



ANDURIL INDUSTRIES UK & ARCHER, SUPPORTED BY SKYPORTS DRONE SERVICES AND ATKINSRÉALIS, TEAM UP TO TEST DUAL-USE EVTOL CARGO AIRCRAFT IN UK MARKET

News / Manufacturer



Anduril Industries UK will lead a team for upcoming programmes, including to bid for future flight opportunities. Anduril UK, building on its existing partnership with Archer, will receive additional support from Skyports Drone Services and AtkinsRéalis, two other leading technology companies. Together, Anduril and its partners will explore civil and defence applications in the UK using Archer's Midnight eVTOL aircraft. This includes explorations for beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations, enabling low-emission, rapid-response logistics to support a wide range of UK-focused civil and military use cases, including cargo.

Anduril will serve as the lead systems integrator incorporating software-defined mission autonomy, communications, and command-and-control systems tailored for UK operational needs. Archer will act as the platform provider, adapting Archer's Midnight platform for dual-use applications and continuing its work with Anduril on the planned hybrid aircraft.

This also marks Anduril bringing in Archer's VTOL technologies to the UK market, furthering investment, job creation and competition to strengthen the UK's capabilities in aviation and defence, and furthering Anduril UK's commitment to UK Defence and wider economic growth. The group will also continue work together on Archer and Anduril's previously announced hybrid-propulsion VTOL aircraft.

This approach to air system design and development will be supported by AtkinsRéalis' deep expertise in safely and efficiently incorporating novel aviation technologies into UK airspace – AtkinsRéalis was recently appointed as the Civil Aviation Authority's first approved assessor of commercial drones.

Skyports Drone Services complements this with its own extensive operational experience, having delivered numerous beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) campaigns for major clients including the NHS and Royal Mail. In 2024, it took part in The Royal Navy Heavy Lift Challenge, showcasing the efficacy of dual-use aircraft.

By combining the latest advancements in eVTOL aircraft development, software-defined systems integration, regulatory expertise and operational delivery, this team is well-positioned to support the UK's ambition to become a global leader in aviation technologies.

Dr Rich Drake, Managing Director of Anduril UK commented: "The UK has clear ambitions both for innovation and growth, as well as to continue its leadership in advanced air mobility. This partnership brings together Archer's leading eVTOL technology, Skyports' infrastructure expertise and AtkinsRéalis' safety systems in order to support future flight projects, accelerating VTOL and BVLOS developments. It also unlocks opportunities in defence and civil domains, including rapid, low-emission urban transport and surveillance capabilities for defence applications. Introducing Archer to the UK, alongside experienced local partners, marks a step forward in delivering integrated air mobility".

Verity Richardson, Head of Business Development, UK, at Archer stated: "This team marks the next phase of our partnership with Anduril. There's an incredible amount of opportunity here in the UK and worldwide to deploy dual-use advanced aircraft and we look forward to making it a reality".

Alex Brown, Director of Skyports Drone Services said: "The UK Government is making strong progress in enabling permanent BVLOS drone operations so partnering with Anduril and Archer is a natural step, as we onboard more advanced aircraft and increase our payload and range capabilities. Our first project on cargo services will lay the groundwork for other applications with significant value, such as surveillance and search and rescue".

David Clark, Global Head of Aerospace & Defence, AtkinsRéalis, said: "Leveraging our experience in novel aircraft design and emerging regulatory frameworks, AtkinsRéalis will be supporting the team to safely integrate automated uncrewed aircrafts into the UK's skies. The combination of local expertise with investment from industry leaders like Archer and Anduril will strengthen the UK's position at the forefront of the future of flight".

Anduril UK software-focused approach to product development enables it to deploy new systems on compressed timelines, fielding several dual-use military capabilities, most notably providing the Ghost autonomous uncrewed air system to the UK MOD. The programme would further demonstrate Anduril UK's commitment to engineering and manufacturing scalable technologies in the UK, building on current approaches, and bringing further investment and job creation.

Over the past two years, AtkinsRéalis and Skyports have been demonstrating the feasibility of an eVTOL ecosystem in the UK, as members of the Advanced Mobility Ecosystem Consortium, which is supported by the Future Flight Challenge Phase 3. This consortium is developing key technology and infrastructure, and exploring key aspects of the passenger journey, vehicle operation, airspace navigation, ground charging, and local stakeholder engagement.

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