

Giant leap for UK spaceflight programme as consultation launches

- consultation on the rules governing UK spaceflight launches today
- first ever launch into space could have lift off by the early 2020s
- Civil Aviation Authority to become the commercial spaceflight regulator

The first ever launch into space from British soil is one step closer today (29 July 2020) as Transport Secretary Grant Shapps announces a public consultation on the regulations for the UK's spaceflight programme.

The regulations to support the [Space Industry Act 2018](#) will enable a range of commercial spaceflight and associated activities to take place in the UK, including from any of the seven proposed spaceports in South West England, Scotland and Wales, paving the way for the UK's first ever space launch.

Government and industry have set a target to grow the UK's share of the global space market to 10% by 2030 with the government having already awarded grants totalling nearly £40 million to establish commercial vertical and horizontal small satellite launch from UK spaceports.

Today's consultation is part of the necessary regulation to enable the first launches to take place in the early 2020s.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The UK's space sector can strengthen our national capabilities, create high-skilled jobs and drive future economic growth across the UK.

Getting the rules in place for space launches from UK territory may seem like one small step. But it paves the way for a giant leap in the development of our space sector.

This is technology's high frontier and we will soon be able to reach it with specialist small payload launches from British soil.

In parallel to the development of a new [UK Space Strategy](#), the government has been engaging with industry and providing grant funding to stimulate the UK launch market, and developing international agreements.

On 16 June (2020), the [UK and US governments signed the Technology Safeguards Agreement](#). This paves the way for US companies to operate from UK spaceports and export space launch technology.

Transport Minister Rachel Maclean said:

The consultation will help to formalise our national approach to space by bringing commercial spaceflight to the UK and creating an environment that fosters growth in the sector.

The steps taken today will join-up leading technology companies to rural areas across Great Britain, levelling up local economies and making them a leader in small payload space launches.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

We want the UK to be the first place in Europe to launch small satellites and, in order to do that, we need business-friendly regulations in place.

Satellite launches will create new jobs right across the UK and attract significant investment into our rapidly growing space sector. This consultation brings these exciting opportunities a big step closer.

The spaceflight regulator role will also be handed over from the UK Space Agency (UKSA) to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), who will ensure that spaceflight and associated activities are carried out safely and responsibly.

Richard Moriarty, chief executive of the UK CAA, said:

We welcome the publication of this important consultation, and the government's intention to appoint the UK CAA as the UK's regulator for spaceflight, working closely with the UKSA and other partners.

The UK has the chance to be at the forefront of spaceflight development globally.

We have a long and proud history of satellite technology and space research, and the CAA wants to support the industry to build on these foundations.

Our vision is for UK spaceflight to thrive as a competitive and, above all, safe industry.