

National Infrastructure Planning

Re-determination of the Application by RiverOak Strategic Partners Limited for an Order granting Development Consent for the reopening and development of Manston airport

This is in response to the Secretary of State's request for further comments on the latest report commissioned by him from Ove Arup and other responses deemed relevant.

The points listed below are in addition to the many points previously made and of which the Secretary of State is well aware.

1. **REPORTS:** The Ove Arup report finds that there is no need for the proposed Aviation Cargo Hub at Manston. This confirms the conclusion made by the ExA after extensive input by both the applicant and the local community into the public enquiry held in 2018/19. That enquiry confirmed previous reports by Avia Solutions, York Aviation, Altitude aviation, Falcon Consultancy, and Alan Stratford & Associates. The only report that has demurred from this was commissioned by the applicant and has since been discredited.
2. **NEED:** It has therefore been amply demonstrated by credible companies and individuals that not only is there no need, but that neither a cargo hub nor a passenger terminal would be viable at Manston.
3. **NO NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE:** As it has been established that there is no need, the application should never have been accepted on the basis of it being a site of National Significance. It never was, and this should be seen as it is, an obvious ruse by the applicant to overcome the significant hurdles to a straightforward development application.
4. **JOBS:** 'More employment', has been given as a reason for support of this project, but it should be clear that Manston when operating provided no more than 140 jobs and that since that time automation has increased considerably, so assuming in the extremely unlikely event that an airport was successfully launched at Manston any jobs provided for the local community would be a mere pittance compared with those that are actually required in Thanet, and the project, with the increase in noise and atmospheric pollution, would put into jeopardy the many jobs now provided by the local hospitality and tourist industry. The Government's own NOMIS website states that unemployment increased when Infratil tried making a futile attempt at rejuvenating the airport and employment increased again only when the airport was finally closed in 2014. That serves to demonstrate the potential loss of employment by allowing another futile attempt, resulting in the loss of many otherwise secure jobs that have come about and more that are likely to come about through the gradual regeneration process that is taking place here.
5. **JOBS – AN ALTERNATIVE:** If the concern is truly about employment, rather than putting existing jobs in jeopardy by approving an airport for which there is no need, the government could take a far more positive step by encouraging and even subsidising large companies to branch into the area, companies that have a proven record of high employment. This could pay for itself by reducing the government unemployment bill and increased tax revenue. When Pfizer closed in 2011 it was a big blow to the economy of Thanet, but the site was developed by Discovery Park, which now hosts 160 companies providing 3,500 jobs. That is the type of project that

creates real jobs, not a half-baked ill researched proposal for an aviation cargo hub with all the detrimental effects it would bring to the area and community.

6. **POLLUTION AND HEALTH:** There are many concerns shown about the obvious impact of noise and air pollution on health to local people and these affects have been well documented throughout the world. The assertion by the applicant that it will all operate with green hydrogen powered planes serves to demonstrates the world of pretence and deviousness under which the applicant operates.
7. **CARBON EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE CHANGE:** The UK's Sixth Carbon budget (22nd June 2021) implies that there can be no more than a 25% air traffic increase between 2018 and 2050 to meet net zero requirements and this has already been allocated to other airports.
8. **LESS NEED AND LOCATION:** At the time of the ExA there was already existing spare capacity at many airports and since July 2019 there is still spare capacity at Stansted and East Midlands airport. A proposed expansion by Stansted has been put on hold due to decreased forecasts. A third runway is most likely to be approved at Heathrow which will increase its capacity, and Manston is at a severe disadvantage to all of these airports because of location.
9. **THE CURRENT ADVERSE AFFECTS OF THIS PROPOSAL:** The Manston Airport site was owned by the group SHP who had proposed a mixed development of light industry and housing supported with a medical centre, community centre, and school which would have contributed with employment. Because of the proposal for an aviation freight hub Thanet District Council zoned the site as airport only in the delayed local plan, which has meant that many housing developments are being built on prime agricultural land in the village areas to meet Westminster's quota for housing for the area. This is ironical as it is believed by many that RSP in attempting to do something that has previously failed a number of times, has as their final objective to build homes, though without any supporting amenities. It should be noted that RSP originated from the original proposal by Riveroak, an American hedge fund dealing with Real Estate and with no experience in aviation.
10. **THE URGENT NEED FOR A RESPONSIBLE DECISION:** People in the area have had this proposal hovering over them for too long and it has led to a general feeling of uncertainty and even a hesitancy to invest. It is past time that this reached a finality and the local people be given the opportunity to progress with a positivity that should be their right. Quite why the Secretary of State has refused to accept the findings of so many reports and is so supportive of such a questionable application is not known and he has refused to give his reasons. One thing is certain is that it has cost a lot of public funds to come up with the same answer and has cost the local community a lot of time and money which would otherwise have been used to our benefit.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Latchford (Ramsgate Resident - RIN 20013061)