



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Y Gweinidog Busnes, Menter, Technoleg a Gwyddoniaeth
Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref EH/06329/12

William Powell AM

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25th July 2012

Dear William,

Thank you for your letter of 11th July requesting the First Minister's comments on Petition P-04-404 regarding unmanned Aircraft at Aberporth. I am replying in view of my portfolio responsibilities.

Aerospace is a major contributor to the Welsh economy providing direct employment for over 20,000 people. As a prime location for this key sector we must keep pace with innovation and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) represents the most significant technological change in recent years.

The potential civil uses for UAVs far outweigh their military applications but their civilian usage is currently severely restricted by regulatory issues surrounding the use of airspace and the development of UAV technologies. In creating a dedicated airspace for the test and evaluation of UAVs Wales is providing an environment in which these issues can be addressed, thus escalating civil development. This places Wales in a good position to establish itself as a leading location for the emerging civil market and its associated high value technology companies.

ParcAberporth is a technology park focused on the development of unmanned systems technologies. The Ministry of Defence is currently conducting trials of its Watchkeeper UAV programme at ParcAberporth. Watchkeeper is an unarmed platform providing a capability to support and protect UK and cooperative forces in front line operations. The MoD trials activity is providing a valuable boost to the local economy but is one in which the Welsh Government has no remit as defence is a non-devolved matter. Similarly, Wales has no jurisdiction over any collaborations which the UK MoD may enter into.

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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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