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Plans for cutting losses on Port Ramsgate seem to be going backwards

Two years of effort on Port Ramsgate: losses are up, there is no master plan and no defined consultation.

Two years ago (on 21st February 2020) Thanet District Council presented the High Level Feasibility Study on Port Ramsgate at Ramsgate Regeneration Alliance. That launched the creation of a master plan to stop the losses on the Port. A year later (16th Feb 2021) the master plan got rolled into the Future Ramsgate project. Another year later (20th January 2022) and the resulting Future Ramsgate Town Investment Plan (TIP) has been published by TDC.

After all that, what progress has been made?

The latest figures (20-21) show losses on the Port up 26% year-on-year at £2.3 million. This is how Craig Mackinlay MP describes the current TIP in "Mackinlay on Monday" (31st Jan 2022):

"The plans for the commercial port are still somewhat abstract and I fear looming differences of opinion on the horizon."

The TIP is now for TDC to develop, without a defined process for further consultation.

We stakeholders need to pay attention, because we are currently going backwards on fixing the Port. Sure the Levelling Up Fund bid has got us

£19.8 million and there are commendable plans for the rest of Ramsgate, but the Port is the biggest swing factor in getting Ramsgate right. So it matters.

RRA wants to support the Town Investment Plan. The Green Campus is a welcome development. But in the spirit of constructive criticism, the TIP needs improvement regarding the Port.

When you have 32 acres of land by the sea, with the wildlife, views and sunsets of Pegwell Bay on one side and the Royal Harbour on the other, in easy reach of London through Thanet Parkway (like it or not) and with 40k of local residents, surely there is a better solution to development and growth than more dry bulk cargo handling and more heavy industry. But that is what the Ramsgate TIP seems to be offering (under the covers) regarding the Port, with a bit of Green Campus on the side.

It may be good on other issues, but regarding the Port the Ramsgate TIP needs to raise its sights and be more ambitious, to live up to Ramsgate's potential. The WSP High Level Feasibility Study was not perfect, but it was more ambitious and thorough than the TIP is at present.

Public opinion and experts alike don't want more industry on the Port; they want a mixed development that gets best value from the assets involved, to benefit both Ramsgate and TDC. Taking up the TIP's offer to be a living document suited to evolution, we need to nudge the TIP in a direction which gives Ramsgate and the Green Campus a better chance to prosper.

So what is the justification for this?

First read RRA's [review of the Future Ramsgate TIP](#). That will update you on the current situation.

TDC's continued insistence on a massive upgrade of dry bulk cargo handling, through development of Brett berths 4/5, heightens our concerns expressed in [RRA newsletter 4](#) ("Worries over the cost of replacing Berths 4/5:"). Just last week TDC reactivated its bid to do the work to upgrade berth 4/5 starting May, by applying to the Marine Management Organisation and the Local Planning Authority for permission ([see here](#)).

It seems that whoever they are, who think they are running this show, they have put a mixed development for the Port on the back burner and

turned up the heat on industrialisation. All the research RRA has done shows that to be both economically and socially perverse. That is, it won't make money and people don't want it. Why are TDC doing it? Who can say?

What can we do about it?

We hope that consultation processes will be defined to help us work with the Future Ramsgate team. For now get on their distribution list by applying by email through ramsgate-future@thanet.gov.uk. At the same time ask them how you can give your views.

Write to your local TDC and RTC councillors about your concerns.

You can also make your views known through the following consultations on upgrading berths 4/5:

The revised application to MMO will be informed by an Environmental Statement (ES) which is the output of the EIA. This application and the ES will be available on the [Marine Management Organisation's website](#) following validation of the application. The marine licence application will be **subject to a 42 day consultation period. You can check the list open to comment through "View Public Register" on the MMO website.**

The Environmental Statement is also being used to inform the 'prior approval' planning application which was submitted to the Local Planning Authority on 1 Feb 22. [Here is the notification](#). You can comment via the [Thanet District Council website](#). The application will be **open for consultation till February 22**. You will need to do a simple registration/login to make a comment.

When we checked the online comment process we found that it was blocked "in error". That block has been lifted and we hope TDC will extend the deadline accordingly.

We hope you have found this RRA newsletter useful. If you like it then tell your friends to get it too. There is an application form on [our website](#).

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