

FSS announcement welcome, but key questions still need answering



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GMB, the shipbuilding union, has welcomed today's announcement by the Ministry of Defence that a vital order Fleet Solid Support Ships will be built by 'British-led teams'.



But the union is calling for cast iron guarantees all ships will be built and assembled in UK yards.

Ross Murdoch, GMB National Officer and Maritime CSEU, said:

"GMB has long argued placing this order with UK yards will support thousands of jobs in shipbuilding and the wider supply chain, including steel.

"However, important questions remain to be answered. It is unclear whether Ministers will require all shipbuilding work on the contracts to be done in the UK, instead of going overseas.

"There was recent criticism in the Lords about the Government's dither and delay over this contract and once again we see the competition restarting in Spring 2021 which means further delay.

"We should seek to build on the success of the Carrier Alliance and get UK firms and respective consortiums to collaborate to deliver savings.

"By doing so we could ensure we maximise the UK social value by adopting a modular block build then final assembly the same way as the Carrier Alliance did, thus spreading prosperity across a wide number of UK yards.

"Boris Johnson said that he wants to make the UK into a 'shipbuilding superpower' – the best way to support UK shipbuilding would be to confirm, once and for all, that these ships will be built in UK yards."

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