

Cross-Party Group on Space

7th March 2023 18:00

Present

MSPs

Colin Beattie MSP

Siobhian brown MSP

Jamie Halcrow Johnston MSP

Carol Mochan MSP

Paul Sweeney MSP

Beatrice Wishart MSP

Non-MSP Group Members

Chris Larmour

Julian Dines

Gordon Bingham

Jonathan Orr

Konrad Zadecki

Grant Lewis

Malachy Devlin

Peter Guthrie

Peter Young

Warrick Malcolm

Apologies

Gordon Bingham
Pamela Smith
Phil McLachlan
Stephanie Ayres
Hina Khan
Lara Zanoni

Agenda item 1: Welcome and introductions to the meeting

All members introduced themselves and their interest for the group.

The convener describes administration and code of conduct for CPGs

- CPGs have no formal power but can influence
- We are cross party and politically neutral.

The convener discusses the frequencies of the meetings. It was agreed that we should meet every couple of months.

The group agreed that the minutes will be brief and cover important points. Colin Beattie mentioned there is an APPG in London and mentioned he would like to get agreement we work with them from Westminster and share our minutes.

Warrick added that ADS is secretariat to APPG with sister body UKspace and proposed in May/June to have a group visit in Prestwick alongside this group. Convener and members agreed to this opportunity. Warrick took the action to coordinate and update the group.

The group then discussed location of the meeting, it was agreed the meeting would be hosted remotely, and if there were any alternative locations, this would be discussed beforehand.

The next topic of discussion was membership. The convener states membership is in the hands of the group, the convener does not approve members, it's for the members to decide. Additionally, if new members wish to join, they must ask.

The convener (Colin) then touched on the topic privacy. An action was issued to all members to make Lindsay Holton aware if they do not wish their contact email to be shared with other group members.

Agenda item 2: Priorities

Colin asked the group what they think the group should focus on. We went around the room and covered each members opinions.

Chris Larmour- there is a lot of focus on south for space, so he would like to focus on north, and pushing the success of the sector in Scotland, removing barriers and nudging to Westminster for support. There is a strong focus on UK delivery agencies on activity in south England, and we want to move the focus to the north of Inverness.

Jamie Halcrow Johnston MSP- Agree with a lot of first points. As a group, he wants to highlight the opportunities, but also the barriers such as skills, supply chain etc. so MSPs are more informed.

Paul Sweeney MSP would like to have a value chain map of what's going on in Scotland so we can visualise what companies are upstream and downstream, what their value proposition is, and how they fit into the bigger picture. Also wants to be a group that takes action.

Peter Guthrie- included a space sector map in Teams chat: <https://iuk.ktn-uk.org/programme/space-satellite-applications-landscape-map/>.

Peter Young- wants to ensure we look at academic stream in the group and make sure they are represented, and wants to understand what's devolved and what's not devolved for space sector.

Malachy Devlin- wants some way of supporting moving space north. Edinburgh is where it is known for data analytics. A big priority is skills. The skills such as DePtek are the skills we need and they don't always get to the top of the table. We have to prioritise how do we get more people or increase skills of the current people we have.

Grant Lewis -supported what people already discussed. He wants to understand where things sit- whether that's a with UK or Scotland and what we can do to influence that. Also, he thinks regulatory factors should be a focus. We want to make Scotland an attractive place to launch from so we must resolve this and collaborate with authorities to do so.

Siobhian Brown said the challenge at Prestwick is the highly skilled workforce in the area. She wants to understand if there is any potential scope to work with APPG to put pressure on migration to bring in highly skilled workers.

Colin summarised that one of the needs from an MSP perspective is that we need better knowledge of the space industry and it would be good to get a summary presentation from a member company.

Warrick Malcolm (ADS) suggested SpaceScotland to assist with this, possibly Hina Khan to come along and do an overview presentation. Lindsay Holton took an action to discuss with Hina.

Chris Larmour brought up the challenge of housing people with the right skills in locations such as Moray, Lossiemouth and Inverness due to post-COVID renting rules and lack of availability being a large blocker for more people. Beatrice Wishart mentioned this as a problem in highland areas too.

Colin assigned action to all to have a think about what's affecting our businesses further in more depth to discuss next time to then pull 3 priorities.

Paul Sweeney suggested having an action tracker for the group. Action to Lindsay to set up.

Warrick Malcolm suggested as a group going to do some Site visits. Group were in agreement to explore the possibility.

Chris Larmour shared the rapid growth of his business as an example of the opportunities that we are presented with. He re-iterated the benefit of knowing what's devolved and what's not so we know where we can apply pressure. Warrick shared that's where the APPG will come in handy.

Paul Sweeney suggested we could advertise our meetings and events to the APPG and vice versa.

Chris Lamour mentioned some Scottish presence in the UK APPG - Philippa Whitford, Angus MacNeil, Owen Thompson and Jamie Stone as contacts.

Peter young- suggested the group also need to consider space and sustainability and net zero.

Julian Dines- raised one other important aspect of the eco system of space in Scotland. That is that we have a lot of small startups and there is a lot of support in early stages of company growth, but lack of support for medium size when they start to grow. This is a general problem in UK, but Scotland have a large amount of small companies so we are reliant on scale up in Scotland. Is there something Scotland could do to support the eco system and should this be something we should consider.

Colin Beattie took an action to discuss with economy and fair work committee to have a look at that as vice convenor.

Any other thoughts on burning issues that need considered, members were actioned to send them to Lindsay to then be prioritised at the next meeting.

Thank you and close

Meeting ended at 19:00