



## **‘So much for the land of the free.’ UK delivery drone plans take off after US clips Amazon’s wings**

### ***Delivery experts ParcelHero say Amazon’s new drone trials are being launched in the UK because the US backed away from legalising trials***

Today’s announcement that Amazon has gained permission to step up its trial of delivery drones in the UK comes as no surprise, say e-commerce delivery specialists [ParcelHero.com](https://www.parcelhero.com). ParcelHero’s Head of Consumer Research, David Jinks MILT explains: ‘Last year, the then Transport Minister Robert Goodwill declared: *“Amazon came to see me to ask about starting drone trials in the UK because regulations in the US were too restrictive. So much for the land of the free.”*’

Explains David: ‘The UK Government was keen to capitalise on America’s hesitation in order to secure further investment in Amazon’s Cambridge based R&D team. Now a cross-Government team - supported by the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) - has pushed through new legislation allowing radical new trials. The new permissions allow beyond line-of-sight operations in rural and suburban areas, and flights where one person operates multiple highly-automated drones. Previously such flights would have been unthinkable and seen Amazon’s plans grounded.’

David adds: ‘The US Government and its Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) were very wary about authorising permission for such tests, which hugely frustrated Amazon executives. But the UK Government has adopted a far more ‘can do’ approach in order to secure investment.’

The then Transport Minister (now Immigration Minister) Robert Goodwill said at a motor industry conference in 2015: ‘We’re working with Amazon, and Government is working on the whole issue of drones...We’re both keen to innovate’. And in December 2015 Amazon boss Jeff Bezos revealed: ‘One of the regulatory agencies that’s moving fastest on this is the UK, so it’s possible that drone deliveries will start first in the UK.’

Comments David: ‘The Government and the CAA’s willingness to change the rules to allow beyond line-of-sight flights and one-person operation of multiple drones mean previously illegal flights are now allowed in a controlled area. Amazon’s Vice President of Global Innovation Policy and Communications, Paul Misener, said today *“We’ve been investing in Prime Air research and development here for quite some time,”* and these permissions are Amazon’s reward for that investment.’

The CAA’s Policy Director Tim Johnson states: “We want to enable the innovation that arises from the development of drone technology by safely integrating drones into the overall aviation system. These tests by Amazon will help inform our policy and future approach.”

Amazon’s Prime Air drone delivery plans were revealed in ParcelHero’s industry report [Amazon’s Prime Ambition](#) as part of a wider strategy to increase delivery choices for its Prime customers. Loyal Prime members spend twice as much as non-members and free or one hour deliveries are key to their retention.

For more information about Amazon’s radical new delivery plans see:

<https://www.parcelhero.com/blog/news-updates/amazons-prime-ambition-parcelhero-industry-report-2>

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