

Dear Sirs

I understand you are seeking submissions regarding Utilisation of the UK's existing Airport Capacity.

Manston Airport in the south east has to be re-opened - and not just because my husband is now an unemployed Air Traffic Controller. I feel the airport and its associated industry played a vital role in Thanet's and indeed the national economy and could be developed further.

It seems absolutely ludicrous to be talking about new runways at Gatwick or Heathrow with the enormous cost, upheaval, time delay and overloading onto an already struggling infrastructure, when there is a wonderful airport, with a long runway sitting idle here in the South East. As I understand it there is a willing buyer in the wings wanting to develop Manston primarily as a freight hub. This would be fantastic and, given our proximity to the continent, a very logical development. It could even lead to interest from a ferry operator for Ramsgate port.

With minimal investment, Manston could take on a significant proportion of the current air traffic burden (particularly cargo) from other airports right now, thus freeing up capacity for passenger flights elsewhere. Manston has excellent road links - with a dual carriageway road (A299 and M2) running all the way into London. Thus, rapid connection to the M25 and hence to anywhere in the UK, or down to Dover and overseas - important for cargo importers/exporters. And, with a new high speed rail station coming soon (investment announced last week), Manston will be under an hour from St Pancras and thus also has potential for significant passenger growth itself in the medium term.

Web data mining and actual road tests have 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. It will also save you parking etc money.

Misreporting of Manston's closure means it is widely believed that operators like KLM "pulled out" of Manston, without clarifying that in March they - and other operators at the airfield - were advised that the airport "may not" be able to support them after a certain date in April. Naturally faced with that uncertainty they all had no choice but to make alternative plans. I believe KLM are now in a court case with Manston airport owners for breach of contract but you will naturally need to verify that. People wiser than I intimate that KLM could be persuaded to return to Manston. I do know that cargo operators would love to return to Manston as they had such quick turnaround times and perishable goods were loaded immediately onto lorries and away rather than losing valuable life stored in warehouses as is now the case elsewhere.

I have only lived in Ramsgate (10 mins from Manston Airport) for 4 years - my husband was employed there (now unemployed), I worked in the café in the airport terminal. We used the airport to fly to Edinburgh. What a wonderful

experience. Short journey, easy, cheap parking, stroll to check in which was quick, walk from terminal to plane. And in reverse, from time of landing to getting to our car took about fifteen minutes, and then a ten minute journey home. Elderly friends of ours who live a little further out in Kent had booked to fly to Scotland, via Amsterdam with KLM, only to have to make other plans when the closure was announced - instead of two short hops by plane they had to get to London and endure a long train journey north. I could cite many other similar cases.

I lived in France for ten years and we saw there the important role regional airports play in the national infrastructure - I flew from Rodez to Stansted once, and friends visiting us used the same route. Minimal time on the road at both ends of the journey - easy parking, quick check ins. Castres and Perpignan were also reasonably local regional airports providing excellent internal flights.

A further important point is that at Manston, the local population is **actively supportive of airport expansion**, unlike all the other options under active consideration elsewhere. What's more it is there, ready to be revived at short notice, unlike elaborate "new runways" (or worse, whole new airports!).

With the M25 often at saturation point, surely regional airports really do have a role in UK aviation overall.

As a country we cannot afford to let such an important piece of aviation infrastructure remain closed or go to waste.

I respectfully ask that the role of Manston among other regional airports be taken into consideration when considering UK aviation needs.

Yours sincerely

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