

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.

[Dowden: 'Jump-start' for UK's leading](#)

creative industries

- Government announces new £500 million scheme to kickstart film and television production struggling to secure insurance for Covid-related costs
- Further detail also released on how £880 million of the government's £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund will support cultural, arts and heritage organisations
- British Film Institute, Arts Council England, Historic England and National Lottery Heritage Fund publish guidance and criteria for applicants

In a major move to jump start the country's cultural and creative sectors following lockdown, the Culture Secretary has announced the launch of a Government-backed scheme worth half a billion pounds for domestic film and TV productions struggling to get coronavirus-related insurance.

The Government has also today set out how organisations can apply for £880 million in grants from next week as part of the £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund, which is the Government's biggest ever one-off investment in the arts.

The new UK-wide £500 million Film and TV Production Restart Scheme will help to get TV and film productions across the country that have been halted or delayed by a lack of insurance to get back up and running, by giving productions the confidence they need that they will be supported if future losses are incurred due to Covid-19.

It will fill the gap left by the lack of available insurance and cover coronavirus-related losses for cast member and crew illnesses and filming delays or disruptions caused by the ongoing battle against the virus.

In the UK, the film and television production industry supports more than 180,000 jobs and contributes more than £12 billion to the economy annually.

The funding will be available to all productions made by companies where at least half of the production budget is spent in the UK and is estimated to cover more than 70% of the film and TV production market to the end of the year.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

From award-winning dramas, to iconic comedies and revered documentaries, the UK makes the films and TV shows the world can't wait to watch. Today's announcement means more clapperboards snapping into action in studios across Belfast, Glasgow, Cardiff, Watford and many more.

Our screen industries are high growth, jobs creating and showcase

the best of British creativity and innovation, and I'm pleased we can give them this jump-start to get the cameras rolling again on this £12 billion industry.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

The UK's film and TV industry is the envy of the world, and it's vital that productions get the help they need to restart as part of our plan to kickstart jobs following the lockdown.

This targeted scheme, which will help fill the gap created by the lack of available insurance, will help protect tens of thousands of jobs, from actors and directors through to camera operators, costume designers, and runners. The sector is worth over £12 billion to the UK's economy, so it's right that we do what we can to help them reopen and get back to making the films and shows that we all love.

As part of the Arts Recovery Fund, grants of up to £3 million will protect important cultural assets and ensure arts and heritage continues to play a key role in levelling up the country.

The British Film Institute, Arts Council England, Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund have published guidance today on how they will judge and distribute applications.

A new independent Culture Recovery Board will be chaired by Sir Damon Buffini to help administer the programme, advising on the largest grant as well as deciding the beneficiaries of the £270 million repayable finance element of the £1.57 billion package.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden added:

Help is on the way to our much loved cultural and heritage organisations with our £1.57 billion fund. This support package will protect buildings, organisations and people to help ensure our wonderful institutions, big and small, pull through Covid.

Today we're publishing guidance so organisations know how to access help. We're also calling on organisations to be creative in diversifying their income streams and the public to continue supporting the places they love so this funding can be spread as far and wide as possible".

In this first round of funding £622 million will be distributed. Arts Council England will oversee £500 million to support institutions across the arts and cultural sector including theatres, music and comedy venues and museums. This allocation includes £2.25 million in targeted immediate, emergency support

for grassroots music venues, which was announced last week.

Independent cinemas will be able to apply to the British Film Institute's £30 million grant scheme. The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England will deliver £92 million worth of grants to protect heritage sites.

The remaining £258 million will be reserved for a second round of funding later in the financial year to meet the developing needs of organisations.

Successful applicants for grants will need to have an innovative plan for how they will operate and be sustainable for the remainder of this financial year, and be able to demonstrate their international, national or local significance. Smaller organisations must show how they benefit their local community and area.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Film and TV Production Restart Scheme

- The Film & TV Production Restart Scheme will be available to compensate productions after they have restarted, and only where costs are then incurred due to delays or abandonment as a result of Coronavirus.
- This is a temporary measure, supporting productions which commence filming before the end of the calendar year and for coronavirus-related losses through to the end of June 2021. It will be possible to back date any future claims for eligible losses to today's date. Further details on the eligibility process and claims system will be provided in the coming weeks.
- Subject to state aid approval, the intention is that eligible productions will receive compensation for costs caused by coronavirus delays up to a value of 20% of the production budget, with abandonment of productions due to coronavirus to be covered up to 70% of the production budget, upon agreement with the Government that abandonment was necessary.
- There will be a total cap on claims per production of £5m, and productions will need to pay an appropriate excess when seeking to claim under the scheme, as well as an appropriate fee when joining the scheme. Productions will also need to purchase insurance to cover non-coronavirus risks to ensure their production is adequately insured.
- Productions will need to provide evidence that they cannot return to work because of a lack of insurance.
- The Government has been working closely with an industry working group, as part of the British Film Institute's Screen Sector Task Force, to understand the extent of the problem and explore possible solutions. The working group was led by Pact and included participating broadcasters, production companies, Directors UK and legal and insurance experts.

John McVay, PACT Chief Executive, said:

This is very welcome news from the UK Government who have worked at

pace with the UK's Film, TV and broadcasting industry to develop a fund that will unlock tens of millions of pounds of production Spend and help to get production companies and freelancers back to work doing what we do best making great programmes for the UK and global audiences.

Elizabeth Karlsen, Producer, Number 9 Films (Colette, On Chesil Beach, Their Finest) said:

It is an understatement to say how pleased we are that a decision has finally been made to support the film and television industry at this unprecedented and crucial time. Without the government's backing our industry, which is held in such high regard throughout the world, was under serious threat. We can go forward with our project MOTHERING SUNDAY shooting this Autumn as planned with the best of UK talent now secure in their jobs. It is an enormous relief to us and to many people who have been working tirelessly to keep projects alive over the past few months. We would like to thank those who given support and to those who have played a hand in reaching this vital and welcome decision.

Culture Recovery Fund and Board

- Organisations should visit the websites of their relevant specialist bodies (British Film Institute, Arts Council England, Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund) for further details.
- The Culture Recovery Fund and the Film and TV Production Restart Scheme come on top of the multi-billion pound support already made available to the cultural and creative sectors, including the Job Retention Scheme and the Self Employed Income Support Scheme, and the Government-approved Covid-secure guidance to help these industries restart safely.

Nicholas Serota, Chair of Arts Council England, said:

Arts and cultural organisations are an integral part of public life in villages, towns and cities across the country. We warmly welcome and are pleased to be administering this vital investment from Government, which will help ensure as many organisations as possible survive the existential challenge posed by Covid-19 so they can continue to serve their communities safely in the future.

Ros Kerlake, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:

For many cultural organisations this funding will be the lifeline they have been waiting for and I urge them to apply as soon as possible. As the lockdown has lifted, and the public have begun to return to some of our much-loved places, the true value of our

culture and heritage is more obvious than ever. It is vital in creating economic prosperity, in making local communities better places to live, and in supporting our own personal sense of wellbeing. We remain dedicated to helping the sector emerge from this crisis with strength and resilience so that it can thrive once again.

Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman of Historic England said:

The effect of Covid-19 on our heritage has been wide-reaching. The historic places that help define us are at risk of being lost forever. This Government emergency funding package of £92m, which we will deliver in partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, will be a lifeline for the heritage sector. England's heritage is worth £31 billion to the economy, supports nearly half a million jobs and engages even more volunteers. It has a central role to play as the country moves towards a sustainable recovery. This crucial funding will help the organisations who look after our locally-cherished historic sites. It is a recognition that investing directly in historic places can bring wide ranging social benefits, inspiring communities to engage with their past and encouraging creativity, regeneration and growth.

Ben Roberts, BFI Chief Executive, said:

The BFI Screen Sector Taskforce highlighted the huge financial pressures facing cinemas as some of the first cultural venues to reopen with strict social distancing. So we really welcome the Government's culture recovery funding and its vital support for independent cinemas across the UK, many of whom will soon be able to provide audiences with a positive and safe cinematic experience.

Sir Damon Buffini, Chair of the Culture Recovery Board, said:

I am proud to serve as Chair of the Culture Recovery Board. The Board will work hard to ensure funding gets to much loved organisations across the cultural, heritage and creative sectors. By protecting organisations large and small, and where possible, enabling organisations to once again create and welcome audiences and visitors, this funding will make a big difference across the cultural sector.

The full list of board members on the Culture Recovery Board is as follows:

Independent Chair

Sir Damon Buffini

Commissioner for Cultural Recovery and Renewal	Neil Mendoza
Arts Council England	Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of Arts Council England
Historic England	Sir Laurie Magnus, Chair of Historic England
National Lottery Heritage Fund	Rene Olivieri, Chair of NLHF
British Film Institute	Jay Hunt, BFI Governor (Board Member)
DCMS	Emma Squire, Director for Arts, Heritage and Tourism

Independent Board Members:

- Claire Whitaker
- Baroness Kate Fall
- Hemant Patel
- Samir Shah

Biographies for Independent Board members

Sir Damon Buffini was a founding partner of Permira, which was named European Private Equity Firm of the decade (1996-2006) during his time as Chairman and Managing Partner, and where he remains a senior adviser. Damon was a Main Board Governor and Chairman of the Investment Committee for the Royal Shakespeare Company for five years, 2010-2015. From 2012-2018, Damon was a Governor of the Wellcome Trust. Damon is currently Chair of the Royal National Theatre, where he was appointed in 2015, and he is also Chair of the Royal Anniversary Trust. Damon was knighted in 2016 for philanthropic and voluntary services.

Claire Whitaker has over 25 years of board level experience as an executive and non-executive in the arts and civil society. Claire was an owner/director of live music producers, Serious, and Director of Africa 95, a cross art form celebration of the arts of Africa. She is bid Director for Southampton UK City of Culture and a Trustee of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Hemant Patel is Finance Director of Premier Inn & Restaurants at Whitbread plc. Until 2017, Hemant was chairman of Interplay Theatre, a Leeds based company using the arts to work with children in special schools nationally and socially excluded children locally. Hemant became Chair of the Royal Armouries in 2018. He left the Armouries in November 2019 and joined DCMS (Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) in March 2020 as a non-executive board member and chair of the audit and risk committee.

Samir Shah is Chief Executive and Creative Director of Juniper, an independent television and radio production company. He is Chair of the Museum of the Home and was, from 2005 to 2014, a Trustee, then Deputy Chair of the V&A. Before Juniper, Samir was head of current affairs television at the BBC and, later, responsible for the BBC's political journalism across radio and television.

Baroness Kate Fall is a Senior Advisor at Brunswick Group LLP where she has

run its geopolitical practice since November 2016. Kate is a member of the House of Lords and sits on the International Relations and Defence Select Committee.

Preventing famine and ensuring unrestricted humanitarian access in Yemen

Well, thank you, Mr President, and thank you to all our briefers.

The United Kingdom is extremely concerned that COVID-19 is compounding an already devastating humanitarian situation in Yemen. The officially reported cases don't represent reality. Modelling shows that in a worst case scenario, 85,000 Yemenis could die. We are frustrated that the Houthis in particular are not reporting cases, have resisted implementing many mitigation measures and are preventing critical health activities from taking place, including vaccinations. And we call on all Yemeni parties to ensure unrestricted humanitarian access, report cases transparently and facilitate the United Nations' response.

I'm extremely concerned that the recent food security assessment for southern Yemen projects 1.2 million more people will be facing food insecurity this year and note that the Houthis have obstructed the assessment in the north. This situation is driven by economic contraction. Yemen's currency is continuing to depreciate to staggering new lows this year, with food prices rising by over 10 percent in June alone. Let us be frank with each other. Famine is now a realistic prospect, as Mark Lowcock has made only too clear. And as we have heard, this will disproportionately hit those who are already marginalised, particularly persons with disabilities.

There are two key actions the international community can take to prevent a disastrous famine being realised in Yemen this year. First is to urgently provide significant funding to the United Nations humanitarian appeal. The United Nations has only received \$800 million this year, compared to \$2.6 billion dollars at this point last year. This gap is hindering, crippling the humanitarian response, with 12 of the United Nations major 38 programmes already forced to scale back, including for food assistance. In response, the United Kingdom has already disbursed over 50 percent of our 160 million pounds – that's \$200 million dollars – of funding in Yemen this year. We urge all donors now to step up and provide significant humanitarian funding to the UN.

The second action is to provide financial assistance to the Central Bank of Yemen so it has sufficient hard currency to sustain food imports. This will be decisive to prevent a further collapse of household incomes and to

stabilise prices.

The Government of Yemen has a role to play here. We call on them to develop a credible and transparent plan that reassures donors and includes the payment of public salaries.

The United Kingdom is responding through that \$200 million funding commitment to the UN this year. We expect to provide over 700,000 medical consultations for a range of health conditions; train 1,500 health care workers to work safely in a COVID-19 environment; provide a much needed boost to nearly 600 health centres to continue providing existing health services.

We're also extremely concerned about the developing threat from desert locusts. We understand that favourable breeding conditions have been existing thanks to heavy rain. There needs to be access to evaluate the options, including spraying, to mitigate this problem. And the impact will be severe not only in Yemen, but potentially also across Africa and in Asia. And we would welcome any update that Mark can provide in closed consultations.

Mr President, the risk of famine makes it ever more important that the Yemeni parties make the necessary compromises to urgently agree a nationwide ceasefire and a comprehensive political process to end the war for good. Whilst negotiations continue, the Houthis' offensive on Ma'rib and cross-border attacks in Saudi Arabia have provoked an escalation in conflict. This behaviour has cast doubt over their intentions and the escalations have resulted in civilians dying in missile and air attacks. The Houthis must cease such provocations.

I welcome the close coordination of Security Council members both here and in the region in their support to Special Envoy Martin Griffiths. We must remain resolute and unified in our message to the Yemeni parties, to all Yemeni parties: now is the time to cease hostilities and agree to the proposals on the table.

There was a welcome announcement this week that the Saudi mediation has led to renewed impetus to implement the Riyadh Agreement. I must stress the importance of swift implementation, including the formation of a joint delegation for the UN-led peace process.

This month in the Council we also focussed on the devastating impact of an oil leak from the SAFER tanker, as set out earlier by Mark Lowcock. Although the Houthis repeatedly agreed in principle to UN assistance, they have proved unwilling to take it forward in practice, instead imposing preconditions and linking it with other issues. After 14 days, the experts' visas have not been approved. The Houthis momentarily approved them, only to cancel them the same day, claiming that was done in error. I urge the Houthis to facilitate the experts in that work. Anything less is extremely reckless.

Let me conclude, colleagues, by echoing Martin Griffiths's warning over negotiations slipping away from us. It must be a clear expectation of all of us in this Council that we expect the Yemeni parties to resolve the outstanding issues swiftly and come to a ceasefire and a political process.

And let us all resolve to use all the tools at our disposal to achieve them.

Thank you, Mr President.

[Dstl awards £300 million weapons research contract](#)

A contract for the accelerated development of disruptive weapon technologies has been awarded by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) to QinetiQ.

The £300 million Weapons Sector Research Framework (WSRF) contract will run for five years with the aim of providing the armed forces with the battle winning technology to fight future conflicts. It succeeds the Weapons Science and Technology Centre (WSTC) contract, and offers a broader range of research activities including directed energy, complex and conventional weapons technologies.

The contract will run as an Enterprise Approach collaboration between Dstl, industry and academia. Stakeholders will work together, planning, tasking and delivering accelerated weapons science and technology (S&T) research.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said:

“The Weapons Sector Research Framework will give top researchers in industry and the public sector more opportunities to innovate. As we continuously refine our response to rapidly evolving threats, we must be disruptive and strategic: exploiting technology and ensuring our armed forces are prepared.

“I am pleased that this contract will also build industry relationships, making our innovative research work fuller and more collaborative.”

The WSRF will work with the supply base to encourage innovation and growth throughout the contract’s lifespan. A Community of Interest (COI) across the supply chain of industry, academia and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) will also spur the development and maintenance of essential UK technical capabilities, weapons critical expertise and facilities.

Chief Executive of Dstl, Gary Aitkenhead said:

“As the science inside UK defence and security Dstl’s research delivers clear military and strategic advantage for our armed forces. We reduce risk to our forces by delivering technology with increased effectiveness and range. We have seen a growing demand from customers for our advice, assurance and research which create new game changing capabilities for defence. We are proud to have delivered affordable and effective solutions to our customers

that have saved lives and money, as well as supporting the growth of the UK economy. The WSRF brings together our key partners, SMEs and academia to develop the solutions defence and security need in a fast-evolving world.”

Steve Fitz-Gerald, Group Managing Director for Maritime and Land at QinetiQ said:

“We are immensely proud to be supporting Dstl and the wider defence enterprise to deliver a framework that ensures the UK benefits from the best thinking and innovation. The enhanced scope of the WSRF will allow the generation of new capability, getting battle winning equipment and technology into the hands of the warfighter at pace, and enable the UK to counter the evolving threats to our sovereignty and prosperity.”

QinetiQ and Dstl are now progressing to the mobilisation phase of the new framework.

[Foreign Secretary call with Chinese Foreign Minister – 28 July 2020](#)

Press release

Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, spoke to Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, on Tuesday 28 July.



A Foreign Office spokesperson said:

The Foreign Secretary spoke to Chinese State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi, today [28 July] reiterating that the UK will work to maintain positive, constructive engagement with the Chinese Government and that both he and the Prime Minister were committed to cooperating with Beijing on shared and urgent challenges. He stressed the importance of China rebuilding trust

with the international community by living up to its international responsibilities.

The Foreign Secretary said that the UK would be watching the Hong Kong Legislative Council elections in September closely, and urged China to uphold its international human rights obligations in Xinjiang in the face of credible evidence of egregious human rights violations against Uyghur Muslims.

The Foreign Ministers agreed that there are wide-ranging opportunities, from increasing trade to tackling climate change where the two countries can work productively and constructively together.

Published 28 July 2020