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**N E W S R E L E A S E**

**New Innovation Centre Opens at Westcott**

***Westcott, 19th October 2020*** - The UK space sector will take its next significant step forward today with the opening of a new multi-million-pound Innovation Centre at Westcott in Buckinghamshire.

More than 200 delegates and dignitaries will attend the online opening event, with Greg Smith MP, Member of Parliament for Buckingham, Richard Harrington, CEO of Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Buckinghamshire LEP) and Stuart Martin, CEO of the Satellite Applications Catapult cutting the virtual ribbon.

Situated on the Aylesbury Vale Enterprise Zone, the Westcott Innovation Centre is a new 1,200m2 facility, providing opportunities for organisations that have outgrown other facilities on site, such as the Westcott Business Incubation Centre, or who are looking to establish a presence in Westcott. Alongside office space and meeting rooms, the centre provides a fully flexible engineering facility, giving businesses working in space and related sectors the opportunity to use specialist equipment for light mechanical engineering and rapid prototyping activities.

Westcott Venture Park in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, represents over £35 million of investment for the UK space sector from Government and industry, and houses ambitious aspirations to secure an additional investment of £380m over the next 10 years.

The Westcott Innovation Centre is part funded by the Local Growth Fund and Aylesbury Vale Enterprise Zone, via Buckinghamshire LEP, and managed by the Satellite Applications Catapult. **more…**

**New Innovation Centre Opens at Westcott: 2**

Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, Luke Hall MP said: “We want to level up areas across the country to ensure they have the opportunities and resources they need to succeed in emerging and dynamic sectors.

“Through the Local Growth Fund, we have invested £2m in The Westcott Innovation Centre - an important example of this government’s commitment to becoming a world leader in the space sector while levelling up jobs and opportunities in our regions.”

Greg Smith MP, Member of Parliament for Buckingham, said: “Westcott presents one of the most exciting economic opportunities in my constituency, it has the potential to help lead innovation for years to come in the fields of space propulsion and drone technologies. The investment by the Buckinghamshire LEP and the Satellite Application Catapult in the new Innovation Centre is to be welcomed and will help attract many new innovative businesses creating high value jobs for my constituency and beyond.”

Richard Harrington, CEO of the Buckinghamshire LEP said: “This new development is an important step towards delivering a world-leading hub for the space sector in the heart of Buckinghamshire.

“We are pleased to provide Local Growth Funds and support from the Aylesbury Vale Enterprise Zone for this new facility, which opens up the next stage in the evolution of the Westcott site to facilitate the growth of businesses currently on the site as well as attracting new business and investment to these world-class facilities.”

**more…**

**New Innovation Centre Opens at Westcott: 3**

Stuart Martin, CEO of the Satellite Applications Catapult said: “Westcott is the UK’s newest space cluster and is growing fast, with 20 new space businesses using the site in the last year alone.

“The Innovation Centre provides much needed space for these businesses as they grow from designing concepts to prototyping and testing their technologies and services. This is all made possible by the unique way the Catapult works with stakeholders to deliver on local and national Government aspirations to support businesses and grow the UK space sector.”

**Ends**

**Note to editors**

The [**Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership**](http://buckstvlep.co.uk/) (Bucks LEP) is a business-led ‘partnership of equals’ between local government and the private sector, building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the County.

[**Buckinghamshire Business First**](http://www.bbf.uk.com/) (BBF) is the Growth Hub for the county and is backed by Buckinghamshire-based entrepreneurs, thousands of SMEs, the Buckinghamshire LEP and Buckinghamshire Council. BBF provides the link between public policy and the business community in Buckinghamshire and works with partners to create a dynamic business environment in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain.

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