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FOUR SCIENCE PARKS IN EAST KENT?

KENT GREEN PARTY CHALLENGES COUNCILS TO RE-EXAMINE AND COORDINATE THEIR PLANS FOR SCIENCE PARKS

Kent Green Party is sceptical about the viability of plans for proposed science parks at the Wye College site near Ashford, the Barton Business Park near Canterbury, at the University of Kent and extensions to the existing science park near Sittingbourne.

Dr Geoff Meaden(1) and Steve Dawe(2) offer comments: Dr Geoff Meaden says: "Our experience with developments of this type is that they never attract the investment or employment claimed by their advocates. Councils need to cooperate with each other to ensure that existing industrial estate vacancies are filled with high-value jobs in areas where they are needed. If Wye is given the go-ahead the four science parks will all be within a 10-mile radius. There simply is not the demand on this scale in this part of East Kent. Kent's environment can be protected by concentrating employment in brownfield sites and urban areas. Why don't these business people carry out a viability survey before they come up with their grandiose schemes?"

Steve Dawe says: "Traffic impacts at all four proposed new sites may be enough to make these proposed developments costly and difficult to implement. Kent Green Party opposes any development on greenfield sites, since industrial estates all over Kent have vacancies. Councils should cooperate in seeking urban regeneration and full use of existing industrial estates before building on greenfield sites."

ENDS c245 words

FURTHER INFORMATION: Dr Geoff Meaden, Senior Lecturer in Geography, on 01227 456806 or Steve Dawe, who is an Associate Lecturer in Development Studies, on 01233 645167 or 07747 036192

Contact address for this release as above. Dr Meaden and Steve Dawe are, respectively, Chair and Press Officer of Kent Green Party.

Notes:

1. Dr Meaden made a 100-page plus submission to the Canterbury Local Plan Inquiry on behalf of a number of local environmental and residents organizations challenging the assumptions behind developing the proposed Barton Business Park, south of Canterbury. Despite near universal public opposition, the Local Plan Inspector has allowed the development to go ahead.

2. Steve Dawe has already made comments on the existing transport problems in Wye and Ashford in two transport policy documents: see www.kentgreenparty.org.uk under Resources/Kent.