

Cllr Laura Edie
Kent

Dartford,

Rynd Smith,
Temple Quay House,
Bristol,

National Infrastructure Planning,
2 The Square,
BS1 6PN

Your Ref : BC080001

9th January 2021,

Dear Rynd Smith,

Firstly, I wanted to say thank you for giving us the opportunity to share our thoughts on whether the continued delay to the examination can be justified, or whether it should be curtailed. For clarity, I am a local Green Party councillor in Dartford, and also a lead member of the Save Swanscombe Peninsula campaign group.

I have been in contact with local businesses who have been under the threat of CPOs since 2014, and been severely impacted by the repeated delays sought by LRCH. So far, 8 months has lapsed since the examination should have begun, and LRCH have asked for an unprecedented extra 14/15 months (contrary to Government guidance)! Furthermore, during this time London Resort have not upheld the regular meetings or kept people informed via frequent correspondence. Business owners have described feeling "like they are on death row".

Local residents are also in limbo over the uncertainty of whether they will potentially lose this treasured green space, and fearful of the increased pollution and traffic that having a theme park on their doorsteps is predicted to bring. This would add insurmountable pressure to the already overwhelmed infrastructure in this borough.

LRCH have claimed that the reasons behind more requests for delay are due to the SSSI status being upheld. However, LRCH were aware of the real possibility of this eventuality, indeed it was the ecological surveys that they requested be carried out which have highlighted what a nature oasis this site is! LRCH was advised of the likely SSSI status prior to even submitting their DCO application.

From our perspective, we are aware that the Government / Natural England have announced that the national rollout of Local Nature Recovery Strategies will get underway in April 2022, and we very much want to see Swanscombe Peninsula play its part in this. However it will be difficult to deploy our energies positively in this direction if we are instead having to focus on stopping the existing nature and wildlife on the Peninsula from being destroyed. There cannot be any other SSSI in the country that is under threat to the extent than this one currently is!

There is also the issue that Dartford Borough Council has now submitted its new Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Examination, and this sets out a clear preference for respecting the SSSI and coming up with a mixed use scheme for the Peninsula which respects existing businesses and allows nature to continue to thrive. I am pleased that the Council has taken this approach and that is why it is right that all efforts must now be focused on preventing any further delay in the London Resort proposals.

How much longer can the local community be expected to cope with LRCH's unwillingness to engage with them and their dithering approach to even beginning the DCO process?

Thanks again for taking the time to consider my responses,

Kind Regards,

Cllr Laura Edie,

Green Party member for Newtown ward

(Dartford)