

News story: £135M infrastructure contract marks milestone in UK F35 programme

The work will deliver a new aircraft hangar capable of housing 12 of the new fast jet aircraft, from which they will deploy to our Queen Elizabeth Class carriers giving the UK world class carrier strike capability. It will improve existing facilities, including resurfacing two existing runways and taxiways, while the Station remains operational. Vertical Landing Pads will also be added to RAF Marham, accommodating the F-35B's ability to land vertically, a capability previously covered by the Harrier jets.

Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon, said:

Flying from our new Queen Elizabeth Class carriers, the F-35B aircraft will provide the UK with the ability to project our influence globally. This contract will ensure that RAF Marham has the facilities to match this world-class aircraft when it arrives next year.

Throughout the F-35 programme, British firms have won major contracts creating thousands of jobs. The contract to improve the runways and taxiways as well as installing new landing pads will bring local jobs to Marham.

The major investment in RAF Marham is the last of seven projects worth £250m undertaken to ready the Station for the arrival of the aircraft in 2018. The contract has been awarded to a joint venture of Galliford Try and Lagan Construction Ltd, creating local jobs at RAF Marham and across East Anglia.

The F-35 Programme is the world's largest single defence programme and the UK has played a major role from the outset. The F-35B Lightning aircraft is an advanced, 5th generation aircraft that the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy will fly from Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers or from Operating Bases such as RAF Marham.

It will be operated initially by 617 Squadron, Royal Air Force, followed by 809 Naval Air Squadron. Combined, they will transform the UK's ability to project UK influence overseas. Initial flight trials for F-35 jets from HMS Queen Elizabeth Class are on track to begin in 2018, building towards delivering a Carrier Strike capability for the UK from 2020.