

For the attention of: The Manston Airport Case Team
Manstonairport@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

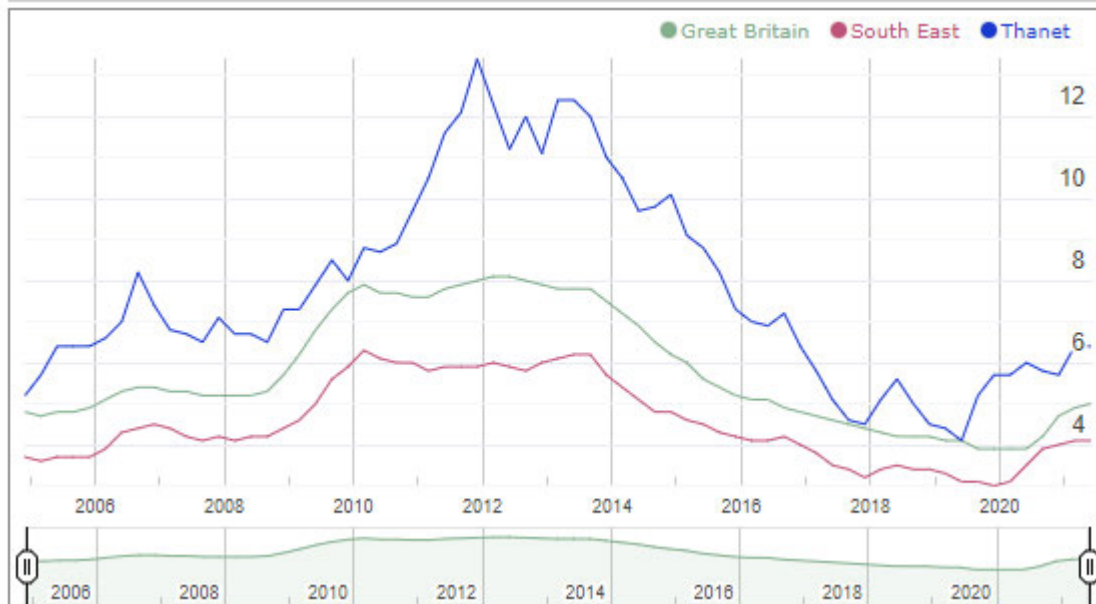
Re: Proposed reopening of Manston Airport by Riveroak Strategic Partners (TR020002)

The Arup Manston Airport Assessor's Report (21st Oct 2021) concluded that 'there have not been any significant or material changes to policy or the quantitative need case for the Proposed Development since July 2019 that would lead to different conclusions being reached (compared with the previous ExA conclusions) with respect to the need for the Manston development'. This chimes with the findings of not just the ExA, but also various reports from York Aviation, Avia Solutions, Falcon, Alan Stratford Associates, Altitude and Kent County Council's 2015 report on Manston's future prospects.

If the Secretary of State is still minded to give the airport the go head on the basis of the benefits to the community which RSP claims it can provide, I would ask him to consider whether those claims are credible especially in relation to jobs.

Based on the data, there is no basis for assuming that the airport will be good for employment in Thanet. Quite the contrary. A graph on the government's Nomis website shows that unemployment in Thanet worsened after Infratil took over the moribund airport in 2005 and tried to turn it round. Unemployment then improved significantly after the airport shut in 2014.

All People – Economically Active – Unemployed (Model Based) Thanet



In 2011, Pfizer announced the closure of its nearby Sandwich site. It was devastating news to Thanet's economy. But the site was reborn as Discovery Park and now hosts 160 companies which provide 3,500 jobs many of which are highly skilled and highly paid. The HS1 Parkway Rail Station, currently under construction will provide it with enhanced connectivity to London and Europe.

Manston Airport has played no part in this employment success story. Most of that job growth has occurred in the seven years since the airport closed.

Sir Roger Gales has been an enthusiastic supporter of RSP's proposal to reopen Manston on the basis that it will bring much needed employment to Thanet which has the lowest skilled, lowest paid workforce in Kent and the highest unemployment. However, the post Brexit landscape reveals that the area has an acute labour shortage. On the 15th September this year, Sir Roger delivered a speech in the House of Commons in which he stated that one of Thanet's largest employers, Thanet Earth, had £320,000 worth of tomatoes rotting in its huge greenhouses. "Because of the lack of labour force, the crops are rotting in our fields and on our trees," he said.

Once upon a time, Thanet Earth was going to be the answer to Thanet's employment problems. It was going to provide training and jobs. Instead, it ended up having to import most of its labour. Whatever is driving Thanet's unemployment figures therefore, it is not a simple lack of jobs. We have acute labour shortages in agriculture, the NHS, in care, in tourism and in construction.

In the last decade, the only aviation consultancy reports that have found any case for an airport at Manston have been commissioned by RSP. From the Davies Commission onwards, the disinterested assessment has been that there is no need for Manston Airport and it cannot succeed. Failed airports do not provide benefits. They suck investment into a black hole and return nothing.

I urge the Secretary of State to follow the advice of Arup and the ExA and reject RSP's proposal.

Yours faithfully
Janet Davies

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Janet Davies.