

Katherine Parkin
Gravesham Borough Council

Our ref: KT/2025/132797/02-L01
Your ref: 20250763

Sent by email

Date: 24 November 2025

Dear Katherine

Change of use of the land for open storage (B8 use) primarily for equipment and operations related to Dalefield Way Industrial Park (B8 use) with associated installation of hardstanding/surface treatment, security fencing/gates, access, a soft landscaping mound, and erection of temporary office cabins.

Land at Dalefield Way (East), Gravesend, Kent DA12 2FL

Thank you for consulting us on the above application which we received on 3 November 2025. As part of this consultation, we have reviewed the following documents:

- Application form, ref. PP-14096103, dated 23 July 2025
- Site location plan, ref. 25008 00-0-00, undated, by Darling Associates Architects
- Proposed site layout, ref. 25008 0-3-00, undated, by Darling Associates Architects
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, ref. 1419, dated 20 May 2025, by ECO Assistance Ecologists
- Biodiversity Assessment, dated 2 July 2025, by ACJ Ecology
- Design and Access Statement, dated June 2025, by Darling Associates Architects
- Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), ref. 24055_WP1 Rev 02, dated October 2025, by Manhire Associates

Environment Agency position

In the absence of an adequate flood risk assessment, we **object** to this application as submitted and recommend that planning permission is refused.

Please refer to the following sections for our full response:

- Section 1: Reasons for, and how to overcome, our objection(s)
- Section 2: Advice to the Applicant / Local Planning Authority

Please be aware that we wish to be re-consulted on this planning application once the required information has been submitted. Please also note that our subsequent advice may concern other important environmental issues.

If you are minded to approve the application contrary to our objection, please contact us to explain why material considerations outweigh our objection. This will allow us to make further representations.

Should you have any queries regarding this response, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Gabrielle Delorme
Sustainable Places Planning Specialist
E-mail kslplanning@environment-agency.gov.uk

Section 1: Reasons for, and how to overcome, our objection(s)
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Objection – Inadequate FRA

Reasons

The proposed development is located within Flood Zone 3 and adjacent River Darent. We have reviewed the submitted updated FRA and maintain our objection on the basis that the FRA is inadequate. This is in line with paragraphs 178 and 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework and paragraphs 20 to 21 of the Flood Risk and Coastal Change Planning Practice Guidance and its site-specific flood risk assessment checklist.

While a topographic survey has been submitted in the FRA, it does not show the line of the top of the riverbank, nor have any photographs of the riverbank been submitted.

We are therefore unable to assess whether there is clear 8m minimum offset between the development and the riverbank, or if the scheme will create any loss of flood storage capacity and flood flow routing.

Overcoming our objection

We may be able to withdraw our objection if a revised proposal is submitted that clearly demonstrates that the development will not create any loss of flood storage capacity and flood flow routing and provides a clear minimum 8-metre horizontal offset relative to the top of the riverbank.

A topographic survey and a series of photographs to define the existing situation are required including the line of the point where the riverbank meets general ground level.

Further comments

Additionally, the proposed development is located adjacent to SSSI/Ramsar designated sites. The requested 8-metre (or greater) buffer zone to the main river is therefore also required to ensure that the use of the land does not affect areas of ecological sensitivity. It might also help wildlife adapt to climate change and will help restore the watercourses to a more natural state as required by the river basin management plan.

Section 2: Advice to the Applicant / Local Planning Authority

Flood Risk Activities Permit

The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 require a permit to be obtained for any activities which will take place:

- on or within 8 metres of a main river (16 metres if tidal)
- on or within 8 metres of a flood defence structure or culverted main river (16 metres if tidal)
- on or within 16 metres of a sea defence
- involving quarrying or excavation within 16 metres of any main river, flood defence (including a remote defence) or culvert
- in the floodplain of a main river if the activity could affect flood flow or storage and potential impacts are not controlled by a planning permission

For further guidance please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-activities-environmental-permits> or contact our National Customer Contact Centre on 03708 506 506. The applicant should not assume that a permit will automatically be forthcoming once planning permission has been granted, and we advise them to consult with us at the earliest opportunity.

Flood risk issues not within our direct remit

The following issues are not within our direct remit or expertise, but nevertheless may be important considerations for managing flood risk for this development. Prior to deciding this application, we recommend that consideration is given to the issues below. Where necessary, the advice of relevant experts should be sought.

- Adequacy of rescue or evacuation arrangements
- Details and adequacy of an emergency plan
- Provision of and adequacy of a temporary refuge
- Details and adequacy of flood proofing and other building level resistance and resilience measures
- Details and calculations relating to the structural stability of buildings during a flood
- Whether insurance can be gained or not
- Provision of an adequate means of surface water disposal such that flood risk on and off-site isn't increased

Biodiversity Net Gain (intertidal)

The Environment Act 2021 introduced a requirement for mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) on most types of Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) development. Biodiversity net gain offers an opportunity to promote and achieve our desired environmental outcomes – nature recovery, natural flood management, nature-based solutions and green and blue infrastructure.

Please note, for this application we have not reviewed any submitted BNG information in detail and our position on this application does not mean the biodiversity gain objective has been met. In line with the “[Biodiversity Net Gain](#)” section of the Planning Practice Guidance, it is the role of the Local Planning Authority role to decide if the BNG requirement for development in scope has been met.

Intertidal habitats should be recorded within the area unit module of the metric. Applicants should record areas of intertidal habitats which are above water at low tide and under water at high tide.

Further information, data and advice on our rivers and catchments can be found using the [England | Catchment Data Explorer](#) and [River Basin Management Plans](#).

Note to applicant

Planning advice service

Should you wish us to review any technical documents or want further advice to address the environmental issues raised, we may do this as part of our charged for planning advice service.

Further engagement will provide you with the opportunity to discuss and gain our views on potential options to overcome our objection with us, before formally submitting further information as part of your planning application. It should also result in a better quality and more environmentally sensitive development.

As part of our charged for service we will provide a dedicated project manager to act as a single point of contact to help resolve any problems. We currently charge £115 per hour, plus VAT. We will provide you with an estimated cost for any further discussions or review of documents. The standard terms of our charged for service are available [here](#).

If you would like more information on our planning advice service, including a cost estimate, please contact us at kslplanning@environment-agency.gov.uk

Note to LPA

Presumption in favour of sustainable development

We are aware that your LPA may currently be subject to the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. Given our outstanding objection on flood risk, we would like to highlight that in this case, as set out in NPPF footnote 7, the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ should not apply as our objection provides a clear reason for refusal. If your LPA is not subject to the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ you can disregard this paragraph. If our objection on flood risk is subsequently withdrawn, you can also disregard this paragraph.