

Mr Kevin George,
CEO Red Funnel Ltd,
12 Bugle Street,
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Mr George,

Here at Sustainable Marine Energy we are big fans of Red Funnel's ferry service which we utilise on a daily basis. We are very keen to see a new terminal facility developed in East Cowes, and even more we want to see East Cowes properly regenerated in a manner which assures the town has a solid economic future. Unfortunately your proposed 'better gateway for the island' does not meet these criteria. It puts well paid and highly skilled jobs at risk and will potentially have an adverse impact on the island's economy.

Having read your letter and flyer which was circulated to residents and businesses, I am very concerned that you are asking the public to support your planning application without providing them with all of the facts. Some of the information provided could easily be considered to be misleading.

I agree that the scheme you are proposing is a 'once in a lifetime opportunity', but only for Red Funnel and its shareholders, not for the community. It is very rare for a private company to be offered extremely valuable, prime waterfront land by a government agency, be offered a loan from a public funding body to purchase the land, and then be allowed to package up a significant portion of the public land acquired using tax payers' funds, along with land that you already own and offer it to property developers as a 'shovel ready' project including outline planning permission for the building of flats and a 'hotel'. I am sure this will make a very tidy profit that more than pays for your new terminal. What business wouldn't absolutely jump at such an opportunity?

One could see the merits of such a scheme if the land involved was derelict and wasn't providing economic value to the island. This was potentially seen as the case when the scheme was first sketched out. Fortunately marine technology businesses on the Isle of Wight have enjoyed a renaissance and now businesses such as ourselves, and our neighbours AMC and Shemara Refit, are all flat out building vessels and marine equipment, including your new RedJet 6. Both the Venture Quays and Trinity Wharf sites are busier than at any time in recent history, with over 200 people working across the two sites which are to be demolished under your plan.

You are quite correct that we were only signed short term leases with the HCA when we moved to the Island. We had no choice; that was all that we were offered. Your statement that the rents are low is not accurate - we are paying market rates, and in light of your application, we have done our research and could secure premises on the mainland for substantially less than we are currently paying at Venture Quays. What we were told when we moved to the Island was that substantial public investment was made by SEEDA into the facilities to attract businesses like ours, that the masterplan that had been developed for East Cowes back in 2006 was being reviewed, and that

the HCA had invested further tax payers' money to ensure the buildings were fit for use as individual units for businesses such as ours. Well - it has all worked - the facilities are excellent, there is plenty of life left in the buildings, and clearly there is a very high level of demand, as they are all occupied again, and are providing amazing, highly-skilled, employment opportunities for IOW residents! It wouldn't be very hard or expensive to upgrade or expand the facilities, and provide even more opportunities for companies like ours and create more job opportunities and a better economy for the island. Something that I would have thought would also create immense benefit for your company due to the proximity of your service!

When your plans were revealed, which represent a substantial departure from the original East Cowes Master Plan, we were shocked that there were absolutely no considerations being made for marine businesses requiring access to the water. This is why we immediately contacted yourselves, the HCA and the IOW Council to try and initiate a dialogue about changing the scheme to include accommodation for a marine technology cluster. You have refused to enter into any meaningful discussion about alternative options or schemes with us, and now it appears that you are just going to try to resort to large company PR to ensure that you get your planning application approved. I imagine you were fairly surprised at the amount of resistance and objections raised by local residents and businesses in response to the application.

So if you are going to go out to the public and ask them for their support for your scheme, please be open and honest with them, and tell them that you are asking them to choose between a new terminal and more second homes for the island which entails the loss of two valuable waterfront employment sites, or the prospect of jobs for them and future generations of islanders.

Ultimately it will be the IOW Council that has to make the decision, and I'm sure they will listen to their constituents. If they choose to approve your planning application, then we will respect that and will of course find alternative accommodation - it just might not be on the Isle of Wight, as no similar facilities of this type currently exist. Those alternatives you speak of are in the pre planning stage and are likely to not suit our needs.

What we really hope is that we can engage in a meaningful dialogue with yourselves, the HCA, IOW Council, local residents and businesses about a real regeneration plan for East Cowes that will deliver new terminal facilities and also increase the employment footprint to provide East Cowes and the Isle of Wight with a bright economic future that we can all benefit from as a community.

As always my door is open should you wish to discuss how this could be achieved. I'm also sure that the public would love to hear your views on this first-hand. It would be quite easy to arrange a public meeting in East Cowes where we could invite local residents, business owners, and local politicians to attend and discuss this in an open forum. Mr George are you were willing to do this?

I sincerely hope you will join us in figuring out how to make this a true 'once in a lifetime opportunity' for the local community and your customers, to ensure everybody wins from the re-development of the East Cowes waterfront. Instead of the

current plan which just serves your own interests and provides an opportunity for unidentified property developers.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Hayman
Managing Director,
Sustainable Marine Energy Ltd.