

Shetland enters new frontier as UK space industry leader



Minister Lamont meets Saxa Vord Space Port Project Manager Elizabeth Johnson

Shetland is set to be at the heart of Scotland's – and the UK's – space industry success story, UK Government Minister for Scotland John Lamont said as he visited the Saxa Vord spaceport on Unst.

Saxa Vord is on track to launch its first satellites in 2023 – part of UK-wide efforts to gain up to a £4bn share of the global space market by the end of the decade. The Minister visited the site's first, newly completed concrete launch pad, one of three orbital launch pads that will support up to 30 vertical launches a year from the former RAF station site, employing up to 200 people in connection with each launch.

Minister Lamont said:

There is a huge opportunity for Shetland to be a world leader in terms of space technology deployment; the spaceport at Saxa Vord has unique geographical advantages that we are keen to help them exploit.

We're working hard to become the first in Europe to provide end-to-end solutions – from design and build to lift-off – for small satellites, and the development of different launch sites is a crucial part of that.

This is a very exciting project, and the wider space industry has huge potential to create rewarding and skilled careers not just throughout Scotland but across the UK as a whole; Shetland can be at the heart of that.

John Lamont was undertaking his first engagements since being appointed as UK Government Minister for Scotland, and met with members of Shetland Islands Council to discuss opportunities and challenges for the islands.

Andrea Manson, Convener, Shetland Islands Council, said:

I am delighted that the Minister has prioritised Shetland for his first ministerial visit and I was happy to welcome him to Shetland. This was a fantastic opportunity to showcase the opportunities Shetland has in space, aquaculture and new energy. It was a positive chance to engage on fixed links and Levelling Up.

The minister also visited Scottish Sea Farms' salmon fishery at Burra and later met teams from Blueshell Mussels and Shetland Mussels, members of the Scottish Shellfish co-operative.

He added:

It has been great to explore Shetland's vibrant and diverse economy. One of the themes that has come up repeatedly throughout this visit has been connectivity – both in terms of technological infrastructure, and of fixed links to improve access to the outer islands.

Shetland has already benefited from internet connectivity improvements with UK Government help; it was helpful to discuss options for improving physical infrastructure too and I will be discussing with colleagues what we might be able to do, across Government, in terms of moving these proposals forward to the next stage.

Published 11 November 2022

Last updated 11 November 2022 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 11 November 2022

Removed factually incorrect para.

2. 11 November 2022

First published.

UK government hosts British-Irish Council in Blackpool to bring islands

closer together

- Rishi Sunak the first Prime Minister to attend the Summit since 2007
- UK government holds positive talks with devolved governments in Blackpool for 38th British-Irish Council Summit
- Delegates discussed approaches to supporting sustainable growth and regeneration across these islands.

The UK government has hosted the 38th British-Irish Council Summit in Blackpool where the discussions included topics such as the war in Ukraine, the rising cost of living and sustainable economic growth.

Building upon the Prime Minister's calls to the First Ministers on his first day in office, and demonstrating the importance of pragmatic and constructive working, the Prime Minister travelled to Blackpool on Thursday to open the summit and welcome delegates – the first Prime Minister in 15 years to attend.

Established in 1999, the British-Irish Council was created two decades ago by the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement to promote positive, practical relationships among the people of the islands and to provide a forum for co-operation.

Membership includes the UK and Irish government, devolved administrations and crown dependencies. There were no devolved leaders in attendance from Northern Ireland due to the current suspension of the Northern Ireland Executive.

The Summit was chaired by the Minister for Intergovernmental Relations, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP. He said:

This British-Irish Council has given us an opportunity to discuss the challenge all parts of these islands face with the rising cost of living and how we can do more to support the most vulnerable in our communities.

The Prime Minister's attendance and constructive conversations with the First Ministers is a clear signal of our renewed ambition to work more closely together, with an absolute focus on tackling the most pressing issues across the UK.

As we approach the 25th anniversary of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement next year, which established the British-Irish Council, everyone in attendance agreed that restoring devolved government in Northern Ireland is an absolute priority over the coming months.

Visit the [British Irish Council website](#) for more information on the Summit.

Whilst at the British-Irish Council, the Prime Minister held the inaugural meeting of the Prime Minister and Head of the Devolved Government Council, as set out in [working arrangements](#) established earlier this year.

Beddington energy recovery plant – environmental permit variation

Press release

Public consultation is now open



Environment Agency officers carry out thousands of inspections all-year-round to ensure communities and the wider environment are protected. File pic.

Viridor South London Limited has applied to the Environment Agency to vary its current operational permit at their energy recovery facility in Beddington Lane, Sutton.

The site has a double-stream energy recovery facility in operation and an adjacent waste transfer station. The operators are now applying for a permit variation to allow increased capacity of the energy recovery facility, along with other operational adjustments and the consolidation of two separate environmental permits.

If granted, the environmental permit variation will allow Viridor to:

- Increase the processing capacity of the energy recovery facility to 382,286 tonnes per annum. An increase of 34,864 tonnes;
- Update the status of all pre-operational and improvement conditions in the permit;
- Amend all of the emission point locations listed in the environmental permit for discharges to surface water and sewerage, for both the energy recovery facility and waste transfer station. Incorporate an additional

- emissions point for shredder emissions at the waste transfer station;
- Consolidate permits for the waste transfer station and the energy recovery facility into a single environmental permit;
- Include additional European Waste Catalogue (EWC) codes for the operation of the waste transfer station. These are for temporary storage and transfer only of hazardous and clinical wastes. These materials are not to be processed in the energy recovery facility. EWC codes classify common types of waste and how they should be treated.

The Environment Agency is inviting views of the public and organisations on the proposed permit variation.

The consultation is open from 10 November until 23 December 2022.

Further information on the permit application and details of how to take part in the consultation can be found at:

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/psc/cr0-4td-viridor-south-london-limited/>

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

An environmental permit sets out stringent conditions that all waste sites must adhere to. We will not issue an environmental permit for a site if we consider that activities taking place will cause significant pollution to the environment or harm to human health.

Public consultation lets people and organisations take part in our decision making. We welcome specifically, comments on environmental and health issues and where people have particular local knowledge. We take all relevant comments into account when making our decisions.

When making permit decisions, we use information on the potential environmental and human health impacts of the activity.

In deciding whether or not to issue the permit, the Environment Agency will take into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements.

For further information, please email KSLE@environment-agency.gov.uk.

More information on how when and how the Environment Agency consults on permit applications and standard rules for environmental permits, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-permits-when-and-how-we-consult>

Published 11 November 2022

Foreign Secretary summons Iranian Chargé d’Affaires over threats to journalists in the UK

Press release

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly instructed the FCO to summon Iran’s most senior diplomat.



The Foreign Secretary today instructed the FCO to summon Iran’s most senior diplomat following a series of serious threats against journalists living in the UK.

In recent years, the Metropolitan Police have contacted a number of UK-based journalists, having received credible information about a threat to their lives.

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said:

The UK will always stand up to threats from foreign nations. I summoned the Iranian representative today to make clear that we do not tolerate threats to life and intimidation of any kind towards journalists, or any individual, living in the UK.

The Iranian regime has responded to widespread internal protests with the suppression of freedom of expression and the targeting of media outlets operating in Iran. More than 40 journalists have been arrested and detained.

Published 11 November 2022

UK-France joint statement: 11 November 2022

Press release

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly MP and Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna issued a joint statement.



1. Foreign Secretary James Cleverly MP and Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna held talks in Paris today, reaffirming the enduring and essential partnership between France and the United Kingdom. On the occasion of Armistice Day, they reflected on their countries' shared history and sacrifice.
2. The Ministers looked forward to the ambitious bilateral Summit to be held in France in early 2023. They underlined the importance of cooperation in addressing global and bilateral challenges:
 - On climate change and biodiversity loss, both countries will support international efforts under Egyptian and UAE Presidencies, mainstream and increase urgent climate ambition across broader multilateral processes.
 - They agreed to cooperate to secure energy supplies and accelerate their clean energy transition, especially by supporting the development of offshore wind power. They reaffirmed the importance of reducing the rise of energy prices and the G7 Oil Price Cap. The Ministers committed to increase bilateral civil nuclear cooperation and welcomed good progress towards reaching an investment decision for the Sizewell C nuclear power plant project.
 - On illegal migration, they stressed the urgency of tackling all forms of illegal migration including small boats crossings and addressing their root causes. They welcomed progress made towards a significant new UK-France agreement and in this respect the conclusion of an ambitious package as soon as possible. The Ministers agreed to reinforce cooperation with near neighbours, including through an early meeting of the Calais group.

3. They underlined their determination to provide Ukraine with the political, military, humanitarian and economic support it needed to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity and to enhance its resilience for the coming winter and beyond. They deplored the global impact of Russia's actions and underlined their commitment to mitigate the consequences for the most vulnerable. They agreed to coordinate preparations for the respective upcoming international conferences on civilian resilience and recovery. They reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to the fight against impunity.

4. The Ministers committed to strengthening cooperation in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific and coordinate responses to the systemic challenges posed by an increasingly assertive China, while remaining ready to work with China on global challenges such as climate change. France and the UK will press China, as permanent member of the UNSC, notably with regard to the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine, to uphold its responsibilities in the UN, on Ukraine and human rights.

5. On Iran, they condemned Iran's violent repression of legitimate peaceful protests and Iran's support for Russia's illegal war in Ukraine, including through drones used for indiscriminate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure. They condemned Iran's destabilising activities in and around the Middle East, including transfers of UAVs and missiles and pledged to reinforce international cooperation to counter these activities. The Ministers reiterated their clear determination that Iran must never acquire a nuclear weapon and their deep concerns at its insufficient cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Published 11 November 2022