**Policy and Resources Committee**

11 November 2015

**Transcript of speakers for Item 6 – Canterbury District Local Plan, proposed site changes**

| **Speaker** | **Text** |
| --- | --- |
| Mike Goddard on behalf of Mark Quinn | Thank you Chairman. Chairman when I first went to Hersden 30 years ago I was struck by the fact that it had lost its heart, the colliery had closed and it was desperate for regeneration and when I got involved in trying to promote regeneration in Hersden 20 years ago I thought that it’s time might have come then but sadly it didn’t so my hopes were raised very much in August when the Inspector wrote and asked officers to look again at land south of the A28 in Hersden to help the council deliver its much needed housing land supply. Sadly and surprisingly that land has not been considered. I’m here tonight representing Quinn Estates who are promoting Hoplands Farm and I know that members of the committee have seen documents and information about that and I won’t go into that detail but our belief is that this is the best possible site in Hersden, it’s the only site which is capable of delivering the kind of benefits and the need for regeneration that Hersden have, has, it’s in the best location, it’s on the side where the colliery was, it would put the heart back into it. It will get rid of this sterile A28 that goes through, it won’t get rid of the road but it’ll actually make an avenue of it and make it look far more attractive. It will sew the two halves of the village together and there’s some great benefits, there’s an apprenticeship centre for engineering and construction in association with Canterbury College, there’s a local medical centre, a small supermarket which would provide for local shopping needs desperately needed and reduce the need for people to travel into Canterbury and it is the best visually and functionally related site to the village. It’s on land of low agricultural value, there are no overhead power cables, it’s not an addition to an existing estate, there are no landscape heritage or biodiversity constraints at all and there are significant delivery benefits that you wouldn’t get with the increase in the size of the Persimmon allocation which is in the hands of one developer who would deliver about 50 houses every year, adding it onto theirs will simply prolong the process and won’t increase delivery year by year which is greatly needed. So Hoplands Farm Chairman, members of the committee I believe is the best option that could give you 250 additional houses and that with the 500 already allocated for Persimmon would give you the housing that you need in Hersden at a far better solution to deliver all those economic, social and environmental benefits that Hersden so desperately needs and which it hasn’t had for many many years. Thank you Chairman. |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much Mr Goddard, next up is Mr Little |
| Mr Little | Well I’m beginning to sound like a broken record here but here we go again. Let me just pick up on what Jessica Graham said, the Inspector at Bodmin (Bodkin) Farm recently, item 44, you can look at the appeal, it said Mr Moore has provided the council with an opportunity to undertake actions that would remedy the identified deficiencies and propose the Stage 2 hearings until that work is complete. Now my understanding is Mr Moore suggested that for identification purposes only three sites but he did add that there are other sites that should be considered, maybe Bodkin Farm is one of them but they’re not on the agenda tonight and I’m not sure why, can somebody perhaps explain this and I assume that the updated SAs and considerations of all the sites have been done but I haven’t seen them, I don’t think the general public see them, I keep looking, and we still haven’t done them. We know the SAs fail, I mean let’s look at the Joseph Wilson Ridgeway, Chestfield SHLAA 130 site which failed the SAs oddly enough last time so I’m not sure why we’re looking at this again but you are, now it said the previous SAs on the SHLAA site for Joseph Wilson is it is in a flood risk zone two and three, it says the Ridgeway is not suitable for traffic, it says there will be significant negative effects on the countryside and it’s 1km for an SLA, it has a historic environment and it’s in a conservation area, use of greenfield site is not acceptable, the site is not in walking distance of public transport, it’s got no reasonable, it’s got reasonable access to doctors and convenience stores, it’s got no cycle routes nearby, it’s not near any schools and it was previously excluded, now I don’t know whether, I know it’s the season of goodwill perhaps Mr Wilson has sprinkled some lovely dust over this and now apparently it’s going to actually be proposed and the SAs are going to change, now let’s look at the other sites you’ve got here SHLAA 199 stated Bullockstone Road has limited capacity for additional traffic, it says negative effects on countryside, biodiversity and water quality and then the site next to it SHLAA 12 Bullockstone Road it says has adequate capacity, now you couldn’t make this up really could you, these are SAs that have been done by a specialist called …[inaudible] that you’ve paid, taxpayers have paid, absolutely fortunes for and yet they can’t get the sites in the same road with the SAs saying the same things, there’s a complete contradiction here which I think needs to be addressed. Now let’s look at SHLAA 210 which is another big site, it’s adjacent to an SSSI site, now I think you all know what that is and if you don’t then you shouldn’t actually be sitting here looking at these proposals and then actually just rubber stamping them, it says the typography of the site is terrible and delivering sustainable transport to and from the site is going to be difficult and the officer says that there are road infrastructure improvements on the A2 Cockering Road, there’s no evidence of that anywhere… |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Mr, thank you |
| Mr Little | …and I could go on and on and on but we’ve got the three minutes, I’ll have to do this on the consultation page but thank you very much for your time and we’ll be back again |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much Mr Little, next we have a representative from Harbledown and Rough Common Parish Council |
| Janet Larkinson, representative from Harbledown and Rough Common Parish Council | Good evening Mr Chairman, Councillors, my name is Janet Larkinson and as you said I’m speaking on behalf of Harbledown and Rough Common Parish Council. Page 18 of your agenda table one the first site is SHLAA 210 land at Cockering Farm, the comment box in column four of table one says that this site will be required to provide and I quote A2 slip road improvements, we welcome this news but it depends on what it means, when the developers of Cockering Farm, Thanington Pentland Homes first submitted their planning application in the summer they were only planning to lengthen and improve the existing off-slip from the A2 coming from Dover, as for the missing off-slip from the A2 coming from Faversham the developer was not planning to do anything about that. However that has now all changed and the developer is prepared to provide the off-slip from Faversham as well. This slip road will reduce traffic on the Harbledown by-pass, Rheims Way and north Canterbury, it will relieve the daily huge queues on the Harbledown by-pass and the A2 itself in the mornings which often tailback as far as the Gate Services at the top of the hill and leads also to rat running through the villages of Harbledown and Upper Harbledown bringing its accompanying pollution and decay. A new off-slip would enable all that traffic to stay on the A2 until it gets to Wincheap and then turn off straight into where it wants to go, so Mr Chairman we would ask for the SHLAA 210 box to be amended to state clearly that the Cockering Farm, Thanington site must provide the missing A2 slip road coming from Faversham as part of its infrastructure. Thank you. |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much Mrs Larkinson, next up we have Mr Burns-Stark |
| Mr Burns-Stark, objector to the allocation of land at Brickfield Farm, Bridge | Thanks. I ask the committee to reject the proposal to build 40 dwellings on Brickfield Farm in Bridge for two primary reasons. Number one this proposal has been raised as an option for you because the site scored amber in a previous sustainability appraisal conducted by a contractor looking generally for potential building sites. That appraisal was a desktop study with no supplementary research whatsoever on the typography, infrastructure or social issues in Bridge village. The surveyor had no knowledge of the history of flooding and serious sewage issues in Bridge. He had no idea of the existing pressure for places in our primary school, no idea that it’s unrealistic to travel to Bridge, from Bridge to Canterbury by train, or that most of our major supermarkets require a car or two buses to get to from Bridge and most local senior schools require a car or bus journey for Bridge children. In fact the appraisal only scored amber because the desk bound surveyor was utterly oblivious to most of the environmental, infrastructure and transport issues which we have in the village. I do not believe this proposal on Brickfields would actually score convincingly in a properly conducted sustainability assessment. The second reason why I believe you should reject this proposal is that Brickfield Farm is a greenfield site within the Kent Downs AONB and Bishopsbourne Conservation Area, it is prime agricultural land currently producing beef. House building should only occur in such an area as an exception if it is in the public interest because there is a proven need for affordable local housing but there has been no housing survey conducted in Bridge that shows any need for 40 dwellings or even half that number. Less than three minutes from Brickfields by car at legal speeds is the site of the new Mountfield Park development where many hundreds of affordable houses are set to be built to meet local need. Is it demonstrably in the public interest to build more houses in Bridge in a protected AONB, in a conservation area just to save local connected people three minutes of travel from Mountfield Park. I say no. Even so Bridge Parish Council conceded a possible exceptional need locally so they generously offered to allow eight affordable dwellings on Brickfields Farm in their new neighbourhood plan. However that offer did not take into account the recent proposal from our local landowner for 30 dwellings including 10 affordable homes on the other side of the village in exchange for a new lease on our recreation ground. That proposal has wide support in the parish council and if it does go ahead there is even less justification for building 40 dwellings on Brickfields Farm. This issue is really about a failure of the Local Plan to deliver houses quickly enough but Brickfields Farm in our AONB should not have to take up the slack. The initial appraisal of Brickfields was not accurate and there is no evidence of a real need for these houses in Bridge. Please reject this proposal. Thank you. |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much Mr Burns-Stark and next we have Mr Atkinson, the Chairman of Bridge Parish Council |
| Mr Atkinson, Chairman of Bridge Parish Council | Thank you Chairman and councillors. We ask that you strike the Brickfields site from the list of additional sites that you have before you tonight. This site has been allocated 40 units in your plans, in relation to the total required for the five year stock which you wish to set before the Planning Inspector bearing in mind the additional units that you will process forward tonight those 40 units are not critical. Bridge is the only parish in the district that is undertaking a neighbourhood plan. The work has been moving forward for some time now, it was put on hold on the advice of your officers and others when the district’s plan became delayed. We are now aware that we might still move it forward in spite of the district’s difficulties and are exploring options. The Bridge Neighbourhood Plan culminates in a referendum, the village votes on what the planners have suggested, for you to put the Brickfield site into your plans at this very late stage when you might as easily await what the people in Bridge themselves want is rather to stamp all over that exercise in localism and in democracy. …[inaudible] saying that there should or should not be housing at Brickfields only that you should respect the idea that the local people should have their say when they cast their vote in the referendum. For that to happen you must allow the Bridge Neighbourhood Plan its head rather than impose this development today. It is entirely possible that there will be housing requested at Brickfields via the Bridge Neighbourhood Plan. Your officers in their papers tonight have suggested as much, this, thus there is nothing to lose by removing the site tonight for those units will make an important contribution towards the housing units windfall figure, itself an important element within the housing building programme. Thereby the additional housing units at Brickfields will still have joined the housing building programme but they will join with the authority of a local referendum, a vote supporting them behind them. Hence I ask that you do not take forward that site tonight but instead I request that you strike the Brickfield site from your list of additional sites pending the completion of Bridge’s Neighbourhood Plan. Thank you. |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much Mr Atkinson and next we have Debbie Barwick |
| Debbie Barwick | Good evening. In papers I have distributed to councillors I would like to draw your attention to the following. Firstly the 764 spaces that are to be removed from the car parking in Canterbury, this comes on top of a significant reduction in car parking spaces in Canterbury city centre which has already occurred in recent years. In 2007 the city council had 247 more city centre parking spaces than it has now. Canterbury Independent Traders has a membership of over 140 small traders and independent businesses in Canterbury city centre. We have constantly opposed these car park closures because our members know that if people cannot park in a reasonable time and for a reasonable charge they go elsewhere. It is clear to Canterbury Independent Traders that the car park sell-off is harming Canterbury’s economy with a number of shops closing in recent months and shop leases not being renewed. The city council admit that footfall in the city centre is linked to car park usage and its own figures show that car park usage has fallen dramatically over recent years, see the attached table provided. Thankfully Mr Carter at Kent County Council has heard the growing outcry from local residents, traders and railway users about these proposals. Last year in secret discussions with city council he challenged the council’s approach to parking, we have discovered that in response Mr Carter was given undertakings by the city council in a newly published letter dated the 11th of July 2014 as follows we will continue to retain a significant supply of city centre parking to meet demand, we are also clear that we will not progress the disposal of any spaces unless there is clear evidence of adequate overall parking supply in the city and following full public consultation particularly engaging with businesses. In the light of the city council’s undertakings it is quite wrong that the city council’s Local Plan and Transport Strategy continue to back these car park self-offs. By promoting a Local Plan and a Transport Strategy which are at odds with its letter to Paul Carter the city council is being duplicitous with the public. Either it wishes these car parks to be developed come what may or it is willing to listen to the public and stop these sell-offs. What is it? Canterbury Independent Traders therefore calls upon the city council to change its Local Plan and Transport Strategy to delete the development of these car parks as a policy aim. Thank you. |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much Mrs Barwick, next we have, next speaker is Mr Andrew Stark |
| Mr Andrew Stark | And I’m afraid it’s on the same issue. I wish to object to the draft documents on the ground that it has not stated in the appendix of sites taken out of the Local Plan the city centre car park sites. The sales of these sites to developers is an unpopular move among residents, visitors and many councillors Conservative, Liberal and Labour have all voiced their support in keeping these sites. The council has no idea how taking away these car parks will affect the city, the statistics provided by Mr Moore are not clear and he has acknowledged this, there has been inaccuracies and they are misleading. The government are against the removal of town centre car parks as it affects the vibrancy of the town or city. The City Partnership have looked into this issue, as they see it will affect businesses of the city and they have produced a draft document at present which states the city centre has its entire lifetime a supply of car parking spaces right now, what is being outlined in the Local Plan is an 18% decrease in city centre parking excluding Park and Ride, simply retaining the supply is a 25 reduction real terms, the additional housing proposed south of the city and into the proposals in the surrounding Canterbury district and in another five districts means that the city catchment area is growing over the next 15 years while the resources of car parking are staying the same. This scenario means that if the closures had been enacted upon and the stock reduced by 439 spaces this would have left 1.2% of the available spaces, 46 across the network of car parking, effectively closing the car parks in the city to additional customers on a certain day and increasing congestion as people such for spaces. There is no proof that the loss of these car parks will affect traffic problems at rush hours. They have looked into, the City Partnership have looked into other cities and how they ease congestion by other parking ideas. A resident, local residents gathered a petition against the sale of these sites and collected one and a half thousand signatures in about two weeks from visitors and residents, this together with a local business opinion must show that the elected body that these sites should be added to the list taken out of the Local Plan. I do hope that this will be done for the benefit of the residents, businesses and visitors, as selling off these assets is at best a complete gamble and at worst uninformed stupidity. Thank you. |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much Mr Stark, next speaker is Ann Blatherwick, the Chair of Herne and Broomfield Parish Council, thank you |
| Ann Blatherwick, Chair of Herne and Broomfield Parish Council | Thank you. Good evening councillors. As Chairman of Herne and Broomfield Parish Council I have taken a keen interest in the Local Plan procedures attending all but one day so far, this is because it has a great impact on the residents of our parish with in excess of 3,000 new homes being planned to wrap around our villages, this amount of homes is of a similar amount to that already in the villages of Herne and Broomfield, a huge amount for our area to handle without loss of amenity, identity and massive effect on all the infrastructure, particularly highways and school provision. The parish council is concerned to note that even more housing is proposed adjacent to our village by the addition of SHLAA 12 Herne Bay Drive Range and SHLAA 199 adjacent to the driving range. Whilst these two sites in themselves are relatively small with a total of 80 dwellings this will add yet more traffic onto Bullockstone Road and for those travelling towards Canterbury to the Sturry crossing. The parish council would however support the inclusion of these sites if the Strode Farm allocation were to be removed as these would sit far more comfortably within the pattern of urban development than Strode Farm. It is considered that as the detailed transport modelling analysis required by the Inspector has not yet been completed the public consultation is premature. It is impossible to ascertain the impact of additional site allocations without this information as it is extremely disadvantageous to the public. The parish council realises the requirement to get a working Local Plan in place however for the sake of a couple of months delay surely it’s better to have all the information and facts than for this to be challenged at a later date. This would be a repeat of the previous scenario when the original Local Plan was consulted on without a detailed highways infrastructure plan. We wish to request that the consultation is delayed until these details are finalised and the public can make informed responses. It is also noted that one of the sites mentioned by the Inspector, the former colliery land south of the A28 Island Road, Hersden, a brownfield site, has not been mentioned in this report, surely it’s better to use brownfield sites than to use working farmland, why has no further consideration been given to this site? The parish council therefore requests that the consultation is delayed until all outstanding issues are resolved, particularly highways, education and community issues to allow informed comment to be made without disadvantaging the electorate. Please do not repeat previous mistakes and listen to the public you serve. Thank you. |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much, thank you. Our next speaker is Debbie Jones. |
| Debbie Jones | Good evening. I’m speaking this evening on behalf of the landowner of the remaining brownfield land forming part of the Chislet Colliery in Hersden which we’ve been promoting , through your, for residential development through your Local Plan. We are very disappointed that the council hasn’t seen fit to allocate the site for housing which we believe goes against the clear direction of national and local planning policy that seeks to bring forward brownfield development. The Chancellor at his mansion house speech last year stated that councils will be required to have local development orders on 90% of brownfield land suitable for housing. This has been further supported through the Planning and Housing Bill making its way through the parliament which requires local authorities to maintain a register of brownfield land and to grant planning permission in principle. The core principle of the NPPF encourages the use of brownfield land, paragraph 111 of the framework says the most effective use of land is reusing land that has already been previously developed. I could go on but I hope that you get my point. Paragraph 41 of the Planning Inspector’s interim note included in your report pack where the Planning Inspector confirms the former colliery land is brownfield. The Planning Inspector further commented on letters received from Natural England and the Kent Wildlife Trust which indicate that both organisations would have no in principle objection to the site being developed. I am not sure why your officers have …[inaudible] the justification for not including the site but I know there’s been long standing issues included the ecological value particularly the lichen heath. We are at the moment putting together a planning application which we hope to submit early next year and we have started negotiations with Kent Wildlife Trust who are content with the mitigation to protect the lichen heath and appreciate that the only way the lichen heath can be effectively protected is by management which development will facilitate. The default situation is that the lichen heath will in fact be lost, the very thing that the council is seeking to protect. We believe that not allocating this sustainable brownfield site runs contrary to national and local policy especially so as to meet your district housing targets the draft allocated greenfield site to the north has been increased by 300 units. Please could I ask you to reconsider and with the greatest respect to your officers instruct them to allocate this sustainable brownfield site. Thank you. |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much, our next speaker is Sue Langdown |
| Sue Langdown | Thank you Chairman. I am speaking on behalf of the Friends of Kingsmead Field, I will be brief as my request is quite straightforward. The 2002/2003 public consultation on the regeneration of Kingsmead showed that the top priority was for open space followed by a range of leisure facilities and a hotel. Since that time considerable development has taken place in Kingsmead and the surrounding area much of which did not form part of the earlier consultation. As well as the SureStart centre we now have in excess of an additional 600 residential houses or flats and more than 1,600 student units built or in the process of building. All within close proximity to Kingsmead Field. Included in the plans for the Serco and old coach park site are 500 more student units and 65 more residential units. Given all this development we are therefore asking the council to seriously think again about the proposed sale of the rear 20% of Kingsmead Field to build 15 houses. There remains strong public opposition to the sale and any subsequent development on this part of the field. The area currently acts as a valuable buffer zone with the neighbouring housing development and most importantly as a green corridor between the two branches of the River Stour, this natural corridor contains many mature native trees providing a habitat for wildlife which together with the surrounding long grass and wild flowers provides considerable interest for the local community. It’s also and most importantly I think an area of calm within what has become and becoming an increasingly built up environment. We therefore ask this committee to recommend the inclusion of the rear 20% of Kingsmead Field in the list of sites to be removed from the Local Plan housing allocation which is to be found in Appendix 2 of the report presented to you tonight. Taking account of the substantial increase in residential accommodation which has already taken place since 2003 and the large development now planned on the site adjacent to Kingsmead Field I hope that you will ask yourselves whether the building of 15 houses together with an access road involving the loss of many trees and a wildlife site valued and used by the community can in anyway be justified. I trust that you will come to the conclusion that it cannot and to recommend to the Full Council the deletion of this site from the Local Plan housing allocation. Thank you Chairman |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much, next speaker is Mr Mark Boardman |
| Mr Mark Boardman, Grasmere Pasture, Chestfield | Good evening. I’m here to speak against the inclusion of the Grasmere Pasture which is the land south of Ridgeway in the housing plan. I have picked up this yesterday afternoon, my points are going to be of necessity very brief so I will simply headline the objections that I have. The first is that the, the field which is 42 acres is a flood plain, in 2013 for over a month the field was under water, there are severe drainage issues, my house is on the, just on the other side of the Swalecliffe Brook and it has in the past flooded from drainage from the field. The issue if you build the proposed 300 houses, roads and so forth is that there would be a vast amount more drainage which could only go into the Swalecliffe Brook and would lead to flooding in my area and further along. The, there is also a sewage issue, there are no immediately accessible foul water sewers which could service that many houses and I believe they’re talking in terms of industrial buildings as well. My second point the John Wilson Centre, the industrial centre already suffers from substantial amounts of vandalism, nuisance and crime, teenagers come down in the summer they drive round, racing round the car parks playing loud music, drinking, if you brought another 300 homes in there the issue of crime, anti-social behaviour and risk to those premises would obviously be enhanced as it would be to the houses in the immediate area. The next point I have point three is that you would because of the location be creating what I term a village within a village, the access to this area is through one narrow residential road with parking on either side, it’s very difficult to see how on occasion emergency vehicles could get through there, the access through the John Wilson Centre would seem to me problematic not least because at the end of that area you are talking about going over private land so there is only one road which is a residential road which would be tremendously overloaded, this would leave an isolated area with no access to South Tankerton or to Chestfield because the only access from there to Chestfield is walking access along the private road which runs along the side of my property. The next issue I’m going to raise is that there does appear to be, have I run out of time? |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | I’m afraid you have Mr Boardman |
| Mr Mark Boardman, Grasmere Pasture, Chestfield | Oh ok |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | But thank you very much for your comments |
| Mr Mark Boardman, Grasmere Pasture, Chestfield | Ok |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Our next speaker is Mr D Smith |
| Mr D Smith | Good evening. I’ve lived in Iffin Lane for 16 years and the topic I want to speak to you about is the Thanington Park development. I’m not against development and the need for a community to develop and expand is well understood but it must be balanced and it must be joined up and quite frankly from what I’ve seen on this one it’s none of those things. The original proposal was excluded from the Local Plan mainly due to traffic and landscape issues, I also might say a significant public objection. The version on offer tonight though has some major changes, mainly an increase in the houses from 1,150 to, from 750 and an increased size in the plot area. It is disturbing that this is being discussed when the original is still not resolved. This change would also negate any of the documents supplied for the original outline planning application, they become irrelevant. The two points the original scheme was rejected traffic and landscape impact are still there only significantly larger now, local meetings held a high level of local concern about what was being proposed and the impact on the area and traffic was a particular concern. As regards the proposals there’s been various promised facilities added to it, a community hall, well we have four of those, two very local, a new primary school, how’s that going to be funded? Have the local education authority said they’ll fund it? The commercial business park, there’s a history of unused units in Canterbury, new park and ride, well that’s just been changed, they’ve changed the option on that, the new hospice, well I’d be the first to support hospices but I have to say there was a lot of uncomfortable feeling in the way this was handled by the developer which seemed to be using the hospice as a PR stunt for the proposals. That said there seems to be a lack of clarity as to exactly how this will be funded and by whom, there also seems to be a conflict of interest with the link between the Tory Foundation and Pentland Homes in this matter which was not really made clear. The fourth slip road off the A2, well that’s debatable whether that’ll make any difference at all, in fact it could make the matters worse but we’ll just park that. Affordable homes, even now the 30% affordable homes target that was offered is being challenged. If this proposal does go ahead how many of these items will actually materialise? History would tend to make us sceptical of that especially when profit margins could be reduced. The latest publicity hand-out from the developer this week has again failed to understand the issues and the local problems particularly with the traffic and the general problems of the south side of Canterbury. I’d just like to quote from the Inspector’s report, page 34 section 44, it says the framework requires that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impact of the development is severe. Well this is the case with this development and that is just on common sense grounds, it doesn’t need sort of in detail survey. Looking closer at the traffic issue, it was obvious that no consideration has been given to the general problem of access and egress. I’m just asking you to reject it on those basis, thank you very much for your time. |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much Mr Smith. Our next speaker is Mr Ellaby on behalf of St Mildreds Area Community Society |
| Mr Ellaby, St Mildreds Area Community Society | Good evening Chairman, good evening councillors. I want to make one fundamental point, it is that Canterbury is really a single road with north and south feeders. It is the A28, laughingly called in part the ring road, it’s no such, it’s a bypass, an inner bypass, but it is the A28 which is almost permanently congested. Now I see that since as a resident of St Mildreds area, Wincheap roundabout is continually congested throughout the day. Now the proposals for the Cockering Farm can only make that matter worse. I refer to your own documentation council policy strategies, page 21, item 7, and these are the relevant documents, these relevant policies that this council should be promoting, tackling congestion, providing policies and allocating sites that take full account of the impacts on congestion and incorporate improvement measures. Well we heard a moment ago that maybe there will be slip-roads bringing traffic from the A2 onto Wincheap, now is that not compounding an already existing problem, making it infinitely worse, we were told a moment ago that the traffic through Harbledown and indeed along the A2 into Canterbury via Harbledown would now be shovelled into Wincheap, now I suggest to you that building the number of houses proposed at Cockering Farm is a disaster waiting to happen, there are other sites, I won’t go into those, you know those, and they could be implemented, but to build there is going to make the matter for the city worse and indeed when I hear what Debbie Barwick says about people finding it difficult to get into Canterbury to shop, that will make it worse. You are compounding an already existing very serious problem. I ask you to reject that site in total. Thank you. |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much Mr Ellaby. Our next speaker is Mr Page from Thanington Without Parish Council. Is Mr Page not here? No, then we will move onto the next speaker which is Councillor Eden-Green |
| Councillor Eden-Green | Chairman this document isn’t planning but it is the opportunistic plugging of gaps in a faulty Local Plan. The Thanington site or sites SHLAA 210, 106, 137 and 084 were coded red by AMEC (?) in their report, red means no. That’s your report, they were rejected by the Local Plan Steering Group, they were rejected by the Full Council when it accepted the Local Plan. They are not in the Local Plan and they shouldn’t be now, they’re being put in by way of trying to rectify something that’s wrong and they were rejected on two essential grounds, access and congestion. Access, now Pentland Properties are promising new traffic lights at St Nicholas Road and Thanington Road, we don’t want them or need them. That’s an estate road for people in houses. There are already 54 traffic light poles at the Wincheap junction with the A2 and the A28, 54 traffic light poles altogether, we don’t want more and many of those have got four lights on top of them. Pentland then promise a contraflow on the western slip-road but there’s no way that they have worked out as to how that is going to be dealt with at the A28 junction, other than perhaps a few more traffic lights as well. These aren’t improvements but they’re trying to make access to an inaccessible site which was why it was thrown out in the first place of the Local Plan and then we’ve got the congestion problem, Wincheap is solid at the moment, the answer to deal with that and it was found in 2004 when the planning consent at Bingley Island was put through was to put a proper gyratory system at the junction of Wincheap and the ring-road, that is what is needed, once you’ve done that then you can consider putting in your fourth slip-road. You can’t put the fourth slip-road in without dealing with the pinch point and the pinch point is at the Wincheap junction, so that needs to be dealt with first. And furthermore there are alternatives to this site, nobody has spoken against the site in south Hersden, plenty of people have spoken in favour of it, that’s an obvious one for a start, that’s four to six hundred houses there, on pages 40 to 41 of your agenda there’s a list of other sites, unhelpfully the housing numbers aren’t shown against them but I’ve totted them up and there’s a 1,000 dwellings in those sites altogether, now I wouldn’t suggest that all of them are appropriate but I would suggest that 580 of them are, now that’s already over a 1,000 houses, add in, which I don’t disagree with in your report the site at Chestfield for 300, your table 19 which is another 66 houses, add in Herne Bay Golf Course, add in the Littlebourne site that’s already been granted planning consent for 87 houses, SHLAA 91 that’s another 200. Your consultants have put this together to inform your Local Plan and you’re paying no attention to your plan or to your consultants… |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you Councillor |
| Councillor Eden-Green | …to be logical you must follow it and reject this one. Thank you. |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you Councillor Eden-Green and our final speaker on the item on the Local Plan is Mr Baker |
| Mr Baker | Good evening Chairman. Thank you very much for allowing me to speak. A few minutes ago Janet Larkinson of Harbledown and Rough Common Parish Council referred you to page 18 of the agenda and the land at Cockering Farm, Thanington which you’ve heard about this evening. Chairman she’s absolutely right to ask that the wording A2 slip-road improvements be clarified. Last year’s public consultation on the District Transport Strategy showed the missing off slip-road at Wincheap to be the most widely supported piece of infrastructure in the whole district. It would enable the Wincheap Industrial Estate and retail park to be better used and regenerated which everyone supports. The city council owns most of the estate and better access and regeneration will benefit the council and its future financial position. Furthermore I have here a copy of a report from KCC’s Highway Engineers which demonstrates quite clearly that this slip-road will reduce traffic in most of Wincheap contrary to the beliefs of many people, this is because there is a large flow of traffic from the Faversham direction heading for work in the Wincheap Industrial Estate and retail park or the Wincheap Park and Ride site, a new off slip would take all that traffic out of Canterbury and keep it on the A2 so it would no longer have to turn right at Rheims Way, at the Wincheap roundabout, across the traffic coming in from Pin Hill which is what causes the hold-ups on the ring-road in both directions which Mr Ellaby and Councillor Eden-Green have referred to. Moreover traffic from Whitstable could bypass Blean, Rough Common and Canterbury altogether by travelling on the dual carriageways via Brenley Corner direct to Wincheap Industrial Estate so the slip-road would relieve the main length of Wincheap and the Wincheap roundabout of a substantial amount of traffic and be very beneficial. The Cockering Farm developer Pentland Homes is prepared to provide the off slip from Faversham as announced in the Kentish Gazette a couple of weeks ago and the developer has now written to your Mr Brown confirming its offer of a financial commitment to fund the new A2 off slip at Wincheap and a further contribution of £1,000,000 towards the extension of the Wincheap Park and Ride site. In a moment Mr Chairman I’d like to hand you a copy of their letter with these pages highlighted. Now we understand that individual members of the committee may have different views on whether or not this site should be in the Local Plan but whatever your view we trust that many of you would agree that if the Inspector puts it in the plan then it must provide or fund the missing slip-road. So Mr Chairman we would ask for page 18 to be amended by deleting the words A2 slip-road improvements and substituting improvements to the westbound A2 off slip and the provision of or funding towards the eastbound A2 off slip, by putting that wording in the Local Plan any development of this site that takes place because of the Inspector or otherwise will have to do it so we appeal to you Chairman to make that change please. Thank you very much Mr Chairman. If I might pass you the letter from Pentland Homes. Thank you very much. |
| Councillor S Cook (Chairman) | Thank you very much. Thank you Mr Baker. And thank you to all our public speakers, appreciate you taking the time to come and speak to us tonight. |

CDS\_NTTRANSCRIPT OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 111115 LOCAL PLAN SPEAKERS.DOCX