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Tackling Covid-19 Construction Challenges

Like countless businesses within the construction industry, Aspire Defence Capital Works (ADCW) – the Contractor delivering the new and improved living, working and technical accommodation for the ABP – has faced unique challenges in these unprecedented times.

The impact of Covid-19 has been far-reaching and complying with Public Health guidance on social distancing rules on building sites has been a priority, whilst continuing to adhere to well established health and safety practices. In addition, the supply chain has become somewhat fragmented where the supply of materials has been in short supply and certain trade contractors have made the decision to temporarily cease trading.

Resourcing has also been problematic for ADCW, particularly at the start of the lockdown when overall labour levels dropped by 50%, as employees and contractors reacted to the Prime Minister’s address to the Nation. Thankfully, through Government support and effective engagement with the supply chain by re-assuring them of the additional safety measures put in place across all their sites, the picture is becoming much more positive. Labour levels have been steadily improving over recent weeks and at the end of April had reached 80% of what would be expected.

“It’s been a really challenging and difficult time,” said Paul Dempster, Managing Director of ADCW. “Our priority has very much been on ensuring we can provide a safe working environment for our people and of course, the Military Personnel with whom they interact with on garrison.”

Across the ABP sites on Salisbury Plain Training Area, construction work continues on eleven primary assets and external work areas. Health and Safety remains and will always remain the number one priority, with ADCW upholding its Zero Harm record with no accidents throughout 2020.



Interior locker room at the new stores, Bulford



Exterior of the new stores at Bulford



Interior office at the new stores, Bulford

In April, over 75% of ADCW’s planned in-month delivery for ABP was completed – a remarkable achievement in light of the recent and ongoing constraints – and this included the conditional ‘Construction Completion’ of new stores at Bulford for the Household Cavalry Regiment (see photos). Outside the wire at Bulford, the Intermediate Healthcare Centre was identified early on in the crisis as a ‘priority asset’ by the Army: ADCW therefore quickly implemented a contingency plan with its contractor Brymor, to ensure the required progress for this particular build project remains on target for July delivery.

Indeed, successful partnerships between ADCW and its wider supply chain has been pivotal to tackling the Covid-19 challenge head-on. ADCW has committed to pay its supply chain early; a decision which was extremely well received by businesses in what have been uncertain financial times for many.

Thanks also to its excellent relationship with the military customer, ADCW has in turn been able to look to the Army for support: at TidNBul Garrison, a Single Living Accommodation block was made available to ADCW contractors who were unable to find local hotel accommodation.

ADCW has been doing its bit to help others out during the crisis too. Spare supplies of safety goggles were donated to a Community Healthcare Team in Salisbury, and all three Aspire businesses have pledged £3k to support Service families recently repatriated to Larkhill from overseas.

Paul added: “I am extremely grateful for and proud of the professionalism and commitment of my staff and contractors, in ensuring any disruption to the ABP construction programme has been minimised as far as possible during these challenging and difficult times.

As we look ahead to the next phase of the response to Covid-19 and what that this might mean for the construction industry and society as a whole, our business will continue to focus on safe delivery of modern, high quality accommodation to support military capability and make soldiers’ lives better.”