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CANVEY  
GREEN BELT  
CAMPAIGN  
PRESENTATION TO

CASTLE POINT  
BOROUGH COUNCIL'S  
SPECIAL POLICY AND  
DEVELOPMENT GROUP

AUGUST 2009



PRESENTATION TO  
CASTLE POINT  
BOROUGH COUNCIL'S  
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# Intro

The "Land East of Canvey Road" is a valuable piece of, fast disappearing, green lung. It serves the, important, purpose of maintaining an Open Space between the three areas of "The Dutch Village", "Saints" and "Avenues" Estates. With the proposed development of the area all the problems associated with urbanisation will take effect. This is the last sizeable area of natural Canvey land within the roadway perimeter. At the moment the fields offer the community the opportunity of exercise, recreation, horse riding, fresh air and an open aspect. How many times have we heard neighbourhood complaints about anti-social behaviour? Well this is a place for off road cycling, a rare place for dogs to be worked or exercised off lead, plus one of the few areas where youths can let off steam, even misbehave without causing excessive disruption. These fields must not be confused with the RSPB site opposite, which will serve a totally different purpose.

Bear in mind also, the Environment Agency's proposal to flood Canvey west marsh in its Thames Estuary 2100 plan! How many more ideas can be invented, that will be allowed to blight the Island?

The fields are frequently waterlogged, due to recent rain patterns, clay soil and the high water table. Any development will threaten the sustainability of the nearby estates silted up, soak-away drainage systems.

Since the early 70's Canvey's population has increased from 27,000 to currently 40,000, by proposing a further 10% increase in housing stock for Canvey, with it's dilapidated infrastructure and roadways, this area will become increasingly more important to be kept as green belt for resident's quality of life.

Canvey Islanders have clearly shown their view, reflected in our Referendum. The opportunity now exists for the Council to respond and show that residents' opinions are of importance. Developers have, for too long, exploited Canvey, the landscape is unbalanced.

It will also be yet further loss of habitat for the likes of: Butterflies, Marble whites, Common Blue, Hollie Blue, Small Copper, Meadow Brown, Essex Skipper, Tortoiseshell, Peacock, 5 Spotted Burnet. Grass snakes, Adders (both protected), birds breeding could include Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Greenfinch, Robin, Whitthroat, Skylarks, Meadow Pippit, Wren, Dunnock.

It is a "shame" these fields were a noticeable omission from the Borough Council's sponsored Ecological Survey of 2007.

# Testaments include

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**Sebastian Gwyn-Williams.**

**Brook Natural Health Centre**

As a resident of Canvey Island and a father of three young daughters, I am well aware of not only the importance of exercise for children but also the lack of open space left on the island. I feel it is a great shame that this last pocket of greenbelt land could be lost for the sake of more houses on our already overcrowded Island. Canvey's infrastructure is already struggling to cope with the current population and 10% more housing can only add to this problem.

**Dean Macey**

**Olympic Athlete**

As a Canvey boy for more than 31 years I have seen many changes to our Island, some good, some bad, and I'm struggling to see the benefits for the proposed houses on an already over populated Island. Not only will it be adding to our already congested roads, I wonder what the generations to come will have as recreational fields if we continually build on them. With the misconception of the youths of today being troublemakers, surely restricting their playing areas will only fuel the fire.

**Mark Hunter**

**Professional Football Club associate Coach.**

Being a football coach for 15 years, and a professional football & conditioning coach, I feel I have a reasonable view of the situation regarding youth exercise. Over the past 5 years, especially on Canvey, due to a lack of opportunities, they tend to sit on their backsides, this is where obesity begins. Playing computer games instead of outside playing games, whether it be, football/basketball/athletics or just hanging out. We are already banging our heads against a brick wall with this self-inflicted disease (Obesity) so let us allow the kids a chance to play as kids, and leave obesity behind, by keeping the green belt land, and with it, the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities.

**Brian Blake**

**Dog Club Official.**

**Trainer and handler.**

What will future generations memories be of, if all our open spaces are covered with concrete? There needs to be room for both housing and countryside to maintain the ingredients for a balanced society.

People need places to be able to walk their dogs. It is much more beneficial to walk across fields whilst enjoying nature, far better than inhaling traffic fumes walking the streets.

Open spaces are where communities come together and learn to interact with one another. By learning to interact together, communities become more tolerant and respectful. What chance of this if the outdoors is nothing but busy streets and alleyways.

Remember, green space benefits the whole community.

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Having been perplexed by the contradictions in the proposed Core Strategy publication, between proceeding with the proposed development and the references to Canvey's hazardous sites and Environment Agency Flood Risk zone 3 rating, we realised that our campaign fell under "the umbrella" of the research of local resident S. Sawkins. He has since agreed to become an advisor to our campaign group and we believe that a joint approach strengthens the protest.

Seen alongside the difficulties safeguarding Canvey Wick, this proposed development is yet one more blow to the landscape and quality of life of residents in this part of the Borough. Other options must be examined.

The LDF Core Strategy should be a wonderful opportunity for a new future. We are not against change, we are aware of population pressures and the need for long overdue regeneration, but decisions need to be taken which reflect residents' desires.



# CANVEY GREENBELT CAMPAIGN

## Referendum Final Details.

Official Balloting period 25<sup>th</sup> April – 10<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

The Count was held at the Heritage Centre Hall, Canvey Road, Canvey Island.

Date of the Count 27<sup>th</sup> May 2009. Time 7.30pm

Official Result

To the Question,

**“Should there be any further development of Canvey Greenbelt land ?”**

**Total Votes cast 6,534**

**Spoiled papers 41**

**Yes votes 56**

**No votes 6,437**

**Percentage Majority Against 99.13%**

Adjudicators for the Count

County Councillor Ray Howard

Councillor Dave Blackwell

Dennis Williams

George Whatley

Procedure. Volunteer ballot collectors called on Residents of Canvey Island. Each Volunteer carried an identity card, Map of their selected area, explanation sheet, clipboard, pen, pads of ballot forms and a sealed jar in which to collect completed ballot forms. The ballot papers clearly showed the question, had a clear space to indicate either possible answer, a space to sign balloters name or initials and organisers contact details. Only people obviously over the age of eighteen were invited to vote. If occupiers failed to answer when our collectors called one voting slip was put through the letter box. Each ballot paper had a telephone number for the resident to then ring, if they wished to vote. The returned jars were then stored, unopened, until being cut open for counting. On the evening of the count the Adjudicators had full control of procedures. Collectors were not invited to be part of the counting team.

Organiser: Graham Bracci

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# Presentation

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Thank you for the opportunity to present to you the reasons why we feel that the part of the Core Strategy that proposes the building on Green Belt on Canvey Island should be removed, on the fundamental basis that this would be a significant increase in the Societal Risk already imposed on Canvey Islanders.

Because of the time restraints we will only be able to provide a broad overview of the presentation that we will be submitting to the Planning Inspectorate in support of our argument using various documentations issued by the HSE. We will be drawing support from recommendations from the Buncefield Enquiry. We will be referring to recommendations from the Sir Michael Pitt Review and requesting that the outcome of the consultative document Draft Flood and Water Management Bill is brought to conclusion before the Planning Inspectorate finalises his deliberations. We will be identifying risk and consequence elements from the Community Risk Register and the failure to fully appreciate elements of National Indicators. We will be referring to those elements of the Core Strategy presented by this Authority that recognises the very reasons why further development of housing on Canvey Island should be curtailed at present.

We shall be providing evidence and recommendations of the MIIB Major Incident Investigation Boards of the Buncefield Enquiry, based upon the necessity of worse case scenario of an incident from an industrial accident having to be the benchmark when dealing with planning implications.

We will be identifying the work of the members of the Societal Risk Technical Advisory Group, who are working on the process used to measure the tolerability of Societal Risk. Canvey Island has been identified through this process, attracting interest because of the COMAH sites' close proximity to residential premises, as likely to be a subject of any revised policy. We will be drawing this aspect to the Planning Inspectorate and highlighting the Advisory Groups three main issues.

1 Incremental development (the build up over time of population that is being exposed to risk). This is an issue identified within the Authority's Core Strategy.

2 Large development outside existing Land Use Planning consultation distances  
This aspect reflects on the whole of Canvey Island.

3 Sufficiency of the measures at the hazardous sites. As Low as Reasonably Practicable issues in view of their risk profile.

The Planning Inspectorate will be aware that a Major Hazard installation is the term given to an Industrial Site that, because of the nature and quantity of substance present, has the potential for accidents that could cause serious harm to people at the site and to the surrounding areas.

LPG Liquid Petroleum Gas storage facilities and sites where highly flammable liquids are stored and distributed are major hazardous installations presenting a considerable risk to the society of Canvey Island.

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We will be referring to the comprehensive documentation on the work being undertaken in the review process of Societal Risk and how it impacts

1. Land Use Planning
2. Consultation distances
3. Public Information Zones

The Government has recognised that Societal Risk (the number of people that would be or could be affected by a worst case scenario incident emitting from a hazardous site) has now to be considered as a priority.

Historically the HSE has based its Land Use Planning advice on the assumption that site operators are fully compliant with the controlling legislations. We will explain to the Planning Inspectorate that as a society we gain no comfort and are in danger of losing confidence in this process as a result of both of the COMAH sites on Canvey Island having been the subject of prohibition and improvement notices.

We will be identifying to the Planning Inspectorate how legacy issues have created the situation of over population of Canvey Island. Using documentation from the late Sir Bernard Braine to show how lessons have not been learned. The increase of societal risk has been allowed to accumulate on the assumption that self-regulatory risk control measures were being fully implemented.

Risk reduction measures carried out at COMAH sites have not previously been based on the population increase. However through the consultation of CD212 it has been recognised, and agreed, that to expect installations to maintain as low as reasonably practicable measures ALARP in line with the increase in societal risk may be too burdensome. Consequently it was agreed that those who created the risk would pay for the risk requirement measures. This creates a huge financial impact for Local Authorities who, through their Planning Authorities have allowed for the incremental societal risk to happen.

It is inconceivable that the Core Strategy should expect the Planning Inspectorate to allow and be responsible for putting a greater number of persons at risk, by the increase in housing on Canvey Island which directly places an increased burden on risk mitigation measures

In support of our presentation to the Planning Inspectorate we will be providing information from the Community Risk Register identifying the ramifications of an incident through the "outcome description" of an incident involving hazardous substances which would affect the existing Canvey population. We will identify the failure to fully engage with the community in consultation with regards to a realistic emergency incident as a requirement of National Indicator 37.

We will be highlighting the lack of an emergency evacuation plan for the occupants of Canvey Island for all case scenarios. We will be expressing our concerns that the worse case scenario has not been accounted for in the COMAH sites safety reports.

The urbanisation of Canvey Island, as identified in the Core Strategy including caravans and mobile homes, has increased the vulnerability of its residents from an emergency situation. Lack of infrastructure causes severe congestion for the existing occupants for access and egress. Any addition to the demand on our single exit and access point would worsen the existing problems that already cause a logistical nightmare for an emergency response.



That it is the long-term objective of the Planning Authority to see the removal of the COMAH sites because of the hazards they present to Canvey Residents is admirable but not realistic at the present time. It is inconceivable therefore for them to suggest putting more people at risk.

The long term aspirations of providing a third road off the Island to relieve congestion and to provide for a realistic emergency procedure at present is not viable. We would strongly suggest that both these aspirations are achieved before any increase of housing development is undertaken. Having recognised these deficiencies and to still proceed with the Core Strategy, in its proposed form could compromise the Planning Inspectorate.

It is becoming clear that considerable efforts are now being made through the various Technical Advisory Governmental Inter- departmental Task groups, along with the HSE to ensure that societal risk elements of the Land Use Planning process is given consideration. It is not unreasonable to request that the Planning Inspectorate gives due regard to these initiatives before accepting a proposal that could further populate Canvey Island.

In our presentation to the Planning Inspectorate we will be producing evidence from the Planning Policy Statement 25 document. We will express our confidence and agreement with the Environment Agency's policy to halt building on Canvey flood plain having faith in this non profit-making organisation, that they have our safety and well being as their upper-most concern. We will question why the Authority continues to proceed with options for the core strategy which cannot be delivered as a result of failure to obtain the agreement of this key delivery agency.

Canvey Island is shown as being on the flood map as having a possibility of 1 in 200 chance of flooding per year even with our sea defences. In order to maintain this level of risk the Environment Agency have advised that the height of the sea-wall will have to be increased to combat global warming. No matter how well we regard our sea defences, PPS 25 indicates that flooding behind such infrastructure can still occur, either as a result of constructional or operational failure of the sea defence, either in whole or in part (failure to close the barrier gates). Or water levels rising, to exceed the level of defence (over-topping). Or over-loading of surface water drainage systems, due to its own limited capacity or being unable to discharge due to high water levels outside the defended area. These events can lead to a rapid inundation of areas by flood water; the consequences can be potentially catastrophic.

The concerns of the Environment Agency about the development on Canvey Island are justified given that the mitigation of the consequences of a major flooding are woefully inadequate.

We will be providing evidence to the Planning Inspectorate from the Sir Michael Pitt Review, that among his recommendations are issues that are applicable to Canvey Island. For example: the provision for a flood risk rescue plan for 40,000 occupants would be a logistical nightmare. This flood risk rescue plan, has been chosen to be ignored. A response, we are told, will only be made when the water subsides.

The Sequential and Exception Test, part of PPS25 clearly indicates that when Canvey Island is placed in the Zone 3a High Probability category, having a 1 in 200 annual probability of flood from the sea, and a Flood Risk Vulnerability classification as 'highly vulnerable' should give cause for concern. It also identifies that caravans, mobile homes and park homes intended for residential use, along with installations that require hazardous substance consent should not be allowed to exist under these circumstances. The Core Strategy identifies these are issues of incompatibility that need to be addressed.

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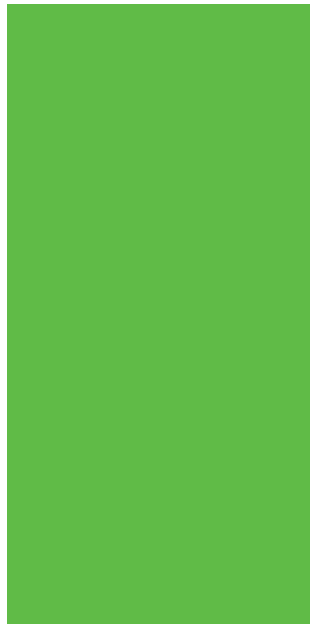
This document endeavours to provide you with an over-view of the presentation we will be taking to the Planning Inspectorate as for reasons to reject an increase in the housing population on Canvey Island. We do, however, agree that our Sports Centre, Community Hall, Shopping Centre, footpaths and paving, drainage and sewage systems, electricity overhead power supplies are all in need of regeneration.

We strongly support the removal of the hazardous Industries, clearly identified as being a safety issue for Canvey Islanders, given the ageing detrimental burden upon their safety regime. The Core Strategy has missed the opportunity of making it a priority to regenerate this desirable river fronted site to benefit societal needs.

We strongly support the desire for a third road off the Island that would enhance the well-being and quality of life of all Canvey residents

Both of these issues will of course reflect on a possible review of the long-term Core Strategy aims. Provided that the Sequential Test and Exception Test of PP25 can be adequately satisfied, the availability of the land provided by the removal of the COMAH sites could fulfil the potential for a vast improvement to the environmental aspects of Canvey Island.





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