



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Mark Reckless
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cc. Chris Irvine, promoter

Brandon Lewis MP

Minister of State for Housing and Planning

**Department for Communities and Local
Government**

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Dear Mr Reckless,

Application by Defence Infrastructure Organisation for the development of a mixed use settlement at Lodge Hill, Chattenden, Rochester, Kent: Application MC/11/2516

Your recent leaflet regarding the above planning application has been brought to my attention. The leaflet claims that a decision not to call-in the above application has already been reached by my Department. The literature states: "*it appears however that Conservatives in Government have secretly told Medway's Conservative Council that Lodge Hill already has the green light*".

This statement is factually incorrect and demonstrably untrue. Planning is a quasi-judicial process, and all decisions by both officials and Ministers are made with due process and a fair hearing in line with my Department's *Guidance on Planning Propriety Issues*. It is not for my Department to become involved in local campaigning, but we believe it is in the public interest to correct the public record, given the integrity of that quasi-judicial process has been questioned by your leaflet.

The planning application was formally referred to the Secretary of State by Medway District Council on 9 September 2014 under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) Direction 2009. Subsequently, a holding direction was issued under Article 25 of the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010, to allow for due consideration of the significant volume of representations received on whether to call-in the application. This is in accordance with standard procedure and guidance.

Contrary to your claims, no decision has yet been made by Ministers acting on behalf of the Secretary of State. Once this application has been considered against the published call-in criteria, you and other interested parties will be informed of the decision on whether or not the Minister has decided to call-in this application.

If the Department decides that no involvement is necessary, then the local planning authority will be advised that it may locally decide the application. If it is decided to call-in the application, then the application will be considered at a public inquiry, led by an independent planning inspector, who will then make a recommendation to Ministers; in turn, Ministers acting on behalf of the Secretary of State will then make a substantive decision on the planning application.

In the interests of the probity of the planning system, I am placing this letter in the public domain.

BRANDON LEWIS MP

