

From: Medway Countryside Forum

45 Hawthorne Avenue
Rainham
Gillingham
Kent ME8 6RT

Dear Burton

Medway Waterport Project Office
Medway Renaissance

RECEIVED
19 JUN 2006

14th June 06

Dear Mr Burton,

Temple Waterport draft development brief

1. Thank you for your covering letter dated 12th May 2006 together with the draft development brief.
2. Although still within the allowed period, we had hoped to respond sooner but 'staying family visitors' and other complications prevented this. We have also had other general and specific issues to raise with our Council which required letters at this time.
3. We shall therefore keep these comments to the minimum by addressing the fundamentals / major concern.
4. If you look in your files, you will see that we in Medway Countryside Forum (MCF) have been inputting constructive suggestions for this site since around 2001, at meetings at all levels of the Council, during an informal field visit with Martin Hall and Jeremy Whittaker in spring 2003, and in letters. We have also encouraged our Council to make the most of financial opportunities e.g. the Rail Link Countryside Initiative to retain/enhance the wildlife and other potential of this area, including the important scrub area and the inter-tidal habitats. We have been consistent in our limited number of key principles when approaching any proposals affecting this site.
5. One of our few written requirements has been the protection of designated Open Space and hence we find the suggested encroachment into protected Open Space as indicated at pages 94 to 98 of your draft to be wholly unacceptable and surprising.
6. We find this departure particularly strange as we raised it at the meeting arranged by Colin Lovell as recently as November 2005 at Eastgate House. The Open

Spaces Society made the same request of our Council to respect that designated Open Space at that same meeting.

7. But the main reason you should revise your draft development brief so that building does not encroach onto any part of the designated Open Space is that MCF has such an assurance, in writing, from Medway Council dated 15 March 2004. This assurance is very clear and was in response to our letter dated 20 February 2004 which followed a MCF public meeting held on 10th February 2004 which asked for our letter to be sent. This also means that Principle 3 at page 78 of your draft brief is deficient and needs to be clarified to state that the designated Open Space should be protected as well as the SNCI area. At the heart of this, we do not believe that any designated Open Space can be treated in such a cavalier way whether by an SA optains appraisal or any other source. So paras. 6.27 to 6.29 do not fit the Local Plan / PPG 17 bill.

8. We have always worked on the basis that building would take place in this area as the Local Plan indicates. We expect Medway Council, however, to honour its written commitments and you need to revise your brief to reflect that promise. Perhaps you can reconfigure your building / development perimeter for the site by some re-arrangement of the existing industrial / business uses and thus retain our designated Open Space; this might also make it possible to solve the difficult traffic / access problems? If not, then an amended, smaller number of dwellings will be necessary.

9. Finally, as a courtesy, you should be aware that MCF has felt obliged to write to Judith Armit and Robin Cooper on a more general concern that there is a serious dissonance between what our Council is saying about its intentions to protect our countryside and open spaces and what it is actually doing in practice (Coppesfield Wildlife Site, Medway City Estate lake etc). We shall be watching carefully, therefore, how Medway Council - up to its most senior levels - intends to proceed on this site, in the context of that letter and the assurance highlighted above.



David Murr
Chairman MCF

Yours sincerely,



Owen Sweeney
Wildlife & Countryside Sub-Group