

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE KIG JOINT PARISHES GROUP**

**Held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2007 at 7.30pm.**

Present: Representatives from the following Parish Councils:

Bearsted  
Boxley  
Broomfield & Kingswood  
Chart Sutton  
Detling  
Downswood  
Harrietsham  
Hollingbourne  
Langley  
Leeds  
Lenham  
Otham  
Sutton Valence  
Thurnham

The meeting was chaired by Richard Jacques - TPC.

Also in attendance: Mrs Sherrie Babington, Mark Watts and Peter Cooper from Bloomfield's Planning Consultants.

**1. Apologies.**

The Chairman, Richard Jacques welcomed Ulcombe Parish Council to the KIG Joint Parish Group.

**2. Presentation by Mark Watts.**

The Chairman welcomed Mark Watts to the meeting.

Mr Watts briefed all present on his professional background.

He spoke of the four themes that he would be addressing during the course of his presentation:

1. The Planning Case.
2. The Applied Planning Case.
3. Local Planning Issues.
4. National and International Public Affairs

Mark Watts stated that the planning case had already been undertaken. He then spoke regarding the applied planning case. He stated that there was an overriding case to justify the development on a regional and national planning policy, transport and freight policy.

He spoke regarding strategies for undermining elements of the proposals and the ways in which this could be undertaken by the group.

He stated that there was no evidence that the proposals would move freight from road to rail.

He spoke of the perception that the applicant would generate regarding the local opposition.

Mr Watts spoke regarding the national and international public relations. He stated that it would be likely that the application would be determined by the Secretary of State and he spoke regarding the political factors and implications regarding this matter.

He summarises his discussions before answering the questions put to him by the JPC before the meeting.

1. *What is happening/planned at Dunkirk?*

The Port of Dunkirk has signed an agreement with Eurotunnel to transport to Kent. There is an agreement to revitalise the freight rail business and Dunkirk is planning to give rail freight new impetus.

2. *Is the UK short of port capacity for containers? Is this being addressed?*

Yes the UK is desperately short of port capacity in the South East. The shortage is being addressed until 2020, beyond this there will still be a shortage for container capacity, the demand is increasing by 1% a year.

3. *What is the attitude of Southampton, Felixstow and Tilbrey to Dunkirk's proposals?*

The only consideration by ports is for their own ports.

4. *What targets do the above docks have for onward movement by rail?*

Southampton has a target of 35%. Mr Watts stated that railways will be congested if the targets are achieved, he stated that these targets are not mandatory.

5. *Could similar targets be imposed on KIG?*

Mr Watts stated that the market dictates the targets.

6. *The government has announced funding to improve rail links to Southampton and Felixstow – what is their opinion of another 'port' stuck on the wrong side of London? Especially if 4 above was to be imposed?*

Mr Watts stated that the track locally will need upgrading and the investment should be directed at the main rails.

7. *The CTRL was built to take freight with special sidings and a dedicated connection at the tunnel and in Essex. What is the aim of these links and provision – where was it intended the freight be unloaded?*

Mr Watts stated that he did not know the answer to this question at present, however he would look into this.

8. *What information is available on Eurotunnel's plans – company report, Shareholders information?*

Eurotunnel is a publically listed company and therefore the information is freely available.

9. *What is the latest Government thinking on railfreight to ports in general?*

Mr Watts stated that the applicant will use this to their defence. The Government thinking on rail freight is underdeveloped. He stated that the Government is addressing these issues in the near future and therefore it is crucial that this application is determined.

Mr Watts stated that the JPG's biggest weapon is to create uncertainty and instability and the backer may have the planning application withdrawn.

He spoke of the effects that the application could have on global warming and it most certainly would not assist in reducing the carbon footprint.

The Chairman thanked Mr Watts for his presentation and the meeting was open for questions.

Questions were raised regarding the political aspects of the application, the green issues, employment issues and quality of life issues.

Richard Jacques spoke regarding the resources open to the JPG and of the possible costs involved in employing a company to challenge the planning application.

A discussion took place regarding the possible terms under which the JPG could work with a public relations company, the possible stages of the application and the process should the application go to appeal.

Councillor Horne asked Mr Watts if he could put an estimate of costs together for the JPG to consider at its next meeting.

Richard Jacques thanked Mr Watts for his time in attending the meeting and thanked him for his input into the meeting.

**3. Date of next meeting.**

To be arranged.

***The meeting closed at 10.00pm.***