



CANVEY GREENBELT CAMPAIGN

**Submission on the
Castle Point
Green Belt Functions Assessment
September 2010
CP/ADD_EV/004**

Whilst the Council's claim that the probable loss of West Canvey Marsh, the RSPB site, to the TE2100 scheme falls outside of the time frame of this LDF Core Strategy, we, as residents, are mindful that the accepted lifespan of housing is 100 years. Therefore before giving over West Canvey Green Belt land for development, future events must warrant consideration. The long awaited Strategic Flood Risk Assessment update, which takes into account climate change, is far more onerous than previous assessments. The Environment Agency have made it quite clear to us, the Canvey Green Belt Campaign group, that the maintenance and upgrading of the sea defences around Canvey Island will more than likely be dependent on funding from the TE2100 scheme. This will require the re-siting of the sea wall further in land so as to be alongside Canvey Way, Canvey Road and Roscommon Way. Resulting in a huge loss of Canvey Island Green Belt, flood plain and threatening the existing heavily developed urban area of Canvey Island's ability to remain sustainable.

The Urban Habitats initiative is a cross border co-operation between the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Flanders. It recognises that as a result of growing economic activity and population levels there is increasing pressure on the sparsely available natural space. And that this space is essential for the quality of the urban living environment, offering recreation possibilities and contributing to conservation of nature and biodiversity in urbanised areas. The Urban Habitats group's aim is to improve availability and quality of urban natural spaces and enhance awareness and engagement of urban nature by local communities. An essential element of a high quality living environment is the availability of natural spaces within and around urbanised areas. These natural spaces offer city dwellers the possibility for outdoor recreation, away from the hectic urban environment, but close to home. Authorities need to work to preserve, create and improve urban natural spaces amidst the pressure of urbanisation. It is also important to make sure these areas are easily accessible. The residents of Canvey Island expressed their feelings on the potential loss of further Green Belt to development when over 6,500 of them registered their opposition to the Borough Council's plans for West Canvey. Having identified areas of deprivation on Canvey Island, nowhere in the Borough has more important need for the preservation of its Green Belt.

One can only hope that the inconsistencies of the Castle Point Borough Council's work in producing the Core Strategy document is realised.

Assuming this Green Belt Functions Assessment document specific information takes preference, it casts doubt on the integrity of the Sequential and Exceptions Test Update, in which it states of Parcel 26 West Canvey ***"the site does not contribute towards the prevention of urban sprawl."***

However on page 42 of the Green Belt Functions Assessment it states of the same Parcel 26 ***"The parcel checks the unrestricted sprawl of West Canvey."***

Importantly, for us residents, it fulfils the aspirations of the Urban Habitats Group. As the Green Belt Functions Assessment goes on to state ***"due to it's close proximity to urban population it allows for access of countryside amenity and enjoyment for local residents."***

Other Council documents in their attempts to downgrade this area of Green Belt state that three sides are edged by urban development and wish the Planning Inspector to view this site as infill, no mention of the other three sides being edged by open Green Belt land. Importantly the Assessment endorses this by commenting ***“from a strategic viewpoint this Green Belt parcel demarks the boundary of the western extent of Canvey’s urban settlement.”*** Also that ***“when viewed from the strategic level this green belt parcel appears to be a part of a wider system that encircles and demarks the boundary of Canvey’s urban settlement.”***

This Parcel of Green Belt has the required distinct edges to mark its boundary.

Having identified this parcel and compared it with the proposed housing and facilities development of the East of Canvey Road one can see that parcel 26 includes not only four football pitches but the Roman Red Hill. Sporting England would strongly object to any loss or pressure on sporting pitches.

To promote development of an area including an archaeological site, one of very few on Canvey Island, within a housing and amenity development is disrespectful, unsuitable and unnecessary.

Parcel 23 the Assessment states ***“the Green Belt also helps to ensure that the setting of the Dutch Cottage, which is a listed building, is protected from inappropriate development.”*** And yet this self same Council select this area as a preferred site for development threatening the character of Canvey’s Dutch Village.

In conclusion.

There is a presumption against development in the Green Belt and we submit that at sub-regional and local level the Borough Council have not proved exceptional circumstances enough as to warrant further release of Canvey Island Green Belt ahead of other available alternative local development sites.