

## **Response from the Moray Economic Partnership**

**Q1. Do you agree with the CAA's high-level recommendation that, if a decision were taken to proceed, sub-orbital operations should preferably commence, either on a permanent or a temporary basis, from one (or more) of the following:**

- an existing EASA-certificated aerodrome;
- an existing UK CAA-licensed aerodrome; and/or
- an existing UK military aerodrome, subject to approval from the MOD.

Whilst we agree that the selection should be restricted to an existing aerodrome in order to meet industry timescale for spaceplane operation, we would strongly recommend that the selection should be a permanent one. The investment required not only on the selected aerodrome, but the creation of the necessary support infrastructure, supply chain and development of complementary industries such as research in the life sciences all require certainty to encourage early investment and development. The selection of an aerodrome with a risk that it may be temporary will only serve to stifle the industry from the outset

**Q2. Do you agree that in order to make maximum use of existing infrastructure, the location should preferably still be active but at a low level of aircraft movements and should have existing and appropriate ground infrastructure/facilities and service provision?**

We agree that the location should still be active to ensure that the existing ground infrastructure / facilities and service provision is available. Preference should be given to a site with relatively low aircraft movements as seen at Kinloss.

**Q.3 Do you agree that greenfield sites should not be considered?**

A greenfield site should not be considered as this would not fit with the industry's timescales for developing commercially operating space planes and carries risk in the planning and consenting stages. This is a global market within which the UK must compete and neither the industry nor other European countries will wait for the UK to develop a greenfield site.

### **CAA's criteria**

**Q4. Do you agree with CAA's analysis identifying the criteria to be considered in identifying a permanent location for a UK spaceport? If not, please explain why.**

Yes we agree with the operating criteria suggested in the consultation document.

**Q5. Do you think there are any other criteria that should also be taken into consideration? If so, please explain why.**

Selection of a coastal site is associated with low population density and the possibility of ditching in the sea. Further consideration could be given to emergency or alternative airfields in the vicinity of the chosen aerodrome; for example, in the case of Kinloss Barracks there could be potential for RAF Lossiemouth to act as an emergency landing site for the spaceplane. At present Kinloss Barracks currently acts as an emergency landing site and Relief Landing Ground for RAF Lossiemouth.

Given the nature of the space plane industry it can be expected that there will be significant growth in supporting industry, associated research, start-up companies, academic requirements at local universities. There must be good transport links and the land availability for industrial and commercial growth and development in the vicinity of the chosen aerodrome should be considered as part of the criteria.

The availability of people with the appropriate skills as seen in Moray with the regular turnover of staff from the RAF alongside the pool of leavers who have remained in the area and connections to the oil and gas industry provide a pool of skilled individuals. The training opportunities provided through the University of Highlands and Islands, the University of Aberdeen and the Robert Gordon University for research and development and skills should be taken into account.

To be successful in maximising the economic potential of the UK spaceport the chosen aerodrome must be in a place that offers a good quality life, that is not too remote and yet retains the low density population requirement in order to attract a highly skilled workforce to the area.

Consideration should be given to the requirement for vertical launching of satellites. We believe that it would make commercial sense to site a vertical launch facility close to the spaceport as they will share the same supply chain, knowledge and logistical requirements. It may be possible to operate a sea based vertical launch facility in sheltered waters, such as that provided by the Moray Firth, and this consideration should form part of the criteria.

**Q6. Do you agree that these are relevant criteria? What weight should be attached to them?**

There can be no doubt that safety considerations should and must be given primacy in determining the future location, operating regime and operations of a spaceport. Beyond that the criteria should be given equal weighting; all are relevant and the advantage in one can easily be offset by a disadvantage in another.

**Q7. If more than one location closely meet the essential operating criteria, safety, meteorological, environmental and economic criteria, do you agree that we should also consider factors around the contribution to local and national growth? If so, what weight should be given to these factors?**

Yes, economic diversification and growth should form part of the criteria for the spaceport, as should the potential for co-operation with other European or international space ports. The availability of a skilled workforce as seen in Moray from RAF and army leavers, together with a strong local economic partnership of the public and private sector to facilitate, support and encourage inward investment in the area and ensure the necessary business and tourism infrastructure is provided.

Space tourism will be a significant driver for the success of the spaceport, particularly in its early years of operation. The site selected should be able to offer a strong and integrated package of accommodation and experiences for the most discerning tourist.

**A coastal location?**

**Q8. Do you agree with the CAA's analysis and strong recommendation that until there is a better understanding of sub-orbital spaceplane safety performance, spaceplane operations should only take place in areas of low population density and the resulting view that only a coastal location is suitable to protect the uninvolved general public?**

Yes we agree with the CAA analysis that spaceplane operations should only take place in areas of low density population and coastal areas. Whilst spaceplane performance and operation will improve, as stated earlier the commitment to a spaceport should be a permanent one.

**CAA's shortlist of potentially feasible locations**

**Q9. What are your views on the CAA's shortlist of eight potential sites?**

Whilst all the aerodromes meet the minimum criteria, the potential for economic growth and development and the availability of land, skilled workforce and supportive local economic partnership will be critical to the success of the chosen spaceport.

**Q10. Are there any locations on the CAA's shortlist which you consider should be disregarded? If yes, please give your reasoning.**

All short listed sites will have to be evaluated. However Moray Economic Partnership feels strongly that with the support of the MOD, Kinloss will offer the best possible opportunity for a spaceport in the UK. The site scores very highly on all criteria offering significant opportunity for economic growth in a region that is already successful attracting High Tech industry sector to Enterprise Park Forres as part of the Inverness to Elgin life science corridor. We have a skilled workforce with established aviation experience, with good transportation links and offer a high quality of life for residents in Moray.

**Q11. Are there any additional locations that you consider should be on the CAA's short list? If yes, please explain why.**

No

**Next Steps**

Moray Economic Partnership would ask that any bid process for the short listed sites should be inclusive of local authorities, enterprise agencies, local economic partnerships representing the public and private sector and the aerodrome operators. To deliver successful spaceport by 2018 all interested parties must be fully supportive of the bid, it will not be sufficient to obtain a bid from the aerodrome operators without the full support of the regional network to support it The Moray Economic Partnership is using its contacts to advance engagement with the MOD so that any invitation to bid for Kinloss or Lossiemouth could be a joint bid between the MOD and the Moray Economic Partnership. The Moray Community and the MOD have a successful supportive relationship which has endured for over 70 years.