

Follow The Sapper

The Corps of Royal Engineers
Our Strategy Towards 2030



'The Best Sapper Family In The World'

A thriving, world-class Sapper Family, uniting Cadets, Recruits, Regular, Reserve, Veterans and Families with our shared values, traditions, and a common purpose



Welcome From The Chief Royal Engineer

Welcome to the Corps of Royal Engineers Strategy to 2030. As the Chief Royal Engineer, I am proud to present this forward-looking roadmap, focused on the moral component and the ethos of our Corps, which outlines our aspirations and goals to the end of the decade. In presenting a refreshed strategy, we must recognise the breadth of the Sapper Family across Cadets, Recruits, Regular, Reserve, Veterans and our Families all of whom play a crucial part in our continuing success.

This refreshed strategy is our main planning document¹. It provides a capstone strategic framework, overseen by the Chief Royal's Board, for the delivery of our collective aims and unifies the constituent elements of the Sapper Family. It is a clear statement of our vision, strategic objectives and priorities towards 2030. Excellence remains the cornerstone of our approach and this strategy, supported in delivery by the Corps' six charities, unites the Sapper Family and reinforces the centrality of people at the heart of all we do.



Why Are We Refreshing Our Strategy?

The landscape of warfare and security challenges continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace. It is therefore unsurprising that the requirements placed on our Corps continue to evolve and change. Since our last strategy was published in 2019, we have lived through a global pandemic, seen the return of full-scale war to the European continent, as well as the heightened risk of regional conflict in the Middle East, and watched as China's expansionism in the South China Sea has threatened to destabilise the Indo-Pacific region. The UK has also entered into the AUKUS partnership and led the international support for Ukraine. Nationally, HMG undertook an Integrated Review in 2021 and is now, under the new Government, conducting a Strategic Defence Review. Not only is the global security environment more competitive, but demand on our skills both in Defence and externally is rising at a time of ever greater fiscal constraint. **Crucially, history tells us that the moral component of fighting power is critical to success on the battlefield, our culture is central to this and to deliver on our core purpose we must invest in it.** The Corps of Royal Engineers is committed to delivering on *The British Army's Plan for Improving Our Organisational Culture*² which I would ask all to be familiar with.

So, as we look out to the 2030s, this strategy refresh reflects a more competitive dynamic, recognises the challenges ahead and looks to build on the successes shown throughout our illustrious history whilst seeking to ensure that the Corps is well set for the future.

Lieutenant General Sir Chris Tickell KBE FInstRE
Chief Royal Engineer
7th January 2025

¹Supported by the [20161024-RE Primer Auth 1-0-O.pdf \(mil.uk\)](#) which will be refreshed in 2025.

²[20240117-Army Plan for Improving Our Organisational Culture 2023 to 2028.pdf \(share-point.com\)](#)

What We Stand For

Our Vision for 2030

A thriving, world-class Sapper Family, uniting Cadets, Recruits, Regular, Reserve, Veterans and Families with our shared values, traditions, and a common purpose.

Our Purpose

In direct support of the British Army's purpose to protect the nation and help it prosper by fighting and winning battles from land.

Underpinned by our rich heritage and supportive Sapper Family, the primary purpose of those serving in The Corps of Royal Engineers is, through a warfighting ethos, to enable Defence to 'Understand, Live, Move and Fight'.

In support, the Chief Royal's Board coheres and delivers the collective objectives of the Corps' Charities, aligning and deconflicting outcomes whilst anchoring and securing the moral component of the whole Sapper Family.



The Sapper Family

Once a Sapper always a Sapper

The *Sapper Family* in combination with our organisational culture and the support of Corps' Charities, forms a unique and highly enviable *People System*. This system, both a framework and a mindset, is foundational to our vision, purpose, and crucially, the Army People Plan³. Structured around the employee lifecycle and directly complementing our Sapper approach this plan encompasses the following stages:

- **Work Well** – Administrative Support, Retention.
- **Adapt Well** – Personnel Strategy & Planning.
- **Join Well** – Inspire, Attract, Recruit & Train People.
- **Integrate Well** – Culture & TEAMWORK.
- **Live Well** – Reward, Recognition & Conditions of Service.
- **Develop Well** – Physical, Psychological & Social Health, Maximizing Talent through CPD.
- **Progress Well** – Career Management, Promotion
- **Transition & Leave Well** – Strategic Reserve, Support to Veterans.
- **In order to Fight Well** – Combat Effectiveness, Motivation, Resilience, Preparedness

While the Sapper Family extends beyond this lifecycle, it remains central as a conceptual handrail for the successful delivery of a future Corps where every individual can contribute meaningfully and proudly to our collective success. Our through-life approach will remain focused on:

- **Cadets.** An organisation that is as big as the Army, and has a strong record of improving social mobility, raising classroom standards, and delivering engagement and wider societal benefits through our shared core values. We must support this work and seek to benefit from it.
- **Recruits.** We attract some of the most amazing people to be recruits and officer cadets in the British Army, but we must attract more with contemporary technical skills and seek greater diversity of thought in our workforce.
- **Sappers.** Our serving Regular and Reserve officers and soldiers are world-leading military engineers but we must increase our efforts to retain them for longer.
- **Veterans.** Those who have already served must be valued and honoured for their service – they have a great deal more to offer the serving Corps and the Strategic Reserve. They deserve greater assistance in their transition to civilian life, as well as greater recognition and patronage; 'Once a Sapper, always a Sapper'.
- **Families.** Our families are always here for us but at times of crisis or in hardship they will need additional moral and physical support. We must be aware where this is the case and be able to support need where it exists.



RECCT is a grant making charity that receives and disperses income from the Days Pay Scheme (DPS). RECCT business resides with the Chief Royal's Board or Corps Finance Committee.

The **Institution of Royal Engineers** is an educational and professional learned society established for 150 years to deepen knowledge in the art and science of Military Engineering while promoting the efficiency of the Corps.



The **RE Museum** has formed as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and is responsible for the collecting, conserving and communicating our Sapper heritage to inspire the nation and serve the Corps.

RE HQ Mess is a charity that promotes the ethos and wellbeing of serving and veteran members. It is also a listed building that provides a venue for Official Mess Functions.



RECPD provides help to fund and support serving members of the Corps in gaining nationally recognised vocational and educational qualifications and awards throughout a person's career.

The **REA** is the principal link between the serving, retired and veteran community. It provides welfare, benevolence and fosters Esprit de Corps through adventurous training, sport and grants.



THE SAPPER CHARITY

³ [20240919-Army People Plan 24-DPers-O.pdf \(mil.uk\)](https://www.army.mod.uk/Portals/0/Documents/20240919-Army_People_Plan_24-DPers-O.pdf)

What we focus on

Our Priorities

To reflect our refreshed approach, we have identified five priority areas that form the basis of our strategy which will drive our business day-to-day and where success will be critical in supporting the whole Sapper Family. These priorities are arranged as lines of operation with leads reporting to the Chief Royal's Board. Our priorities will be delivered through ten objectives focused out to 2030 which unify effort across the charities of the Corps and the Sapper Family. Each objective is measurable and has a clear part to play in delivering Our Vision. Effective communications will enable all lines of operation.





Our People

(Objectives 1, 2 & 3)

The Royal Engineers' reputation for excellence is dependent upon our ability to inspire, attract, develop, retain and mobilise a skilled and motivated group of people – be they Regulars, Reserves, Veterans, or partners across industry and from academia. We care about all our people. We are committed to putting our people first. In affirming our identity within the British Army, across Defence and internationally we have the ambition to be the Cap Badge of first choice for those serving and the most supportive of our veterans and families. We treat everyone with respect. We strive for excellence – for ourselves and for our organisation.

Military Engineering Excellence

(Objectives 4 & 5)

Focused on the front line and inculcating an expeditionary and agile mindset in all we do as either a Soldier, Combat Engineer or Tradesperson, the pursuit of excellence compels us to continually learn, adapt, innovate and maintain our position at the forefront of Military Engineering. By always doing it well, safely and to the highest possible standards, we recognise that excellence is not a destination, rather it is a continuing dedication to high standards and improvement.

Deepening Relations

(Objectives 6 & 7)

Across the Sapper Family, within the British Army, throughout Defence and with our Allies but also broadening and exploring those partnerships with industry, academia and the charitable sector, harnessing the power of Sapper networks in the fulfilment of Our Vision.



Organisational Fitness

(Objectives 8 & 9)

To ensure we are the best we can be, these priorities will be supported by strong systems based around a programme of Organisational Fitness, which – built upon the Sapper ethos and aligned with environmental, social, and governance considerations – will ensure that The Corps of Royal Engineers is well-governed and led, just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive, with its people and systems enabled to deliver The Sapper Vision, The Sapper Way!

Effective Communications

(Objective 10)

To ensure that in 2030, The Corps of Royal Engineers will be globally recognised with a clear brand, a widely understood and valued capability, relevant role, well-regarded, and world leaders in Military Engineering.



Our Objectives



Objective 1 - People First. We are a whole-force organisation enabled by and supporting outstanding people from across the military, civil service, veterans, our families, and those contracted from industry. In all areas, our objective is to attract, develop, retain and mobilise a skilled and motivated group of people demonstrating relevance and impact. To attract and retain the very best, the Corps must ensure we have a positive and inclusive culture in which all individuals are respected and developed, and through which high performing teams can flourish – our ‘Offer’ must be second to none and the lived experience the best it can be.

Objective 2 - Talent Management. Our objective is to identify, nurture, mentor and develop those with the skills and potential to become future leaders in the Corps, the British Army and across Defence.

Objective 3 - Our Veterans. Our objective is to ensure that our veterans, irrespective of generation or time served, are always valued as part of the Sapper Family. Working with others in the veteran sector to amplify collective advocacy, directly support through our own benevolence provision and engage across the breadth of the veteran community. Recognition and awareness of such, will ensure that all are understood, valued, supported, and cherished.

Objective 4 - Military Engineering Excellence and Enhancing Skills. Our objective is to be a global leader in Military Engineering and a proponent for continuous professional development and continuous personal development across all the Military Engineering disciplines, maximising the opportunity and variety which this presents. This reflects our position of strength, expertise, and knowledge, but also our desire to innovate and explore new opportunities - leveraging the expertise we have for the benefit of a wider audience and ourselves, including after Regular or Reserve service.

Objective 5 - A Spirit of Adventure and Teamwork. Our objective is to empower the skills, values and qualities needed by: Military Engineers on and off the battlefield; our cadets as teenagers in a modern world empowered but also distracted by the overwhelming influence of technology and social media; our families managing the day-to-day pressures of living; and our veterans seeking a new tribe, but certain that once a Sapper, always a Sapper. We are committed to building strong teams, inculcating a sense of belonging, investing in the moral component and equipping all with the mental and physical resilience required to excel in challenging environments, fostering an unwavering determination and an indomitable spirit to confront adversity head on and to win together. Ultimately ensuring all the Sapper Family live their best lives.

Objective 6 - Deepening Relations. Our objective is to deepen and develop our relationships and networks within the British Army, throughout Defence and with our Allies whilst also broadening and exploiting strategic partnerships with NATO, other nations, likeminded institutions, industry, academia and the charitable sector. In so doing, we will build on our reputation and expertise to become a recognised leader in Military Engineering. We will develop relationships with all who can further the delivery of Our Vision.



Objective 7 - Sharing a Proud History. Our objective, through engagement, outreach and partnerships is to inspire the nation and our Sapper Family by collecting, conserving, and communicating our Corps' heritage. Harnessing our rich history, we will inform, educate, and excite, showcasing our culture, ethos, and values whilst celebrating the art and science of our Military Engineering innovation and Sapper generational achievements.

Objective 8 - Digitally and Technology Enabled. Our objective is to utilise innovative, AI and sustainable digital services and solutions, ensuring that the Sapper Family has easy access to the tools and literacy which they need to engage efficiently, innovatively and effectively while reducing costs, deepening our relationships and growing our audience. This will ensure we attract and retain people with the vital contemporary skills, nested in a forward-looking culture, and maintain our competitive edge in the future.

Objective 9 - Financial Sustainability and Growth. Our objective is to be financially sustainable by maximising the potential of our private property, investing ethically across a diverse and balanced portfolio for income and growth, diversifying our income, and delivering year on year efficiencies. Additionally, our people must see and be confident in receiving value for money as we discharge our duties.

Objective 10 - Our Brand, Reputation and Communications. Our objective is that by 2030 the Royal Engineers will be nationally and internationally recognised as leaders in Military Engineering, with a clearly understood and valued mission, relevant to Defence now and in the future, well regarded and attractive to the best talent in Britain and providing lifelong support to the wider Sapper Family. Naturally dynamic this objective underpins all others and will leverage the support of role models in order to engage widely.



Governance and Accountability



Governance. The Corps has an honorific structure designed for internal governance to; manage the soul and ethos of the Sapper Family; maintain Esprit de Corps; promote Corps' interests and provide direction, guidance, and support. Additionally, there exists a 'sense and warn' function which supports the operational aspect of Defence, the Army, and the Corps. The Chief Royal Engineer leads Corps governance activity and is supported by up to 11 Colonels Commandant filling specific appointments⁴. This strategy is intentionally focused on the moral component and the stewardship of the resources available through the RE Central Charitable Trust and the portfolio of Corps charities. However, it is nonetheless written in direct support of delivering against the primary purpose of the British Army. It has been approved by the Chief Royal's Board, the Colonels Commandant with responsibility for the Corps' charities, acting on behalf of their trustees and members, and shared, through the Corps Colonel with the Military Secretary who has responsibility for the Army's Arms and Services.

Accountability. This strategy will be owned by the Chief Royal's Board and aligned with their objectives, delivered through the Corps' portfolio of charities. Lead for delivery against the 10 core objectives will be assigned to Colonels Commandant, Corps senior 1*s / OF5s and RHQ RE as set out below. Each lead will be required to develop a delivery plan against their objective and measure progress.

	Objective	Lead
Our People		
1	People First	Corps Colonel supported by 1*Cabal ⁵
2	Talent Management	Corps Colonel supported by 1*Cabal
3	Our Veterans	President of the REA
Military Engineering Excellence		
4	Military Engineering Excellence & Enhancing Skills	Comd 8 Engr Bde supported by President InstRE, RE-CPD & RHQ RE
5	A Spirit of Adventure and Teamwork	Chief Engr ARRC supported by President of the REA and RHQ RE
Deepening Relations		
6	Deepening Relations	Representative Colonel Commandant
7	Sharing a Proud History	Chair RE Museum
Organisational Fitness		
8	Digitally and Technology Enabled	Commander Royal Engineer (Geographic)
9	Financial Sustainability and Growth	Chair RE Finance Committee
Effective Communications		
10	Our Brand, Reputation and Communications	Comdt RSME Gp supported by RHQ RE

⁴ Representative Colonel Commandant, President of the Institute of Royal Engineers, Chair RE Museum Committee, President REA Board, Chair RE Finance Committee, and Colonel of the Regiment for the Queen's Gurkha Engineers.

⁵ Composed of: Commander 8 Engineer Brigade, Chief Engineer and Civil Military Co-operation in Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, Commandant Royal School of Military Engineering Group, Corps Colonel and Commander Royal Engineer (Geographic).



'Be the best Sapper Family in the World'

Royal
Engineers
Central
Charitable
Trust



ROYAL ENGINEERS
MUSEUM



The Institution
of Royal Engineers

ROYAL
ENGINEERS
ASSOCIATION



THE SAPPER CHARITY



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