

REPLY FROM MARK WILLIAMS MP 9TH OCTOBER 2009

Q. Do you currently support the creation of the area of segregated air space (fly zone) over west Wales as proposed by the Welsh Assembly Government for the purposes of testing UAVs?

A. I do support the principle of a segregated airspace policy, but you will be aware of the Welsh Assembly Government consultation which presents three options. Option 3 involves largely (but not exclusively) rural areas, so this would be my preferred choice.

Q. Is your support for the fly zone conditional on jobs being created for local people at Parc Aberporth?

A. Yes

Q. If yes, how many local jobs would you want to see at Parc Aberporth in two years time in order for the project to continue to receive your support?

A. I can't quantify the economic benefits of Parc Aberporth, though I have to say I have been extremely disappointed by the scale of job creation on the site. Parc Aberporth was presented to local people as an opportunity to create jobs which has not been realised.

Q. What benefits do you think the UAV testing zone brings to the people of west Wales other than jobs?

A. I would hope there would be economic benefits but again I remain to be convinced

Q. Is your support for the fly zone influenced by whether the zone is used to test military applications of UAVs or civilian applications?

A. Yes, most definitely. I am on record as saying that I do not support the use of military UAVs. When the assertion was made that military UAVs tested at Parc Aberporth might have been used in Israeli incursions into Gaza, I challenged the Welsh Assembly Government, and received assurances that they were not. There is a case for some civilian applications for example mountain and sea rescue or the monitoring of crops, but my support for these is predicated by the tight monitoring in terms of safety and the environmental effect, and the effect on residents.

Q. Do you think the creation of a fly zone will benefit or harm the tourist industry in West Wales? If so, how.

A. I do not see how this can benefit the tourist industry.

My immediate concern however following representations made to me by constituents locally is the safety provisions of UAV testing. I am currently trying to seek assurances over testing safety, and an explanation as to the circumstances of the incident that happened a couple of weeks ago.