

13^h May 2009

Our ref: R00098

Freedom of Information Request - Kent International Gateway

Your request to SEEDA is:

I have heard from a local magazine that you are in favour of the proposed KIG (Kent International Gateway) to be built within the North Downs countryside close to the villages of Thurnham and Bearsted. Please could you shed any light on these reports?

Information provided

I enclose a copy of the letters SEEDA sent to Maidstone Borough Council in response to their statutory consultation on the planning application for the development known as Kent International Gateway.

SEEDA carefully considered its response which was based on three main advantages demonstrated by the development proposal. Firstly there is the clear potential of a National Distribution Centre to deliver economic growth and modal shift from road (the M20 - a very busy freight corridor) to rail. Both of these are clear Regional Economic Strategy 2006-16 (RES) objectives. Secondly the general suitability of the location in terms of access to motorways and rail lines with spare capacity and unencumbered by Green Belt issues. Thirdly the lack of an existing National Distribution Centre in the South East which is in an appropriate position to intercept HGV traffic from Dover.

SEEDA does however in our second letter recognise the uncertainty in the success of such a proposal and the considerable risks involved.

SEEDA recognises that economic issues have to be balanced by environmental and social issues and this balanced viewpoint is one that the Borough Council needs to take account of when it makes its decision.

