

News story: Historic day for the military as all roles are opened to women

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has today announced that all roles in the military are now open to women.

News story: £93 million missile project secures over 100 Belfast jobs

The £93 million Future Air Defence Availability Project (F-ADAPT) was awarded to Thales UK during Minister Andrew's visit to Belfast today. The contract will secure over 100 jobs in the city and provide the UK Armed Forces with a potent defensive ability.

The project will enhance the High Velocity and Lightweight Multi-role Missile systems which are designed to intercept a wide range of air and surface threats such as enemy drones, helicopters and armoured vehicles. The upgrades include thermal imaging which ensures the High Velocity Missile system can be used 24 hours a day and 'Friend or Foe' identification, which will maximise intelligence on potential threats and targets.

The F-ADAPT, secured by the MOD's procurement agency Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), will ensure that this critical capability is maintained during peacetime training but can also be rapidly deployed for operations into the 2020s.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Defence investment benefits every corner of our United Kingdom and Northern Ireland is no exception. This £93 million deal will secure over 100 local jobs and demonstrates the ingenuity and skill of Northern Irish industry.

In these uncertain times, it is crucial we protect ourselves from the rapidly evolving spectrum of global threats. These cutting-edge missile systems will fortify our military advantage over adversaries and help protect UK Armed Forces across the world and into the next decade.

DE&S Director Weapons, Richard Smart said:

The F-ADAPT is crucial in safeguarding our Very Short-Range Air Defence capability and the team at DE&S has worked collaboratively with industry to deliver the enhancements needed to ensure this project continues to support our troops for years to come.

Thales has a long and illustrious presence in Belfast dating back to 1952. Thales in Belfast is a world leader in the design and development of light weight weapon systems for tactical air, land and sea platforms. The company has over 500 local employees and has secured contracts worth hundreds of millions from the Ministry of Defence in recent years. The Belfast office contributed to Thales UK's record exports in 2017 which were worth over £500 million. The local economy also benefitted from a £6 million investment from Thales Alenia Space in 2016 which transformed the capital city into a global centre for excellence in electric propulsion systems.



Defence Minister Stuart Andrew at Thales Belfast. Crown copyright.

Northern Ireland plays an important role in UK defence, providing over 4,000 regulars and reserves to the Armed Forces, supporting over 600 industry jobs and is renowned for its defence manufacturing industry. Industry has committed to more than double its revenue from the aerospace, defence, security and space activities in the region to over £2 billion a year. Northern Ireland companies are part of the overall Ministry of Defence equipment and support plan to spend £180 billion over the decade to 2026-27 which will enhance prosperity across the UK.

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Defence Minister Stuart Andrew has announced a multi-million-pound deal to modernise and boost the British Army and Royal Marines' very short-range air defence capability.

News story: Contract awarded to resurface RAF Northolt runway

The contract, worth £23 million, will upgrade the existing runway, improve drainage and install new arrestor beds to improve safety. The resurfacing work will extend the life of the runway by 10 to 15 years.

RAF Northolt is the RAF's strategic site in London, home to 33 supported units from all 3 armed services and wider government. 32 (The Royal) Squadron are the resident flying squadron at the unit, who provide air transport to UK government and military leaders on official business.

Clement Adekoyejo, DIO's Project Manager for the work said:

We are pleased to have successfully awarded the contract for this vital project for military capability to Lagan Aviation & Infrastructure as the main contractor, and Mott MacDonald as our Principal Support Provider. DIO plays a crucial role in maintaining infrastructure to allow the armed forces to live, work and train. We appreciate the public support for the station and will endeavour to keep disruption to a minimum.

RAF Northolt's Station Commander, Group Captain Mike Carver said:

RAF Northolt is home to the last remaining military airfield within the M25 and the flying operations that take place here provide a vital contribution for defence, wider government and the United Kingdom. The runway resurfacing works will assure those flying operations for decades to come.



RAF Northolt from the air. Photo: Crown Copyright/MOD2017.

James Aikman, Operations Director, Lagan Aviation & Infrastructure said:

Having successfully recently completed RAF Gibraltar, RAF Akrotiri and now nearing completion at RAF Marham. Lagan Aviation and Infrastructure are delighted to have been awarded the runway refurbishment contract at RAF Northolt. We are pleased to be afforded the opportunity to continue our collaborative working relationship with the DIO, which has proven to be successful over the years. Our experienced and dedicated team look forward to delivering yet another interesting project safely, on time and within budget.

The airfield works are expected to take around six months with the runway being closed for renovation from spring to autumn 2019. During this time, military aircraft will operate from RAF Benson in South Oxfordshire and civilian aircraft will operate from other civilian airports.

News story: Contract awarded to resurface RAF Northolt runway

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has awarded a contract to Lagan Aviation & Infrastructure to resurface the runway at RAF Northolt.