

Objections to Change of Use at Manston Airport

Planning Applications Submitted

F/TH/15/0460 (Building 1: AvMan Engineering Hangar)

Conversion from airport use to General Industrial (B2). Temporary permission to last for 3 years.

F/TH/15/0459 (Building 2: Cargo Centre)

Conversion from airport use to General Industrial (B2). Also seeking permission to alter the building to have upstairs office space.

F/TH/15/0457 (Building 3: Aircraft and Storage Hangar)

Conversion from airport use to storage and distribution (B8).

F/TH/15/0458 (Building 4: Equine Inspection Post)

Conversion from airport use to General Industrial (B2).

Submitting an Objection

1. You can make register your objection on the UK Planning portal at www.ukplanning.com.
2. Click 'Search Applications' on the left of the website and select 'England' and then 'Thanet District Council'.
3. Click 'Search Applications' again and search for one of the reference codes above with the 'Application Number' search tool.
4. Click 'Comment on Application' to add your objections.
5. Repeat steps 3-4 for all four of the reference codes above.

Reasons for Objection

1. These applications go against TDC's emerging Local Plan which states the Council will "support the sustainable development and regeneration of Manston Airport to enable it to function as a local regional airport." Further to this, the Local Plan states the Council seeks "to safeguard an operational airport at Manston, the Council is aware of the need to prevent developments that might prejudice the future operation and expansion of the airport, or be adversely affected by Airport operations."
2. Paragraph 2.75 of the Local Plan states that "the Local Planning Authority will oppose any development or use of land in the defined area which does not specifically require an airside location." None of these businesses require an airside location. We ask the Council to identify other available non-aviation premises elsewhere and to demonstrate clearly why there are no other alternative sites/premises available on any site covered by adopted policy EC12.
3. The Council's emerging Local Plan indicates the Council is seeking to designate "Manston Airport and the adjoining area" as an "Opportunity Area" for the purposes of preparing the Manston

Airport Area Action Plan (AAP), which will constitute a Development Plan Document and, in due course, form statutory planning guidance. The emerging plan further confirms that “a consideration of the AAP should be the retention, development and expansion of the airport and aviation operations where supported by a feasibility study and a viable Business Plan.” The plan also states that the Council will be “exploring alternative options for the future development of the area for mixed-use development.” However, until the AAP is adopted, the policy remains that support will be given to the “development, expansion and diversification of Manston Airport”, which accords with the adopted development plan policy. Therefore, as full weight can be given to the adopted policy, this increases the degree of weight which can be given to the emerging policy, contrary to the assertions made by the applicant’s agent. Moreover, the Council has now carried out two consultations on the new local plan, one in respect of “Issues and Options” and a second in respect of the Council’s “Preferred Options”. The Council is therefore best placed to determine the degree of weight to be given to the adopted and emerging policies, in the light of consultation responses. The Planning Applications Team is therefore strongly urged to liaise directly with the Local Plans Team in order to reach a view as to the level of weight to be applied, in the light of the above representations.

4. There is no evidence from the applicants that alternative sites have been sought by the companies leasing the units. There are several industrial parks within Thanet that have vacant units and land for development that do not require planning permission for change of use. In fact, planning consent has only just been granted for 19 new units at Westwood Business Park, while more units have been completed and are under construction at Manston Business Park. Significant areas of vacant land are available at the latter park, which are serviced and ready to be developed for B1, B2 and B8 uses.
5. The Council’s emerging Local Plan has identified that there is now less need for employment land. If they allow planning permission for employment uses outside of those sites allocated for employment use, they will set a precedent for the use of all other airport buildings. This will be in direct competition with established sites such as at Westwood, Pysons Road, Haine Road and more recent sites including Manston Business Park and EuroKent. This will generate ‘ghost town’ industrial sites as businesses relocate to the Airport.
6. The current UKIP TDC are keen to CPO the airport, and this requires vacant possession of the airport buildings, which means all these businesses will have to relocate very shortly in the event of a successful CPO. This would be a costly exercise for the companies leasing the buildings and not logical for TDC to grant planning for change of use.
7. The Agents are applying for temporary change of use for Building 1, but say they have no prospective occupants. This is directly contrary to the agent’s unsupported claims that there are no other, suitable premises available for any form of business use elsewhere in the district. If they don’t know what it’s being used for why are they applying for temporary 3 year permission?