

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Manston Airport](#)
Subject: TR0200002 Manston Airport
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Submission on by Interested Party in response to Secretary of State's request, due date by 19th November 2021

Dear Sirs

I write following further damaging revelations concerning the Secretary of State's self-confessed bias in favour of aviation and his mission statement for his time in office as Minister for Transport to be to promote general aviation.

Whilst I am inclined to point out to the Minister that general aviation throughout Kent will not be improved by a cargo hub monopolising flight paths, given the large amount of airspace required for stacking, turning, etc, I think rather the best approach is to point out that any plan for a new airport on this former airfield is bucking a trend.

There are more than 2000 airports in Europe and as I write approximately 750 are not working or are redundant. In many cases, such as Tempelhof, they have been creatively reimagined to provide local communities with a variety of spaces for leisure activities, businesses, housing and sport.

As host spaces for music and cultural festivals and wellbeing activities, these former airports or airfields bring huge benefits to their communities, with workshops providing education and training.

As light-industrial estates, they provide sustainable employment and training for local workers and bring vital manufacturing and engineering skills to the fore; it is from these growth sectors that the tools for combating climate change and meeting the needs of technological advance will come.

Thoughtful landscaping providing wildlife corridors and havens for endangered species come hand in hand with these activities, and also work with spaces for green energy installations to harvest wind and solar.

You don't have to spend long looking around Thanet to see we have plenty of wind - look out to sea at the wind farm arrays, and you understand that they don't put windmills where there isn't any - and we have big sunny coastal skies, as the fields full of solar panels attest.

People talk about the need for big employers in communities but, as we see time and time again, this is no longer a sustainable pattern of employment; when a big employer fails or takes on board labour-saving new technology, it takes the heart and soul of the

community with it, whether it's a port, a car factory, a steel mill or a mine. In Thanet, unemployment has fallen steadily since the airport last failed, although Covid lockdown had an impact from which the area is now recovering.

Rather, we have an embedded green industry sector already here, who would love to expand, but also source more of their parts locally, committed as they are to sustainably development.

We have wonderful heritage housing stock, begging to be brought up to date and made climate resilient as increasingly extreme weather conditions and fuel poverty loom over the horizon. We desperately need to train and employ people to do this work.

We also have a lively cultural, arts and music scene, which provides employment and engagement for the local communities.

On Manston now, we have endangered brown hares returning to breed, together with peregrine falcons. The opportunity to keep these precious inhabitants safe is another sound reason for taking a route away from a noisy, polluting, unviable, cargo hub, and towards a future of sustainable employment and land-management.

The Applicant seems to struggle to understand that a cargo hub at Manston will not be viable, despite 16 reports telling them so, in no uncertain terms.

Maybe now is the time for the Secretary of State to start engaging with them and showing them this other, better way.

It will be more profitable for them too; they could build a few houses on the Northern Grass for example - this is after all what Tony Freudmann does tend to do to airports when they fall into his hands as a little research into the subject will prove.

They could provide and manage units for light industry and technologies, they could host annual festivals, like the Tempelhof festival, they could even (to gladden the Secretary of State's heart) maintain a heritage general aviation runway where he could land his plane.

All this would surely be so much more heartening than constantly failing to pass the CAA requirements, facing a tussle with the MoD about their HRDF, dealing with a very dirty and contaminated site, removing human remains, ordnance, asbestos and toxic chemicals, taking over tens of freeholds to facilitate pipeline upgrades, wrangling with Kent Highways Division and Network rail, not to mention fighting like tigers to persuade any airlines at all to use their airport in the first place in a cut-throat industry with tiny margins and ample provision and capacity at other, better located airports.

This is all before the endless struggle to find tanker drivers (four tankers for each medium to long haul 747 flight), logistics companies to deal with cargo and all of the other day to

day headaches of running an airport which, if we are to learn from history, will fail, like it did before, leaving disappointment, debt and dirt in its wake.

So please may I ask Mr Shapps, or whomever he gives this decision when he recuses himself from it, to take a long hard look at every report ever written about Manston, to read his own Planning Inspectorate's advice, to think going forward about the declared Climate Emergency and the desperate state of the world, and to think about all of those people who believe that the airport will bring them jobs, only to have it fail again.

Thank you, in anticipation of an evidence-based, climate and environment aware decision, supportive of deprived communities in line with this Government's own "levelling up" agenda.

Deb Shotton
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