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**Councillor P A Watkins**  
Leader of the Council

Direct Line: (01304) 872090  
Our Ref: AF/PAW/DJD  
Your Ref:  
Date: 22 August 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: Manston Airport**

I am writing to you to formally respond to the pre-consultation documents that have been published on the website in connection with RiverOak's plans to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) to PINS for the retention of Manston as a fully operational airport.

**Government Policy**

It is fully recognised by Government's own Select Committee that Heathrow and Gatwick airports are both running almost at 100% capacity and there is a desperate need for additional airport capacity in the south east. According to the Confederation of British Industry, the UK is losing business due to lack of airport capacity. This situation will undoubtedly continue for the foreseeable future given the fact that it may well take at least 15 years for a new runway to be up and running at whichever airport is finally selected. It is fully acknowledged that Manston will never be a major airport in the same sense as LHR and LGW but if some of the freight flights were moved to Manston from these other two airports, it could potentially free up slots for more passenger capacity in the southeast, provide linkages to other airports such as Amsterdam, and bring much needed specialised jobs and skills to East Kent.

**Kent County Council (KCC)**

In its discussion document Bold Steps for Aviation (May 2012) Kent County Council supported the increased use of Manston Airport and stressed its potential to make a significant contribution to aviation in the UK.

*"In Kent, Manston has the potential to make a significant contribution [to the UK's aviation capacity], providing excellent communications to European destinations and reduced flight times".*

**Thanet District Council Local Plan**

The proposal to retain the airport would be in accordance with Thanet District Council's Adopted Local Plan (2006) which clearly states *'The Local Planning Authority will oppose any development or use of land in the defined area which does not specifically require an airside location'*.

## East Kent Regeneration Board

East Kent Regeneration Board through the East Kent Growth Plan, 'Open for Growth', identified 12 Spatial Priorities for East Kent, including Thanet Central Island/Manston. In particular, it recognised the potential that Manston offered and stated:

*"..... Manston in particular offers significant scope for growth, with new international passenger services starting in 2013, and an expanding freight market. Manston has the potential to develop as an airport of regional significance, while Lydd also offers scope for expansion. ..."*

## Withdrawal from European Union

Following the United Kingdom's decision to withdraw from European Union (EU), it is evident that new international trading links will be forged beyond current arrangements. In the event of this occurring, it is likely that there will be a call for greater long haul freight requirements which will need to be accommodated at some point in the UK. Manston could, therefore, provide opportunity and resilience in this matter.

## Conclusions:

Safeguarding Manston as a fully operational airport is fully aligned with a motion which was passed by Dover District Council at a meeting of Full Council on July 2014:

*'This Council supports the campaign to retain Manston as an operational airport, recognising the role and place it can have in the UK aviation industry, making the better use of regional capacity in accordance with the views of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, while making a significant contribution as one of the strategic priorities for regeneration of the East Kent area'.*

We would therefore like to fully **support** the plans by RiverOak to pursue a DCO for Manston airport as this is fully aligned with our own Council motion that supports the campaign to retain Manston as an operational airport.

Owing to the strategic importance of the airport to the regeneration of the whole of East Kent, we do feel that it is important for Officers from Dover District Council to be involved in the forthcoming DCO that is submitted to PINS. Ideally we would like to suggest that this should follow a similar arrangement to the Richborough Connection Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) which has involved Officers from Thanet DC, DDC, Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council entering into a Planning Performance Agreement with National Grid to cover the cost of Officer time attending any meetings and commenting on various draft documents prior to the submission of the DCO. You will be aware that early engagement with Local Planning Authorities is something that PINS strongly encourage for NSIPs and is the main reason for suggesting that a similar approach should be followed for this particular project.

Yours faithfully



**P A Watkins**  
Leader of the Council