

## News story: Ready for F-35s: runway resurfaced at RAF Marham

This took place with little to no impact on operational activity.

The first F-35 Lightning aircraft are due to arrive at their new home at RAF Marham shortly. The game-changing aircraft, which will be operated by both the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy, will be based at RAF Marham. Preparations are on track for the aircraft to be able to deploy from RAF Marham to deployed operating bases by the end of the year. In due course they will also deploy to the Royal Navy's Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers.

The resurfacing work was undertaken by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) through its contractors, a joint venture of Galliford Try and Lagan Construction. It forms part of a £250 million DIO programme of investment at the station and involves resurfacing about 90% of the airfield operating surfaces; all of this while the Tornado Force maintained operations from the airfield.

Rob Dawson, DIO's Principal Project Manager, said:

The completion of the resurfacing of the secondary runway is one a series of milestones for the work DIO and our contractors are undertaking to prepare RAF Marham to be the main operating base for the new F-35B aircraft. Along with work being completed by our colleagues at Defence Equipment and Support, this investment will transform RAF Marham with a host of new and upgraded facilities for the aircraft and the men and women who will operate them.

RAF Marham Station Commander Group Captain Ian Townsend said:

It's fantastic to have the secondary runway handed back to the station after the completion of the resurfacing in preparation for the imminent arrival of the F-35 Lightning. To see the Tornado's take off from it for the first time was a real milestone in the programme and we look forward to the next historic event in the next couple of weeks when the F-35's will touch down on the new runway as it arrives at its home base for the first time.

James Aikman, Project Director, Galliford Try Lagan Construction, said:

The Galliford Try Lagan Construction joint venture is delighted to have successfully reached this important stage of the project. We have a well-established relationship with DIO and this, combined with our experience of complex airside work, augurs very well for

the remainder of the programme.

Resurfacing the 1,855m long runway required the construction of two batching plants to prepare the specific asphalt and concrete needed for the new surface. Preparing the materials on site increased efficiency.

RAF Marham is currently the home of the RAF's Tornado fleet, which will begin operating from the runway immediately before being joined by the F-35s in due course. With the aircraft currently on operations it was important that this activity could be maintained without restriction. During the work, flying was only halted for three weeks while construction teams resurfaced an intersection between the main runway and the secondary runway. This was completed a day early despite poor weather.

The remainder of the work being undertaken at RAF Marham continues, including construction of three vertical landing pads to enable the F-35s to use their vertical landing capability and a squadron headquarters for 617 Squadron (The Dambusters).

Other work includes a high voltage power upgrade, refurbishment of 12 Hardened Aircraft Shelters and a small gym and canteen as well as a hangar, offices and technical facilities for 207 Squadron.