# EIA Quality Mark Case Study

## Manston Airport

### Key issues

**Socio-economics:** The project could deliver significant economic and social benefits to the local population. This benefit needs to be weighed against the project’s likely adverse environmental effects.

**Noise:** Given the scale of the project, it was noted that some of the noise effects would be unavoidable. There was considerable public concern regarding aircraft noise effects. This triggered the need for additional assessment to ascertain the scheme changes that were needed to reduce public concern.

**Traffic:** There was a general consensus that an increase in road traffic would lead to severe congestion and additional noise pollution.

**Community consultation:** The project involved extensive stakeholder consultation, which was carefully designed to ensure that all interested parties were kept informed.

### Purpose of the project

The purpose of the project is to re-open Manston Airport as a dedicated air freight facility, which also offers passenger, executive travel and aircraft engineering services.

The increase in demand for air transport seen in recent years is forecast to continue in the period up to 2035. London’s six airports (Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Luton, London City and Southend) facilitate around 76% of the UK’s air freight. However, the Airports Commission’s report\(^1\) states that all London airports will be at capacity by 2030. Without additional runway capacity, the south-east would be particularly hard hit, with sustained losses in potential trade running at £2bn/year.

### Description of the project

The project is located on the existing site of Manston Airport, which is situated west of the village of Manston, Kent. From 1916 up until the cessation of operations in May 2014, the airport provided a variety of airport-related services. Much of the airport infrastructure, including the runway, taxiways, aprons, cargo facilities and passenger terminal remain.

The project involves re-opening Manston Airport as a dedicated freight facility, capable of handling in excess of 10,000 air freight traffic movements annually. The works associated with the Project include:

- construction of 19 stands for air freight aircraft;
- construction of 65,000m\(^2\) of cargo facilities;
- re-development of the northern part of site for airport-related businesses;
- upgrade of the runway;
- extension of passenger service facilities; and

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Lessons learnt

The re-opening of Manston Airport necessitates striking a balance between social and economic drivers of development and environmental challenges (in particular noise effects) associated with the project. The EIA for Manston Airfield illustrates very well the importance of public consultation as part of the EIA process in addition to consultation with statutory bodies. This reflects the tension that arose on this project centred around the local communities’ desire to see more employment on the one hand versus concerns about noise effects on the other.

For this reason, regular and transparent communication over the approach to and results of the noise assessment were key elements of the consultation strategy and programme.

In addition to PINs’s consultation leading to the adoption of a Scoping Opinion, three public consultation events were held pre-submission; two involved statutory consultees and one was for non-statutory consultees. Feedback sought at these events ensured that the views of the local community were fully understood. For example, eight key concerns were raised during the stage 1 consultation; noise was one of the issues of greatest environmental concern, with 8% of respondents concerned about the increase in noise pollution. This approach facilitated the identification of environmental measures designed to reduce adverse effects.

In undertaking the assessment, one of the key questions was what baseline should be used. This issue arose from the fact that for many years local residents had been subject to noise from aircraft using Manston Airport. However, the previous noise levels were considered not to provide an appropriate baseline as they do not reflect what has happened over the last four years, namely the zero-baseline related to airport activities. It would not therefore have been appropriate to view the proposals as building on an existing operation.

The outputs of the noise modelling and subsequent feedback received during the consultation included a Noise Mitigation Plan which was drafted, consulted upon and subsequently amended. This offered compensation to significantly affected properties as well as reducing the night-time aircraft quota count by nearly 50%.

Our approach not only ensured that noise was assessed in an appropriate manner, but on-going liaison with consultees has reduced the risk of there being requests for additional environmental information during the examination period.

Aircraft noise – daytime LAeq 16hr contours opening year
Aircraft noise – daytime $L_{Aeq,16hr}$ contours – year of forecast maximum capacity

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