



## **PRESS NOTICE**

Friday, March 12, 2010

### **Natural England requests that the Secretary of the State 'calls in' Shepway District Council's resolution to grant planning permission for London Ashford Airport at Lydd.**

Natural England has written the Government Office of the South East (GOSE) requesting that Shepway District Council's resolution to grant planning permission for the London Ashford Airport (LAA) at Lydd be 'called in' for decision by the Secretary of State.

"We work closely with developers and planning authorities to identify places where new developments are best accommodated and are most sustainable, while minimising negative impacts on nature and the environment," said Natural England Area Manager Rob Cameron.

"We support development that takes the natural environment into consideration and we do all we can to help ensure that the right sort of development is located in the right places and delivers sustainable benefits for people and the natural environment together.

"We have to be consulted by law because the proposed expansion at the LAA at Lydd may affect nature conservation sites of national and international importance. We also have to consider the likely impacts on wider ecological interests and landscape in the area and the impacts on local access and recreation. The scientific evidence supports the need for the 'call in'.

"If the Secretary of State agrees to Natural England's request, this would most likely result in a Public Inquiry."

Shepway DC's resolution on March 3 to approve plans for a runway extension and a new terminal building was against the advice of its own planning officers and the conclusion set out in its own Appropriate Assessment.

The sites affected by the development are:-

Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Dungeness Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Dungeness to Pett Level Special Protection Area (SPA).

Proposed Dungeness to Pett Level Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar site).

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“We believe the applicant has been unable to demonstrate that the sites of national and international importance for nature conservation would not be adversely affected by the proposed developments,” continued Mr Cameron.

“There was insufficient information before Shepway DC for it to be able to properly determine the nature and scale of the impacts on these sites, statutorily protected species and the natural environment generally.”

**Natural England objected to the planning application for the following reasons:-**

The applicant has been unable to demonstrate that the proposals will not have an adverse affect on the integrity of the protected sites;

The lack of a detailed Bird Control Plan that sets out precise measures that will be necessary to deliver on the airport’s legal bird-strike requirements, and the impacts this might have on bird populations;

Air quality issues, especially the levels of nitrogen, and the impact on the Special Area of Conservation. There is potential for a reduction in air quality, leading to shingle communities becoming eutrophic and altering the fragile nature of the ecosystem. Evidence indicates that the airport expansion will cause an increase in nitrogen deposited, which Natural England believes will adversely affect the habitat.

There are also additional adverse effects on the invertebrate features of the SSSI and there has been insufficient survey work to assess effects on geomorphological interest features of the SSSI.

Ends

**Notes to Editor:**

Natural England Area Manager Rob Cameron is available for interviews on Friday, March 12. Please contact Adrian Westwood on 0300 060 2862.

***About Natural England***

- Natural England is the government’s independent advisor on the natural environment. Established in 2006 our work is focused on enhancing England’s wildlife and landscapes and maximising the benefits they bring to the public.
- We establish and care for England’s main wildlife and geological sites, ensuring that over 4,000 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves are looked after and improved.
- We work to ensure that England’s landscapes are effectively protected, designating England’s National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Marine Conservation Zones, and advising widely on their conservation.
- We run England’s Environmental Stewardship green farming schemes that deliver over £400 million a year to farmers and landowners, enabling them to enhance the natural environment across two thirds of England’s farmland.
- We fund, manage, and provide scientific expertise for hundreds of conservation projects each year, improving the prospects for thousands of England’s species and habitats.
- We promote access to the wider countryside, helping establish National Trails and coastal trails and ensuring that the public can enjoy and benefit from them.

For further information about Natural England please visit: [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)