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Annwyl Jeremy Ketley

**GWYNEDD COUNCIL RESPONSE : Supporting Commercial Spaceplane Operations in the UK - Consultation on Criteria to Determine the Location of a UK Spaceport**

This response is presented by Gwynedd Council, the Unitary Authority for the region of North West Wales within which Llanbedr Airfield - one of the eight potential locations for a UK spaceport identified by the Civil Aviation Authority – is located.

Gwynedd Council provides a range of services to the community of Llanbedr and has responsibility for the social wellbeing and economic prosperity of the area. It should be noted, however, that Llanbedr Airfield is located within Snowdonia National Park and, therefore, the Snowdonia National Park Authority is the relevant planning authority.

Gwynedd Council warmly welcomes the inclusion of Llanbedr Airfield in the CAA's shortlist and would fully support the development of the site as the location of the UK Spaceport.

Llanbedr is an extraordinary site set within the world renowned landscape of Snowdonia with a great many attributes which would make it an excellent choice for the spaceport such as its status as an existing airfield facility in a secure coastal location where a spaceport could safely operate at minimum risk to the public.

The Airfield benefits from wholehearted support of the Welsh Government as part of the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone and benefits from its proximity to both Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities, both of whom have expertise in fields relevant to space technology.

Response to consultation questions:

Q1. *Do you agree with the CAA's high-level recommendation that, if a decision were taken to proceed, suborbital 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*

The CAA are right to identify the safety of passengers and the 'uninvolved public' as the primary consideration and, as such, the selection of an appropriately regulated aerodrome and airspace is paramount. Shortlisted sites should be required to ensure that the appropriate licenses are secured within an agreed timeframe.

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 utilising an existing facility with low level of aircraft movements is preferable. Llanbedr Airfield fully meets this requirement

Q3. *Do you agree that green field sites should not be considered?*

Given that appropriate sites such as Llanbedr Airfield already exist Gwynedd Council does not believe it is appropriate to consider the development of green field sites.

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.*

Gwynedd Council agrees with the CAA's analysis identifying the criteria.

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

Consideration should be given to opportunities to align the requirements for a Spaceport with other requirements from the UK Government such as the ongoing requirement to establish a UK test and evaluation environment for large, remotely piloted aircraft systems and a site such as Llanbedr which could meet both requirements should be supported.

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

The criteria identified are appropriate and relevant and Gwynedd Council agrees that safety consideration should be given primacy alongside contributory factors such as meteorology. Environmental considerations should also be given appropriate weight, on the basis that the utilisation of an existing aerodrome would significantly reduce the environmental impacts.

Q7. *If more than one location closely meets 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?*

The development of the UK Spaceport provides a unique opportunity for scientific and technological advancement and by that means economic development and local / national growth. It is incumbent upon UK to maximise these benefits by striking the most beneficial balance between reasonable proximity to existing clusters of industrial and academic excellence and the economic needs of a proposed host community.

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?*

Gwynedd Council agrees with the CAA's recommendation and notes that Llanbedr Airfield fully meets this requirement due to its low population density access to segregated airspace.

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

Gwynedd Council wholeheartedly welcomes the inclusion of Llanbedr as one of the eight shortlisted sites.

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

Gwynedd Council respects the CAA's objective analysis of the available sites.

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

None

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide Gwynedd Council's response to the consultation; in closing, I would reiterate Gwynedd Council's full support for the selection of Llanbedr Airfield as the location for the UK Spaceport and assure you that the Council will provide any and all support within its ability to the venture.

Yn gywir,



**Cyng. Dyfed Edwards**  
**Arweinydd Cyngor Gwynedd**  
**Leader of Gwynedd Council**