

Science Minister predicts Scots to deliver first vertical launch in Europe

Country is experiencing an 'industrial renaissance driven by the space



SCOTLAND has been heralded as the cornerstone of the UK's

space sector expansion as the Government's Science Minister suggests the country could be the first to launch satellites into orbit from European soil.

George Freeman MP hailed the country as a critical component to the UK's increasing influence in the commercial space sphere, and believes the surge is reminiscent of the nation's ship building and oil producing heritage.

The minister shared these views on the long running online space networking webinar, SpaceBar, created by UK-headquartered space marketing firm [AstroAgency](#) to help the industry engage outside of its sector and discuss the latest market developments.

Hosted by renowned science broadcaster Dallas Campbell and planetary scientist Professor Suzie Imber; Freeman was asked about what was impressing him in the Scottish space scene.

He said: "We (UK) are a £17bn turnover sector with around 46,000 employees; the Scottish sector is 8,500 staff, but more than that, Glasgow is now known as 'satellite city' and for a good reason.

"I went up to see the sector the other day – I saw a whole raft of companies, and I met 18-year-old girls from Glasgow high schools working on satellite tracking devices – I mean its extraordinary, and I think space in Greater Glasgow and Strathclyde is driving manufacturing, optics, photonics. It really is an industrial renaissance driven by the space sector."

Freeman discussed on the show's 67th edition how the UK, and in particular Scotland, was well positioned to be a major player in satellite launches for years to come.

He added: "I am really excited about next year. In Scotland we have launch sites in Sutherland and Shetland, and I think Scotland could be the first country in Europe to launch."

When asked about what the UK can learn from other countries in the space sector, the minister expressed much was still to be done in the country, but the UK can play an important leadership role on the world stage.

Freeman said: “We don’t have a SpaceX, but I’ve described the UK space sector like a Formula One pit lane without a car – but there are a lot of cars coming along – we have got some amazing companies that are really poised and I think the key is international collaboration.

“This sector is becoming an open international structure, so my big mission is making sure we are on the front foot of the international network in growing skills of science, of shared data, of collaboration because we are really good at that.

“As a country we tend to beat ourselves down, but when you go abroad and represent our country in science – boy are we respected. In engineering, in science and research, and it’s an incredible thing to see.”

This was the second appearance from Freeman on the SpaceBar after discussing strategic plans within the sector last year alongside representatives from the UK Space Agency and European Space Agency.

The online meet up was established by Edinburgh headquartered commercial space experts AstroAgency during the Covid-19 lockdown to help the sector stay connected internally and share opportunities externally, with complimentary sectors, jobseekers and investors. It has since grown an international audience, with participants as far as Canada, the US and New Zealand tuning in monthly.

Rebekah Russwurm, a Project Manager at AstroAgency who leads on SpaceBar planning for the Scottish firm, stated: “It was a delight to welcome Minister Freeman back to SpaceBar as well as Jodi Bartin from Citicourt & Co, who gave us an insight into how companies can engage in the space sector.

“As the original space communications firm with close to 60 clients around the world – including multiple national space agencies, SpaceBar is something we created in our free time to help the sector through isolation during the pandemic. However, we’ve found it to be an incredible way to connect with people interested in space, with many having thanked us for helping them find employment in the sector.

“We’re enjoying the buzz around the new format and the views on our YouTube channel are growing all the time. We’ve got some incredible guests lined up for the rest of the year and it’s exciting to see where SpaceBar goes next!”

SpaceBar is a free of charge event in line with AstroAgency’s brand values around inclusivity, diversity and educational outreach. Earlier this year the online webinar, which has also been held ‘in person’ during UK Space Agency conferences that brought the format to the physical stage, won sponsorship from internet services and communications giant Viasat, while delivery partners include space news platform Spacewatch Global, production partners Chaos Created and student space community UKSEDS.

With the sponsorship, the show moved from its Zoom format to a more engaging style to reach new audiences outside of the sector, SpaceBar is now streamed live and recorded on YouTube, allowing viewers to interact on topics and ask questions to the guests. Every episode is followed with an “after party” on Zoom to reflect upon guest comments and provide the audience with an opportunity to share challenges, look for jobs or find collaboration partners.

SpaceBar explores a variety of themes across the space value chain, covering everything from the launch supply chain to the benefits of satellite data insights for non-space companies, the economy and the environment, with the latter being a continuous theme due to the multitude of ways that satellites can support the battle against climate change. The 68th show

will take place on September 28 at 7pm, to register your interest for the next show visit: <https://chaoscreated.live/spacebar/>.

AstroAgency offers space organisations a unique combination of strategic marketing support, brand building techniques, space media coverage, detailed technical knowledge and business development informed by market intelligence.

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