



## Minutes of Meeting

### Sutherland Spaceport Community Liaison Group (CLG) Meeting

25 October 2023

19.00

Kyle Centre, Tongue

#### ATTENDEES

Present		Online	
David Macleod	(Chair)	Bea Ayling	RSPB
Lesley Still	Orbex	Sion Edwards	Jacobs
Kirsteen Mackay	Orbex	Laura O'Kane	Caithness Chamber of Commerce
Mark Findlay	Melness Crofters Estate	Hugh Morrison	Highland Council
Barry Allsop	Tongue Grazings Committee		
Peter Faccenda	Highlands & Islands Enterprise		
Martin Reid	Tongue Community Council		

No	Description	Action	Due date
1.	<b>Welcome and opening remarks from the Chair</b>		
	David welcomed the two new members to the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barry Allsop (Tongue Grazings Committee)</li> <li>Martin Reid (Tongue Community Council).</li> </ul>		
2.	<b>Apologies</b>		
	Apologies were received from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frances Gunn, Peter Guthrie, Matt Smith, Eann Sinclair, Trudy Morris, David Oxley, Allan Mackay, Amanda Mosely.</li> </ul>		
3.	<b>Conflict of Interest</b>		
	There were no conflicts of interest raised.		



<b>4.</b>	<b>Items Arising from Previous Minutes/Notes</b>		
4.1	The updated terms of reference are now completed and approved. They can be found on the Highland Council planning portal and the Orbex website.	Terms of reference annual review will be due approx.	July 2024
4.2	Received a reply from Stuart Fyvie about the question raised by Allan Mackay at the last meeting. The reply was read to the group and it will be sent as an attachment with these meeting notes.		
4.3	David announced that this will be his last meeting as Chair of the Community Liaison Group and he will now be stepping down. The group thanked David for his time and input to the group.		
4.4	The appointment of the new Chair will be an agenda item for the next meeting and Frances Gunn will cover as Deputy Chair until a replacement for David has been agreed.	KM to add election of a new Chair to the next meeting agenda	March 2024
<b>5.</b>	<b>Orbex Updates</b>		
5.1	<p><b>Construction</b></p> <p>Ground conditions have presented some challenges to the site team in October. We are moving forward with a new revised drainage solution to the East of the access road and this is under review with SEPA.</p> <p>The large spoil heap near the A838 is temporary and the material in it will be used in later phases of the development.</p> <p>Design for the launch pad complex and the integration facility is also nearing completion.</p>		
5.2	<p><b>Ben Tongue</b></p> <p>Following on from the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion that was previously submitted, we are continuing to work on the associated planning application and we will update everyone as it progresses.</p> <p>To date, meetings have been held and discussions had with the landowner and the Tongue Grazings Committee about the possibility of relocating some of the consented infrastructure to Ben Tongue.</p>		
5.3	<p><b>LIDAR Placement</b></p> <p>Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) will be being placed out on the hill close to the launch pad in the coming weeks.</p> <p>The LIDAR will be situated close to the launch pad site to collect data on wind conditions. This data will be used during launch. The LIDAR itself is small and will be in-situ temporarily and it will be powered by an LPG generator and a solar battery power supply.</p>		



5.4	<p><b>STEM Update</b></p> <p>Two local staff members attended Farr High School to take part in their Focus On Careers Opportunities afternoon alongside other sectors. Hopefully we inspired some young people to look into what careers are available within the space industry.</p>		
5.5	<p><b>Peat Project</b></p> <p>Lesley gave a short update from Georgina regarding her PhD project to create a peat bog in the laboratory at Stirling University. Using peat collected from the Mhoine, she is using satellite data to model the water table changes within peat. We will continue to keep the group informed and it will be an interesting report to hear once the project has been completed.</p>		
5.6	<p><b>International Bilateral Fund (IBF)</b></p> <p>The IBF project is one that seeks to crystallise a bilateral relationship and regional collaboration between Mid Atlantic Regional Spaceport (Virginia, US) and Sutherland Spaceport. Exploring the potential for active and tangible bilateral work between the two spaceports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workstream one - will focus on spaceflight capabilities and resilience, exploring the potential for a reciprocal launch relationship between the two locations.</li> <li>• Workstream Two - is focused on education outreach and development of skills, with a focus on the development of campaigns with long term impact. Seeking to research, compare and contrast STEM activities across both locations.</li> </ul> <p>Earlier this year Lesley Still and Andres Gutierrez (Head of Strategy) at Orbex, along with Highland &amp; Island Enterprise visited Wallops Island Flight facility in Virginia (used by Rocket Lab) and Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. Lesley reported that the data from Wallops Island suggested that for every \$1 invested by the Spaceport facility there was a \$3 benefit to the local community. This is encouraging as Wallops Island has great similarities to Sutherland.</p>		
5.7	<p><b>Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP)</b></p> <p>Lesley reported that Orbex are seeking to work with KTP North. KTP help businesses innovate for growth by connecting with academic expertise. For Sutherland, the aspiration is to create an opportunity for a University of the Highlands and Islands (hopefully local) graduate to work at the Spaceport for a duration.</p> <p>More information on KTP can be found at <a href="https://ktp_uk.org">https://ktp_uk.org</a>.</p>		



5.8	<b>Birth of a Spaceport</b> Is the first in a series of short films documenting the journey of the Spaceport and can be viewed on YouTube, or via the Orbex website.		
<b>6.</b>	<b>Questions /Comments Raised</b>		
6.1	Hugh Morrison requested that Kinlochbervie High School could be included in any Orbex STEM activities proposed in the area. Lesley agreed that their inclusion would be welcome.		
6.2	Sion Edwards briefly touched on the topic of regional apprenticeships. This is something that is being explored and there will be more news on this at the next meeting.	Provide an update at the next meeting	March 2024
6.3	Laura O’Kane offered help for schools and STEM, via the Caithness Chamber of Commerce Developing Young Workforce Group.		
6.4	Bea Ailing requested clarification on what the spoil heap currently located near the car park on site is made up of and if it was peat.  The spoil heap is gravel that has been removed from the ground works. The spoil heap doesn’t include any peat and it is hoped that, if agreed, it will be used to landscape and screen the car park to lower the visual impact and will also be used in other parts of the construction as it progresses.		
6.5	It was asked if the rumour that Gunns were pulling out of the construction on the Mhoine was true?  We have no knowledge of this, but will share any pertinent information should we be formally advised of any change		
<b>7.</b>	<b>Date of Next meeting</b>		
	To be held in March 2024, and as agreed this one will be an open public meeting.	KM - Schedule next meeting.	Date to be confirmed