

K&F PC response to EADT article 12th Feb 16

Sir,

You reported on Friday that Land Agents Bidwells are campaigning for an enormous area of land on the Felixstowe peninsula, near to quiet villages and an AONB, to be converted from farmland to warehousing, distribution and other port related use. It is understood that Bidwells' job is to campaign to increase the value of their client's land, however their justification is not backed up by the evidence.

Firstly the competition issue; the new London Gateway is of course a competition to Felixstowe as have also been, for decades, the many existing ports on the South and East coasts. However, Felixstowe Port has reported that no notable inroads have been made so far by London Gateway. More significantly for the future, they have also reported that London Gateway have found it difficult to find both owners and occupiers for their warehousing and distribution facilities. The race between ports to build more and more warehouses appears to have stalled early on. It is important that planners do not give in to hearsay about jobs and the economy in over developing an increasing number of ports, whilst government publications show that economic situation in the last decade has reduced overall UK shipping volumes.

Secondly; the need for warehousing, logistics and distribution facilities. Bidwells do mention the recently approved massive warehousing, distribution and logistics park within the existing dock perimeter, which is yet to be built. They fail to mention the enormous 1.5 million square feet Uniserve facility which has approval for construction very close to the port, this is also yet to be built. Until these already approved facilities are built, operational and proven to be operating at capacity, Suffolk Coastal District Council are right not to consider any further such facilities, particularly on isolated, rural, greenfield sites. There is a real risk of over capacity and the creation of industrial sites which may end

up being derelict brown field sites. There is certainly no urgency as claimed by Bidwells.