



13th September 2022

Dear Mr Kemp

We wish to make a submission to the current Dartford Borough Local Plan examination as a coalition of Charities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) - Buglife, CPRE Kent, Kent Wildlife Trust and the RSPB ("the Coalition"). Please note that the Coalition may choose to submit further individual responses to the examination.

The Coalition would like to highlight its support for the Local Plan's protection of the Swanscombe Peninsula Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) where it is within its power. This is an important step in recognising the important contribution that the Swanscombe Peninsula makes to our national wildlife and the local community.

The Swanscombe Peninsula is incredibly rich in wildlife, home to some of the UK's most threatened species of plants and animals. Over 2,000 species of insects and other invertebrates have been recorded here, including the Critically Endangered Distinguished Jumping Spider. It is also one of the richest sites for breeding birds in the South East, living side-by-side with Otters, Water voles and rare plants such as the Man Orchid. This is thanks to this special site's remarkable mosaic of grasslands, coastal habitats, scrub and intricate wetland priority habitats, much of which is brownfield that has been reclaimed by nature. In recognition of its valuable biodiversity, it was made a SSSI year.

SSSIs like the Swanscombe Peninsula are the backbone of the UK's protected sites network. They include our best habitats and are essential to protecting wildlife and supporting healthy ecosystems.

For local people in Swanscombe, Greenhithe and Northfleet, the Swanscombe Peninsula is also a much-loved green lung and valuable open space.

It is essential that Dartford Borough Council includes the protection of the SSSI as a planning priority, as a key step in addressing the biodiversity crisis.

Please do contact us if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Buglife

CPRE Kent, the countryside charity

Kent Wildlife Trust

The RSPB