



**For immediate release**

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## **Westminster on-time, on-budget**

Type 23 frigate HMS *Westminster* has left Devonport Royal Dockyard on-time and within budget, and with significantly increased sustainability and fighting capability, following a successful upkeep period by Babcock which culminated in the ship being 'Ready for Sea' ahead of schedule.

The eight month project has involved well over 200,000 manhours and has seen some 40 km of new cable installed, 300 new items manufactured, and 1100 items removed for overhaul in the workshops at Devonport, as well as many items renewed through the 'Upkeep by Exchange' process.

The upkeep period has been a challenging one, HMS *Westminster* being the first Type 23 frigate to receive two of the largest upgrades at the same time; the Royal Navy's new DNA(2) Command System (central to its fighting capability against air, surface and underwater threats), and SeaWolf mid-life update comprising tracking, guidance and weapon management upgrades to counter evolving anti-ship missile threats. The ship has also received the Defence Information Infrastructure (Future) (DII(F)) upgrade, ready for installation of the new software to enable information sharing and collaborative working across the Armed Forces and MoD.

The refit has also involved a large weapons package, including a 4.5 inch Mod1 gun upgrade, as well as an upgrade of Sonar 2087, NATO radial filters to protect fresh air supplies from contamination, and a sophisticated incident detection system, the Nuclear Biological Chemical Defence Incident Surveillance System. A new transom flap has also been fitted to increase fuel efficiency and endurance by harnessing previously lost energy from the propellers. These are in addition to a programme of maintenance (including, for example, replacement of the 10 tonne, two metre diameter port main gearwheel from the main propulsion gearbox), defect rectification, and habitability improvements, plus a large preservation package.

Close working between the MoD, Royal Navy and Babcock has been a key feature of this project, and an important contributor to the success of this demanding upkeep period. A 'partnering charter' established by the key stakeholders in advance of the programme start outlined a set of principles that has guided the team, leading to the successful delivery of HMS *Westminster* on time.

Babcock warship support director (Devonport) Chris Tomkins remarked: “It has been a fantastic achievement from the whole team to have the ship materially ready ahead of the contracted Ready for Sea Date, and is reflective of the strong partnering ethos that existed on the project. At all times during the docking period, risk was openly shared and jointly managed in a very open, honest and trustworthy environment, with all partners working extremely closely towards a common goal.”

Babcock project manager Andy Correy, leading the upkeep project, commented: “This has been a very challenging project with a number of significant upgrades coming together in one upkeep period, along with a substantial maintenance package. Close working and true partnering values in our relationship with the MoD and Royal Navy have been vital to ensuring the smooth running of this complex project, and we are delighted to be delivering *Westminster* on-time and in-budget, and fully equipped for her operational duties.”

MoD Project Contract Manager Peter Mercier said: “This has been a very busy period in which the partnership of Babcock, SFM, and ship’s staff has successfully delivered a significant increase in the capability of HMS *Westminster*, and made her the most capable Type 23 frigate in the fleet. The partnership team has also delivered habitability upgrades to improve living conditions for ship’s staff, and carried out extensive deep maintenance to equipment and systems. This has all been delivered as part of a fleet timeliness trial for upkeeps, and the project achieved every significant milestone on-time, with the majority being delivered early.”

HMS *Westminster* has now left for eight weeks of sea trials and will return to operational duty in May.

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