

‘Historic moment for shipbuilding’ will create 900 jobs in Belfast

Around 900 jobs are to be created in what has been described as a “historic moment for shipbuilding in Belfast”.

The city’s Harland and Wolff shipyard – which built the Titanic – is part of the Team Resolute consortium which is to deliver three fleet solid support ships for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Made up of BMT, Harland and Wolff and Navantia UK, the consortium was selected as the preferred bidder last November.

The £1.6bn contract is expected to create 1,200 UK shipyard jobs – including 900 in Belfast – and 800 further jobs across the supply chain.

The deal releases £100m of investment from Team Resolute into UK shipyards, including £77m of infrastructure, the bulk of which will go into Harland and Wolff’s Belfast and Appledore shipyards.

A further £21m will be invested in skills and technology transfer from Navantia UK.

The trio will be the first ships built by Harland and Wolff in Belfast since MV Anvil Point was launched in 2002.

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The historic Belfast shipyard, which built the Titanic, appeared to be facing an uncertain future in 2019 when it was placed into administration.

Its future was secured when InfraStrata, now Harland and

Wolff, acquired it for £6m.

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Defence Secretary Ben Wallace and Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris visited the Harland and Wolff shipyard on Wednesday.

Mr Wallace said: "Creating jobs and prosperity, Team Resolute is bringing shipbuilding back to Belfast, developing a modern, resilient and thriving shipbuilding industry that will support naval and commercial shipbuilding into the future."

Harland and Wolff chief executive, John Wood, said: "This is the last chance to capture the excellent shipbuilding skills that remain in Belfast and Appledore before they are lost, and pass them on to the next generation of UK shipbuilders."

Union representative Joe Passmore, of Unite, hailed an "historic moment for shipbuilding in Belfast".