Submission from:
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We would like to strongly object RSP's proposals regarding noise mitigation for their proposed airport. We live directly under the flight path in St Lawrence, Ramsgate, and have done so since 2007.

We do not object to the airport in principle, and the daytime passenger flights that were operated in the past by FlyBe and KLM caused no problems at all.

However the freight flights were very noisy at any time of the day, and were frankly deafening and frightening at night. The freight flights seem to fly much lower than other planes, and are usually larger and older aircraft, so this contributes to their noise. Even in the daytime, when one went overhead it blocked out the sound of the radio or TV, and if we were on the phone we would have to stop talking. I (Andy Ball) used to work in an office in central Ramsgate, and it was the same there - people I was talking to on the phone would ask what was happening, as they thought there was some sort of disaster happening!

If this is what would happen in the day, imagine what it sounded like at night. We were often woken up by night flights in the past, when planes were late arriving. When we complained to the airport at the time and asked why there has been a night flight, we never got a proper answer - they just said the plane was flying according to 'safe flying practices'. Most of the night flights would fly right over our house - it would be intolerable if this happened regularly throughout the night. We can't afford to be disturbed or kept awake at night by aeroplanes - it would affect our work and damage our health very severely.

Even when planes took off from Manston over Herne Bay at night, we could still be woken up. The noise might be less than those that fly over Ramsgate, but it would still be very noisy.

RSP's proposals seem very vague in mitigating noise at night. Of course, any airport has to have provision for AHEM flights, and it seems that RSP will use the same trick as the old airport operator, allowing night flights without any proper explanation or reasoning. For them to say they don't need a quota for night flights is misleading. There will of course be night flights, possibly by subterfuge, but even late evening flights would disturb the population of Ramsgate, particularly children and older people who go to bed early.

The idea that cargo flights will bring lots of jobs to Manston is rubbish, as a previous report from Thanet District Council showed. Large numbers of jobs require passenger flights, but cargo flights require fewer staff. The few jobs they would create would be countered by the loss in jobs from the tourist trade, the loss of income from people who live in Ramsgate and work elsewhere, and a decline in house prices and house renovations.

People live in Ramsgate for quality of life. If we can't sleep at night we will have to move out of Thanet, as will many others. The runway at Manston is extremely close to residential property, much closed than for many other airports.

The review of RSP's proposal has to take account of the wellbeing of children and the general health of the population. How are children expected to learn properly if they are woken up at night by late evening or night flights? And there has been much research showing the deleterious effects on health of being woken at night, but also research that shows that even if you don't consciously wake up in response to a loud noise, your sleep is disturbed, again leading to health problems such as high blood pressure.

The old airport struggled for many years, and I have not seen any convincing evidence that a similar airport would thrive now, unless reasonable noise mitigation was abandoned and noisy flights encroached on late evenings and nighttime. This must surely be the unwritten strategy of RSP, and we urge you to interrogate their stated reasoning very intensely.

Best wishes, Andy Ball & Eudu De Oliveira