

The environmental and economic threat from Brett.



 Labour

Councillor Karen Constantine and Raushan Rahman both work and live very close to the Ramsgate Port. They are passionate about Ramsgate, about preserving its unique heritage and safeguarding against any potential or actual negative impact on the local environment.

About the Thanet Coast

Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate encompass some of the most stunning and scientifically significant coastline in the world.

15 stunning sandy beaches stretch from Pegwell Bay to Minnis Bay, featuring soaring chalk cliffs; this stretch of unique coast is 12% of Europe's coastal chalk, with seven Blue Flag Award beaches and three Seaside Award bays.

Alongside incredible natural features, heritage and culture draw around 5 million day-trippers to the county annually, with many more visiting for longer, to fully immerse themselves in the spectacular scenery, innovative artwork and culinary delights.

71% of Kent's overnight stays, however, are in its coastal towns. The Thanet coast contributes significantly to this figure, with its golden beaches and creamy cliffs.

The coast is home to a range of extraordinary wildlife, including the rare stalked jellyfish, brightly coloured sea slugs, St John's jellyfish, Turnstones, Common and Grey Seals.

The Pegwell Bay SSSI designation ends just before Ramsgate's direct coastline begins, which puts many of the species in this area in particular at risk. However, many of the species and features that give the Thanet coast SSSI status (such as chalk cliff-top grassland, sanderling and plover populations, rare algae on cliffs and mud/sand flats) feature prominently on the Ramsgate-adjacent coast.

The protection of these species and areas are internationally important for conservation. Species of algae have been discovered in Thanet sea caves that are so rare, they have never been seen outside of Thanet. By allowing development in these delicate ecosystems, we may be destroying species that have previously been undiscovered.

Raushan said: "the coastline is simply beautiful and must be protected. Locally businesses very much depend on the tourist trade throughout the year. I fear that this development will not only damage the local environment but will potentially damage the tourism trade."

Our Conclusion

The risks present in this development, regardless of safety and environmental protection procedures, are too high to justify approval. Even when only factoring in CO2 and air emissions, as well as visual blight, the dangers to local flora, fauna and the tourism industry are highly significant. When accounting for likely water pollution, even in a 'closed system' the risks are even greater.

An Environmental Impact Assessment is vital to ensure we can conserve this globally significant site, which may still feature further undiscovered species, and certainly contains the best of British wildlife, landscapes and plant life.

The real Risks

Various areas of land on the Thanet coast have previously been contaminated by industrial activity; ... industrial activities may have left contamination in the ground, which if not properly dealt with can pose a risk to public health or the environment. The type of contamination can vary substantially from site to site, but some of the more common causes for concern include heavy metals (e.g. mercury and lead), hydrocarbons (e.g. oils, fuels and solvents) and domestic and industrial wastes (e.g. landfill, dry cleaners).

It is frequently argued that with greater restrictions upon industrial activity within the U.K., the risk of pollution and contamination is greatly reduced. This is true, however, with planned concrete aggregate production dangers increase.

Another environmental issue with cement and concrete production is water pollution. The concern is the greatest at the concrete production phase... Water use varies greatly at different plants, but Environment Canada estimates water use at batching plants at about 500 gallons per truck per day, and the alkalinity levels of washwater can be as high as pH 12. Highly alkaline water is toxic to fish and other aquatic life. Environment Canada has found that rainbow trout exposed to portland cement concentrations of 300, 500, and 1,000 milligrams/liter have 50% mortality times (the time required for 50% of the population in test samples to be killed) of 68, 45, and 29 minutes, respectively.

The key Facts

- Thanet's tourism industry is worth over £245million per annum.
- The majority of overnight stays are in coastal districts.
- A major draw to the coast is the iconic chalk cliffs, the longest in the U.K.
- The Thanet Coast is a Designated Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It also contains a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Protection Area and two Special Areas of Conservation (amongst other designations).

In addition to water pollution dangers, planned expansion of aggregate processing facilities at the Port of Ramsgate will definitely result in a rise of CO2 emissions, production of other air pollutants (primarily dust) and potentially solid waste generation.

These pollutants undoubtedly have a significant effect on flora and fauna. Any increase in development on the coast, especially when industrial in nature, will have a negative impact on the local wildlife and landscape, possibly permanently destroying features we did not yet know existed, and losing further local species.

Also important is the potential increase of lorry movements. When access to the Port is closed from the West side, access can only be gained via the town and harbour area.

Alongside all these environmental dangers, the increase in industrial activity both from sea and land transport, as well as the increased visual blight on the landscape may have an impact on the tourist industry. This affects not only the incomes listed previously in this document, but may also affect the over 3,600 people directly employed in the tourism industry in Thanet alone, accounting for 15% of all employment in Thanet, and a total tourism value of £245,200,000.

Cllr Karen Constantine says "all the local Labour councillors have formally opposed this proposal, by writing to KCC and Natural England. However it is land that belongs to TDC. So we believe that TDC can be guided to refuse this application. It's simply is not what people want and will damage prospects for years, possibly decades to come". Visit: Karen4Labour.uk