

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Manston Airport](#)
Subject: Manston Airport DCO re-examination
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Attn of the Manston Airport Case Team

I reference a report by an aviation consultant Alan Stratford & Associates and their observations on Manston Airport.

Founded in 1965, Alan Stratford and Associates is one of the most established specialist aviation consultancy firms in the UK. Its team brings a wealth of industry-specific and consultancy experience covering an extensive range of project areas in the airport, airline and air traffic management sectors. Our consultants have all extensive experience both in the UK, Europe and elsewhere in the world. Together we have worked in almost 30 countries worldwide.

Our work covers airport and airline strategic planning, infrastructure development, air traffic forecasting, regulatory advice, airport and airline sales transactions and environmental assessment. We also undertake more general project preparation and monitoring studies across the aviation and other transport sectors.

As established specialist aviation consultants I feel their opinion should carry some weight. I attach a link to the complete article, <https://www.alanstratford.co.uk/aviation-insights/manston-airport-dco-promises-of-over-23000-new-jobs-are-flawed/> but include the following extracts;

A personal view – Peter Forbes, Director, Alan Stratford and Associates

- **Manston's history**

In order to fulfil the requirements of the DCO, RSP needed to show that the airport was a significant national infrastructure development with a minimum of 10,000 ATMs per annum. Under RSP's forecasts, Manston would handle some 181,436 tonnes of cargo with 10,144 cargo ATMs by Year 6 of its operation. Passenger traffic was forecasted at 965,925 by Year 6 and 1,307,259 by Year 18. The development is forecasted to create some 23,235 direct, indirect and induced jobs – of which 3,417 were direct jobs at the airport itself. This compares against the total of just 150 jobs at Manston when the airport closed.

Location is too remote

In terms of freight, the key disadvantage of Manston is its location at the extreme SE corner of the UK and its poor surface access. Historic traffic levels at the airport have generally been modest and it has never been able to compete with East Midlands and Stansted – the UK's two largest airports for dedicated freighter traffic, which account for some 71.7% of all cargo handled by dedicated freighter aircraft.

No clear need for the Development

Given the fact that Manston was historically unable to develop significant levels of freight and/passenger traffic on a profitable basis and the constraints on future growth outlined above, I really cannot see why the Secretary of State for Transport overruled the Planning Inspectorate and approved the DCO. There is significant available capacity to handle additional freight at East Midlands and Stansted (as well as at other airports with the exception of Heathrow and Gatwick) for at least the next 15-20 years.

Sale of land

There is little doubt in my mind that RSP's objective in promoting the Manston development is to sell off some or all of the land for housing and/or industrial development.

Suitability of the developer

A further issue is the background of RSP and its key personnel. RSP is a US investment company with no background in or experience in airport development or operations. The source of the funding for the project (£330m) is completely undetermined.

Impact on climate change

My own view, is that the UK aviation sector as a whole is fully committed to meeting these targets in line with ICAO requirements and, if the development were not to proceed, any traffic growth would in any case be accommodated at other UK airports.

How would the development be financed?

Should the DCO decision be upheld, then it is unclear as to how the development would be funded. If private finance is not forthcoming, then might RSP seek funds through a public offering ? It is also possible that the RSP may try to sell some land to enable the initial investment.

False hopes?

I would hope that some aviation activity can be retained at the site both to maintain its heritage and for light aviation. This might, in the future, include the use of electric aircraft eg for recreational flying and small-scale commercial passenger operations.

He concludes;

I personally hope that the decision will now be overturned in a Judicial Review. If not, I suspect it will be a long drawn out saga with few, if any, jobs created and no long-lasting benefit to the local community.

Submitted by

James Hose

