



## DEBATE PACK

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# Future of the UK Space Industry

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## Summary

This pack has been prepared ahead of the debate on the future of the UK space industry on 4 February 2021. The debate will be opened by Owen Thompson MP.

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

# 1. Background

The UK Government and the space industry have ambitions to capture [10% of the global space market](#) by 2030. The latest figures from the 2018 [Size and Health of the UK Space Industry](#) survey show that “total UK space industry income grew to £14.8 billion in 2016-17” which is estimated to represent “5.1% of the global space economy”. The survey was undertaken by London Economics for the UK Space Agency. The “space industry” is defined in the survey as covering all “organisations that are engaged in any space-related activity to some degree”, comprising both:

- Commercial organisations (i.e. businesses, companies, firms) that earn revenue from the manufacture, launch and operation of satellites/spacecraft, and from utilisation of the signals and data supplied by satellites/spacecraft to develop value-added applications; and
- Non-commercial organisations (e.g. universities, research institutes) that secure funding to contribute space-specific research and expertise throughout the industry supply chain, often in partnership with commercial organisations.<sup>1</sup>

Almost 950 organisations, involving 41,900 jobs, spread across all 13 regions of the UK are engaged in the space industry (though with concentrations found in London, the South East, the East of England and Scotland).<sup>2</sup> The majority of income (£12.4 billion) is generated by the ‘downstream’ segment of the industry through space applications such as direct to home broadcasting. ‘Upstream’ activities, including space manufacturing (eg launch vehicles, satellites, payloads, scientific instruments), generated an income of £2.4 billion in 2016-17.<sup>3</sup> The following table breaks down UK space industry income by capability:

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<sup>1</sup> London Economics, [Size & Health of the UK Space Industry 2018, A Report to the UK Space Agency](#), Summary Report, January 2019, p3  
<sup>2</sup> London Economics, [Size & Health of the UK Space Industry 2018, A Report to the UK Space Agency](#), Summary Report, January 2019, p1  
<sup>3</sup> London Economics, [Size & Health of the UK Space Industry 2018, A Report to the UK Space Agency](#), Summary Report, January 2019, p5

<b>UK space industry income by capability</b>	
£ millions, 2016/17	
Broadcasting	7,584
Communications	2,741
Positioning, navigation, timing	1,819
Defence/military	1,228
Other	523
Earth observation	407
Science or exploration	315
Transportation (including launch)	97
Meteorology	78
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,792</b>

Source: London Economics, Size & Health of the UK Space Industry 2018

In addition, the UK Space Agency and its partners have recently published an [interactive map](#) outlining the universities, companies, manufacturing businesses, funding bodies and networks that form the UK space sector.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [KTN and UK Space Agency launch UK Space Sector Landscape Map](#), UK Space Agency, 21 January 2021

## 2. UK space policy

In December 2015, the Government published its first ever [National Space Policy](#), which set out that the Government:

1. Recognises that space is of strategic importance to the UK because of the value that space programmes deliver back to public services, national security, science and innovation and the economy.
2. Commits to preserving and promoting the safety and security of the unique space operating environment, free from interference.
3. Supports the growth of a robust and competitive commercial space sector, underpinned by excellent academic research.
4. Commits to cooperating internationally to create the legal frameworks for the responsible use of space and to collaborating with other nations to deliver maximum benefit from UK investment in space.<sup>5</sup>

Since 2015, efforts have been particularly focused on enabling commercial spaceflight from the UK, with investments made in several spaceports, such as Sutherland Space Hub in Scotland (which secured [planning permission](#) in August 2020) and [Spaceport Cornwall](#) in Newquay, see:

- Commons Library Insight, [When will UK spaceports be ready for lift-off?](#), April 2019

In 2018, the [Space Industry Act 2018](#) provided for the creation of a regulatory framework to enable commercial spaceflight activities (involving both launch to orbit and sub-orbital spaceflight) to be carried out from spaceports in the United Kingdom. For further information see:

- Commons Library briefing, [The Space Industry Bill 2017-2019](#), February 2018.

The licencing framework, however, is not yet in place. On 29 July 2020, the Department for Transport published a [consultation](#) seeking views on the regulations needed to:

- operate a spaceport
- carry out spaceflight activities
- provide range control service.<sup>6</sup>

The consultation is now closed though an outcome is yet to be published.

Prior to the launch of the consultation, the Government signed the 'US-UK Technology Safeguards Agreement' which, the Government states, "will enable U.S. companies to participate in space launches from the

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<sup>5</sup> HM Government, [National Space Policy](#), 2015, p8

<sup>6</sup> Department for Transport and UK Space Agency, [Spaceport and spaceflight activities: regulations and guidance](#), 29 July 2020

United Kingdom”.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the UK Space Agency launched its [National Space Innovation Programme](#) (NSIP) during the summer to “provide grant funding to UK project teams to support the development of their innovation ideas”.<sup>8</sup> The Agency has since [announced](#) that 21 organisations had been awarded a share of over £7 million of NSIP funding.

Further information about the UK Space Agency’s ‘priority programmes’ for 2020-21 can be found in its [Corporate Plan](#) (published 20 January 2021).

### **National Space Strategy and National Space Council**

The Queen’s Speech on 19 December 2019 set out the Government’s plans to establish a new National Space Council and launch a UK Space Strategy:

The Cabinet-level National Space Council will help put space at the heart of Government policy and help us deliver a UK Space Strategy. The Space Strategy will boost future funding and lead to a dedicated innovation programme to support future space exploration and exploitation of technology developments by funding cutting-edge British innovation in AI, robotics and satellites.<sup>9</sup>

The National Space Council’s terms of reference – as set out in the list of [‘Cabinet Committees’](#) – are:

To consider issues concerning prosperity, diplomacy and national security in, through and from space, as part of coordinating overall Government policy.<sup>10</sup>

To date, a National Space Strategy has not yet been published. In response to a Parliamentary Question from January 2021 on when the strategy can be expected, the Government stated, “The UK’s first comprehensive national space strategy is being developed under the direction of the National Space Council”.<sup>11</sup>

### **OneWeb**

In July 2020, the Government announced a bid to acquire the satellite technology firm OneWeb in conjunction with Bharti Global Ltd, with each partner providing \$500 million. The rationale behind the acquisition was set out in a Government press release:

With a sovereign global satellite system, the UK will further develop its advanced manufacturing base, making the most of its highly skilled workforce as the hardware is further developed and equipment and services are deployed to make the most of this unique capability.

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<sup>7</sup> [Press release: New US-UK agreement boosts UK’s spaceport plans](#), UK Space Agency, 17 June 2020

<sup>8</sup> UK Space Agency, [National Space Innovation Programme](#), 22 July 2020

<sup>9</sup> Prime Minister’s Office, [Queen’s Speech December 2019: background briefing notes](#), 19 December 2019, p108

<sup>10</sup> Cabinet Office, [List of Cabinet Committees](#), 19 November 2020

<sup>11</sup> [PQ 133283](#) [on Space Technology], 15 January 2021

OneWeb will also contribute to the government's plan to join the first rank of space nations, along with our commitment to making the UK a world leader in science, research and development.<sup>12</sup>

Industry experts were questioned by the [Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee](#) on the OneWeb deal in September 2020. The BEIS Acting Permanent Secretary and Accounting Officer, Sam Beckett, also wrote to the Secretary of State for Business, Alok Sharma, seeking a Ministerial Direction for the purchase, noting the time available to review the purchase, value for money and potential non-monetary benefits.<sup>13</sup>

The acquisition was [completed](#) in November 2020.

### **Brexit and the UK space industry**

The UK's membership of the European Space Agency (ESA) is not affected by leaving the European Union as ESA is not an EU organisation. The UK no longer participates in 'Galileo' (the global navigation satellite system (GNSS)) or the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS), both of which are EU programmes. There is an agreement in principle to continue to participate in the Copernicus component of the EU Space Programme as a third country for 2021-2027 (Copernicus is the EU's Earth observation programme). Further information can be found at the following links:

- Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, [Guidance: UK involvement in the EU Space Programme](#), 31 December 2020
- [Joint Declaration on Participation in Union Programmes and Access to Programme Services](#), December 2020
- POST, [Key EU space programmes](#), June 2020

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<sup>12</sup> [Press release: UK government to acquire cutting-edge satellite network](#), Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 3 July 2020

<sup>13</sup> [Letter to the Secretary of State from the Acting Permanent Secretary and Accounting Officer](#), BEIS, 26 June 2020

### 3. Press articles

*Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.*

BBC News Online, 18 January 2021

[Shetland space launch plans submitted](#)

The Telegraph, 17 January 2021

[Britain readies for lift off in the great satellite space race](#)

The Guardian, 31 December 2020

[Is the UK about to have liftoff in the global space industry?](#)

The Times, 19 December 2020

[Britain accused of blowing £400m in space race with Elon Musk](#)

The Telegraph, 24 November 2020

[Britain's reliance on foreign satellites risks 'economic blackout of frightening proportions'](#)

The Telegraph, 17 November 2020

[Meet the British start-ups battling to take on Elon Musk's SpaceX](#)

The Telegraph, 16 November 2020

[Space industry throws its weight behind UK sat-nav plan](#)

The Independent, 30 October 2020

[The UK is a world leader in science and technology but we will quickly fall behind without investment](#)

The Guardian, 9 Oct 2020

[Residents of remote Scottish peninsula face up to its future as spaceport](#)

The Telegraph, 27 September 2020

[Inside the battle to build a British version of the Galileo satellite system](#)

The Independent, 29 July 2020

[We have made a 'giant leap' to launching spaceflights from Britain, UK government claims](#)

The Telegraph, 3 July 2020

[Why has the UK invested \\$500m in OneWeb's satellites?](#)

The Independent, 21 May 2020

[UK's first complete rocket test in 50 years takes place in Scotland](#)

## 4. Press releases

**UK Space Agency**

**[Spacewalk to fit ground-breaking British kit to International Space Station](#)**

Scientists in UK and Europe will benefit from faster transmissions of key data from space

**27 January 2021**

**UK Space Agency**

**[UN and UK sign agreement to promote space sustainability](#)**

International efforts to protect future space activity have been given a boost thanks to a new partnership between the UN and the UK government

**26 January 2021**

**UK Space Agency**

**[KTN and UK Space Agency launch UK Space Sector Landscape Map](#)**

The new interactive tool is set to become a main point of reference for the UK space sector, mapping the capabilities of over 900 organisations in the industry

**21 January 2021**

**UK Space Agency**

**[Rolls-Royce and UK Space Agency launch study into nuclear-powered space exploration](#)**

The UK Space Agency and Rolls-Royce are joining forces for a unique study into how nuclear power and technologies could be used as part of space exploration

**12 January 2021**

**UK Space Agency**

**[Government funds UK companies at the forefront of space innovation](#)**

21 UK organisations have been awarded a share of over £7 million of funding to put the UK at the forefront of the latest advances in space innovation

**7 December 2020**

**Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

**[UK government secures satellite network OneWeb](#)**



Acquisition of global satellite communications company, OneWeb, completes today, following successful government bid in July 2020.

**20 November 2020**

**UK Space Agency**

**[New support for UK space hubs unveiled](#)**

Government has backed the development of new 'space hubs' across England, as well as funding to support projects in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**18 November 2020**

**Department for Transport**

**[Giant leap for UK spaceflight programme as consultation launches](#)**

A public consultation on regulations that will support the Space Industry Act 2018 opens today, paving the way for the UK's first ever space launch.

**29 July 2020**

**UK Space Agency**

**[New US-UK agreement boosts UK's spaceport plans](#)**

The UK and US governments have signed a new agreement paving the way for US companies to operate from UK spaceports and export space launch technology.

**17 June 2020**

## 5. Parliamentary material

### 5.1 Statements

**Written statement:** [Consultation on draft insurance and liabilities requirements to implement the Space Industry Act 2018](#)

**Member:** Rachel Maclean | Department for Transport

I am today publishing the consultation on the draft insurance, liabilities and charging requirements to implement the Space Industry Act 2018. This consultation seeks views on the operability and effectiveness of the proposed liabilities, insurance and charging requirements to implement the Space Industry Act 2018, including the use of licence conditions to cover insurance requirements. It also seeks views on the draft Space Industry (Liabilities) Regulations and the associated guidance documents, as well as to gather new evidence and test the assumptions in the consultation-stage impact assessment.

The UK's space sector is a unique national asset, and this Government is committed to growing this exciting industry. Our regulatory framework for spaceflight will support safe and sustainable activities that will drive research, innovation and entrepreneurship in this vital sector, exploiting the unique environment of space, and providing a catalyst for growth across the space sector. Harnessing the opportunities provided by commercial spaceflight will also feed into our emerging National Space Strategy, the Government's agenda to level-up the UK, and Global Britain.

Government and industry have set a target to grow the UK's share of the global market to 10 per cent by 2030. To support this, our spaceflight programme aims to establish commercial vertical and horizontal small satellite launch, sub-orbital spaceflight and space tourism from UK spaceports. To expand the UK's spaceflight capabilities, government is funding a range of industry-led projects. Separately, we are investing in related facilities and technology. This will provide industry with new commercial market opportunities, grow our export share and help to build new UK supply chains.

Liabilities and insurance requirements

An important element of the Space Industry Act 2018 concerns operators' liabilities arising from their spaceflight activity. Under UN space treaties, the UK Government is ultimately liable to pay compensation for damage caused by its space objects on the surface of the Earth or to aircraft in flight, and liable for damage due to its faults in space. This means that another state suffering damage can bring a claim against the UK Government under the UN space treaties. The Space Industry Act 2018 places an obligation on an operator carrying out spaceflight activities to indemnify the Government or listed person or body for any claims brought against them for loss or damage caused by those activities. It also includes liability provisions to provide the general public in the UK with easy recourse to compensation.

We recognise that this is an important issue for the UK space sector and understand that we need to create the right environment for the UK to be competitive and for our British companies to compete on the global stage. We have listened to the concerns industry has raised about liabilities and insurance and our consultation sets out approach to address those concerns, as well as other issues relating to insurance and liabilities. This follows a Call for Evidence on these matters published in March 2018.

We are proposing to limit operator liability and use the Modelled Insurance Requirement approach, which is considered to be critical to enabling launch and unlocking the benefits of spaceflight.

The insurance proposals and liabilities regulations are part of the package of regulations needed to implement the Space Industry Act 2018 and to allow for commercial spaceflight launches to take place from the UK. They supplement the consultation which was launched on 29 July 2020 on the draft Space Industry Regulations, which covers the other secondary legislation and guidance needed to enable commercial spaceflight in the UK.

Together with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the UK Space Agency and Civil Aviation Authority we have legislated to allow for the regulation of a wide range of new commercial spaceflight technologies, including traditional vertically launched vehicles, air-launched vehicles and sub-orbital spaceplanes and balloons. It is our intention to merge the draft Liabilities and Space Industry Regulations once the consultations have concluded.

#### *Next steps*

The deadline for responses to the consultation is the 10 November.

Following which I will update the House and publish the Government's response to the consultation.

**13 Oct 2020 | HCWS505**

## 5.2 PQs

### [Space Technology](#)

**Tabled by: Wayne, David (Lab)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of representations from industry to develop a sovereign space-based positioning, navigation and timing capability on the UK's space capability.

**Answering member: Amanda Solloway | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

The Government's Space-Based Positioning Navigation and Timing Programme (SBPP) is exploring innovative and alternative ways of delivering vital satellite navigation and timing services to the UK. These services are critical for electricity networks, communications systems,

and the maritime, aviation and defence sectors, as well as for getting from A to B.

In October a 'Request for Information' consultation was opened with industry and academia to ensure the right space-based solutions are explored by the new programme. This has now closed, we are grateful for the inputs received and are now considering this feedback that will set out approach and workstreams going forward.

Once approved, the SBPP Pre-Market Engagement strategy will set out the next steps and timings for engagement with and the opportunities for industry in 2021. Further details will be shared as soon as possible.

This work will boost the UK's already thriving space industry and expertise, whilst paving the way for a more 'Global Britain', with greater independence from foreign systems.

**27 Jan 2021 | Written question | House of Commons | PQ 141923**

**[Space Technology: Exports](#)**

**Tabled by: Griffith, Andrew (Con)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment her Department has made of the value to the UK of space sector exports.

**Answering member: Graham Stuart | Department for International Trade**

The UK Space Agency's most recent estimates are that between 2016 and 2017, the UK Space sector's exports amounted to £5.5 billion. In 2016/17, the industry directly contributed £5.7 billion of GVA (in current prices) to UK economic output – equivalent to 38% of space industry income and 0.29% of total UK GDP.

Looking ahead, the Department for International Trade is leading the development of a support plan in coordination with other government departments to enable more small and medium-sized space enterprises to export, and the sector to build back better from the impacts of Covid-19.

**27 Jan 2021 | Written question | House of Commons | PQ 140994**

**[National Aeronautics and Space Administration: Foreign Students](#)**

**Tabled by: Pritchard, Mark (Con)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will hold discussions with his US counterpart on ensuring that UK students can participate in the NASA International Internship Program.

**Answering member: Amanda Solloway | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

In the light of our growing international programme of space collaborations, it would be timely for us to consider the opportunities this programme might offer within funding constraints. I shall instruct officials at the UK Space Agency to discuss this with their counterparts at NASA.

**22 Jan 2021 | Written question | House of Commons | PQ 137899**

### [Space Technology](#)

**Asked by: Morgan, Stephen (Lab)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what general programmes and themes he plans to include in the national space strategy.

**Answering member: Amanda Solloway | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

We are committed to making the UK world leader in space, building on our excellence in science to deliver solutions to some of the world's greatest challenges. Our UK Space Strategy will help the UK lead the way in this fast-growing, high-technology sector, levelling up our economy, strengthening our global influence and keeping people safe, including through a dedicated space innovation programme.

**24 Nov 2020 | Written questions | House of Commons | PQ 115799**

### [Space Technology](#)

**Asked by: Morgan, Stephen (Lab)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policy on future UK space capability of the Athena paper entitled A new Approach to Space.

**Answering member: Amanda Solloway | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

The Government is committed to making the UK a global leader in space. As we develop the UK's first comprehensive national space strategy, we are working closely with partners across the sector to realise our shared ambition for the UK's world-class space industry.

**24 Nov 2020 | Written question | House of Commons | PQ 115801**

### [Space Technology: Skilled Workers](#)

**Asked by: Morgan, Stephen (Lab)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to increase the number of suitably qualified and experienced personnel (SQEP) in the UK space sector.

**Answering member: Amanda Solloway | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

The UK Space Agency is working closely with organisations across the sector to understand their varied requirements for SQEP. We are undertaking a nationwide Space Skills Survey to map the current learning landscape and identify gaps in provision of support. A Space Skills Advisory Panel, including expertise from across government, academia and industry, will then prioritise new training opportunities to ensure we can deliver a skilled and enthusiastic workforce for the space sector.

The UKSA has worked with the Space Engineering Trailblazer group to develop a new apprenticeship standard at level 4, and continues to work with industry to finalise the standards for a level 6 apprenticeship in Space Systems Engineering. Work also continues with other Trailblazer Groups to address other space skills issues such as data applications.

The UKSA also continues to raise awareness in the student body of the career opportunities presented by the space sector. This is delivered through country-wide careers engagements as well as through the Space Placements in Industry (SPIN) scheme. This successful scheme provides small grants to enable SMEs in particular to employ university students for short placements within their business, providing both meaningful work experience and developing skills in the interns to improve their employability. This year we received a record number of applications for the programme which was able to proceed with many projects being offered remotely, a threefold increase over previous years.

**24 Nov 2020 | Written questions | House of Commons | PQ 115796**

**[Spaceflight: Government Assistance](#)**

**Asked by: Everitt, Ben (Con)**

What steps his Department is taking to support the UK space sector.

**Answering member: Amanda Solloway | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

We are committed to establishing a commanding lead in space and other industries of the future. My Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister has established a National Space Council to deliver this ambition.

We are investing in the next generation of satellite technologies, backing exciting new spaceports in Scotland and Cornwall, and using UK space expertise to tackle climate change.

**10 Nov 2020 | Written questions | House of Commons | PQ 908555**

**[Space Technology](#)**

**Asked by: Lord West of Spithead (Lab)**

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will publish a new cross-departmental National Space Strategy.

**Answering member: Lord Callanan | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

The UK's space sector can strengthen our national capabilities, create high-skilled jobs and drive future economic growth across the UK. In order to support this, the Queen's Speech on 19 December set out the Government's intent to establish a new National Space Council and launch a comprehensive UK Space Strategy. The Council will consider its strategy in due course.

**06 Aug 2020 | Written questions | House of Lords | HL 7492**

**Oneweb: Satellites****Asked by: Onwurah, Chi (Lab)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of OneWeb's (a) R&D and (b) manufacturing takes place in the UK; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect on those proportions in the event that the Government invests in that company's satellite broadband programme.

**Answering member: Amanda Solloway | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

The Government led a successful bid to acquire OneWeb, who develop cutting-edge satellite technology in the UK and in the United States. The deal will support the UK to be a pioneer in the research, development, manufacturing, and exploitation of novel satellite technologies, whilst boosting UK manufacturing.

This deal will protect 70 existing jobs and the Government will be encouraging future roles to be based in the UK, both in OneWeb itself and in the wider supply chain. The UK will seek to develop further its advanced manufacturing base, making the most of its highly skilled workforce as the hardware is further developed and equipment and services are deployed to make the most of this unique capability.

This Government has made clear its ambitions for space and is developing a new National Space Strategy to bring long-term strategic and commercial benefits to the UK. We are in regular discussions with the space industry as part of this work and how this could be taken forward.

**06 Jul 2020 | Written questions | House of Commons | PQ 66860**

**Space Technology: Contracts****Asked by: Onwurah, Chi (Lab)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the recent award of Copernicus contracts on the UK space sector.

**Answering member: Amanda Solloway | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

UK space sector organisations have won important new contracts from the European Space Agency for work related to five out of the six new Copernicus missions. The Government has made clear its ambitions for space and is developing a new UK Space Strategy to bring long-term strategic and commercial benefits to the nation.

**06 Jul 2020 | Written questions | House of Commons | PQ 67638**

**Space Technology****Asked by: Morden, Jessica (Lab)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he is having with UK satellite companies on their development of capability in Cislunar space; and if he will make a statement

**Answering member: Amanda Solloway | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

The UK is investing to participate in future lunar activities including Cislunar space through our membership of the European Space Agency. This is an independent organisation and not part of the EU. In November 2019, the Government invested 218M€ in ESA's exploration programme which covers our involvement in the International Space Station, and the exploration of the Moon and Mars. ESA has provided workshops for industry explaining the future opportunities. Specifically, for the Moon the future opportunities include building elements of the Gateway a space station that will orbit the Moon, led by NASA; a commercial data relay service and a study for a future telecommunication and navigation network service. UK officials and ESA are working closely together with SSTL and Goonhilly Earth Station to launch the first lunar communications satellite in 2023. This activity will enable the UK to deliver on the joint Statement of Intent between the UK Space Agency and NASA to identify areas of cooperation for Lunar exploration and research.

**05 May 2020 | Written questions | House of Commons | PQ 39823**

**[Covid-19: UK Space Industry](#)**

**Asked by: Andrew Griffith (Con)**

What steps his Department is taking to help the UK space industry to support nationwide plans to tackle the covid-19 outbreak.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Amanda Solloway)**

I thank my hon. Friend for his question. The UK Space Agency, working with NHS England and the European Space Agency, has made £2.6 million available for "close to market" ideas to manage pandemics. A new, fast contracting process will ensure swift development. The agency is also working with UK Research and Innovation to explore how drones can support health services.

**Andrew Griffith (Con)**

May I join my hon. Friend the Minister in thanking the space industry for its help with the crisis? Does she agree that investment in the UK space sector has a vital role to play in growing the UK economy, and could she confirm that programmes such as the global navigation satellite system and Skynet 6 are moving ahead at pace?

**Amanda Solloway**

My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The growing UK space sector employs 42,000 people and contributes £300 billion to the wider UK economy by providing satellite services on which many industries rely. The UK Space Agency continues to investigate the requirements, design specifications and cost of a UK GNSS capability, and it is working closely with the Ministry of Defence to support activities under the Skynet



contract. We are working hard to develop a UK space strategy to generate further economic growth across the country.

**HC Deb 04 May 2020 | PQ 902155**

### [Space Industry](#)

**Asked by: Garnier, Mark (Con)**

What steps she is taking to support the space industry in the UK.

**Answered by: Chris Skidmore | Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

The UK space sector employs 42,000 highly skilled people, generating more than £300 billion for the wider economy. We recently committed ourselves to investing £374 million a year—a record 15% increase—with the European Space Agency over the next five years, and our national space council and space strategy will help us to lead the way in the evolution of this high-technology sector.

**Asked by: Garnier, Mark (Con)**

Following the welcome announcements in the Queen’s Speech about investment in the UK space sector, will my hon. Friend tell us the status of funding for innovation in the sector and of plans for the proposed UK space strategy?

**Answered by: Chris Skidmore**

I thank my hon. Friend for his work as vice-chairman of a newly formed all-party parliamentary group, the parliamentary space committee. I know that he plans to fly to the United States next month to attend the launch of the European Space Agency’s solar orbiter, which was built in Stevenage. It is a fantastic piece of UK science engineering and was funded by the Government to the tune of £216 million.

I understand that the space industry has proposed a space innovation fund, and I am interested in working with the industry on that. The national space council will consider how we can build on existing commitments through a comprehensive UK space strategy, which will help to create thousands of jobs across the country.

**Asked by: Shannon, Jim (DUP)**

It is good to hear what the Minister says about the space sector, but may I ask him specifically how all the regions of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will benefit from that potential, and, in particular, how Northern Ireland will benefit?

**Answered by: Chris Skidmore**

Last year, during a fantastic trip to the Belfast region, I had an opportunity to meet representatives of Thales Alenia Space, which is working on some of the capsules that encase satellite technology. The hon. Gentleman was absolutely right to ask that question. Our national space strategy constitutes a one nation approach that will involve every part of the UK, from a horizontal launch site down in Newquay in Cornwall to a vertical launch site up in Sutherland in Scotland—we are

also thinking about establishing a spaceport in Wales. Every part of the UK will be involved in space, and rightly so.

**Answered by: Clark, Greg (Con)**

We have a growing share of one of the fastest-growing markets in the world—the market for satellites—but no country in Europe has the ability to launch satellites into space, and there is a race to be the first to do so. Will my hon. Friend update the House on when we expect the Sutherland site to be ready for the launch of the first UK satellite?

**Answered by: Chris Skidmore**

I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend for his hard work on space when he was Business Secretary. He was responsible for working on the Satellite Applications Catapult increase, and for the £99 million satellite testing facility at Harwell, which will mean that satellites can be tested here rather than our having to go abroad. He also set out our mission to be the first country in Europe to have both horizontal and vertical launch. As for Sutherland, I am working closely with the highlands and islands authorities to ensure that we can achieve our vertical launch, and that we work with Lockheed and other partners to do so as soon as possible.

**HC Deb 21 Jan 2020 | PQ 900283**

## 5.3 Early Day Motions

### [Space Week](#)

**Primary sponsor: Thompson, Owen (SNP)**

That this House celebrates that 4 to 10 October 2020 marked Space Week; notes that Space Week celebrates at an international level the contributions of space science and technology to the betterment of the human condition; notes that this year the theme was Satellites Improve Life; celebrates the contribution of satellite manufacturers and the researchers and engineers behind them to the UK and Scotland's technological advancement; further welcomes the huge economic potential of this industry as international connectivity becomes more imperative than ever; and calls on the Government to support this industry at all available opportunities, and provide clarity on how the UK intends to replace the EU's Galileo system after the end of the transition period.

**12 Oct 2020 | House of Commons | EDM 993**

## 5.4 Committee reports

European Union Committee, Seventeenth Report, [Chapter 1: Agreements reported for special attention](#), 27 November 2020, HL 181 2019-21

## 6. Further reading

UK Space Agency, [UK Space Agency Corporate Plan 2020-21](#), 20 January 2021

UKspace, [Securing Our Future in Space](#), 3 December 2020

Athena, [A New Approach to Space](#), 6 November 2020

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, [UK/USA: Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Notes between the United Kingdom and the United States of America on Technology Safeguards associated with United States Participation in Space Launches from the United Kingdom](#), Cm 307, 16 October 2020

UK Space Agency, [How we are promoting and regulating spaceflight from the UK](#), 1 October 2020

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