



Victoria Asimaki [REDACTED]

[CONSULTATIONS] Proposed development of Brooklands Farm

Debbie townley [REDACTED]
To: Consultations <consultations@canterbury.gov.uk>

19 April 2024 at 11:26

Dear Sir/Madam,

This message is being sent to record that I OBJECT in the strongest terms to the proposed development of Brooklands Farm, South Street, Whitstable.

The town, along with Canterbury, Blean and Herne Bay, are being hugely over-developed for housing, in a frenetic attempt to meet unreasonable Government targets. This is resulting in loss of valuable green space between the Whitstable junction off the A299, Thanet Way at Estuary View, in the west and the Reculver junction in the East. The proposed developments in Blean and Tyler Hill compound the destruction of open space and will lead to a North Kent conurbation. I enquired about this possibility four years ago and was assured by a local councillor that development of the Thanet Way 'corridor' was not 'in the plan'. Should the development at Bodmin Farm, Chestfield go ahead there will be one field and a solar farm between that and the new estate at Greenhill.

The people buying properties at the recent development at Whitstable Heights are not appropriate for young local buyers as the asking prices are far too high, reflecting the location and views the development commands. It is unclear just what percentage of any new accommodation will be 'affordable', nor how much will be sold off to London boroughs, who are desperate to re-locate sections of their residents in social housing. Despite reassurances from the same councillor that these people have 'a local interest', most of them are currently in central London boroughs, such as Battersea and Kennington Oval, barely know where Whitstable is and have never even visited on a day trip.

Whitstable in particular cannot support this increase in population. There is insufficient improvement to infrastructure and services. This area - the south-east of England - has the lowest annual rainfall in the country and is the first to have water restrictions imposed during dry periods. The area relies upon reservoirs to the west of the county, especially Bewl Water, and underground aquifers. The 50 year old plan for a new facility at Broad Oak has been resurrected but, even without any public consultation, would take some 10 - 15 years to become operational.

Perversely the area to the south of Brooklands Farm is prone to flooding: the junction between South Street and Radfall road becomes impassable during periods of prolonged rain, or even an isolated, heavy thunderstorm. Concreting over such a large area of land will exacerbate this problem and add to the well-publicised problems with sewage discharges into the sea from the wholly inadequate treatment plant at Swalecliffe Brook.

Loss of hitherto productive farmland further reduce the contribution of homegrown produce such as milk and arable crops, a nationwide problem. It will also reduce habitat for wildlife including invertebrates and insects, therefore birds who feed on them.

At present Whitstable Medical Practice provides a very good service, however it is beginning to show signs that it is over-burdened: appointments for non-emergency procedures, such as blood tests, post-hospital check ups and clinics, can take up to 3 weeks to book and this includes 'phone appointments with GPs. It is

almost impossible to arrange a face-to-face appointment. It has been announced by central Government that there will be no support for a new hospital in East Kent, nor for any expansion or improvements to either QEQM in Margate or William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both of those towns are also subject to massive building programmes.

There are 4 dentist practices in Whitstable; only one is taking new NHS patients. The town lost the services of several dispensing chemists last year: there are now just 4 pharmacies servicing a growing population and, with the exception of Tesco's, none have convenient or dedicated parking.

There has been no dedicated police station in Whitstable since the late 1970s. Despite efforts to increase the visible presence of a couple of 'bobbies' in the town residents are still subjected to petty crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly in the conservation area, around the harbour, the beaches and the access roads from the train station. Currently there is a problem with theft from cars parked in residential roads, both on-street and on private drives. This is happening in the centre of town and on estates further out, e.g. at Estuary View.

The biggest impact would be a huge increase in traffic and a woeful lack of parking in the centre of town and harbour area. The car parks that exist are hideously expensive due to Canterbury City Council's openly expressed plan to 'fleece' visitors and residents alike.

Families moving into the new estates along the Thanet Way are going to need to use these car parks as they will quickly realise that they are not living by the seaside, as advertised at Whitstable Heights and Pearson View. In reality they face either a 3 mile walk or fighting for parking. Plans for a Park & Ride next to Benacre Wood are sketchy and there is no information on the route into town - hopefully not via the overused Long Reach/Borstal Hill route (but where else?) - nor where the necessary 'bus station' would be.

Many of the roads in and around Whitstable are in need of urgent repair, e.g. Sea Street. Other roads are already being subject to closure for construction vehicles and projects, or maintenance. being a largely Victorian town, the local roads, including South Street, cannot cope with the volume of traffic now, especially in summer. New houses are required to have provision for off road parking, usually for 2 cars, however many households now have more vehicles than that, including work vans and even lorries, taking up any on-street spaces.

Presumably the majority of the incoming population will not find employment in Whitstable but will travel further afield, many to areas on the route to London, putting pressure on the new Thanet Way and M2/A2. Others may find work or education in Canterbury: the road through the woods to Radfall, Tyler Hill and St Stephen's Hill is already a 'rat run' and more traffic into Canterbury will add to the congestion in the city, which has been of great concern for years.

In summary, This proposed development, and any others, would cause further over-crowding and strain on the roads, in the car parks, at the doctor's surgeries and all other local services. It will adversely affect the quality of life for all exiting and new residents of the town and dilutes the history and heritage of the town, which is what visitors value.

Yours faithfully,

Debbie Waters