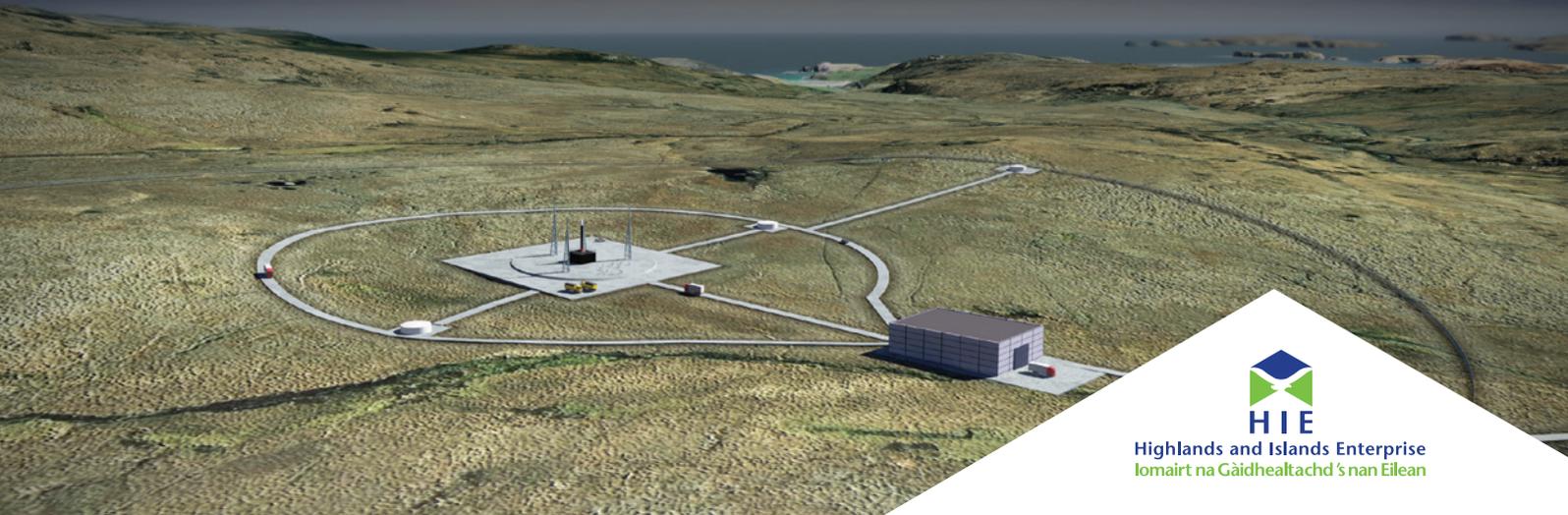


WATCH THIS SPACE

DEVELOPING SPACEPORT LAUNCH CAPABILITY IN SCOTLAND



Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean

DESIGN • BUILD • LAUNCH • MISSION CONTROL • DATA COLLECTION • DELIVERY

Welcome to the first newsletter of the UK Vertical Launch (UKVL) Sutherland spaceport project, and thank you for signing up to receive our updates.

PROJECT UPDATE

In July 2018, the UK Space Agency announced grant funding of £2.5m to develop vertical launch capability in Sutherland.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) confirmed a major funding package for the project totalling £17.3m, including the £2.5m from UK Space Agency and £9.8m from HIE which has been approved in principle by the HIE Board, subject to conditions.

Over the next 12 months, HIE will prepare a planning application to the Highland Council, which is expected to be submitted late in 2019.

The announcements also confirmed funding for Lockheed Martin Space Systems (LMSS) and Orbex to develop launch capabilities for small satellites. Both companies are working in partnership with HIE to work up the detail required for a planning application.

On 7 November 2018, the Melness Crofters Estate, who own the land, confirmed that a ballot of members had voted in favour of continuing to work with HIE towards agreeing heads of terms of a lease over the land at the Moine. <http://news.hie.co.uk/all-news/crofters-vote-in-favour-of-working-with-hie-on-plans-for-uk-s-first-spaceport/>

Roy Kirk, formerly HIE's area manager for Caithness and Sutherland, has been appointed as Project Director for UKVL Sutherland and Peter Guthrie has taken on the role as Senior Project Manager, UKVL Sutherland. Internal recruitment for a project officer is ongoing. Support is also being provided by June Love, seconded from DSRL, in the areas of communications and stakeholder engagement. We also appreciate the support from Cavendish Nuclear in permitting. Simon Middlemas is leading discussions on regulations.

OUR VISION

As the international space sector is set to grow very significantly in the coming years we want to ensure that our businesses are ready to reap the economic benefits that this will generate.

The establishment of a launch site in Sutherland will deliver an exceptional local opportunity, with around 40 high quality, skilled jobs being created. We believe it can also act as a catalyst to stimulate further space-related investment and business activity in the area and more widely across the Highlands and Islands as well as in other parts of Scotland. The impact of this is estimated to be around 400 jobs supported through the supply chain.

We will be working to develop supply chain opportunities locally and across our region, and to use the spaceport's presence to attract and encourage further business activity and investment over many years ahead. We are also absolutely determined that this project will deliver strong community benefits.

ENGAGING WITH YOU, THE COMMUNITY

Following the July 2018 announcement, HIE and both the industry partners, held two drop-in sessions in Sutherland (Melness and Tongue) and around 110 people attended. Views provided from the local community were extremely useful and will factor into our thinking as we take this project forward.

Representatives from HIE also attended the Tongue Community Council meeting on 28 September and provided a brief update on the project as well as informal engagement with a number of attendees.

Further community engagement events will be announced shortly and take place from January 2019. HIE will advertise these in the local press and social media to ensure everyone who wishes to come along and find out more can do so.

We understand the strong interest in the project from local people, who want to receive the information they require to consider this proposal in detail. We will continue to provide information on the proposed spaceport and work with our partners to provide information on the planned launchers. We will shortly be issuing information through a dedicated website and will share information with local groups in person and through this newsletter. We will continue to develop our dialogue with all interested parties.

Community engagement sessions will continue throughout 2019 as our plans for the spaceport develop and we are in a better position to provide more details to you.

RECENT/ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Currently we are revising our project programme to ensure we have captured all activities required to take this project forward in a timely manner. This includes continuing with environmental studies which will help inform the planning application as well as having ongoing discussions with UK Space Agency regarding regulations around satellite launch.

On 25 September 2018, we welcomed representatives from the UK Space Agency who travelled to the proposed site in Sutherland. This was followed by a meeting between HIE and UK Space Agency to report on project progress.

Ongoing discussions also continue with partners Lockheed Martin and Orbex on their requirements which will help to inform the site infrastructure requirements and allows a better definition of what the spaceport will look like to be identified.

We continue to refine the benefits that the community can expect, particularly around job opportunities, and will share this with the community as they develop.

We are also looking to identify a number of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) activities linking into the already successful programme within the Caithness and North Sutherland area. Lockheed Martin Space Systems took part in the Engineering Industry Day held on 4 December which was aimed at senior school pupils and college students thinking of a career in engineering.

The event is established in the STEM calendar, and helped to prepare pupils in the application/interview process for an engineering apprenticeship/technician or further study.

Lockheed Martin UK joined other companies to deliver a careers presentation and outline the UK spaceflight programme and what roles LMUK will be looking to recruit locally in the coming year.

PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES:

A tender has been issued for Project Management Services to support the continued development of plans for the spaceport.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Community feedback is important to us – we want to make sure that we can address any questions or issues you feel you need to raise to allow you to make an informed decision as to the suitability of a project such as this in your area.

At the first drop-in sessions we held there were a number of questions raised. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions and answers.

Right now, we do not have all the answers. The programme of activity over the next 12 months will help us to clarify some of the questions you may have.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Why has A'Mhoine been selected?

Having considered different locations across Caithness and Sutherland and the wider Highlands and Islands A'Mhoine was chosen because of factors including being a good position for the required flight paths and being a large enough area for the exclusion zone. In July 2018, the UK Space Agency announced grant funding of £2.5m to support HIE's plans to develop vertical launch capability in Sutherland.

What will the site look like?

The actual site will be modest, consisting of a fenced off area which we expect will be a few hundred metres in diameter. The actual design continues to be developed.

Is this a done deal?

No, Melness Crofters Estate have agreed to continue discussions on the lease of the land and work will continue to evolve the concept of this project to take forward to a formal planning application, involving community consultation

How would you access the site?

We plan to create an access road from the A838 and plans have been drawn up to look at the best location for the access point. The positioning of the site will therefore require no road closures, displacement of people or acquisition of property and the spaceport itself will have a modest footprint on the land.

Will you be expanding this site to accommodate space tourism or astronauts?

No. The site is being designed for relatively small launch vehicles and therefore not of the size required to launch astronauts or consider manned space travel. The vehicles that will be used to launch satellites here are much smaller.

What size are the the vehicles?

The launch vehicles by both operators are very similar in size – around 17m tall, 1.2-1.3 meters wide. The site will be specifically built to accommodate vehicles of this typical size.

How safe will it be?

Safety is an absolute priority. The launch and the launch site will be safe. Launch will be regulated by the appropriate Government agencies and follows the basic principles of the risk of life being equivalent to typical day to day activity. In order to provide this, the regulator will ensure that the appropriate safety case evidence and supporting documentation is robust.

The law requires that the launch of a satellite into space is governed by three licences: one to ensure the vehicle itself is engineered to safety margins; a second to ensure the operator is fit for purpose and has excessively sought to ensure the safety of the public and properties; and a third licence to ensure that the range is safe for use.

How many jobs are likely to be created in this area?

An economic impact assessment was carried out which showed that by around five years' time, the spaceport would be capable of supporting around 400 full-time equivalent posts throughout the wider Highlands and Islands. Of these, it is anticipated that some 40 full-time equivalent posts will be created for the construction and spaceport activities and therefore be based in Sutherland. It is expected there will be a mix of new jobs in the local area because of activities at the spaceport and supply chain opportunities. We will continue to look at other potential opportunities for employment in the area.

FURTHER INFORMATION

During 2019 we will be focusing on keeping the community informed, sharing dialogue and listening to the views of local people – online, in person, and through future issues of this newsletter.

CONTACT

If you have any queries or wish to raise any issues please get in touch: ukvlsutherland@hient.co.uk