

RAF Lakenheath gets power to grow thanks to the Defence Infrastructure Organisation

DIO awarded a contract worth £160 million to a Kier VolkerFitzpatrick joint venture in November to deliver critical infrastructure at the Suffolk airbase to support the arrival of the new US F35s in 2021.

Construction started on the site earlier this month and additional electrical capacity is needed to support new buildings which are planned to be delivered as part of the project.

DIO worked with the US 48 Fighter Wing Civil Engineering Squadron (48CES), based at RAF Lakenheath, to determine the additional capacity required. The upgrade work, which involved installing a 24km cable route across a railway, river and roads, was then carried out by UK Power Networks.

Ductwork and cabling were completed in early July and power will be available from September, 4 months ahead of schedule and over one year before it is required. UK Power Networks coordinated the work with two county highways departments and worked with other utility providers on the route to minimise disruption to road users and residents. This will provide the base with a 15 megawatt power supply equivalent to the energy used to power more than 5,000 homes.

DIO USVF Programme Director, Keith Maddison, said:

This work has gone incredibly smoothly. We are pleased that this complex power upgrade has been completed ahead of schedule so that all other construction can continue as planned.

This is an excellent example of how DIO works well with its partners, how we can be agile and respond innovatively to challenges.

We are grateful to 48 Fighter Wing Civil Engineering Squadron and to UK Power Networks for working together to minimise disruption both to local residents and to those on the base.

Mark Adolphus, director of connections at UK Power Networks, said:

Work is progressing well with the Ministry of Defence to deliver a safe and reliable 15 megawatt power supply needed for buildings that will accommodate US Air Force F35 squadrons at RAF Lakenheath.

Construction work on a new substation, housing essential equipment, is nearing completion and the majority of the new cabling is now in place. The project is on track to be delivered months ahead of schedule, while minimising the impact on the base and the local community.

Colonel Will Marshall, 48th Fighter Wing commander said:

We are truly thankful to our local community for their patience and understanding during high traffic congestion periods associated with this upgrade,

Preparing the base for the future comes with some challenges, which can affect our local communities, and we appreciate our partners working diligently to complete the project ahead of schedule.

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