



Sir Roger Gale, M.P.

House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

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Dear

Manston Airport – Section 53 notice.

Further to our previous correspondence I write to express my concern that the RiverOak Corporation of America, who have a publicly expressed desire to acquire and re-open Manston Airport in my constituency as a freight hub continue to be denied access to the site to complete the necessary environmental survey in support of their submission to the Inspectorate.

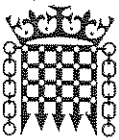
I have stated very clearly and publicly that I believe that Manston is a national asset that is not only necessary as a diversion field but, particularly in the light of “Brexit” and the inevitable increase in demand for air freight as extra-European markets are developed, is a facility that cannot and must not be abandoned to use as a housing and industrial estate for which there is no local demand.

I now understand that The Inspectorate had given RiverOak and the present controllers of the site, Lothian Shelf/SHP, until 29th October to respond to the application for compulsory access and that voluntary access is not forthcoming.

Given that RiverOak have agreed to all of the terms and conditions demanded by those at present in control of the site it is clear that the latter have no intention of providing access voluntarily. I note that the airfield has a use established over almost 100 years, that there is no commercial activity taking place on the site that could be disrupted by the necessary survey (which the present `owners` would have to conduct themselves before seeking consent for any alternative use) and that Avia Solutions, who carried out a perfunctory report on behalf of the local authority, were afforded access within 5 days of making their request.

While I appreciate that the Inspectorate prefers to proceed by consent I note that Section 172 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016, while not directly applicable to DCO applications, now obviates the need for consent and provides for site access within 14 days.

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It is now some seven months since RiverOak requested access to Manston Airport and some four months since they approached the Inspectorate for assistance. I believe that the time has now arrived when it is clear that those currently in control of Manston Airport are being deliberately obstructive and I would hope and expect that you will now take appropriate action to enforce access.

Yours sincerely,

Sir Roger Gale MP

cc. Gavin Barwell, MP