

# Press release: Britain competes for the launch of an estimated 2,000 satellites by 2030

- New figures published today by the UK Space Agency reveal that the UK could compete in a high value market to launch an estimated 2,000 satellites by 2030
- On his first visit to the site of a new spaceport at Sutherland, Business Secretary Greg Clark said that the spaceport could be worth 400 jobs to local Scottish economy
- In July £31.5m of funding was announced to support the Sutherland spaceport. This is a key part of the Industrial Strategy to ensure the UK thrives in the commercial space age.
- Commercial vertical and horizontal launch demand is worth a potential £3.8 billion to the UK economy over the next decade and will support further growth of Britain's space sector.

He commented that thanks to the UK's location, planned regulatory framework, private sector strategy and space ecosystem, Britain has a competitive advantage to compete for a substantial share of a market for launching an estimated 2,000 small satellites by 2030.

During the visit the Secretary of State viewed plans for the spaceport site and held discussions with local people and businesses to hear their thoughts.

Figures released to coincide with his visit suggest that existing 'rideshare' small satellite launches (small satellites piggybacking on larger missions) are capable of meeting less than 35% of the total demand. This reveals a significant gap in commercial small satellite launch provision for which future UK spaceports are well placed to compete.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

"From our market leadership in small satellite construction to our world leading universities Scotland and the UK comes from a position of strength in the global space sector which will be turbo boosted by the first new spaceport and our Industrial Strategy.

"However, I want to make sure that this giant leap for the UK will also deliver on the ground, that's why I'm here today to discuss benefits in local jobs, uplifting tourism and businesses, helping to bring prosperity to all."

Low cost access to space is important for the UK's thriving space sector which builds more small satellites than any other country, with Glasgow building more than any other city in Europe.

The Sutherland spaceport will be developed by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE). The HIE Board approved investment of up to £9.8m in the £17.2m facility. The agency earlier confirmed that the Sutherland spaceport

was capable of supporting some 400 jobs. These would be a mix of new jobs as a result of activities at the spaceport, inward investment, and supply chain opportunities.

Roy Kirk of HIE is project director for the Sutherland Spaceport development said:

“Establishing the UK’s first spaceport in Sutherland is a fantastic opportunity for the Highlands and Islands, and for Scotland.

“The international space sector is set to grow very significantly in the coming years. We want to ensure our businesses are ready to benefit from the opportunities this will create.

“Establishing this launch site will create local opportunities, with around 40 high quality, skilled jobs in a fairly remote and rural part of Sutherland. Crucially, we believe it will also stimulate further related investment and business activity more widely across the Highlands and Islands and other parts of Scotland.

“We’ll be working to develop supply chain opportunities locally and across our region. We will also use the spaceport’s presence to attract and encourage further business activity and investment here in the longer term.”

Chris Larmour, Chief Executive of Orbex said:

“I don’t think anyone should underestimate the importance of what is being done here in Scotland. With Sutherland we will have continental Europe’s first spaceport. Britain already has a very strong satellite manufacturing capability and soon, with Orbex, there will be British rockets taking those satellites into orbit. This end-to-end capability is unique in Europe and will create a virtuous circle, leading to more investment, more business and more jobs.”

“As a great example of that, we are currently assessing locations in Scotland to house our rocket factory and Spaceflight Mission Control facility, which will become Orbex’s global headquarters. We hope to announce the location of our new facility within the next sixty days. From there, we will start the hiring process for 25 new jobs immediately, rising to around 130 jobs over time. We have progressed rapidly over the past three years. We are already testing the engine of our Prime rocket, we have secured £30 million in funding and we have signed up our first customer for twenty satellite launches. Very quickly, we expect the local economy and the wider British economy to start feeling the positive impact of this progress.”

Patrick Wood, Lockheed Martin’s UK Country Executive for Space, said:

“We are moving quickly with our teammates to establish detailed plans and infrastructure for this new launch capability. Lockheed Martin is already expanding our presence in Sutherland, and we’re searching for the first members of our team now. We are committed to fast and meaningful progress to deliver regular, reliable and responsible access to space for the UK, with the first launch slated for the early 2020s.”

Scotland is the best place in the UK to reach in-demand satellite orbits with vertically launched rockets. UK Space Agency has also previously announced a £2m scheme to support horizontal launch.

The UK Space Agency is driving the growth of the space sector as part of the Government's Industrial Strategy with major initiatives including the National Space Test Facility at Harwell, and the UK continues to be a leading member of the European Space Agency, which is independent of the EU.