

Response to Ramsgate Town Council (RTC) – report by Peter Forbes of ASA [PF] – part 2

Re-determination of the Application by RiverOak Strategic Partners Limited (“the Applicant”) for an Order granting Development Consent for the reopening and development of Manston Airport in Kent.

Save Manston Airport association (SMAa) has over 3,700 members who are in full support of the Development Consent Order to reopen Manston Airport, many wanting jobs for themselves, their family or other Kentish people. Thus, we wish to make further representations to assist in the re-determination of the DCO.

We would like to make a further response to the representation by Peter Forbes (PF) of Alan Stratford Associates (ASA) [PF], on behalf of Ramsgate Town Council (RTC). In our original representation¹ we showed why we believed the report by PF contained several errors and / or omissions. However, we also indicated why we felt that the author of the report could not be considered impartial:

“As an interested party, Ramsgate Town Council (RTC) were notified by letter on the 11th June asking for further representations on the four matters outlined. RTC did not hold a meeting to discuss their representation until 30th June (wasting nearly 3 weeks). The minutes of that meeting show that, to write a response, they said they needed expert advice and because of the short time scale negotiations had already taken place with Peter Forbes (PF) of Alan Stratford Associates (ASA). He was appointed by the council to write a report which RTC subsequently agreed, by a vote, to use as their representation to the Secretary of State.

The choice by RTC to use PF of ASA to write their report is significant because:

- *PF is a member of “No Night Flights over Ramsgate” (NNF) which opposes the development of Manston.*
- *PF has written several articles that have been critical of the applicant’s plans and have contained personal attacks against Tony Freudmann.*
- *The Chair of the RTC, Cllr Anne-Marie Nixey, is an Admin of NNF and screenshots of tweets and retweets by her prove that she was aware of critical articles by Peter Forbes of ASA.*
- *Cllr Green, who proposed the motion and Cllr Hetherington, who seconded the motion, along with 3 other RTC councillors are members of NNF making six in total.*

It is in this context that one should decide whether the author produced a balanced, impartial report to enable the council to make a suitable representation to the Secretary of State.”

Since writing that submission further evidence has emerged which further strengthens our belief that PF was always going to produce a report that was opposed to the reopening of the airport

1.0 Email exchange between PF and Cllr David Green (DG) of RTC

Following a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to RTC the following email exchange was disclosed. For the sake of transparency, we will print the full exchange.

¹ SMAa Response to Ramsgate Town Council (RTC) – Report by Peter Forbes of ASA (PF)

1.1 PF to DG

In the first email of this exchange, it is clear that not only has there been previous communication between the two, "I thought I would get in touch again", but also that it is PF that is "touting for business" from someone he knows to be opposed to the airport.

Thu 17/06/2021 17:29

Hi David

I thought I'd get in touch again as you will no doubt have seen the invitation for interested parties to provide further representations regarding the proposed DCO for Manston Airport.

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/TR020002/TR020002-005360-FINAL%20Statement%20of%20Matters%20-%20Manston%20Airport.pdf>

Is the Council planning to respond to this and, if so, will you require any assistance?

Brgds

Peter

Peter A Forbes | Director
Alan **Stratford** and Associates Limited



Alan Stratford
& Associates

1.2 DG to PF (cc. to the Chair of RTC, Cllr Nixey)

In the reply DG tells PF that he believes RTC would like his assistance and that *"the Council is convinced that any decision to proceed with the DCO would be disastrous for the town"*. PF is thus in no doubt what DG hopes to get from him in terms of his report.

To:

- Peter Forbes <pforbes@alanstratford.co.uk>;
- Anne Marie Nixey

Thank you, Peter,

Yes, Ramsgate Town Council does intend to respond to the SoS Transport's call for evidence regarding what has changed regarding "need" for the facility, paragraph 2 of his statement of matters. **We would be interested in any assistance you could offer.** We also expect to wish to respond to the independent aviation assessor appointed by the SoS. As you know there is a 9th

July deadline for responses. This deadline may be extended. In order to comply with the Council's standing orders, we would need to make a decision whether to proceed with you at our meeting on the 23rd or 30th June and would need to receive your report for our meeting on 7th July. Could you reply with your terms for providing this assistance in two parts, providing an initial report, and providing a response to the SoS's assessor and the submissions by RSP and other interested parties. **Please bear in mind that though the Council is convinced that any decision to proceed with the DCO would be disastrous for the town, it has only limited resources at its disposal.**

David

1.3 PF to DG

PF is very pleased with the reply from DG and sends two emails in quick succession. The second one outlines the charges for his services which are "£800 per day (ex VAT)" and anticipates the first report, responding to the Statement of Matters, will take two days.

Peter Forbes <[REDACTED]>
Fri 18/06/2021
To: David Green

Hi David

Thanks for getting back to me. I'll send you a proposal by Monday night at the latest.

I'm happy to come along to the Council meeting if you feel this would be worthwhile. I would be available on both the 23rd and the 30th although I'm attending a Planning Committee meeting at Buckinghamshire Council regarding another project between 9.30 am - 1.00 pm on the 23rd.

Brgds Peter

Peter Forbes <[REDACTED]>
Sun 20/06/2021 23:29

To: David Green
Cc Anne Marie Nixey
Hi David

Thanks for your email.

We can provide a report by 7th July which you can use in a submission to DfT. This would require two days input, which we would charge at £800 per day (ex VAT). It's difficult at this stage to estimate the input needed to comment on the Assessor's report - although I feel it would be possible to limit this to a further four days work. This gives a total of £1,600 ex VAT for the first stage and £3,200 ex VAT for the second stage of this assignment.

For further info, I attach a copy of my CV. Additional information about my company's background and experience shown in our website (see link below).

If you'd like to discuss this further or if you'd like me to come along to a Council meeting, please get in touch. It's usually easiest to contact me on my mobile (see below).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Brgds Peter

1.4 DG to PF (cc. to the Chair of RTC, Cllr Nixey)

In this email DG indicates that he thinks £2000 for two days work is a reasonable sum for taxpayers of Thanet to pay for a one-sided report. For comparison, according to the latest ONS data, the average Gross Weekly Wage for a Thanet resident in Full-Time work is £560.

Earnings by place of residence (2021)			
	Thanet (Pounds)	South East (Pounds)	Great Britain (Pounds)
Gross Weekly Pay			
Full-Time Workers	560.3	660.1	613.1
Male Full-Time Workers	575.0	709.1	655.5
Female Full-Time Workers	528.4	584.6	558.1
Hourly Pay - Excluding Overtime			
Full-Time Workers	14.60	16.97	15.65
Male Full-Time Workers	14.68	17.91	16.26
Female Full-Time Workers	14.47	15.65	14.86

Source: ONS annual survey of hours and earnings - resident analysis
Notes: Median earnings in pounds for employees living in the area.

We believe it is outrageous that this sum should have been agreed to so readily.

DG then asked for additional help from PF. *"I would also ask your assistance in identifying relevant airport operators that would be adversely affected by a freight hub at Manston and any impact on trade, flight space congestion or the UK carbon budget; and to communicate with them suggesting they might intervene."*

Obviously, there is no evidence to suggest that PF did communicate with anybody he considered would be adversely affected or, if he had, that they had any input into the 6 month investigation by Arup, but it shows the lengths that DG will go to.

To: Peter Forbes <[REDACTED]>
Anne Marie Nixey

Good Morning Peter

Just to update you on your offer.

We hope to make a decision at our meeting on Wednesday 30th evening. I am as certain as I can be with any decision of Council that we will get the go ahead. I would take up your offer to speak to us, but it's an evening meeting probably 8-8:30 pm before we get to our item, and I wouldn't want you to be involved in what will be politically contentious.

What I hope to agree is to offer you £2k including vat for your initial report to answer the SoS questions. Council to receive the report in good time before its meeting on Wed 7 July for onward submission by the deadline of the 9th.

This meeting will be a special one to receive the report and will be at 7pm if you are available to attend.

I would also ask your assistance in identifying relevant airport operators that would be adversely affected by a freight hub at Manston and any impact on trade, flight space congestion or the UK carbon budget; and to communicate with them suggesting they might intervene.

I will also be asking the Council to put aside £4k including vat to employ you to help respond to the SoS's expert report and any submissions by RSP and others, should it be necessary, as I fully expect it will be. I hope these terms are acceptable. Please confirm.

As an aside, Jenny Dawes, who fronted the JR tells me that she and her lawyers are employing Louise Congdon of York aviation to help with their response.

David

1.5 RTC to PF

The following email, from the acting Town Clerk, shows that RTC agreed to pay PF £2000 for two days work.

From: Eileen Richford [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 July 2021 09:20
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Manston Airport DCO

Dear Peter,

Council agreed the following resolution last night;

“Due to the technical nature of the SoS questions, Ramsgate Town Council (RTC) recognises the need for expert advice before responding.

The short timescales imposed by the SoS has meant a swift negotiation with Peter Forbes of Stratford’s, independent experts previously used by Thanet District Council.

They will agree to produce a draft for consideration by Council before the deadline of 9th July 2021.

Their charges are £2,000.00 for the draft. Should RTC require advice in responding to the SoS expert and others, the charge will be an extra £4,000.00.

RTC will be able reclaim the VAT”.

Therefore, I write ask you to proceed as per negotiations with Cllr Green, invoicing directly to myself for the £2,000.00 report fee.

The Chair of Council is calling an Extraordinary Meeting of Council at 7 pm on Wednesday 7th July 2021. Are you able to attend here at the Custom House?

I believe Cllr Green has already advised you of the meeting.

Normally all agenda papers go out on the Friday before the week of our meetings but in this case only the agenda will go out.

It would be appreciated if I was able to send Members something prior to the meeting but obviously this is only possible if you are able to send me something.

Please accept this email as formal appointment to carry out the work on

behalf of RTC. Best regards,

Eileen

2.0 Conclusion

As stated earlier we believe that:

- a) RTC members were mistaken if they thought PF was going to produce an impartial report.
- b) RTC should not have paid such a large sum for such a report.
- c) Having read and critiqued his report² it is clear that Thanet taxpayers did not get value for money.

The report was seriously flawed which we showed in our representation in response to RTC. In summary:

- PF failed to factor in the consequences of a long delay in the expansion of Heathrow.
- PF failed to highlight that the priority at Heathrow is for belly hold not freighters.
- PF used incorrect data to represent what has happened to air cargo since 2020 which has increased not decreased so his conclusions were totally wrong and thus misleading.
- PF completely misrepresented the data from the Boeing report implying there was a predicted drop in demand for freighters whereas the report actually predicted a 60% rise in freighter numbers.
- PF completely ignored the huge rise in e-commerce which will benefit the Manston development.
- PF ignored the significance of Amazon building their biggest warehouse in Europe at Dartford.
- PF did not factor in MAGs clear intention to increase the number of passenger ATMs which inevitably lead to a reduction of cargo ATMs with total ATMs fixed at 274,000.
- PF has totally ignored the possibility that there will be a move away from wide-body to narrow-body jets with the subsequent reduction in belly hold capacity.
- PF has not considered the need to build resilience into the system by granting the Manston development.
- PF has not even mentioned the Thames Freeport which is *“ready for development now in Europe’s biggest consumer market”* and easily accessible from and to Manston.
- PF has not considered that *“the Proposed Development’s effect on the global climate is not significant”*.
- PF has not given an accurate analysis of the planning situation regarding growth at many airports. Heathrow, for example, is by far the biggest expansion plan and that is nowhere near getting planning permission.
- PF has misrepresented the situation by alleging that airports have already been allocated their “share of the UK’s aviation carbon target”.
- PF has not referred to the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and that it is still in the monitoring, reporting and verification phase so allocations to “aeroplane operators” have not yet been finalised.
- PF tried to strengthen his argument against the development at Manston by including matters that were totally irrelevant.

From the SMAa Committee on behalf of the 3,700 members

Dr Beau Webber (Chairman)

