

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Applications by London Ashford Airport Ltd

APP/L2250/V/10/2131934 & APP/L2250/V/10/2131936

Site at London Ashford Airport Limited, Lydd, Romney Marsh, TN29 9QL

CPRE/11/A – Airport Operations
REBUTTAL TO MR TIM MASKENS (LAA/03/A)

- 1.1 My name is Gareth Thomas. I have an MA degree in Mechanical Sciences from Cambridge University, am a chartered engineer and a member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. I completed the maximum allowed five years as chairman of Protect Kent some three years ago, but have been a member of its Transport Group and often its chairman for 12 years. I am chairman of the CPRE southeast region transport group. I also have a Private Pilots Licence (licence no 51577), although currently not valid since I decided not to continue the required annual flying hours.
- 1.2 This statement of rebuttal primarily takes account of the initial evidence of Mr Tim Maskens of LAA.
- 1.3 Where this statement does not mention or take account of evidence presented as above or elsewhere on behalf of the appellant, this is not to be understood as acceptance by CPRE Protect Kent of such evidence.

2 POINTS OF REBUTTAL

- 2.1 Mr Maskens proof of evidence is in support of the applications. He confirms that the extension of the runway as applied for will allow Boeing 737 aircraft to operate at Lydd.
- 2.2 **Boeing 737 aircraft and the effect of a longer runway:** The 737 is the world's most successful airliner. It first entered airline service in February 1968. Since that time it has been subject to a large number of developments and many different variants. Some 6605 aircraft have been built up to the end of last year. The success of the 737 has led to many competitors being developed for this market, particularly the Airbus 300 series, Embraer in Brazil, Fokker and others. Many airlines, including Easyjet and United, are now retiring their 737s, which creates a flourishing second-hand market. Lengthening the runway therefore would make it available to very large numbers of mid-range jet airliners of different types, not just 737s. This is precisely the basis of the many objections. The 2006 document from the applicants entitled "London Ashford Airport (Lydd)"¹ lists 16 airlines is sees as potential operators (now 15). I believe it to be significant that none of these airlines has

¹ LAA (2006) http://www.lydd-airport.co.uk/documents/The_case_for_LAA.pdf (Accessed 20/01/2011)

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737s in their fleet, but use many aircraft types that could use Lydd now, and do fly in to London City Airport with its much shorter runway of 1199 metres. I therefore believe that the runway extension will not lead to the growth in passenger numbers.

- 2.3 **Training:** However, with the very large numbers of 737 and similar aircraft, changes in the market and the continued growth of air travel, there is a very large demand for pilot training, including converting to new aircraft and gaining type approval. Mr Maskens makes clear that the airport would have excellent facilities for this type of work, particularly with a longer runway. The airport management have also made it clear that this is a function they are very keen to develop.
- 2.4 **Effects of developing training:** This activity would give rise to all the adverse environmental effects, without creating any of the anticipated benefits to the local economy or the employment situation.
- 2.5 **Flight paths:** Mr Maskens proof of evidence includes drawings of the flight paths (appendices 5, 6 and 7², drawings 16.1, 16.2 and 16.21). Those flight paths shown as being for “all groups” would be ones used by these mid-range jet aircraft, because they will need to line up with the runway several kilometres from the threshold.
- 2.6 Thus Flight Paths (FP) 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 would be used for runway 21 (figure 16.2³). These would have serious effects on the residents of New Romney, Greatstone and Littlestone where the aircraft would be in the worst situation of wheels down, flaps down and engines under power, and could be doing frequent circuits.
- 2.7 Aircraft of this type approaching runway 03 from the south would use FP15, or possibly FP13+16 (figure 16.21⁴). However when the firing range is in operation it would appear that these flight paths would not be available (note: FP12 is shown as available, but FP1 is not, although they seem to be almost the same). I believe that this situation would be a considerable disincentive to any potential operator considering scheduled or regular charter services. I would appreciate Mr Maskens views on this.
- 2.8 **Light aircraft:** By far the largest numbers of aircraft movements at Lydd are by light aircraft. These will not generally use the navigational systems such as the ILS but instead make a visual approach (paragraph 5.3).
- 2.9 The air traffic controller communicates with the pilot to provide a mix of instructions, permissions and advice, but relies on the pilot being competent to position his aircraft appropriately for landing. This usually allows these aircraft to fly close to the airfield (see example of FP2, appendix 5 figure 16.1), therefore avoiding the residential areas to the north and Lydd village. However when a large jet is approaching the airfield from several kilometres out the controller will undoubtedly send the light aircraft round behind it. This will therefore cause them to overfly the residential areas to the north and the

² LAA/3/C

³ LAA/3/C – Appendix 6

⁴ LAA/3/C – Appendix 7

environmentally sensitive areas to the south much more frequently than at present. I trust that Mr Maskens would confirm this point.

3 CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Lengthening the runway appears unlikely to generate the increased passenger traffic levels suggested in the application. However, the adverse environmental effects could easily occur with increased airport operations, but without any of the economic or employment benefits predicted actually happening.