

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Manston Airport](#); grant.shapps@dft.gov.uk; caroline.lucas.mp@parliament.uk; info@andymcdonaldmp.org
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: OBJECTION: Application by RiverOak Strategic Partners Limited for an Order granting Development Consent for the reopening and development of Manston Airport in Kent
Date: 02 February 2020 20:52:14

Application by RiverOak Strategic Partners Limited for an Order granting Development Consent for the reopening and development of Manston Airport in Kent

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION dated 17 January 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are writing to register **our wholehearted objection** to the application for a Development Consent Order by RiverOak Strategic Partners (RSP). While our objections are many and we have written to the Examining Authority on several occasions, today we would like to focus on the potential disastrous impact of an air freight hub on **Ramsgate's special historical heritage, its growing successful tourism business and the regeneration of Ramsgate.**

Proposal:

We understand that RiverOak Strategic Partners (RSP) proposes air freight services which will eventually reach 17,000 annual air freight movements "equating to 350,000 tons of air freight" and potentially 64,906 HGV movements per year.

Proximity:

Ramsgate with a population of 42,000 lies directly on the Manston flight path. So this would mean having noisy, polluting, and old cargo (therefore potentially dangerous) planes flying at low altitude over areas of unique historical importance to the United Kingdom, plus residential and highly populated areas, as they come into land and take off directly above our town.

Case against:

It is vital that the Examining Authority ensure that Ramsgate's unique and special importance to British history as a Royal Harbour and scene of some of Britain's most dramatic maritime rescues in WWII, along with its outstanding architecture and internationally important natural environment is preserved and protected for future generations. Ramsgate is one of the great British coastal towns with a fascinating maritime history. We were recently designated an Historic England Heritage Action Zone and are on the brink of growing into a prosperous maritime town where outstanding heritage and architecture coupled with new investment and development will strengthen the economy for the benefit of the local community.

Ramsgate is a much under-appreciated asset for the UK and, given the right investment, offers a superb opportunity for economic regeneration that would delight hundreds of thousands of visitors from Britain and overseas. A government that allows a disreputable company to install a cargo hub against overwhelming health and safety, and environmental and sustainability advice opens itself up to enormous and justified criticism, and indeed reputational damage.

However, a government with imagination would see the unique importance that Ramsgate can play in telling the story of the history of the UK, and by supporting the town in continuing to grow its booming tourist economy, would create a unique and, indeed, invaluable gift to the UK.

Unique history of Ramsgate:

As well as being Britain's only Royal Harbour, over 900 listed buildings are sited here, with an outstanding collection of Georgian and Victorian properties. The town is also includes a wonderful variety of historic sites including buildings by the architect Augustus Pugin, famous for designing the interiors of the Palace of Westminster, along with many artistic and literary associations in the town from Dickens, Van Gogh, Karl Marx, Coleridge and many more.

Ramsgate in history – some reminders:

- In 54BC, Julius Caesar landed at Pegwell Bay.
- In 449AD, the Vikings landed and settled in Ramsgate. You can see the Viking ship Hugin at nearby Cliffsend.
- In 497AD, England's first Christian missionary St Augustine landed in Ramsgate. St Augustine's Cross, which marks the event, is to be found just west of Cliffsend, while the church bearing his name, designed by celebrated architect Augustus Pugin, is situated on the town's Westcliff.
- Ramsgate was a main embarkation port from the UK during the Napoleonic Wars. On one occasion 40,000 troops embarked from the town.
- In 1821, King George IV named our harbour 'Royal', making it the only Royal Harbour in the UK.
- Ramsgate, during WWI, was branded as the most bombed seaside town in the UK.
- Ramsgate was a major contributor towards the rescue of the troops from the Dunkirk Beaches, during WWII (Little Ships).
- Ramsgate, during the WWII, protected the residents within the underground tunnels, which are nearly 4 miles long, with a capacity to hold 60,000 people.
- The first international Hoverport in the world was at Pegwell Bay in Ramsgate.

Tourism in Thanet:

Tourism has boomed in Thanet in recent years which has had an enormously positive impact on the region seeing regeneration, restoration and a rise in employment. Currently Thanet's tourism economy is worth more than £319m. The district welcomed a record 4.2 million visits in 2017, meaning the value of Thanet's visitor economy grew by 9.2% since 2015 (the former airport closed May 2014). Tourism jobs have also increased by 6.8% to 76,828, and now account for 11% of total employment across the county.

Tourist Attractions:

- Ramsgate's visitors currently enjoy kitesurfing, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, diving, seal boat trips, bird watching, tennis (open air tennis courts are at Spencer Square), swimming, football, croquet, bowls, walking,
- cycling, golfing, and horse riding
- Ramsgate held the British Kitesurfing championships in 2019 (its second year)
- Ramsgate was voted in the Top 100 ITV British walks (2018)
- Active Ramsgate was awarded GOLD in the Community Care Award (2017)
- Explore Kent awarded Ramsgate in 2016 with the first "We Love Walkers and Cyclists" accreditation status and is part of the 28- mile circular Viking Coastal Trail
- It holds the second largest international regatta in the UK from the marina Ramsgate Week and the Regatta

- Winter Wassail, May Fayre, Great Bucket and Spade Run, Looping the Loop, Ramsgate Festival of Sound (outside and indoors), Adventures in Performance, Ramsgate Carnival, and the Christmas laser light show over the Royal Harbour
- Ramsgate has a designated park and non-designated parks as well as Grade II Royal harbour
- Ramsgate has Seaside awards for its sandy beaches at Ramsgate Western Undercliff and Ramsgate Main Sands. It has a further sandy beach at Eastcliff beach.

Thanet is an area that is rapidly improving, overcoming years of neglect and provides a pleasant place to live for its residents. In recent years, Ramsgate has worked hard to reclaim its status as a popular tourist resort. You only need to visit the Harbour or Addington Street to see how the area is changing for the better, new shops are opening, Wetherspoons has done an excellent job in making over the Royal Victoria Pavilion and all of these are just a glimmer of the opportunities to come through a clearly considered regeneration of the area.

The growing tourist industry will be driven away by noisy and polluting cargo planes and ferries over the beaches and hotels and outdoor activity. The burgeoning tourist industry is bringing employment and money into the local economy, and having this renaissance without an airport or ferry service. The argument that a cargo airport would provide jobs does not withstand scrutiny, as it's apparent that the creation of roles in Manston would be minimal.

Potential affect on historic environment:

With over 900 listed buildings, many of considerable antiquity and national importance, and four conservation areas, Ramsgate faces significant risk of damage to its older and more fragile buildings given the nature and scale of the proposed airport operation. The disturbance from air traffic would so reduce the desirability of the town that the refurbishment and repair of historic buildings would become a far less attractive proposition and the urban fabric would deteriorate.

I understand there are more accidents and crashes to air cargo aircraft than to passenger aircraft and of these around 80 per cent occur during take-off and landing. In addition, it is common for large aircraft to cause tiles or slates to be sucked off roofs of buildings close to the flight path. In Ramsgate the flightpath approach is from the east over the Channel. This would entail low flight over the centre of the town, including the conservation area and most of our listed buildings. These buildings, mainly Regency and Georgian, are vulnerable as the roofs are predominately period slate or tile, placing much of our built heritage under significant threat.

Negative impact on nature and the environment:

Ramsgate is very close to a RAMSAR site, NNR and SSSI site 'Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay' a Special Area for Conservation and Special Protection Area. Pegwell Bay which adjoins Ramsgate to the south and this Nature Reserve is a Ramsar Site of International Importance. It is rich in flora, fauna and especially bird life, with many rare species. It is a highly valuable outdoor leisure asset. Local people and tourists enjoy public access to the area in the form of footpaths and cycle routes, providing a much loved amenity. As mentioned above, the high quality beaches of Ramsgate and surrounding seaside settlements are a great draw for holiday makers which contributes significantly to the tourist business of South East Kent.

Further objections:

In addition we strongly object to:

- Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges of our lifetime and it is widely accepted now that aircraft plays a fundamental role in exacerbating carbon emissions. Building an air hub goes against all sensible thinking on environmental issues.
- The health hazards particularly lung diseases caused and worsened by aircraft pollution and the increase in HGV vehicles that a cargo airport would require.
- Noise pollution and the debilitating impact on mental health e.g. known cause of insomnia, anxiety, depression and severe loss of quality of life.
- Negative impact on schooling and pupil attainment through increased interruption through noise, sleep and general health as above, particularly in a disadvantaged area where the educational attainment is among the lowest in the UK.
- The lack of expertise evidenced by RSP in this area and abysmal credentials of key members of the RSP e.g. Tony Freudmann, a struck off solicitor.
- Previous owners at Manston have not had success with running an airport here.

Section 6 of the Appraisal of Sustainability

It is our understanding that under Section 6 of the Appraisal of Sustainability: Airports National Policy Statement NonTechnical Summary of June 2018 the proposed scheme must: (a) avoid or minimise negative effects on community viability, including housing, facilities and indirect effects

(b) avoid or minimise disproportionate impacts of any social group

(c) maintain and where possible improve the quality of life for local residents and the wider population

(d) minimise and where possible reduce noise impact on human receptors

(e) conserve and where appropriate enhance heritage assets and the wider historic environment including buildings, structures, landscapes, townscapes and archaeological remains, and

(f) promote the protection and improvement of landscapes, townscapes, waterscapes and the natural features including areas of tranquility and dark skies.

Summary:

In summary we believe allowing a cargo (or any other) airport to be reinstated at Manston would:

- Adversely impact the historic environment of Ramsgate
- Potential to destroy internationally recognized Nature reserve and local wildlife, flora and fauna.
- Blight the growing and successful tourism business on which much of Ramsgate depends, in an already fragile economy
- Discourage growth in investment
- It would blight the residential and commercial property market much of which is used to accommodate visitors to the region
- Impact the health and well-being of the population of over 40,000 due to noise and pollution hazards, and also the health and well-being of thousands of tourist visitors.

Conclusion:

The proposed introduction of a cargo airport at Manston is entirely inappropriate and at odds with the Ramsgate's reinvention as an historic heritage destination. There is an extraordinary opportunity now to turn Ramsgate into a beacon for British heritage. Ramsgate's economic success as a tourist destination is being achieved without an airport, and in fact the introduction of a cargo airport would do nothing but blight the town's nascent recovery. **Ramsgate is a national treasure, please don't put it at risk.**

Kind regards,

Tracey and Michael McEvoy