

objections to policy C.121

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To:Consultations <Consultations@canterbury.gov.uk>

📎 2 attachments (2 MB)

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2 June 2024

Fao CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL PLANNING DEPT
OBJECTIONS TO POLICY C12

Dear Sirs,

Herewith some of my objections to the above.

THE LAND

The land sits north of the University of Kent (UOK) and it was actually submitted to the previous Call for Sites in 2022. The Strategic Land Availability Assessment 2022 identified that it was **not viable** due to the fact that a 'suitable access to the site has not been demonstrated to be achievable due to heritage and ecology concerns. However, two years later it seems that one of these concerns has been 'resolved' in two ways: a) by demolishing an outstanding primary Blean school (!!) and relocating it to another site; b) AND by using a bridle way opposite Kent College which is part of the national cycle network. Both beyond absurd if I dare suggest Furthermore the proposed new locations for two schools must call into question the physical and emotional protection and safety of the children attending the schools as they will be part of a building site initially and them be surrounded by homes and University buildings , how can parents feel that the children are safe?

DESTRUCTION OF QUALITY ARABLE FARMLAND

The proposed land has been used to arable farming for many years , together with some beef farming . Never has there been a time in recent history when it has been generally recognised that we, as a country, need to produce more of our own crops (plus apples and ears as per the current Prime Minister) and place less reliance on imports. In addition, never has climate change been such a concern and therefore to allow the loss of this land at such a time is frankly reckless .

INEVITABLE DESTRUCTION OF ANCIENT WOODLAND

It is deeply concerning to note that the proposed development of the land to the north of the UOK will destroy ancient woodland , and what is even more concerning is that it would seem that both the UOK and Policy C12 are guilty of attempting to mislead the public on this issue . The topic paper seeks to claim that such woodland does not meet the NFPP definition of ancient woodland when it clearly does so. Such parcels of ancient woodland are identified on the Canterbury City Council TPO Map . Within the policy Canterbury City Council actually states" If necessary ,there is clear potential for a suitable compensation strategy to be devised that mitigates the loss of ancient woodland ". Nothing can compensate for the loss of such woodland – nothing .

TYLER HILL ROAD – IMPACT AND UNSUITABILITY

The Local Plan states that the aim is to 'minimise traffic flow onto Tyler Hill Road in both directions',.Is it stated that the provision of two accesses would provide sufficient access to serve the site. Also, linking these two accesses would help to mitigate the impacts of additional traffic flow onto Tyler Hill.' It is very unclear what 'mitigating' or 'minimising traffic flow' actually entails or what additional traffic flow is expected given that there has been no publicly available traffic impact assessment. The houses will be built on each side of Tyler Hill Road, a small winding rural road with two very sharp and dangerous bends and no pavements , nor opportunity to provide any pavements An increase of 3,000 cars + delivery vans, etc. will have a significant impact upon the road which is not sustainable. In addition, Tyler Hill Road has a weight limit restriction and in places it is narrow such that it is not possible for cars travelling in opposite directions to pass at anything near a normal speed. The road is subject to flooding during periods of heavy rainfall as indeed are the adjoining fields currently owned by UOK .

Cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders are already faced with risk from passing cars on this road. Indeed at times when traffic is diverted onto this road there is often periods where such traffic is at a standstill say if a large delivery vehicle is using the road, or indeed the weekly dustcarts.(photo attached re issues when tractors were on the road and this only happens once a year.

□

PROTECTED BIRDS ETC . The site for development is between Blean and Tyler Hill villages in the Sarre Penn Valley which is surrounded by ancient woodland, hedgerows and arable fields. The open fields between Tyler Hill and the church at St Cosmus and St Damien at Blean provide a habitat for a number of protected species of birds, especially skylarks and nightingales. In May 2024 a group of five University of Kent researchers from the Conservation Society conducted a short 2-hour survey which recorded a total of 77 distinct species within part of the proposed development area, of which 97% were invertebrates or plants.

GREAT CRESTED NEWTS The development is also likely to disrupt the longest running great crested newts monitoring programme in Europe. Located in Elliott Pond the project has been running for the past 29 years. Newts are very sensitive to outside disturbances. A building site within a close vicinity will severely affect their wellbeing .

AIR QUALITY The proposed development will sit within two Conservation Areas: Blean and Hothe Court in Tyler Hill. Canterbury's Local Plan (2017) identified key issues for air quality on the Special Area of Conservation which includes the proximity of roads to sensitive habitats and the presence of physical barriers between the road and the habitat that filter air pollution. The Habitat Regulations Assessment of Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan 2024 states that 'the air quality assessment data associated with the University of Kent allocation provides evidence that the air quality changes due to traffic growth linked to the CCC Local Plan provisions are likely to be negligible.' (9.3.14) However, the Local Plan states that it is important that there are no further decreases in air quality to the detriment of sensitive parts of the site. Given that neither the traffic impact assessment, nor the air quality assessment by the University of Kent are publicly available, this claim is not credible.

.The proposed development may lead to a decrease of air quality by the sheer scale of housing numbers , not to mention the disruption and annoyance over many many years to local residents caused by noise, dust, pollution and heavy vehicles.

FLOOD RISK

The Met office states that by 2070 the temperature will increase by 1-4.5 degrees resulting in up to 30% more rainfall, with wetter winters and hotter summers. The construction of the proposed 2,000 homes will massively reduce permeability of the area whilst additionally the high levels of the water table will lead to increased flooding at the site along with run off via Sarre Penn and more flooding further down the valley. Both Blean and Tyler Hill have a highwater table level which historically is recognised as leading to drainage problems . **Tyler Hill road regularly floods during periods of heavy rainfall (evidence attached) Similarly the Crab & Winkle outside the old church floods every winter and spring for up to 6 months and KCC have never been able to resolve this issue , despite several attempts.**

PROTECTED HERITAGE SITES

There are significant heritage sites and conservation areas surrounding and within C12 which are protected by national planning laws. The Church of St Cosmus and St Damian in the Blean is a grade II Listed Building which dates back to the 13th century. It is situated in a tranquil rural area and is surrounded by fields where the protected birds such as skylarks and nightingales sing. The proposed 'community hub' would negatively impact upon this building and irrevocably change its character. It will be subsumed in an urban sprawl development. Other protected sites are grade II listed Blean House and Hothe Court in Tyler Hill which will be impacted by access routes. C12 will destroy the positive characteristics identified and acknowledged by the the awarding of a Conservation Area. C12 would also impinge upon the site of a Roman Villa immediately south west of St Cosmus and St Damian's Church which is a scheduled monument, the site of Medieval Tile Kilns to the east of the site (a scheduled monument), and Bronze Age Settlement in the fields east of the church and the graveyard which contains, inter alia, many war graves .

BREACH OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACT ARTICLE 8- RIGHT TO THE ENJOYMENT OF FAMILY AND PRIVATE LIFE INCLUDING PROTECTION OF THE HOME

To undertake this monstrous proposed development would represent a fundamental breach of this Act and will seriously impact on the mental health of all homeowners and residents in the surrounding area, including Tyler Hill Road and the villages of Tyler Hill, Blean and Rough Common.

M M Connolly

