

A response to the 'Utilisation of the UK's Existing Airport Capacity' discussion paper.

Connectivity and Capacity provided by Manston Airport.

Lab-Tools response – v3

July 2014.

Version 1 added text

Version 2 added text

Version 3 added text

1.16

"The Commission's analysis suggests that the prevailing pattern of diminishing air connectivity between London and the regions may be the product of a number of factors."

Capacity constraints

1.17

"It is often suggested that the decline in domestic links into Heathrow is the product of its capacity constraints."

It then seems sensible to move this excess traffic to an under-utilised airport such as Manston. Both passenger and freight traffic is welcomed. Expansion at Heathrow/Gatwick by building runways will take some time – Manston Airport can serve to fill this gap.

1.25

"A further two possible reasons are a) improvements in UK rail services, and b) increasingly time-consuming check-in processes at UK airports."

Both these two developments (1.25a&b) that are problems for other airports conspire together to favour Manston and extend its catchment area [definition 1] to :

- a. **Passengers:** North beyond the 13 Category-A main-line stations in London (by road or rail) and West to the M23.
- b. **Perishable cargo:** planes land without stacking, full loads are on their way to the M25 and the aircraft back in the air within 80 minutes. At other airports the cargoes are frequently still sitting waiting, uncooled, degrading.

The reasons for this recent increase in catchment area include excellent HS1 high-speed rail links to Ashford International and Central London 8 minutes away by taxi from Ramsgate station, (to be further upgraded this Autumn, and with money announced for a new HS1 station on the airport boundary). Also recently completed dual-carriageway roads (A299, M2) from Manston Airport boundary fence across Kent and into Central London, A299 to Ramsgate Port and A256 to Dover Port.

The other crucial point is the remarkable convenience and efficiency of Manston Airport – 200m walk from car to plane, 30 minute check-in – mostly spent sitting having a drink, with no significant wait for baggage check-in or at security.

1.31

"... increasing numbers of passengers flying from regional airports are now choosing to transfer to connecting flights at hub airports outside of the UK. , the last decade has seen ... a growth in transfers at, in particular, Schiphol"

1.32

"This growth in foreign transfers ... may be because the foreign hubs that have established links with the UK regional airports and ... have won and retained traffic through their own merits, be that through ... better services (such as faster minimum connect times). ... Passengers travelling to long-distance destinations from these cities may prefer to make their entire journey by air, and are therefore very likely to fly outside of the UK to make any necessary transfer."

These points (1.31 & 1.32) might well have been written specifically with Manston in mind. They are particularly the case for the over 1 million passengers in East Kent who are now faced with allowing a (prudent) 3 hour journey on the M25 plus 3 hour check-in time, for Heathrow long-haul, vs. a 10 to 30 minute drive plus 30 minute check-in for Manston, followed by a 30 minute hop to Schiphol. This is in addition the over-all savings in car/train/parking/hotel costs

per person per round-trip that are usually £100 to £250, with the total flight costs via Manston and Schiphol frequently being lower than the direct flight via Heathrow. This 30 minute air hop effectively replaces the bulk of the driving otherwise required to go to Heathrow or Gatwick.

1.50 “A number of airports were keen to note the increases in tourism that their institutions can promote” (a figure of £20m per million passengers being given)

1.51 “.... **Regional airports do however have the potential to contribute to regional growth and employment.**”

Very true for Manston, see Appendix 3 for a partial list of those that have been affected by the closure. Considerably more advantage would accrue if there were an aviation-related enterprise zone at Manston Airport.

1.52 “Regional airports can also provide other benefits. They can make flying more convenient, and increase and diversify the range of people who visit a region.

1.53 Regional airports are also capable of improving the quality of life of local people, by making flying more convenient, and by increasing and diversifying the range of people who visit a region.

40 to 60 minutes to seat on plane via Manston vs 4 to 6 hours via Heathrow or Gatwick. In addition the over-all savings in car/train/parking/hotel costs per person per round-trip that are usually £100 to £250

1.54 In addition, a number of parties have impressed on the Commission the importance that non-London airports play in facilitating and supporting the entire UK airports system. For instance, non-London airports host a number of activities that London airports are too congested to undertake, such as fire safety and other operational training”

Manston activities, in addition to passenger and standard cargo flights, include handling of show and race horses, race cars, musicians’ and other sensitive equipment, mercy flights, military troop and equipment flights – licensed aircraft recycling – aviation school – flight attendant school – fire training – training airport : BA including A380; Monarch Airlines : Airbus-320s,321s, KLM : Fokker-70s,Embraer-190s; Net-Jets : Gulfstreams etc.; private jets – diversionary landings including 7 from Heathrow alone in 2013, two RAF Tornados with birdstrike last winter, and an international flight in last operational week - usually fog free, little bird problems, and ideally placed in the event of engine failure over the English Channel, with approaches mostly over water.

2.12” It is important to consider both a) why a number of closures are occurring ... and b) how problematic any closures of regional airports are.

2.15 ... , it is necessary to consider whether the closures significantly disadvantage a) individual regions, b) the UK as a whole.

2.16 An airport’s closure is likely significantly to damage a region if no alternative airport can be reached without a material increase in journey time between the region and the airport.”

Kent : 40 to 60 minutes to seat on plane via Manston vs 4 to 6 hours via Heathrow or Gatwick.

2.20 “But ... figures tell us nothing of the particular circumstances of individual communities, some of which may feel keenly the loss of adjacent capacity, Neither do these figures consider the loss of jobs, and wider economic benefits or utility that can accompany the closure of airports.”

A tear fell down the face of Nicola Hill as she watched Manston airport’s workers walk out for the final time.

“I hate the people who have done this,” said the mother-of-two from Margate, whose firefighter husband Michael has been forced to take a job at an airport in Afghanistan. *“They don’t care about the people who work there but we have to suffer because my children’s dad has gone away.”*

<http://www.kentonline.co.uk/kent-business/county-news/land-value-doubt-for-manston-18324>

Please see Appendix 3 for a preliminary list of businesses and teaching enterprises that have already been affected by the closure.

2.24 **“The Government’s Aviation Policy Framework states that ‘We support the growth of airports ... outside the South East of England’,** but also notes that **‘The Government wants to see the best use of existing airport capacity’.**

This is discussed below.

Similarly, the European Commission recently stated that **‘The development of regional airports is important for economic growth and territorial cohesion.’**

3.6 “In February 2014 the European Commission (EC) adopted new guidelines on state aid to airports and airlines. **The guidelines set out the conditions under which Member States and local authorities could grant state aid to airports and airlines in the EU. ... The provision of operating aid to regional airports has not been common practice in the UK, given the predominantly privatised nature of its aviation industry.**”

3.7 **“... the new guidelines allow Member States to grant state aid to finance infrastructure investment at airports of less than 5m passengers per annum ...”**

3.8 **“... airlines may receive ‘start-up aid’ that gives them the necessary incentive to create new routes from regional airports.” In the absence of a business plan for a route, th airline must provide an irrevocable commitment to continue operating the route for at least the same period as the one during which it received start-up aid.”**

We note that the current owner hastily announced the Manston Airport closure “consultation” on the same day that this new route aid was announced in parliament, after just over 5 months. We note that Southend has benefitted from such aid, with a new route being established to Scotland.

3.10 **“The recent amendments to the EC guidelines were swiftly followed in the budget, this March, by the Government’s decision to double the amount of funding in its Regional Air Connectivity Fund ...”**

3.19 **“One additional source of state-aid may come through Public Service Obligations (PSOs), the vehicle through which EU Member States may safeguard air services to airports serving a peripheral or development region, where such a route is considered vital for the economic and social development of the region.”**

3.20 **“The PSO regulations allow the Government to safeguard slots for that route at an airport In addition to safeguarding an airport slot, the Government may ... provide funding to an airline to compensate its running a noncommercially viable service.”**

3.24 **“In addition to state aid, a range of additional measures may be undertaken to help support regional airports. The Commission is keen to hear views on the applicability and effectiveness of all of the following: the current tax regime, targeted intervention in the tourism market, local enterprise zones, and, building upon the recommendations already made by the Commission in its Interim Report, improved surface access links.”**

These are discussed below

3.33 **“... VisitEngland has established a Regional Airports Task Force, bringing together regional airports, Local Enterprise Partnerships and local destination organisations ...”**

3.35 **“A further potential route to growth for regional airports is to seek to become designated, or for their surrounding areas to become designated, as Local Enterprise Zones.” Indeed this has I believe been requested or will be shortly.**

The planning and policy framework

3.43 **“... the Government’s Aviation Policy Framework (APF), published in 2013, ... : ‘**

We support the growth of airports ... outside the South East of England’.

This is discussed below.

4. What role do airports serving London and the South East currently play in providing utility and connectivity to the South East and UK?

4.1 London and the South East are the two most populous regions in the UK (and have high rates of population growth), ... **This contributes to people in London and the South East having a very high propensity to fly compared to other areas of the UK.**⁵¹

4.3 "... this high propensity to fly and popularity of **London as a destination supports the largest origin and destination (OD) market in the world.**

Scope to accommodate growth: Under any of the proposals additional capacity will not be delivered at Heathrow or Gatwick until the 2020s. Even once this additional capacity has come on stream the demand for aviation in London and the South East cannot be met by growth at Heathrow or Gatwick alone. **The other airports serving London and the South East will continue to need to provide capacity to meet this demand."**

Kent County Council documents suggest that Manston Airport could provide a capacity up to 5 to 6 million passengers per year, with minimal development (much of which is now in place).

7. Questions and how to respond

7.1 **"The focus of this paper is the connectivity and capacity provided by airports** other than those short-listed by the Commission for further consideration as long-term capacity options. The Commission wishes to understand the long term strategic context within which the eventual expansion option is likely to sit, and any recommendations it could usefully make to shape this context. **This paper is a call for evidence on that subject."**

The crucial question we feel needs addressing, is :

Why close Manston Airport at a time of expansion plans for Heathrow and Gatwick ?

The current owner of Manston claimed that the airport would be run for at least 2 years, but a closure "consultation" was announced after just over 5 months, on the very day that the Government announced, as per point

3.8 "... airlines may receive 'start-up aid' that gives them the necessary incentive to create new routes from regional airports."

KLM have been running 4 Cityhopper flights per day between Manston and Schiphol Hub in Amsterdam for over a year – nearly full on the occasions that we flew, right up to the point when they were requested to leave by the airport owner. Newmarket have been running successful holidays, totalling about 50k passengers in the last year. Five cargo firms have been operating from Manston in the last year.

Manston's surface links now include excellent HS1 high-speed rail links to Ashford International and Central London 8 minutes away by taxi from Ramsgate station, (to be further upgraded this Autumn, and with money announced for a new HS1 station on the airport boundary). Also recently completed dual-carriageway roads (A299, M2) from Manston Airport boundary fence across Kent and into Central London, A299 to Ramsgate Port and A256 to Dover Port.

Manston Airport also has an enviable record for cargo handling, with no stacking on airport approach, and full loads of perishable cargo unloaded and on the road, and the aircraft back in the air, within 80 minutes of landing. Good capability for handling show and race horses, racing cars and specialised music and stage equipment. Also handle troop movements.

So for whom does it make sense to use Manston Airport ?

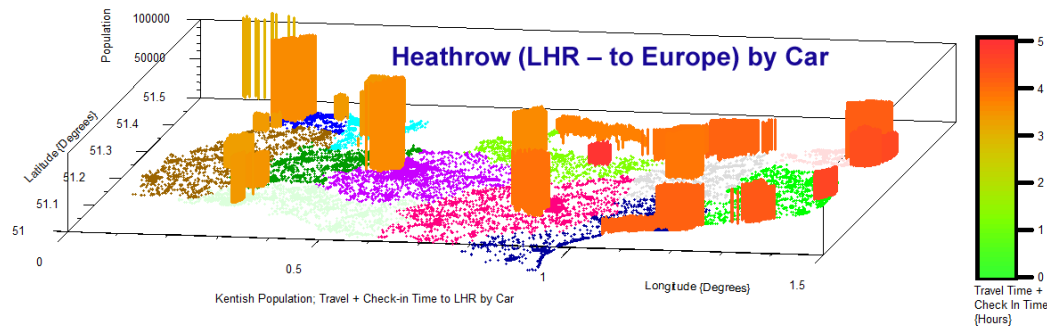
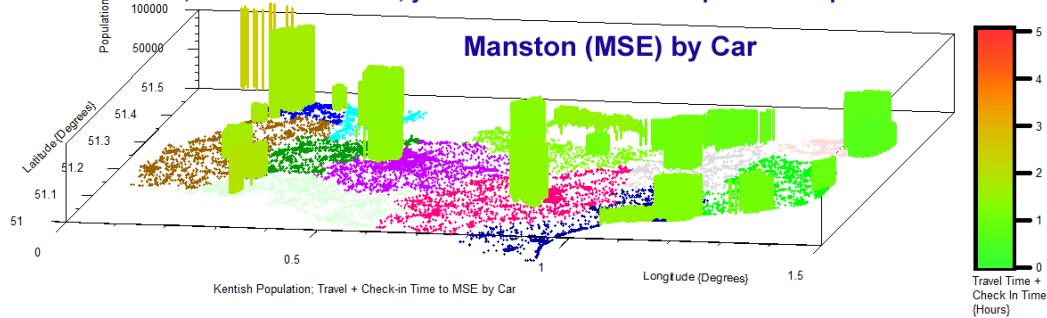
Web data mining has given us extensive evidence that the highly efficient nature of Manston Airport means that you can be as far away from Manston as any of the 13 Category-A mainline stations in London, by road or rail, or on the junction 9 roundabout on the M23, at the Gatwick Airport boundary, and you will still be quicker to fly from Manston Airport than either Heathrow or Gatwick Airports.

This is some of our evidence, timings obtained directly from the web; these are 3D maps of Kent, with height of bars being populations, and colour being time to backside on plane. (Plotted height at 13 London mainline stations is arbitrary.)

3D Maps : Travel + Check-in Times From London and Kent to two Airports, MSE & LHR. (v2b-r)

Bright green : zero delay time; through to Bright red : five or more hours.

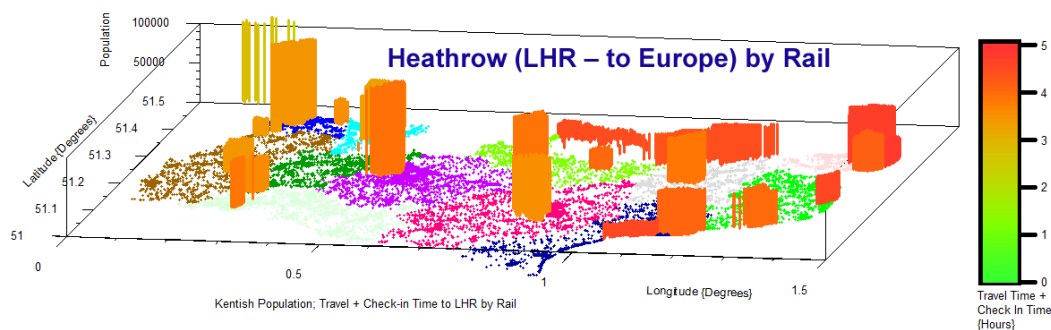
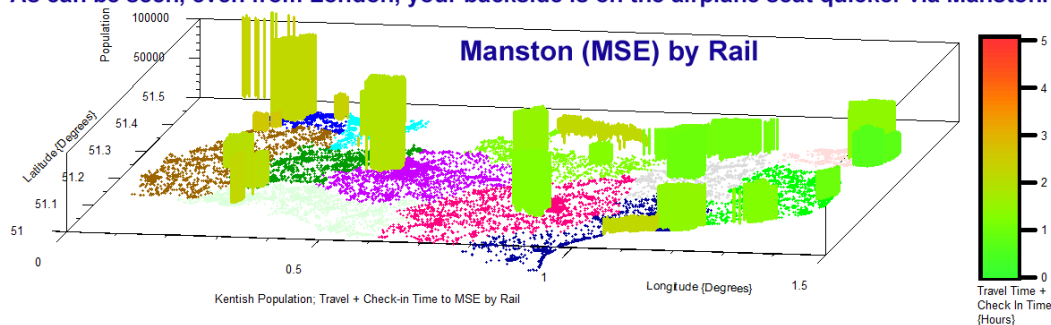
As can be seen, even from London, your backside is on the airplane seat quicker via Manston.



3D Maps : Travel + Check-in Times From London and Kent to two Airports, MSE & LHR. (v2b-r)

Bright green : zero delay time; through to Bright red : five or more hours.

As can be seen, even from London, your backside is on the airplane seat quicker via Manston.



Figures 1,2,3,4.

The Manston advantage becomes even greater if the flight is long-haul, even allowing for the hop to Schiphol. See this pdf document on the "Save Manston Airport" group's Facebook site :

[Manton Airport Kent has major travel advantages - v2b.pdf](#)

www.facebook.com/groups/616428761764523/645012062239526/

We have even conducted an on-road and "virtual flight" validation of these timings :

www.facebook.com/events/580892218698984/ - Manston beat Gatwick by 1 hour 22 minutes.



Figure 5.

"The (Davis) Commission noted ... a number of significant challenges, such as relatively poor surface transport links"

Fig. 5: As we can see, an uncongested dual-carriageway road runs right to Manston Airport boundary. Fig. 5, 6 : the meeting-point of the A299/M2 to Central London and the A256 to Dover, the A299 to Ramsgate Port and the A256 to Dover Port.



Figure 6

So why is this not more generally appreciated ?

- No one has been told !
- Where is the advertising on the tube and train-lines to the other London Airports ?
- How many travel agencies in the South East even know of Manston Airport ? - Again and again people have to tell their travel agencies about Manston.



Figure 7 : What we believe and would like to see ! © Save Manston Airport.

7.2 To inform those who would wish to prepare submissions on the issues raised in this paper we set out below a number of specific questions on areas of interest:

7.3 Questions on the role that non-London airports currently play in providing connectivity and utility to the UK.

●● How do respondents view these trends developing in the future?

Manston is not like the usual airport, surrounded by people trying to limit operations : We are asking - yes the people of Kent are ASKING - for the excess passengers and cargo that is fuelling the claimed need for extra runway development at other London Airports, that is receiving so much opposition, be moved to Manston Airport in Kent.

We Ask : Why close Manston Airport at a time of expansion plans for Heathrow and Gatwick ?

The people of Kent fully appreciate the opposition to airport expansion at Heathrow and Gatwick. However in Kent we have Manston Airport, which has the widest runway in Europe, the 4th longest civilian runway south of Birmingham, and unusually thick.

But Thursday 15th May 2014 it was shut by the current owner. Airport operations ceased at 5pm. Airport operating equipment is already being sold off. We believe the intention is to dig up the runway, demolish the airport buildings, and build houses. We hear at the moment calls for new runways at airports near London. It seems to us in Kent that there is a lack of joined up thinking.

The Save Manston Airport group has presented to 10 Downing St. 26,542 signatures in support of re-opening Manston as a working airport : 16,552 online + 9972 on paper . – we want the airport back in operation, and have raised nearly 7,700 signatures in support of a Thanet District Council (TDC) Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), currently being investigated by the council.

Manston Airport has been a remarkably fast, efficient, friendly and convenient airport to use and work at.

We have solid evidence that this highly efficient nature of Manston Airport means that you can be as far away from Manston as the Category-A mainline stations in London, or on the junction 9 roundabout on the M23, at the Gatwick Airport boundary, and you will still be quicker to fly from Manston Airport than Heathrow or Gatwick Airports.

We want Manston Airport back in operation, supported by a well funded advertising campaign in London and throughout the South East. Most of these people had never even heard of Manston, much less knew that KLM were running daily flights to Schiphol Hub, or that access to Manston had been upgrades so remarkably.

These Kentish people are going to be fighting for KLM to return to Manston, asking for if possible for yet more daily flights to Schiphol, for inter-UK flights, and supporting the increase of cargo flights and the construction of an air-road-rail-sea light-freight/package hub.

The recent time-line regarding Manston Airport :

- 1) On 14th November 2012, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines announced double daily flights from Manston to Amsterdam, with onwards connections to the rest of KLM's network. The first flight was with a Fokker 70 on 2 April 2013.
- 2) On 29th November 2013 Manston Skyport Ltd. took over the running of the airport. Ms Gloag said: "Whilst this is a loss making airport, I hope that with the co-operation of our neighbours and the wider community of Kent, the airport partners and staff, we can capitalise on the opportunities available to give Kent the best chance possible of having a successful and vibrant airport." She pledged to deliver "real potential for growth", and promised that she would commit to the airport for two years.
- 3) On 19th March 2014, after a period of 5 months 2 weeks 2 days it was announced that a 45-day "consultation" period into the closure of the airport had begun. KLM, Newmarket and cargo flights were forced to end.
- 4) On 9th April 2014, the last KLM flight departed for Amsterdam. In all, about 48k passengers had been flown to and from Schiphol Hub, Amsterdam, and international destinations.
- 5) On Thursday 15th May 2014 Manston Airport was shut by the current owner at 5pm. An large orderly demonstration took place at the airport. See fig. 8.
- 6) On Thursday 26th June a petition with about 7,700 signatures, to support a compulsory purchase order to preserve Manston Airport for aviation purposes, was presented to Thanet District Council (TDC) :
"We the undersigned petition the council to make a compulsory purchase of Manston, Kent's International Airport. We would also like Thanet District Council to look into the possibility of members of the public to buy bonds into this purchase."
"In addition to the 3,361 persons who have signed the Epetition, 4,330 persons have validly signed a paper petition containing the same petition prayer as the Epetition."
So about 7,700, well over the required 1000 signatures necessitating a full council meeting.
- 7) On Monday 7th July, £10m Government funding for a Thanet Parkway station possibly on the Manston Airport boundary announced.
- 8) On Wednesday 9th July TG Aviation, who have been at Manston Airport for 30 years, and have 50 years remaining on their lease, failed to gain an injunction in the High Court, which would have allowed them to use the runway. The full case will be heard "soon".
- 9) On Thursday 10th July the full Thanet District Council (TDC) held a meeting about giving consent to the TDC Cabinet to investigate raising a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) on Manston Airport, and this received nearly unanimous approval.
Full notice of motion: *"Council affirms its considerable disappointment at the recent closure of Manston as a regional airport. We recognise the public support for its continuation as an airport and endorse the steps taken to date towards that objective. Council urges all available options to that end be explored, including a detailed examination of the legal and financial implications of a Compulsory Purchase Order before a final decision is reached."*
- 10) On Thursday 17th July Kent County Council (KCC) held a Council Meeting, and unanimously supported an amended motion :

"KCC will explore ways in which it can maintain Manston as an airport."

11) The same afternoon the TDC Cabinet held an extraordinary meeting about the CPO : *"To inform the Cabinet of the timeline for identifying an indemnity partner in the event a CPO is sought for Manston Airport. To explain the process of a local authority bond issue."* The council are going to continue to investigate the CPO proposal and this matter will again come before the TDC Cabinet on the 31st of July.

12) The aviation minister, Robert Goodwill, has told the House of Commons that the department of transport is "more than happy to help with any Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) licensing issues" relating to the future of Manston Airport.

13) On Monday 21st July a petition was presented to 10 Downing St, by the Thanet MPs Sir Roger Gale and Laura Sandys, TG Aviation and the Save Manston Airport group. This petition had 26,524 signatures in support of re-opening Manston as a working airport : 16,552 online & 9,972 on paper :

"We do not want Manston Airport to close! there are many good points to this site. We have flights on our doorstep, it will create more jobs and if the powers that be are thinking of spending money on improving rail networks for the area it will tie in nicely with Manston Airport."

14) Airport operating equipment continues to be sold off by the owner.



Figure 8.

●● Is the Commission accurate in its analysis of the market dynamics affecting the non-London airports sector? Is the Commission correct to identify a broad trend, especially since 2007, in larger regional airports retaining or building their route networks, whilst smaller regional airports' route networks shrink?

What explanations can respondents provide for this trend?

Firstly, a significant difference between Manston and a range of airports that are faring far better, is that it lacks an owner with a vision, real motivation, and resources.

In Manston's case, this lack of nepotism /active sponsorship means that it has little ability to fight back against :

- a) Exclusion
- b) Disregard
- c) Ignorance / Myths
- d) Outdated reports/surveys
- e) Inexactitudes that are misleading
- f) Untruths, both deliberate and induced
- g) Corporate ineptitude
- h) Corporate/Economic vandalism

See Appendix 1 for examples of each case.

●● "Can respondents provide any evidence to counter or support the Commission's analysis of the UK population having quick access to relatively high numbers of airports ... ?"

The access of in excess of 1million Kentish people to long-haul flights has recently changed, with the temporary closure of Manston, from say Canterbury, from 50 minutes for a Manston plane seat (90 minutes for a Schiphol Hub long-haul plane seat) to 6 hours (360 minutes) for a Heathrow long-haul plane seat.

●● “What analysis ought the national or local Government undertake when faced with a potential airport closure?”

- a) Ascertain the expected direct and associated job loss, and the capacity of the surrounding area to absorb these workers and give them equivalent level jobs.
- b) Integrate the total added cost across all passengers per year for additional car/train/parking/hotel expenses and company/personal time travelling to other airports.
- c) Estimate the loss of air-travel business due to people just not bothering to take short/week breaks that now involve much of 2 extra days travel or journeys with near doubling of cost.
- d) Estimate the loss of air-travel business from older people who might well now faced with perhaps having to use rail travel to get to the more distant larger airport, with an extra integrated station/airport return walk requirement of in excess 2 miles.

7.5 Questions on how the connectivity provided by these airports can be enhanced, and on the options to intervene in this sector.

●● Has the Commission correctly identified the major options to support or bolster the regional airports sector?

In Manston's case little specific thought appears to have been given:

There are 3 mentions of Manston, in spite of its unusually long runway (2.75 km)

The mentions of Manston are all only about its closure :

2.11 **the future of Manston Airport in Kent was being disputed**

2.23 **the recent closures of ... possibly Manston**

5.38 **Manston airport closed on 15 May 2014, less than 12 months after its purchase by its new owner** (actually less than 6 months)

There is no discussion of the highly successful KLM **two return flights** per day for over a year or of Newmarket package holidays, **totalling nearly 50k passengers in the year**, nor of the profit making air cargo side (**five companies**), or how to extend and succour these. **We must not forget the military flights, or the diversionary landings (7 from Heathrow alone in 2013) including 2 RAF Tornados that had suffered bird strike in the last year, and an international flight in the last week.**

3.43 “... the Government's Aviation Policy Framework (APF), published in 2013, ... : **‘We support the growth of airports ... outside the South East of England’.**

This is perhaps not as damning a phrase for Manston as it first looks (though there is no discussion of it), since we are not asking (initially) for expansion of Manston airport itself, just of its use and non-destruction, and support for the airlines and air-facilities using it.

However the Government has indeed announced, as per point

3.8 “... **airlines may receive ‘start-up aid’ that gives them the necessary incentive to create new routes from regional airports.**”

And this could indeed have been as helpful for Manston Airport as it was for Southend. There are those that believe that the current owner of Manston chose to instead bring forward the closure “consultation”, that was announced on the very same day, (after 5 months instead of completing the declared 2 year trial), as it is believed that the last thing she wanted was evidence the airport could be successful.

A further point that is indeed particularly relevant to the many airport-related businesses and teaching enterprises based at Manston is raised in :

3.35 **“A further potential route to growth for regional airports is to seek to become designated, or for their surrounding areas to become designated, as Local Enterprise Zones.”**

The intention of the Thanet District Council and Kent County Council is indeed we believe to ask to extend the adjacent Enterprise Zone that has risen Phoenix like from the ashes of Pfizer, to become the highly successful Discovery Park Sandwich Enterprise Zone, so as to include Manston Airport, particularly targeting airline related businesses and college courses.

Please see Appendix 3 for a preliminary list of businesses and teaching enterprises that have already been affected by the closure and that could particularly benefit from it reopening as part of an enterprise zone.

An enterprise zone located at an international airport would act as a magnet to bring in further technical / research companies, and be highly attractive for the three local universities.

7.6 Can respondents suggest means of bringing about positive change in the context of these options? What recommendations could the Commission make in these areas?

- a) Be positive/forthcoming about Manston's potential, make it clear that it has at the very least as much right to be in the London Airport mix as Southend has.
- b) Support a range of internal UK/Ireland flight routes for London and the South East, via Manston.
- c) At least take note of the international link to Schiphol Hub, assuming that KLM are willing to return to Manston, after having been chucked out, and factor it into the overload situation that Heathrow and Gatwick are facing.
- d) Indicate that an airport related enterprise zone is welcome and support it when there is a Kentish request to form it.

7.7 Questions on the constraints to developing further utility and connectivity at airports serving London and the South East, as well as how and by whom these constraints can be mitigated (Chapter 6):

Geographical Constraints

●● Are there longer-term or more extensive surface transport improvements and developments (beyond those committed to in the National Infrastructure Plan) that could support the other London airports to make best use of their capacity?

- a) Support for a partly EU funded international air-rail-road-sea light-freight / small package hub. USA airfield operators RiverOak state :

"RiverOak has developed a long term plan to own and manage Manston as an airport"

"It remains committed to investing in and developing Manston as a successful diversified aviation services, cargo and potential future passenger airport facility, and values Manston as an important piece of aviation infrastructure that is very important to both Kent specifically and the United Kingdom in general."

They were influential in setting up Alliance Fort Worth Airport in Texas as a major freight / package hub, and want to do the same for Manston :

http://www.alliancetexas.com/Portals...ce_Airport.pdf

There is EU funding for freight hubs, in particular for moving long distance freight from road to high-speed rail.

We note the following European goal and the availability of Horizon2020 money :

the following goal is set up in the 2011 Transport White Paper:

"30% of road freight over 300 km should shift to other modes such as rail or waterborne transport by 2030, and more than 50% by 2050, facilitated by efficient and green freight corridors. To meet this goal will also require appropriate infrastructure to be developed."

Our suggestion is to use EU money to upgrade the new funded HS1 station to be a light-freight/package air-road-rail-sea hub, including for firms such as DHL etc. APC East Kent are already located only a couple of minutes drive away.

Particularly use the modern freight handling at Manston, which has an excellent reputation, full plane loads being unloaded and the plane back in the air in 80 minutes.

Then use EU funding to move perishable air freight arriving in the UK to the high-speed rail system rather than just the road system, which will give final destination access right up through the back-bone of England. Also use this hub for transshipment of perishable freight arriving at Ramsgate Port to High-Speed rail.

- b) Extensive surface transport improvements – none needed in the short term, beyond the already funded upgrade to the HS1 route this autumn, and the announced funded new HS1 station at Manston airport..
- c) Minor improvements - if there is a significantly increased Manston –Dover Port traffic growth associated with the extensive re-modelling and upgrading of Dover Harbour : there are still a couple of miles of the Manston to Dover Port road (A256/A2) that need to be upgraded to dual carriageway.
- d) Longer Term : Upgrade Folkestone-Dover-Deal to Manston-Ramsgate rail line to HS1.

●● Are there any ways that government, or any other stakeholders, could improve airport site access? Are there any innovative ways that airports could resolve site access problems?

- A) With reference to fig 9. below -The existing HS1 Manston station is Ramsgate, 3 miles away. However funding is now announced for a new HS1 rail station accessible via a short, direct road link. Two recently suggested locations for such a station are marked on Fig. 9. These locations could also form the location for the above (7.7) air-rail-road-sea light-freight / small-package hub.



Figure 9.

The Manston Airport runway can be seen at the top of the picture, with the A299 leading to the M2 and Central London running alongside the boundary fence. The roundabout to the left of the image is the junction between the A299 to London, the A299 to Ramsgate and Ramsgate Port, and the A256 to Discovery Park (on the Pfizer site) and Dover and Dover Port. The fourth exit from this roundabout leads down to Cottingham Road, there then being multiple-lane road plus rail access under the A256 to one of the proposed locations (HS1 Station B) for a new HS1 rail station / light-freight / package international air/rail/road/sea hub. However an alternative location, right on the airport boundary, may be at HS1 Station A.

To Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted Airports :

*"Give us your tired (who have walked too far from check-in to gate to plane to baggage pickup),
your poor (who have paid as much to park - or to catch the train across England - as for their flight),
Your huddled masses of stacked planes yearning for a free slot in which to land,
The wretched refuse of your teeming sky and overloaded runways.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed and diverted planes, to us at Manston Airport:
We lift our lamp beside the White Cliffs of the Dover Straights."
Dr. Beau Webber - May, 2014, with apologies to Emma Lazarus.*

Appendices :

Appendix 1:

What explanations can respondents provide for this trend (of smaller regional airports' route networks shrinking) ?

Firstly, a significant difference between Manston and a range of airports that are faring far better, is that it lacks an owner with a vision, real motivation **to run a successful airport**, and resources.

In Manston's case, this lack of nepotism /active sponsorship means that it has little ability to fight back against :

a) Exclusion

Airports Commission : Discussion Paper 06 : Utilisation of the UK's Existing Airport Capacity :

2.24 The Government's Aviation Policy Framework states that 'We support the growth of airports outside the South East of England'

b) Disregard

Disregard is so common and profound that one suspects it must be wilful.

"Kent County Council - Dispersed.pdf" :

KCC's submission to the Davies consultation only devoted 2.2 pages of a 37 page report to discussing Manston Airport.

Airports Commission : Discussion Paper 06 : Utilisation of the UK's Existing :

6 mentions of Biggin Hill : 1.8km runway

3 mentions of Manston : 2.4 km runway – all only about its closure.

c) Ignorance / Myths

Myth: Manston has a poor Catchment Area:

1. If you define a catchment area as the region within which you can get to your final destination quicker via Manston Airport than any other airport, then this extends north of all the main railway stations in London and West to the M23. We have documentation and video of actual on-road/virtual flight comparisons.
2. For perishable cargo, at Manston, cargo planes land without stacking, full loads are unloaded and on the way to the M25 with aircraft back in the air within 80 minutes. At other airports they would still be sitting uncooled and degrading.

Myth: Owners cannot make a profit:

3. The current owner only ran Manston for 5 months, 2 weeks, 2 days before announcing the closure "consultation". **Was that a fair trial ?**
4. How much did the recent airport operators spend on advertising Manston Airport in London and the South-East? When did you last see an advert for Manston Airport on a London Tube train telling you that you would be at your destination quicker via Manston Airport? Did any travel agent you have used even know you could fly to nearly anywhere in the world from Manston?
5. The previously rejected purchaser, RiverOak, still state they have developed a long term plan to own and manage Manston as an airport. "It remains committed to investing in and developing Manston as a successful diversified aviation services, cargo and potential future passenger airport facility, and values Manston as an important piece of aviation infrastructure that is very important to both Kent specifically and the United Kingdom in general ..."

Myth: Extensive night flights would be required:

6. Night flights are not popular with passengers, and the day time flights could be considerably expanded without the need for night flights.
7. RiverOak confirmed they see no need for more night flights at Manston Airport and that former operators including CargoLux would not need night flights and would happily continue on previous agreements.

Myth: Passenger services have failed:

8. KLM ran a very successful cross-channel hop to Schiphol Hub, **two return flights a day**, for over a year. Flights to Europe and world-wide via this hub were quicker and cheaper than via other airports. Often flights were nearly full, **48,200 passengers in the year.**
9. The closure "consultation" was announced on the very day government support was announced for establishing new air-routes - Southend has already benefited - this could have been Manston!

10. Manston Airport now has excellent HS1 high-speed rail links to Ashford International and Central London (to be further upgraded this Autumn), 8 minutes away by taxi from Ramsgate station (with funding announced for a new HS1 station on the airport boundary), plus recently completed dual-carriageway roads from Manston Airport boundary fence across Kent and into Central London.

d) Outdated reports/surveys

A committed Thanet District Councillor's opinion *"I have for many years looked into how and if Manston could work and found out that it could never be a commercial airport ... there isn't enough catchment area this side of Maidstone to make it viable."*

The interim report from the Airports Commission into airport capacity and connectivity in the UK. (Davies Report) :

"The Commission noted that some people living in North Kent valued the role that the Airport played in supporting regional connectivity, but noted a number of significant challenges, such as relatively poor surface transport links and a large distance from significant population, which rendered any significantly expanded role for the airport implausible."

The paragraph above (10), about current surface transport links, gives the lie to these statements, as do actual road tests we have conducted. See also Figures 1,2,3,4 and Figures 5 & 6, in section 7.1.

e) Inexactitudes that are misleading

KCC Chairman Paul Carter and

Airports Commission : Discussion Paper 06 : Utilisation of the UK's Existing Airport Capacity : 5.38

"Manston airport closed on 15 May 2014, less than 12 months after its purchase by its new owner."

Actually 5 months, 2 weeks, 2 days – indeed less than 12 months....

f) Untruths, both deliberate and induced

Ann Gloag, as a reason for rejecting an offer of the full asking price; and KCC Chairman Paul Carter (after a meeting at which it was quoted by others, on three occasions, twice after being other-wise informed) : *"Nearly all the (sacked) workforce now have new jobs"*.

At that time the true fraction was around 10%, and in one case as far from their families as Afghanistan. This statement has caused deep offence among ex-workers and in some cases considerable distress. Most of those that have found alternative employment have said they will return to Manston Airport as soon as it is possible.

g) Corporate ineptitude

The Kentish considered opinion is that a EUjet tried to expand flights across Europe in a way that was too fast, too ambitious, before the local road and rail infrastructure has been adequately upgraded. Their funding was withdrawn at no known warning.

As the high-speed rail links and dual-carriageway roads were being built there was no noticeable attempt by the last two airport owners to reach the London travellers.

h) Corporate/Economic vandalism

It is the carefully considered opinion of the Thanet MPs and MEPs that this is a good description of the current closure of the Airport, little more than 5 months after being purchased with a promised a 2 year development and expansion program.

Appendix 2:

Definitions :

1. Catchment Area :

- a. **Passengers** : Being the region in which one arrives at ones destination sooner via Manston than via any other airport.
- b. **Freight** : Being the region in which perishable freight at its destination in a better condition via Manston than via any other airport.

Appendix 3:

A preliminary list of businesses and teaching enterprises that have already been affected by the closure and that could particularly benefit from it reopening as part of an enterprise zone, include :

1. **East Kent College** - Stopped the Flight Attendant courses
2. **TG Aviation - Flying School and aviation engineering business.** Family business on the airport site for over 30 years has had to relocate to 3 different locations over a radius of 100 miles. Lost practical use of it's Hangar/business premises. Gloag reneeged on 50yr lease, causing them severe financial hardship.
3. **Polar Helicopters** - Lost the ability to book-in fixed wing Aircraft for Pilot training. A side of their business that was increasing.
4. **Airport Cafe** - Closed on day KLM finished. Airport staff as well as Passengers used it.
5. **Spitfire & Hurricane Memorial Museum and RAF Manston History Museum** - reduction of visitors and uncertain future.
6. **Rhodes Distrubution haulage Heathrow** lost contract for perishables cargo
7. **Whites Transport Manston Airport** will have to relocate at end of lease
8. **KLM** Loss of passenger business from Manston.
9. **Cargolux** had to relocate to Stansted higher charges and longer turn around times
10. **Saudia Cargo** as above
11. **AvMan Engineering** loss of contracts and revenue will have to relocate to possibly Lydd ending 30 years in Manston
12. **Atlas/ANA Cargo** relocation to Stansted higher costs and delayed turn around times
13. **MyCargo/Magma** relocation to Stansted higher costs and delayed turn around times
14. **Premier Inn** loss from passengers and pilots over night stays
15. **学立特教育(Xuelite Education)** - English education company based in Zhengzhou China had planned to begin a two week summer programme bringing Chinese students to learn English in Thanet. With the airport closure Xuelite has had to rethink the whole programme and now is in negotiations to send students to study in Malta instead.
16. **Finlays** - operated distribution out of Manston and are no longer able. Had to move operations elsewhere.
17. **Morgan Cargo** - operated out of Manston and are no longer able. Had to move operations elsewhere.
18. **RH Consultants UK** - operated out of Manston and are no longer able. Had to move operations elsewhere.
19. **TET Dover** - freight forwarder who worked out of Manston with clients, including those using the equine facilities.
20. **T & N Caterers (SE) Ltd** - supplied catering, staff have had hours drastically reduced.
21. **Lab-Tools Ltd. (Nano-science)** - European and worldwide travel car/train/underground/parking/hotel cost & time per return journey increased very significantly over multiple journeys per year to/by overseas customers.
22. **Business Computer Solutions.** Although we are still there for a few months, we have been looking after their IT for many years - we have gone from looking after 50+ Systems to 5 and soon it will be nothing.
23. A new building being erected for industrial use has stopped 3/4 into the project because there is simply no point in continuing at the moment.