

## **Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on PE2054: Establish an independent review into the proposed Spaceport 1 development at Scolpaig Farm in North Uist, submitted by Colin G Anderson**

### **Background**

Spaceport 1, to be located on the north-west coast of North Uist in the Outer Hebrides, is a rocket launching site for [sub-orbital sounding rockets](#). The project is being led by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES), which bought the spaceport site, previously part of Scolpaig Farm, for £1m. CnES is developing the spaceport in partnership with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, QinetiQ, Rhea Group and Commercial Space Technologies. The first rocket launch from Spaceport 1 is expected during 2024.

Detailed project documentation is not currently available online, as CnES [suffered a significant cyber-attack](#) on Tuesday 7 November 2023.

### **Scottish Government Action**

The Scottish Government [issued a direction](#) to all Scottish planning authorities on 10 June 2020, which required any authority receiving a planning application for a new spaceport related development to notify Scottish Ministers. The aim being to provide Scottish Ministers with a national overview of potential spaceport developments.

Following receipt of such a notification from CnES for the Spaceport 1 development, Scottish Ministers [issued a direction to the authority on 4 March 2022](#). This required CnES to notify Scottish Ministers if it were minded to award planning permission for the proposed development. Following notification, Scottish Ministers would consider whether to “call-in” the application for their own decision or return the application to CnES.

[CnES agreed to award](#) the Spaceport 1 development planning permission on 23 June 2023, subject to the requirement to notify Scottish Ministers. Scottish Ministers [advised CnES on 24 July 2023](#) that it would not call-in the application, meaning the CnES decision to award planning permission stood and that the development could proceed.

## **Scottish Parliament Action**

To date, the Scottish Parliament has not considered the development of Spaceport 1 in any detail.

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21 November 2023

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