

£110m upgrade for RAF Shadow fleet

Awarded to Raytheon UK, the £110 million contract will see the current fleet of six aircraft increased to eight, and the integration of the latest UK Sovereign Defensive Aids Systems, ensuring this vital capability continues to provide battle-winning intelligence gathering for years to come.

Supporting 150 highly-skilled jobs at Broughton, including specialist aerospace skills and apprentices, and roles at Raytheon's sites at RAF Waddington and Harlow, the contract will also sustain around 350 further jobs across the UK supply chain.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said:

"Our newly upgraded Shadow Mk2 aircraft be equipped with world-leading technology developed right here in the UK. This investment supports vital defence outputs and 150 high-quality jobs in North Wales."

Welsh Secretary Simon Hart said:

"The signing of this contract with Raytheon is huge news for North Wales and testament to the incredibly skilled local workforce whose hard work, dedication and professionalism have rightly been recognised.

"This is levelling up in action – the UK Government, working with our partners and using our spending power to support jobs and prosperity in every part of the UK.

"Today that levelling up is happening in Broughton with the signing of this £110 million contract."

Based at RAF Waddington and flown by 14 Squadron, Shadow forms a key part of the RAF's Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) force by gathering intelligence via its high-definition electro-optical and electronic sensors.

Once the data is gathered, satellite communication links enable the information to be assessed while the aircraft is airborne during a mission. To protect the aircraft from possible attack, the aircraft will be fitted with an improved state-of-the-art Defensive Aids System (DAS).

As part of the contract, the latest DAS will be installed across the fleet of 8 aircraft, increasing its ability to defend itself and operate in unfriendly airspace.

Shadow Programme Senior Responsible Owner, Group Captain Shaun Gee RAF said:

"This investment will enable the Shadow fleet to be increased in size and equipped with the latest technology providing a key capability as part of the

RAF's next generation Air Force."

It is expected the first upgraded aircraft will be delivered to the RAF in June 2023, with delivery of the eighth Shadow R Mk2 aircraft before the end of 2025"

DE&S CEO, Sir Simon Bollom, said:

"This contract is the result of collaborative working between DE&S and industry and ensures the RAF has the world-class capability needed to protect the UK's interests against ever-evolving threats."

The investment for an upgraded Shadow fleet forms part of the vision laid out in the Defence Command Paper, which is ensuring that the Armed Forces are prepared for new and emerging threats. This ambition is underpinned by a £24 billion increase in defence spending over next four years.