

The Ministry of Defence has awarded a £1.2BN contract for HMS Audacious, the latest Astute Class attack submarine to be built for the Royal Navy.

The contract with BAE Systems will safeguard 3,000 skilled jobs at Barrow in Cumbria and represents a significant step forward in the Astute submarine programme.

Audacious is the fourth of seven Astute Class submarines being built for the Royal Navy. They are the most technologically advanced the Royal Navy has ever sent to sea and offer a step change in capability.

The first two boats, Astute and Ambush, are currently undergoing sea trials to rigorously test their systems. Astute has conducted deep dive trials and successfully fired Tomahawk land attack missiles and Spearfish torpedoes.

Ambush's ability to dive and surface has been successfully tested as has her propulsion system and the two boats have been conducting trials together on the Clyde this week. The third boat, Artful, is reaching the final stages of her construction at Barrow shipyard.

The MoD can also confirm today that a further £1.5BN has been committed to the remaining three submarines in the class. This has enabled early build work to start on boat five (Anson) and long lead items to be ordered and bought for the as yet unnamed boats six and seven.