

## **PE1746/F**

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) submission of 8 November 2019

### **HIE response to the petition**

Highlands and Islands Enterprise is the economic and community development agency for the North of Scotland, with a remit to support sustainable and inclusive growth across the region. The region is well suited to the development of Spaceport facilities with Northern trajectories enabling access to orbital and sun synchronous orbits from the mainland and islands. We also recognise that the strong tradition of engineering skills in the region opens up further opportunities for companies across the whole space supply chain to establish themselves in the Highlands and Islands.

We support the petitioner's view that space represents a great opportunity for Scotland. In the near future, it is possible to see multiple Scottish spaceports, using launch vehicles built in Scotland, with satellites made in Scotland, providing data analysed in Scotland, and it is correct that Scotland needs to ensure this potential is fulfilled. However, HIE does not consider that the creation of a non-departmental body is the correct way to ensure this happens, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, Space remains a reserved matter, and the development of the sector is better managed through maintaining close working relations with the relevant UK Government department, and particularly the UK Space Agency rather than creating another NDPB.

Secondly, many of the activities identified by the petitioner such as R&D funding, STEM outreach and internships are already in place through established structures. As an example, HIE, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Funding Council, and Skills Development Scotland operate under an overarching Strategic Board. This ensures cooperation, collaboration and alignment at a strategic level across the broad industry, academia, and business support ecosystem. Space is identified as a key priority in the Scottish Government's Programme for Government, and mechanisms to ensure collaboration and effective delivery are already in place.

Thirdly, the Scottish Space Leadership Council, a community of Scottish businesses with an involvement in industrial/commercial space, is already established and leading on the development of the sectoral opportunity for Scotland. SSLC membership includes public, private and academic partners who have come together with the aim to increase business opportunities, efficiencies, effectiveness and economic impact through collaboration, partnering and mutual support, and whose role is firmly business-based.

HIE's view is that the a new NDPB would duplicate and overlap on much of the existing activity already underway, and does not support its establishment-