Covid and its significance for large airports vs small local passenger airports.

I and many other Kentish people have written in during the Manston Airport DCO consultations concerning the significant advantages of flying from a small local airport like Manston.

But the current consultation is concerned with : what has changed since mid-2019 ?
Well Covid, of course.

It seems that the public now are gaining a strong preference for not mingling in huge airport concourses with other people far from one's local area, with potentially different Covid variants.

And driving from Thanet to airports like Gatwick, Heathrow and Stansted frequently also involves one in entering motorway station malls, with yet again a different set of potential Covid variants.

For East Kent and Thanet people flying from a local airport like Manston, one only needs to allow less than 15 minutes to drive, with no expectation of the huge motorway delays that are possible with more distant airport.

Thus at Manston one has often been through the check-in process and on the plane in less than half an hour, vs hours hanging around vast concourses. RSP's prediction for throughput at Manston Airport is fewer than 300 passengers per hour (Appendix A).

We believe this will rapidly swing the public's preference to travelling, where possible, from smaller airports.
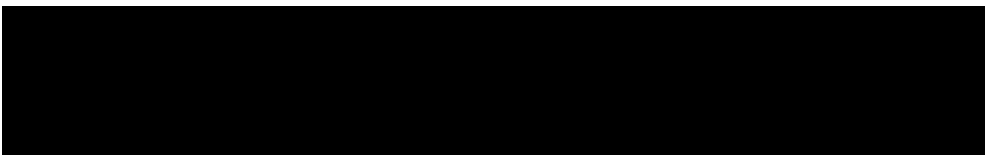
There is some evidence that this is currently taking place Graph 1, Appendix B:
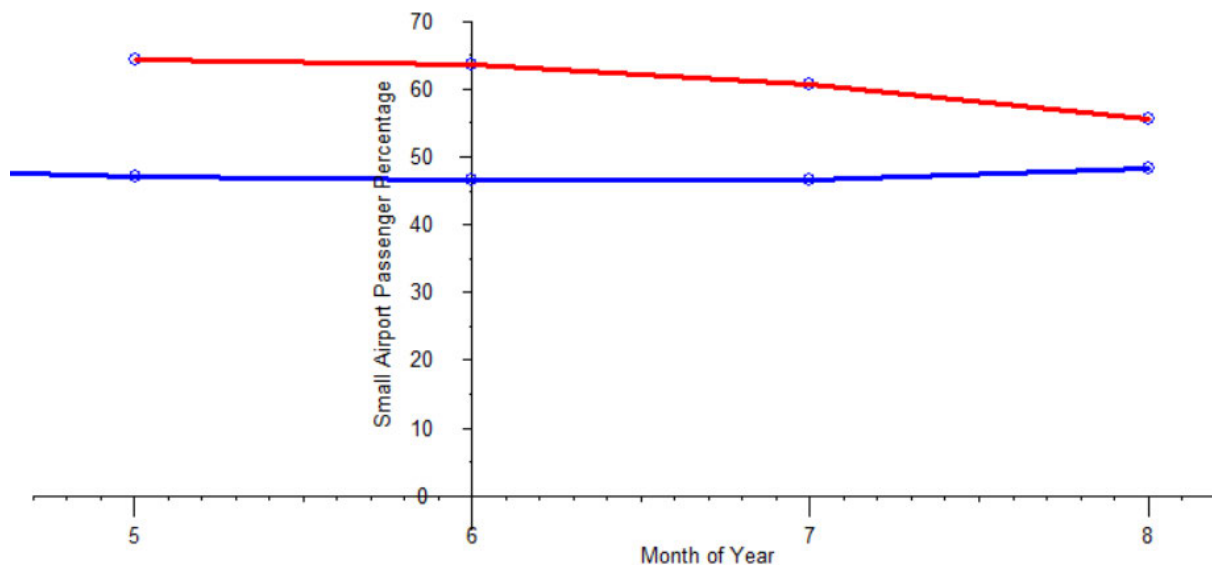
Graph 1. UK percentage of Passengers per Month, using Small Airports vs larger Airports.
Blue : 2019   ;   Red : 2021

Dr. Beau Webber
Chairman, Save Manston Airport association.

Dr. Beau Webber

Appendix A

Table 7   Passenger infrastructure requirements

	Stands	Terminal capacity (pax per hour)			Car parking
		Departures	Arrivals	Landside	
Y1	0	0	0	0	0
Y2	0	0	0	0	0
Y3	3	124	31	62	1,069
Y4	3	171	43	85	1,097
Y5	3	171	43	85	1,108
Y6	3	171	43	85	1,557
Y7	3	171	43	85	1,574
Y8	3	171	43	85	1,574
Y9	3	171	43	85	1,574
Y10	3	171	43	85	1,574
Y11	3	171	43	85	1,632
Y12	3	171	43	85	1,692
Y13	3	171	43	85	1,755
Y14	3	171	43	85	1,820
Y15	4	171	43	85	1,888
Y16	4	171	43	85	1,959
Y17	4	171	43	85	2,032
Y18	4	171	43	85	2,108
Y19	4	171	43	85	2,188
Y20	4	171	43	85	2,271

Source: Provided by RPS and Viscount Aviation

This table from Volume III of the Azimuth report indicate the low numbers of passengers per hour expected within the passenger terminal.

Appendix B.

Airports with currently > 1m passengers per month :

Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester

Stansted has been omitted from the list as it is currently in the process of losing all its passengers

Table 8

 Passengers

Date	Airports with > 1m passengers			Airports with < 1m passengers
2019 May	6,769,369	4,177,166	2,641,605	26,794,086
2019 June	7,246,532	4,517,617	2,960,884	28,558,545
2019 July	7,754,564	4,739,916	3,181,836	30,309,005
2019 August	7,680,708	4,943,820	3,334,136	30,870,626
2019 September	6,777,720	4,370,314	2,945,698	27,726,645
2021 June	956,862	233,821	204,947	3,191,350
2021 July	1,510,623	494,635	447,973	5,580,258
2021 August	2,232,752	1,023,222	865,320	9,130,288
2021 September	2,571,198	1,033,092	974,924	9,674,685

Passengers

Date	Year	Large Airport	Small Airport	Ratio
2019 May	2019.333	13588140	13205946	0.9718729716
2019 June	2019.417	14725033	13833512	0.9394554158
2019 July	2019.5	15676316	14632689	0.9334265142
2019 August	2019.583	15958664	14911962	0.9344116776
2019 September	2019.667	14093732	13632913	0.9673032664
2021 May	2021.333	927626	989876	1.0671067866
2021 June	2021.417	1395630	1795720	1.286673402
2021 July	2021.5	2453231	3127027	1.2746565652
2021 August	2021.583	4121294	5008994	1.2153935148
2021 September	2021.667	4579214	5095471	1.1127392168