



House of Commons
Science, Innovation and
Technology Committee

**UK space strategy and UK
satellite infrastructure:
reviewing the licencing
regime for launch:
Government response to
the Committees Seventh
Report**

**Fifth Special Report of
Session 2022–23**

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 18 October 2023*

HC 1900
Published on 27 October 2023
by authority of the House of Commons

Science, Innovation and Technology Committee

The Science, Innovation and Technology Select Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and associated public bodies. It also exists to ensure that Government policies and decision-making across departments are based on solid scientific evidence and advice.

Current membership

[Greg Clark MP](#) (Conservative, Tunbridge Wells) (Chair)

[Aaron Bell MP](#) (Conservative, Newcastle-under-Lyme)

[Dawn Butler MP](#) (Labour, Brent Central)

[Chris Clarkson MP](#) (Conservative, Heywood and Middleton)

[Tracey Crouch MP](#) (Conservative, Chatham and Aylesford)

[Katherine Fletcher MP](#) (Conservative, South Ribble)

[Rebecca Long-Bailey MP](#) (Labour, Salford and Eccles)

[Stephen Metcalfe MP](#) (Conservative, South Basildon and East Thurrock)

[Carol Monaghan MP](#) (Scottish National Party, Glasgow North West)

[Graham Stringer MP](#) (Labour, Blackley and Broughton)

[Christian Wakeford MP](#) (Labour, Bury South)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO. No. 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2023. This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright-parliament.

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/science and in print by Order of the House.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are: Jessica Bridges-Palmer (Senior Select Committee Media Officer), Ian Cruse (Second Clerk), Stella-Maria Gabriel (Committee Operations Manager), Arvind Gunnoo (Committee Operations Officer), Dr Claire Housley (Committee Specialist), Dr Claire Kanja (Committee Specialist), Dr Faten Hussein (Committee Team Leader (Clerk)), Dr Joshua Pike (Committee Specialist), and Ben Shave (Committee Specialist)

The following staff also worked for the Committee during this inquiry:
Gina Degtyareva (Former Senior Select Committee Media Officer)

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general inquiries is: 020 7219 2793; the Committee's e-mail address is: commonssitc@parliament.uk.

You can follow the Committee on X (formerly Twitter) using [@CommonsSITC](https://twitter.com/CommonsSITC).

Fifth Special Report

On 14 July 2023 the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee published its Seventh Report of Session 2022–23, [*UK space strategy and UK satellite infrastructure: reviewing the licensing regime for launch*](#) (HC 1717). The Government Response was received on 12 September 2023. The Response is appended to this Report.

Appendix: Government Response

Recommendation 1: *Government should conduct a full review into the suitability of the Space Industry Act 2018 following its first use by September 2023.*

The Government is committed to undertaking a full Post Implementation Review (PIR) of the Space Industry Act 2018. The PIR began on 1 September 2023 and will conclude by 31 March 2024. The Review will follow three distinct phases of activity, including consultation with the space sector. The outcome of the Review will form part of a broader review of the space sector regulatory environment being undertaken by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).

Recommendation 2: *Government should take steps to streamline the regulatory process, primarily by convening all regulatory bodies involved with licensing (e.g., maritime, environmental, health and safety, nuclear), with a central portal for applications.*

The Government is undertaking a series of targeted reviews of the space sector regulatory environment to ensure it remains able to deliver our strategic goals in growth, sustainability, innovation and accessibility. These reviews will take account of lessons identified following the introduction of the Space Industries Act, the establishment of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) as the independent regulator, experiences of the first launch from UK soil and our strong demonstration of leadership in space sustainability on the world stage. The scope of these reviews is likely to include assessing stakeholder views of the regulatory apparatus of government.

Following the UK's first launch from Spaceport Cornwall earlier this year, the UK Space Agency has drawn together key lessons and begun implementing changes to support future UK launches. A summary of lessons learnt will be published shortly.

Recommendation 3: *Government should address how it intends to support the UK launch sector in the coming years, including whether it will provide ongoing financial support.*

The UK Space Agency (UKSA) is currently developing the next phase of the Spaceflight Programme, which will seek to include a package of targeted interventions to develop the UK's launch capabilities. UKSA is currently evaluating which interventions will be most effective in developing the UK's launch sector.

Our investment of a further £12 million into the next phase of the European Space Agency (ESA) Boost programme at the ESA Council Ministerial Meeting 2022 represents our commitment to continued benefits through this programme, aimed at providing tailored support to national launch companies and related infrastructure. The focus of the Boost

programme is on developing novel space transportation services to the market where they can demonstrate commercial value. UKSA is currently evaluating new bids into this programme.

DSIT is also considering where further government support may be required over the longer term to ensure a successful UK launch industry that delivers growth to the economy.

Recommendation 4: *Government should establish the Space Sector Industry Forum and appoint a leader from the sector by the end of 2023.*

The first Space Sector Industry Forum meeting is due to take place on 9 October 2023.

These senior-level meetings, co-chaired by Minister George Freeman and the Chair of UKSpace, will bring together industry and academia to input advice to government on collective strategic issues facing the sector and respond to government initiatives, including the sector's long-term vision.

Recommendation 5: *Government should publish the PNT strategy without delay.*

As set out in the letter from the Minister for Science, Research, and Innovation to the Committee of 30 May 2023, DSIT hopes to be able to publish the outcome of the work it has been doing on PNT by the autumn of this year at the latest.

Recommendation 7: *The CAA should take steps to improve the experience of the licensing process, ideally by agreeing a licensing timeline with applicants, and to maintain frequent engagement throughout the process.*

The CAA has commenced work on a number of improvement projects, which are designed to deliver a package of 'quick wins' to simplify the applicant journey, as well as longer term deliverables to streamline the licensing and monitoring process and manage risks in a proportionate manner. This includes longer term work to deliver efficiencies in the licensing process and use of a proportionate approach for evidencing that statutory tests have been met. The CAA has recently published revised Regulator's Licensing Rules, which aim to simplify information and evidence requirements for industry at the point of application.

Recommendation 8: *The UK space and satellite sector urgently needs clear and strong organisation in Government to match its current importance as well as its future strengths.*

The re-instated National Space Council had its inaugural meeting on 19 July 2023 and is tasked with considering issues relating to prosperity, diplomacy and national security in, through and from Space. This forum is essential for providing a coordinated, strategic voice on UK space matters across government at the highest levels of government.

The Council is underpinned by the regular meetings of the senior officials-level National Space Board, which coordinates delivery of the ambitious 2021 National Space Strategy between government departments.