

3 October 2014

Our ref

Your ref "Supporting commercial spaceplane operations in the UK - consultation on criteria to determine the location of a UK spaceport"

Jeremy Ketley  
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Dear Mr. Ketley

## **SPACEPORT CONSULTATION**

QinetiQ is supportive of the government initiative to establish a spaceport in the UK by 2018.

Due to our RPAS interests, we are very familiar with some of the sites you have considered. As I am sure you are aware, Spaceport and RPAS share similar challenges and require similar site characteristics. Hence, it is probably not a surprise that we strongly support the candidature of Llanbedr as a suitable site for the spaceport as that is the location we have selected for our most recent investment in RPAS capability development.

However, the key message from QinetiQ in response to your consultation is that we are interested, capable and keen to support Spaceport whichever location is selected. We are the only UK organisation with significant capabilities across experimental aircraft operation, range management, safety, training, aviation medicine, satellite technology and payload integration and believe these all to be fundamental to the successful delivery of a UK spaceport at any location.

Please find herewith the QinetiQ response to the specific questions detailed within the Spaceport Consultation documents and additional comments on some of the key issues raised by the discussion.

### CAA's high level recommendation: Q1-Q3

QinetiQ agrees with the CAA's high level recommendations.

### CAA's selection criteria: Q4-Q8

QinetiQ agrees with the CAA's basic selection criteria, particularly the strong recommendation that spaceplane operations should only take place in areas of low population density and the resulting view that only a remote coastal location with immediate access to controlled, segregated airspace is suitable.

In terms of weighting, we suggest that greatest credence should be given to the ability to deliver sustained, safe operation of experimental aircraft in available segregated airspace with a proven track record for managing complex air operations.

If more than one location closely meets the essential criteria we also support the recommendation that contribution to local and national growth should also be considered. We suggest that emphasis should be placed on immediate synergy or support to the existing economic usage of the spaceport location with a longer term view to support growth of the wider national space and aerospace sectors.

We believe spin-off benefits such as tourism or other jobs related to spaceplane operations will stem naturally regardless of location.

CAA's shortlist of potentially feasible locations: Q9-Q11

QinetiQ broadly supports the CAA's shortlist of eight potential sites subject to the comments above with regard the ability to deliver sustained, safe operation. We do not believe any additional locations would be suitable.

Additional comments

Technical specification – there is a need for additional information to support a detailed technical specification, particularly with regard existing data on Operational and Safety Performance Requirements (SPR), Operational Services and Environment Definitions (OSD), Interoperability Requirements (INTEROP), Minimum Aviation System Performance Standards (MASPS) and Minimum Operational Performance Standards (MOPS), both for the anticipated spaceplanes and the associated spaceport. We recognise this material may be subject to export control restrictions.

Business case – the UK Government review of commercial spaceplane certification and operations describes the significant long term economic benefit to the UK, but does not present a robust business case that provides confidence in a return on investment in the short/medium term for any parties that may commit to establishing the initial spaceport. Further detail is required in this area, particularly with regard the level and type of Government support that will be provided to assist the transition to a sustainable business.

Timescales for next steps - the Government will be inviting submissions from interested parties whose locations meet the criteria identified. We strongly recommend that the timescale for this next step is consistent with provision of the above technical and business information in order to allow those parties to construct a robust, deliverable and sustainable proposition. This timescale should be independent of and decoupled from the Parliamentary timetable for the upcoming General Election.

We would be happy to discuss further our position supporting the Spaceport programme or to elaborate on any of the top level views presented above.

Yours sincerely



Paul Hearn  
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