

# STOPKIG.org

## The Campaign to **STOP** the Kent International Gateway Development

Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears  
Secretary of State  
House of Commons  
London SW1

6<sup>th</sup> February 2008

Dear Ms Blears

### **Kent International Gateway (Application No 07/2092 – Maidstone Borough Council) Freedom of Information Act**

I am writing to you on behalf of STOP KIG following AXA's decision to appeal the KIG application.

STOP KIG believes that the scale of the proposal is completely out of keeping with an area of outstanding natural beauty and should be refused on this basis. The case for rail freight at this location is poorly made and there are serious flaws in the impact assessments and the analysis of alternative sites.

However, if the Government is minded to consider a rail freight terminal at this location, I would urge you to ensure that it is considered within the context of Maidstone's Local Development Framework which has been so badly delayed due to KIG. It is inconceivable that an application of this size and likely impact could ignore the wider "growth point" considerations for the Borough of Maidstone. No doubt AXA would like the application to be considered as a separate issue as it would help their case.

It is obvious that AXA has used the lobbying process to its fullest extent. I am aware that this application is supported by a significant number of Labour MPs and the Labour Peer Lord Berkeley. I understand that you cannot comment specifically about KIG, however, I request under the Freedom of Information Act a statement indicating that the Government will consider this issue in a fair and appropriate manner, setting out a likely timetable for the determination process.

I do not consider that AXA has complied with Maidstone Borough Council's Consultation Strategy for major applications. Equally, the emerging South East Plan encourages promoters of rail freight interchanges to do so "in partnership" with local communities. Many consider that AXA ignored this principle and that fact that it has now bypassed the local planning process in an attempt to get its own way is a clear indication of this.

I believe that one of the Government's objectives in introducing the LDF process was to ensure local democracy prevailed in setting a direction for the community. I would urge you to ensure that the full democratic process is allowed to prevail in this case.

Yours sincerely

Richard Horton

Cc Hugh Robertson M.P  
Paul Carter, Leader KCC  
Chris Garland, leader Maidstone Borough Council