increased financial assistance to employers of Reservists and self-employed Reservists. They will also reduce the cap on the amount Reservists can claim in lost income.
8	Investment in high quality training and modern equipment for all three services	Dismounted close combat equipment was originally programmed for delivery from 2015, but was accelerated to provide £48m of equipment for delivery to the Reserve in 2014. Successful trials have been completed with Reservists for the Air Assault Task Force; a series of exercises in Kenya with integrated companies is planned for 2015. We see plentiful evidence to resource and develop high quality training for the Reserve, including opportunities for integrated training worldwide. The initial investment has been made.

9	Integrated Army Reserve force structure and basing plan announced	Announcement was made Jul 13. The Army have established a Military Judgement Panel to continually review basing change proposals.
10	Additional Royal Auxiliary Air Force units in the north west of England, Northern Ireland and Wales	All three squadrons have been formed and are recruiting strongly. More are under consideration.
11	Procure additional dismounted close combat equipment for the Army Reserve	All dismounted close combat items (less night vision items) have been on contract since 16 Dec 13. The rollout of night vision systems was announced in Jan 15.
12	New Employer Recognition scheme implemented	The Employer Recognition Scheme was launched by the Prime Minister on 17 Jul 14. At end of 2014, 10 Gold Awards were awarded nationally, 358 Silver Awards were presented regionally and 147 organisations stated their intent to support Defence personnel objectives by signing up to the Bronze Award. 46 nominations for Gold, 57 for Silver Awards and 163 for Bronze Awards have already been received for 2015.
13	Army Regular and Reserve unit pairing fully implemented	Regular and Reserve unit pairing have been substantially implemented.

3. Motivated Reserve Forces

Welfare policy, leave entitlement, financial improvements, learning credits and rehabilitation provision have all contributed to a much improved offer to Reserves. There are some significant changes to policy and TACOS attached to these recommendations, as well as measures such as the extension of Armed Forces Railcard eligibility.

Ser.	Recommendation	Observations
14	New Employment Model (NEM) review of Regular and Reserve Conditions of Service	A number of financial incentives were introduced to promote recruitment into the Reserve Forces. Revisions to Conditions of Service for Additional Duties Commitment (ADC) were introduced to assist Reserve participation in training courses or exercises alongside Regulars. The NEM Programme is planned to respond to implications from single Service reviews of their Reserve requirement.
15	Improvement to the Maritime Reserves estate commenced	Betterment package complete. All units received SMART technology and an updated graphics package to facilitate distributed training. Minor works completed in units that would not be part of the longer term re-building programme. A major works package is ongoing.
16	If evidence justifies it, consider additional measures to provide additional employment protection to reservists, including whether to provide additional protection in the next quinquennial Armed Forces Bill	An anti-disadvantage question has been incorporated in 2015 ResCAS to judge the scale of the problem. For the moment MOD consider that a policy approach provides more practical protection than legislation but this remains under review.

17	Web-based portal for Reservists who feel they have been disadvantaged or when seeking employment	An online portal to report disadvantage in the workplace was launched in Jul 13 to coincide with the publication of the White Paper.
18	Reservist annual leave entitlement granted	Leave entitlement based on paid attendance has been in place since Jul 13.
19	Army Early Commitment Bonuses implemented	Scheme started on 1 Apr 14. Payments backdated for those who joined from 1 Jan 14.
20	Single Service reviews of Reserves' welfare policy	MR policy remains unchanged. An extra Permanent Staff Senior Rating with Welfare responsibilities has been funded for all RNR Units. All Reserves and families are now entitled to the same Army welfare support as their Regular counterparts. The RAF already treats Regulars and Reserves identically for welfare policy/provision.
21	Occupational health provision extended	All facets of enhanced occupational health have already been introduced. We are told there has been a delay in establishing the final delivery method and securing funding, slipping FOC from Nov 15 to Apr 16.
22	Provision of rehabilitation extended for those injured during Reserve training	This service has been in place since Apr 14.
23	Army welfare and Reserve career management officers established at unit level	Funding and establishment of these posts is complete. 64 Career Management Officers, 49 Operational Support Officers and 69 Operational Support Warrant Officers are in post as at May 15. Recruiting continues as normal business.
24	Training Bounty criteria revised	The single Services were content with the criteria in place, with no change recommended by AFPRB 14. We understand that a substantive paper is being submitted to the AFPRB 15.
25	Civilian accreditation of military provided training implemented	The programme is on track and has made major progress in the last year, but there are variations between single Services accredited training. Under the Army Skills Offer and similar sS programmes, some civilian qualifications have been mapped against trades and are now on offer; many are available to Reservists community.
26	Reservist access to Standard Learning Credits implemented	Fully implemented on 1 Apr 14. In FY14/15, 305 Reservists took advantage of the scheme.
27	Reserves given access to Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015	Armed Forces Pension Scheme 2015 legislation laid in Parliament 4 Sep 14, implemented 1 Apr 15.

4. Cost Effective Capability

We are told that the financial provision (£1.8bn) allocated to the FR20 programmes remains on budget. As the FR20 programme is now devolved into the four separate programmes, individual Service budget holders are now responsible for their allocations of this funding with MOD monitoring coherence and providing assurance. A cost comparison model is complete and has

been published. A LEMCOC (Land Environment Military Capability Costing) study is being carried out by the Army, on which we have been briefed.

Ser.	Recommendation	Observations
28	Flat-rate payments to SME employers of mobilised Reserves	Employer incentive payments of up to £500 per month per mobilised employee was introduced by the Defence Reform Act from 1 Oct 14.
29	Revise financial assistance regulations to improve financial assistance to employers and cap the level of Reservist Award for non-specialist roles.	Amendments to SI859 (2005), titled SI460 (2015), came into force on 27 Mar 15. These amendments provide increased Financial Assistance to employers of Reservists and self-employed Reservists. They also reduce the cap on the amount Reservists can claim in lost income.
30	Army regular and reserve unit pairing commences	Commander Land Forces direction on Regular and Reserve pairing was issued in Jul 13 and is complete. We believe that this direction will need review (see the main report).
31	Restructured Training Bounty	We have been told that proposals will be submitted to the AFPRB in mid-September 15.

5. Better Understanding of Armed Forces in Society

Considerable effort has been expended towards this benefit realisation, with the majority of recommendations complete and the others assessed as on track. There is good research available to demonstrate that Service marketing and communications has increased awareness of the Reserves.

Ser.	Recommendation	Observations
32	Armed Forces Corporate Covenant introduced	Introduced in Jun 13. By 13 May 15 a total of 543 organisations have signed the Corporate Covenant.
33	Employer support help-line and web pages updated	Gov.UK website is live and the website has been updated on a regular basis.
34	Employer online toolkit live	Toolkit went live in Jul 13.
35	Partnering for Talent pilot programmes focused on improving Reservists employability	Armed Forces Employability Pathway (AFEP) trials have concluded. The concept has matured into model that is agreed by DWP. AFEP was transferred to Support Command on 4 Feb 15 and is now being implemented nationwide.
36	Improved predictability and notification of Reservist status and commitments	Employers have now been notified in 2014 and 2015 of the Reserve status of their Reservist employees, and told of the training that their Reservist is expected to complete in the coming year.
37	Introduce feedback on deployments to employers	The directive to the single Services to deliver post-deployment feedback to employers was issued on 10 Dec 13.
38	Employer Engagement Strategy implemented	The Strategy was published on 18 Oct 13, accompanied by the EE Directive. It was updated in Oct 14 and a governance structure is now in place.

39	Workforce planning partnership with Department of Health/NHS established	A DH/NHS Employers Summit took place on 25 Mar 14. A series of NHS Roadshows commenced Autumn 14 and concluded Feb 15 with an online webinar and Military March Campaign. National partnership boards have been developed to take forward the DH/MOD partnership tasks.
40	Establish National Relationship Management scheme	Now called Defence Relationship Management, an initial operating capability was achieved on 1 Apr 14. Full operating capability was declared as substantially achieved on 1 Apr 15, as planned.

SUMMARY OF EST 2015 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1.** The MOD give further consideration to how it will safeguard the ability of Reserves to play a proportionate part in resilience operations, especially once the Reserves are at full manning and would otherwise have to dilute funds for annual training to offset costs. (Paragraph 19)
- 15.2.** Working within the existing governance system, build more inter-Service cooperation on experimentation and best practice on recruiting and retention, whether or not initiatives are universally adopted (Paragraph 22).
- 15.3.** The three Services should review the separate roles played by the national call centres, the Armed Forces Careers Offices, the recruiting field forces and Reserve units to ensure that they are clearly optimised for Reserve recruiting (Paragraph 26).
- 15.4.** The MOD and the Services should review the medical entry standards required of recruits and ensure that the screening contracts are appropriately incentivised and assured to achieve success (Paragraph 28).
- 15.5.** The Services should initiate work to determine the recruiting resources necessary to ensure steady state manning of the Reserve beyond the FR20 period (Paragraph 29).
- 15.6.** The Services should examine what more could be done to enhance manning through retention-positive measures, at least in the short term, including bespoke extra-mural activities targeted at the Reserve (Paragraph 39).
- 15.7.** FR20 planning and risk mitigation should increasingly turn more attention to the growth of capability within the Reserve component, rather than a slavish pursuit of numerical growth. (Paragraph 43).
- 15.8.** Army Reserve basing requirements should be revisited as a consequence of availability of funds to deliver the original basing concept and on the evidence of other FR20 achievement; link to Recommendation 15.10. (Paragraph 56).
- 15.9.** DIO and the Services should review their multi activity and support contracts and, where relevant, explore ways in which they can be amended to ensure that they are Reserve-friendly. (Paragraph 62).
- 15.10.** The Services should conduct a command-led stock-take on all aspects of FR20 implementation by the end of FY 2015/16 and share lessons learned. (Paragraphs 63 & 64; link with recommendation 15.8)

SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES FOR 2015/16 WORK

In addition to the formal requirements now set out in the Reserve Forces Act, the following themes will be subjected to particular scrutiny during the 2015/16 reporting period:

Review

- An assessment of the conclusions and implementation of adjustments arising from the Army Reserve Stock-take; parallel reviews within the other Services; and arrangements to share findings.
- Progress with the Reserve Footprint Strategy.

Funding

- Costing and cost comparison modelling.
- Governance and assurance arrangements for the £1.8B FR20 funding.

Capability

- Development and growth of Reserve capabilities. Initial points of interest:
 - Joint and single Service progress with Medical capability.
 - Arrangements for Reserves use within employing formations
 - Development of defence engagement and resilience roles for Reserves.
 - Refinement of the proposition, with particular attention to officers.
 - Achievement of mandated collective training at unit and sub-unit level.

Manning, Recruiting and Training

- Progress towards FR20 manning levels.
- Sustainability of long-term support arrangements for Reserves, particularly to maintain inflow once measures such as Op FORTIFY have run their course.
- Effectiveness of retention positive activity.
- Capacity of Phase 2 and 3 training arrangements.

Management

- Progress with personnel management change implementation.

Betterment

- Provision and availability of unit equipment.
- Provision and availability of individual and collective training opportunity.

Infrastructure

- Progress with FR20 basing.

EXTERNAL SCRUTINY TEAM – MEMBERSHIP

Chairman:

Lieutenant General (Retd) R V Brims CB CBE DSO DL

Members:

Major General (Retd) S F N Lalor CB TD

Brigadier P R Mixer (Retd) OstJ QVRM TD DL

Captain I M Robinson (Retd) OBE RD RNR

Colonel T S Richmond (Retd) MBE TD DL FCA

C N Donnelly CMG TD BA

Co-opted

Group Capt G W Bunkell CBE QVRM ADC RAuxAF

Clerk:

Air Vice-Marshal (Retd) P D Luker CB OBE AFC DL