

Natasha Kopala
Head of Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR
By email: transportinfrastructure@dft.gov.uk

Your ref:
Our ref: DAW0011

Email: 

1 December 2021

Dear Sirs,

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

We are instructed by Jenny Dawes, the claimant in judicial review proceedings which resulted in the High Court's quashing order of 15 February 2021.

We write to raise our concerns about the involvement of the Secretary of State for Transport in any decision relating to the DCO for the Development.

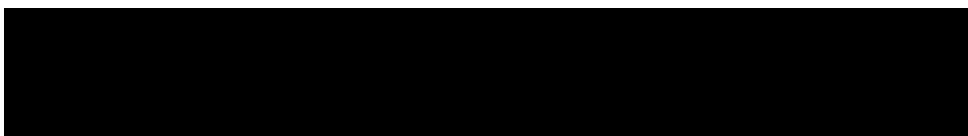
We have received a copy of an email from the Department for Transport press office about the Development, in which it is stated that Grant Shapps "will still be involved but the decision will be made by Andrew Stephenson".

We accept that the decision must be legally made in the name of the Secretary of State. We also note that he can depute the decision to another Minister. However, in all cases any decision must be free from actual or apparent bias, and a conflict of interest.

In the case of the Development, Mr Shapps has previously visited Manston, and specifically endorsed the re-opening of Manston Airport in 2014.¹ Recent media reports have indicated that Mr Shapps (as a recreational pilot) set up a team (the Airfield Advisory Team) to challenge non-aviation developments on airfields.²

In light of the above, please explain what involvement the Secretary of State has had in the DCO process to date and what involvement he is intended to have going forwards.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter and respond within 14 days.



Yours faithfully,



HARRISON GRANT