



# techUK’s Information Superiority Forum – Chair/Vice-chair nominees 2024

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## Chair

### John Philliban

**Job title:** Director

**Company:** CGI

**Nomination for:** Chair nomination

#### **Please write a short biography/Profile**

John is the Strategy & Political Affairs Director in the Space, Defence and Intelligence business unit within CGI. He joined the company in 2021 following a successful career in the RAF, which saw him reach the rank of Air Vice-Marshal. A communications and electronics engineer by background, he has been employed widely across Defence, from supporting the RAF's C4 missions both at home and overseas, to supporting Defence Intelligence and other government departments' ISR requirements. Moreover, he has recently held senior positions in the MOD, many of which were specifically related to the strategy, policy, requirements-setting and acquisition of a large number of Defence's C4ISR projects and programmes. As such, he has a wealth of C4ISR experience, allied to an acute understanding of how the MOD operates across all the Commands, Defence Digital and DE&S.

#### **Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme**

John has been the vice-chair of the ISF Forum for the past 2 years and this, coupled with his extensive C4ISR policy and strategy background and understanding of how Defence operates, means he would continue to be a real asset to the ISF. Moreover, having recently worked at a senior level within the MOD, he would be well-placed to secure key speakers and influential stakeholders, using his engaging manner and extensive network of senior colleagues. A proactive supporter of techUK, he has the time and capacity to support this most worthwhile activity.



## **Nick Hartley**

**Job title:** Business Development Director Defence and National Security

**Company:** Leidos UK

**Nomination for:** Chair nomination

### **Please write a short biography/Profile**

I have a strong background in Defence and National Security, spanning a 36-year career delivering Cyber, CEMA and C4ISR capabilities from both military and industry perspectives with BT, Thales and now Leidos. I have a well-developed leadership style and a collaborative and inclusive approach. I am well aware of the SDR challenges ahead for Defence Digital, Strat Com and the single Services in an increasingly challenging and technologically complex environment. Industry remains pivotal to this challenge and the relationship between industry partners and MOD to deliver affordable, sustainable programmes and innovative solutions will be key to future success. As Chair of the ISF team for the last 2 years we have delivered a successful and informative programme to members in support of the Defence Board objectives. I have a good working relationship with the Defence Board and techUK team and I would like to provide continuity in this role during this challenging post -SDR period.

### **Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme**

I would bring a broad, well-informed and experienced perspective to the IS Forum. Having served as both Vice-Chair and now Chair for the last 2 years I would bring continuity to the team going forward during what will be a key period of challenge and opportunity post-SDR. Having previously both presented to and participated in techUK debates and discussions, from both military and industry perspectives, I would ensure that all views are equally well represented and respected. As an RAF reservist, I understand the operational drivers now being faced and will ensure we continue to focus on the right priorities and are having the right discussions with key senior stakeholders across Defence in order to address the key issues being faced across technology, people, skills, capability and resources. I would combine my military and industry insight and experience to ensure that we get the most out of what is a tremendously diverse and highly capable community so that we can add real value to Defence thinking and offer thought leadership and practical solutions to the complex and challenging threats now being faced. In that way we will ensure the techUK IS Forum remains as relevant and vibrant as ever.

## Vice-chair

### Kirsten Blackwall

**Job title:** UK Programmes and Solution Lead

**Company:** Airbus Defence and Space Limited

**Nomination for:** Vice-chair nomination

#### **Please write a short biography/Profile**

Kirsten is the UK Programmes and Solution Lead for the Defence Digital business unit within Airbus Defence and Space and is based in Newport.

Kirsten joined Airbus in 2023 from the UK Ministry of Defence where she led the Wide Area Network procurement within the Tactical Systems Service Executive. She has also successfully delivered technology projects for Electronic Data Systems, Rolls-Royce and Experian.

Kirsten has an honours degree in Information Systems and has been working for over 25 years within industry and government building and leading high-performing teams, frequently with a focus on recovering complex projects with problematic stakeholder relationships and unclear requirements. She is a full member of the Association of Project Management and is certified with the Project Management Institute

#### **Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme**

In my current role, I work into the Defence Digital and Cyber business for Airbus Germany and International. In the Information Superiority area, this business unit is responsible for Decision Superiority, Air and Land Command and Control solutions including integration into end-to-end systems both fixed and mobile, and secure tactical IT systems for NATO.

As Vice-Chair I will bring my experience in Defence Procurement in both government and industry, along with my knowledge of technology development within Airbus, to support how the UK and Allies strengthen Defence through Information Superiority.

In addition Airbus in the UK invests approx £290m annually for Commercial Aircraft, Helicopters and Defence and Space technology developments. Our technology developments are transversal and beneficial to all divisions and part of this investment directly supports advances in Connectivity. As Vice-Chair I can bring a view on the developments in this area.

Information Superiority is dependent on collaboration and interoperability and I would value the opportunity to take an active role in support of this topic.



## **Robert Sandler**

**Job title:** Client Partner, Defence

**Company:** Cognizant

**Nomination for:** Vice-chair nomination

### **Please write a short biography/Profile**

Robert Sandler has been involved with Defence and Technology for more than thirty years, from his days as a Territorial Army infantryman as a student, to current army reserve service and now managing the whole of Cognizant's Defence and National Security portfolio. A career in the technology industry with GE, through tech startups, to Cognizant today has provided Robert with a breadth of experience across five countries both on client and provider sides. Cognizant is one of the largest providers of data and digital technology services in the world, with more than 340,000 employees globally.

### **Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme**

I will bring the unusual perspective of leading the UK Defence business for a large global technology services provider with a personal commitment to UK Defence as an army reservist with an information superiority-focused unit.



## **Adrian Keward**

**Job title:** Chief Technology Defence and Intel

**Company:** Red Hat

**Nomination for:** Vice-chair nomination

### **Please write a short biography/Profile**

Chief Technology Defence and Intel at Red Hat, Adrian is an experienced defence professional with over 20 years of leadership and strategic expertise in Military programs, defence policy and technological innovation. He has a proven track record in driving cross-sector collaboration, and ensuring the successful integration of cutting-edge technologies. Adrian has wide experience of both the wider public sector and most Industry verticals, with complex platforms from Mainframes to Edge devices for over 30 years developing technology solutions.

### **Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme**

Having worked with most of the TLBs and directorates of the MOD, I bring experience of working with MOD programs specifically within the Digital Digital environments and the wider Defence Ecosystem, to bring influence to bear. I am committed to contributing insights that address current challenges and future opportunities within defence. Through my contributions, I aim to help shape a more agile, resilient, and forward-thinking defence strategy, ultimately supporting national security.

I am also passionate about driving positive change, whether through improving operational efficiency, supporting policy development, or advancing technological solutions. As part of my role I also interact with the other main Government departments to promote cross government working through Open Standards, Open Source and Open Data.

Open Source is crucial in modern software development, ensuring systems are based on the best peer reviewed capabilities in the industry, Many eyes ensures fewer vulnerabilities and ensures commercial choice which is impossible without massive development teams and cost. Open Standards ensure commonality and help remove lockin, both commercially and technically, finally Open Data enables greater transparency with sharing at the center it promotes data re-use.

## Chair and vice-chair

### Alan Jenkinson

**Job title:** Business Development Lead

**Company:** DXC Technology UK

**Nomination for:** Chair nomination; Vice-chair nomination

#### **Please write a short biography/Profile**

Alan Jenkinson sits within DXC' MOD Account Leadership as a Management team Senior Manager. He is an Army veteran with over twenty years' experience within Govt and MOD, both as a senior sales and delivery manager and professional National Security and Defence consultant within UK MOD, US DoD, UK Police CT, OSCT and Uk Security/Intelligence Agencies.

His niche customer skills reside in services and capabilities within the operational aspects of Defence and National Security, Intelligence analytics and Internet intelligence and Investigation. He holds qualifications and a wealth of experience in the design and delivery of Huma Machine Teaming, UAV operations, AI, Data Analytics, Concept of Operations, Intelligence collection, Intelligence Life Cycle management capabilities within small and large MOD and Government programmes.

Alan has previously delivered: global Military Intelligence Collection Management; An Intelligence Information Dissemination and Exploitation Programme (IMINT/HUMINT/SIGINT/OSINT/MASINT); Army EC2Spearhead Information Superiority Programme and The Army Open-Source Information Exploitation Service

#### **Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme**

Alan Jenkinson brings deep experience and current understanding of the MOD Information Superiority ambition, vision, doctrine, and future plans and experience gained from fulfilling a similar role into Home Office and Policing for ADS (techuk sister organisation). He holds qualifications and proven skills in the application of AI, ML, Data Analytics, Data Fabric operations, Information Warfare Operations and MOD networks and edge compute enabling me to support industry and customer conversations and share information with techUK members and understand how industry capabilities can add value to current and future MOD programmes. His ongoing engagement with MOD Industry groups around SDR and future force structures provides insight and understanding of future MOD strategy across all Defence Programme. Alan has strong pan-MOD and industry personal contacts, network across all sizes of companies provides unique and trusted relationships. He recently revamped DXC SME ecosystem which provides him relevant insight into current SME needs and best ways to engage. Alan sees his role on the forum as bringing understanding enabling him to promote and share all techUK member capabilities in a way that meets members and MOD customer needs to deliver recognized value and benefits of techUK and its members to the MOD.

## **Stefan Crossfield**

**Job title:** Senior Strategic Engagement Director

**Company:** SAS Software

**Nomination for:** Vice-chair nomination; Chair nomination

### **Please write a short biography/Profile**

I've spent that last 30+ years serving in the Armed Forces, reaching the rank of Brigadier as the British Army Chief Digital & Data Officer (CDDO). I began my career in Mechanical Engineering, gaining Chartered Status while leading on operations at every rank up to Lt Col in command of a unit on Op HERRICK in Afghanistan. Mid-career I gained an MSc in Information Systems and since then my staff roles have predominately exploited this. Following a full time MBA at Exeter I was selected as CDDO in 2020 to lead the Army Digital Transformation Programme (THEIA). In my time as CDDO I've delivered the Army AI Strategy, the Army Data Strategy & Plan and finally the comprehensive Army Digital & Data Plan. I've now retired from Regular Service to concentrate on a commercial career working in support of Defence & Security. My specialisms are Data, Analytics and AI/ML.

### **Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme**

Having dedicated so much time to my Army career I remain deeply committed to the Armed Service and their role in securing the Nation. Over a relatively long career I've worked hard to break down the insularity that besets the MOD; my MBA was the pinnacle of these efforts, allowing me to set my military experience in the context of the private sector; I feel this will be useful in any contribution to TechUK as it allows me to take both perspective into account. In my role as CDDO I introduced the THEIA Community of Interest that recognises the challenges of understanding where the MOD is heading and the lack of collaborative environments to discuss and explore. As I embark on a new career, I see a role in TechUK as an outstanding opportunity to grow my experience & commercial network while adding value to the wider industry contributors. I feel I have experience of Defence that I can use to help TechUK target activity and investment in the areas most in need of development. I also have a strong network inside the MOD which would offer TechUK access, and provide valuable contributions to the Defence Programme.



## Ross Terry

**Job title:** Transformation & Adoption Lead

**Company:** Esri UK

**Nomination for:** Chair nomination; Vice-chair nomination

### **Please write a short biography/Profile**

I've now worked in the IT industry for 25 years, mainly focused on delivering and supporting mission critical systems across the Defence and Security domains. These systems have ranged from protecting government data to, more recently, helping it collect and exploit that data more effectively.

As everything happens somewhere, I've a particular interest in helping organisations improve their decision-making capability and operational effectiveness by using location as a common framework to better manage, analyse, visualise and, crucially, share their varied data assets in meaningful ways.

My current priority within UK Defence is to help MOD leverage its Strategic Partnership with Esri UK to provide a rich and dynamic Location Service Ecosystem, at all classifications. This requires a 'better together' approach so that industry partners can contribute to, and consume from, these location-enabled services, helping to deliver decision advantage through a seamless two-way flow of information and intelligence across MOD's enterprise.

### **Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme**

Like many of you, our purpose in Esri UK is to help MOD keep our society safe, secure and prosperous and I truly believe that many of the information and intelligence challenges we face can be solved, today, through better application of the technologies industry can already provide.

I also believe that industry wants to find a better way to deliver these technologies into MOD. As commercial organisations, we are building collaborative relationships proactively to find innovative ways of solving business and mission challenges through the 'power of combinations'.

The complexity of these challenges, coupled with the opportunity that today's prevalence of sensors and connectivity presents, means that now, more than ever, requires a 'team sport' approach and this is supported by the intent of the forthcoming Strategic Defence Review, described as "Britain's review – not just the Government's".

Therefore, I would like to position the Information Superiority Forum and TechUK's wider Defence programme to encourage key government stakeholders to foster, and learn from, industry's partnering-by-default behaviour, using it as a platform to enable 'One Defence'.

TechUK's membership has a significant role to play, not just in the review itself but also in helping to turn its words into action.