

## **EXEC SUMMARY**

### **Long Term Proposals for the Development of Manston, Kent's International Airport**

Manston Airport, near Ramsgate, has outlined its long-term development proposals as a response to the Airports Commission.

At the heart of the submission is the belief that the South East capacity issue would best be tackled through better utilisation of existing runways as the most viable, cost effective and deliverable option in the current economic climate. Manston is available to respond now and provide relief and resilience for the region, and wider UK's aviation capabilities.

Manston argues that it would provide a 'useful increment' in terms of capacity while the options for additional new runways are considered, agreed and pass through the planning system.

### **Strengthening resilience through under-utilised capacity**

In the interim period (2015-25), Manston has outlined its capability to make a significant contribution to efficient operation of the South East aviation network by:

- Handling 5m passengers a year and 400,000 tonnes of freight by 2030 as capacity is increasingly constrained at other South East airports.
- Expanding its role as a dedicated air cargo facility and accepting all-cargo flights displaced voluntarily or because of new Traffic Distribution Rules (TDRs) – from Heathrow and Gatwick (and ultimately possibly Stansted), in a location from which the whole of London and most of the South can be reached within acceptable trucking times.
- Increasing the airport's passenger throughput by attracting low cost, long haul and tertiary market traffic seeking access to the London and South East market but not able to sustain the commercial charges levied by major airports.
- Being designated and equipped as a principal diversion airport for Gatwick and Heathrow, to deliver greater South East wide resilience and better slot utilisation while new capacity is being created.
- Acting as a destination for long term Maintenance Repair & Overhaul (MRO) operations, as well as flight testing and commercial pilot training.
- Increasing its role as a Helicopter base with the imminent arrival of The Search and Rescue operation, and servicing offshore wind farm arrays located nearby.

### **Supporting regional growth through regulatory relief**

The airport's ability to build upon its modest passenger traffic would be supported by identifying and applying fiscal or regulatory mechanisms to persuade airlines and air cargo carriers to loosen their commercial attachment to the principal London airports.

These measures would 'turn-on' Manston as a 'release valve' for the regions most congested airports. This would allow a significant proportion of passenger traffic, currently travelling across or through London, or around the M25 from Manston's natural catchment area to access Heathrow and Gatwick to be serviced more locally.

### **Relieving constrained capacity**

In the absence of planning permission to develop new runway capacity anywhere in the South East for at least the next decade, Manston would contend that it is perfectly placed to act as a 'reliever airport' for London.

With Manston's airspace outside the London Terminal Control Area, it is able to combine an expanding passenger role particularly for low cost and charter flights, with other activities requiring an established, licensed and competitively priced airport with a long runway and substantial spare apron. Located only 60 miles, or 60 minutes travel time from the east of London, Manston offers significant operational advantages for freight companies.

Manston has a large landholding, similar to the current Stansted airport, which has Government approval to grow to 35mppa. As a result it has huge scope to grow and expand passenger and cargo handling facilities, and with one of the country's longest single runways it can accommodate most aircraft types for the foreseeable future.

Changes to the TDRs and Air Passenger Duty APD regime and planned improvement to the airport's rail connections and a new Thanet Parkway Station would support Manston in the short-medium term, and provide the all important springboard for long term sustainability. As a recent HMRC report<sup>1</sup> indicated, differential APD would have minimal impact on traffic using Heathrow or Gatwick, but could have potentially large impacts on airports with spare capacity close to them, of which Manston would potentially be a major beneficiary.

Manston is already a licensed airfield which currently has limited capacity constraints, dual carriageway access from the M25 and wide-spread political support from across Kent for its development. As a result it is capable of making a material contribution to the South East's short and medium term capacity needs, with the added advantage that it would help to improve the significant western bias of current capacity distribution around London, and support the economic development east of London.

The airport can play a key role as a long-term 'reliever' airport, by:

- serving outbound business and leisure traffic from the South East corner of the region and inbound leisure traffic looking for a cost effective way of accessing London.
- targeting key price sensitive market segments (e.g. based outbound low cost, inbound low cost and long haul low cost carriers displaced from higher cost capacity constrained airports).
- offering priority tertiary network carriers from Africa, CIS and near Asia a foothold in the London airport system while waiting for slots to become available at higher yielding airports.
- attracting charter carriers and regional carriers serving domestic and business destinations in Europe.

Importantly, the 'reliever' airport concept is well established and proven for airport systems serving other World Cities. For example, Stewart, White Plains, McArthur, Teterboro, Morristown and Atlantic City airports all serve the *New York and the wider tri-state area* in a variety of functionally or geographically distinct ways enabling JFK, La Guardia and Newark to be used optimally.

### **Changing perceptions**

These Interim proposals seek to change the industry's perception of Manston as being too remote from London and serving only a small discrete catchment in East Kent. Manston is well placed to be seen as multi-faceted and a 'reliever airport' for the capital.

With increasing congestion at other airports, passengers will seek out hassle-free airports. Manston recognises that there is a need to change market perceptions, and is already taking steps to secure a London designation with International Air Transport Association (IATA) and have received support from Gatwick and Heathrow for doing so.

### **Manston of the future**

The principal features of the long-term proposals for Manston within the operational boundary and its 2,700m runway and associated facilities to allow up to 35 movements an hour (parallel taxiway and rapid exit taxiways) include:

- Terminal capacity to cater for 15-20mppa, and developed incrementally and conveniently available car parking and public transport access
- Cargo facilities handling up to 1 million tonnes per annum
- An MRO and an aircraft recycling zone

Outside the boundary fence, there will be land allocated for:

- A railway station and associated public transport interchange, as closely integrated with the terminal building as possible.
- Between 4-5,000 parking spaces, some of which may be decked as the airport grows.
- A sustainable energy power generation complex - biomass from airport grass cuttings and agricultural waste from the surrounding farms; a solar farm with panels on the terminal, cargo and maintenance shed roofs, car ports etc
- An Airport 'Campus' development adjacent to the airport, potentially comprising:
  - a mix of B1, B2 and B8 development, tertiary education facilities including an aviation/aerospace training academy, 2-3 hotels and possibly a modest conference/trade-hall/exhibition space;
  - an integrated airport village;
  - a factory outlet park.

The existing Manston Business Park will continue to be built out as a logistics and manufacturing (e.g. food processing) centre and integrated into the overall airport campus project area.

Crucially the operator of Manston proposes that a new 140mph High Speed Railway line would be constructed along the North Kent Coast from Ebbsfleet, connecting the Medway Towns with the airport and Ramsgate - a distance of approximately 40 miles. The aspiration is that this would be completed between 2025-30, allowing easy access to the Airport's terminal (as at Southend), using High Speed Javelin style services.

The new line would allow 4 trains per hour (4tph) to be diverted from the Ebbsfleet to Ashford section of HS1, freeing up capacity for services from the UK regions using HS2 to connect via the existing chord north of St Pancras to HS1, and Europe. A further 4tph could be on the new (or upgraded) North Kent Corridor with a terminus either at Ebbsfleet for

connections to Crossrail, or by switching at Rochester onto the Victoria bound line rather than running through the Stroud Tunnel thereby linking Bromley and Swanley directly with the airport.

These arrangements would deliver competitive journey times to Manston, aiming for 40-45 minutes, from Central London, as well as Ebbsfleet, Stratford and key Kent, Medway, and South East London commuter towns.

No plan of the route, or detailed costing has been prepared. However, if the benchmark of £10m/km is adopted, and allowances are made for connections at Ebbsfleet, enhanced bridging/tunnelling in the Rochester/Stroud corridor and a significant parkway station and associated road improvements at Manston, a figure of £1.0bn is estimated.

Development inside the boundary fence would cost less than £1bn and deliver up to 20mppa of additional capacity – the capacity equivalent of a close parallel runway at one of the other major London airports – at the lowest cost/capacity ratio of any of the long-term proposals being presented to the Commission.

Manston would also offer one of the lowest surface access related cost for a capacity increment of this size at any of the other South East airport, all of which would require at least as great or greater investment in new or enhanced road and rail links.

### **Strategic Impacts**

Manston asserts that it can deliver against the Department for Transport's mantra of flying locally is better for the local economy and environment, and importantly is consistent with the Airport Commission's key criteria:

**Strategic fit:** Unlike other South East airports, Manston is open for growth now. Its development would support London's easterly connectivity and help to underpin the Government's strategic aspiration to deliver the economic development and regeneration of the Thames Gateway region. Manston would complement most single hub/single runway South East provision and free up capacity at other airports especially if it was designated as a long term dedicated cargo airport for the region.

**Connectivity and surface access:** These proposals would build upon the Government's investment to unlock East Kent economy through improved connectivity, Enterprise Zones status and Regional Growth Fund. An upgraded North Kent line would support the proposed development of Paramount Park, at Swanscombe, near Dartford, and the prospect of 27,000 new jobs associated with it.

The improved connectivity would reduce congestion for passengers and support the development of improved air access – long haul and short haul. Manston's location, road network, and proximity to London and the region, already ensures it offers the fastest freight management service capability of any South East regional airport.

Communities and businesses throughout Kent, and in particular those in Thames Gateway, would benefit from faster access times to international travel via Manston through investment in High Speed Rail.

**Economic impact:** Manston would deliver significant employment opportunities – 10,000 jobs when it achieves 15mppa, a further 2-3,000 jobs linked to the dedicated freight services, and a similar number through the Airport Campus.

**Environment:** The proposals would include the establishment of a ‘noise package’ consistent with the increased capacity and government guidelines for local residents. The expansion of Manston would reduce pressure for more environmentally damaging development at other airports, and reduce surface travel distances for passengers.

**People:** The development of Manston as a 15-20mppa would significantly improve the employment opportunities for East Kent and through enhanced access to the area would drive the tourism sector.

**Cost:** Development within the airport’s landholding would be undertaken by the owners, with the proposal that the public purse funds the upgrading of surface access and connectivity through the rail and road upgrades as part of its commitment to the economic development of Kent. This would still be less than the costs associated with upgrading of others airports. Importantly, the development of Manston can be incremental, delivered quickly in line with growing demand, and faster than at other airports.

**Operational viability:** Manston is capable of handling the A380 and B787 aircraft, is beyond the London TMA and recently undertook a £3m investment in radar. It currently offers operational resilience to other airports and its designation as a ‘reliever airport’ would further enhance its performance.

**Deliverability:** There is strong support for Manston within Kent and new capacity could be brought on stream quickly to achieve a 10mppa within 20 years. The airport’s potential, if designated as a ‘reliever airport’ for the South East, would help to underpin long term investment, jobs and economic development for East Kent and Thames Gateway – and more importantly contribute to the greater resilience of the region’s airport capacity and strategic operation.

For further information contact:  
Charles Buchanan  
Chief Executive, Manston Airport  
T: 01843 824825  
E: charles.buchanan@manstonairport.com

ENDS