

NO NEED FOR AN AIRPORT AT MANSTON AND NO BENEFIT

A huge piece of misinformation, broadcast throughout Thanet, is that only through the opening of a 24/7 Cargo hub on the old Manston Airport site, can youth in Thanet expect to have any future.

This in spite of the disastrous environmental impact it would have on a fragile and precious coastline and Britain's net zero aspirations, not to mention the negative PR hit post COP26.

Additionally Thanet has a thriving tourist and hospitality industry, which would be adversely affected.

Manston Airport has a history of failure. The reason it has failed in the past and will fail again is because it is in the wrong place.

It is in the far south-east of the country, with poor road networks, no fuel pipelines and no cargo rail links.

It is the wrong side of the Thames crossings from all of the major distribution hubs.

It does not, like the MAG group (Manchester, Stansted and East Midlands), find itself within what is known as the "golden triangle" of four-hour haulage range. Far from it, it can take in excess of 90 minutes to get across the Thames or round the M25 to Heathrow on a good day.

Incidentally, the last time the airport failed, and the time before that, it was under the management of Tony Freudman, currently one of the Directors of RSP, the company proposing the new hub and the applicant in the recent DCO process.

There has been very little change to the modus operandi of the airport business plan in the new proposals, but RSP, aided and abetted by the two local MPs (for reasons unknown) have won some local support by promising huge numbers of jobs, in the tens of thousands (when Manston was last a functioning airport there were fewer than 500 employees). They have also used the prominent local fear of more housing, more people moving down from London to already oversubscribed schools and doctors' surgeries. They believe that if Manston isn't to be an airport, it will be housing.

Sir Roger Gale in particular is passionate in his support for the reopening of Manston Airport. Ironically, Sir Roger Gale has been loud in his condemnation of building on greenfield sites and on the outskirts of villages and he has also been loud in his objection to Heathrow's third runway, because of his concerns for the

health of his grandson, who lives in Chiswick, due to increased air traffic noise and pollution. It seems we can rely on Sir Roger to be inconsistent.

Craig Mackinlay owns a company called MAMA Airlines. He was recently chastised in the House for failing to declare it in the Register of Interests. MAMA is short for "Manston to Malaga". He has consistently voted against measures to combat climate change and is one of several prominent Conservative 'Climate Inactivists' seeking to delay any move towards Net Zero for his own personal ends.

At the conclusion of the DCO hearings, the Planning Inspectorate concluded that the estimated jobs were overstated and that the jobs impacted negatively elsewhere in the local economy would considerably outnumber any airport jobs.

All expert opinion except for that of RSP is that the airport is not needed and if opened would fail.

Should the Planning Inspector's decision not to grant the DCO be ignored by the Secretary of State for a second time then the suspicion will arise that the only possible reason for flying in the face of all the evidence would be cronyism or sleaze. A payback for services rendered (financial or otherwise) or to reward a chum for his devotion. Whilst this government has a well documented history of such behaviour it should not be used to throw the people of Thanet under a bus.

Thanet is ideally placed as a hub for green energy industries, with the Vattenfall and London Array bases already here, solar energy expertise and funding in place for Green Hubs. Such industries would provide a large number of skilled and forward looking, future-proof jobs, as opposed to the few, low-skill, low-wage jobs that a fully automated cargo hub could bring.

Manston has a potential future as a location for clean Green industry, leisure, natural restoration and much else. As an airport it has no future at all.