

Alexander Gunyon

From: Elisabetta Ebani [REDACTED]
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To: Consultations
Subject: Policy C12: Land north of the University of Kent

Categories: Blue category

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Dear Sirs

As residents of Tyler Hill, we, Simon Annoot and Elisabetta Ebani-Annoot wish to provide our comments in relation to:

- Chapter 2, Policy C12 in the reference for the University of Kent development.
- Chapter 1, Q1 is the reference for Vision for the District
- Chapter 1, Q2 is the reference for Strategic objectives for the District.

Comments on the vision

The vision of improving societal functions and increase the standard of living was an economic drive of the 19 and 20th century, when planet Earth was considered to have limitless resources in terms of development; that environmental costs of new infrastructure and production were considered irrelevant to a discourse of how economy worked and what was important for economic development.

Over the past 50 years the vision has been the same only phrased and structured differently. It lacks of creativity, does not take into account the change of demographic and has no regard for generation z and what is coming with them: generative artificial intelligence. How can a strategy to 2040 be taken seriously when gen AI is now here and changes in the society are inevitable. Changes will come and will affect all jobs, so in these uncertain times a local authority needs to look at the present and near future. It needs to remain agile with the near future demands if they are unable to reinvent themselves.

- 1) Generation Z care about the environment, about pollutions, resources depletion and climate changes. How can a constriction of 2000 homes in a semi-rural area not cause concerns in regard to pollutions, depletion of resources and consequent climate changes 's?
- 2) Inequality: economic growth does not always lead to equitable distribution of wealth; often wealthy people benefit of economic development, while poor see little improvement in their standard of living;
- 3) Cultural impact: rapid economic development can lead to the erosion of traditional cultures and values as well as increased stress and mental health issues among the population;
- 4) job displacement: economic changes can lead to job displacement, especially if industries are automated or move do to other areas (e.g., the Ashford development for Eurostar) or for the or counties or countries;
- 5) overemphasis on GDP: can neglect other important aspects of wellbeing, such as health and overall quality of life.

Strategic objectives

The strategic objectives are based on past and unchanged values with no consideration of the potential downside of the infrastructure development. They do not take into accounts the true environmental and societal costs.

Building of such a larger scale is a serious environmental damage to the environment, to Blean Woods, to the various parts of the National Nature Reserves. There will cause a habit destruction and biodiversity loss. An increased pollution, cause concerns and to the already water-stressed district. Resources depletion, deforestation, land degradation will cause an increased environmental stress.

Societal: building can cause flood which would force displacement of communities, the decision can force residents to move; social and economic inequality.

Furthermore, neither strategy nor objectives take in to account the economic decline in jobs from both main employers of the area - the two universities. It is a fact today which is going to progressively escalate that there is a constant decline of student populations. So would be living in these 2000 homes, who would be able to afford them? We don't want an extension of your housing estates in our arable fields, nature, in our Garden of England.

We understand that the local authorities are all cash strapped, but infrastructure is not a solution. The risks are too high – have we not learnt anything from the houses built in Ashford for the Eurostar? Who is living in those houses now? The commercial investment as stated by the NAO is risky, too risky. Building houses with the prospect of attract commuters in not viable is a false hope.

Options

1 - From a sustainable perspective

The closure of one single road in Canterbury is like severing an artery. It's pure congestion, which affects schools, employers, emergency services, visitors, transport and the whole local community. It's a daily evidence. It's a fact the closure of only one road in Canterbury causes a domino effect throughout the city. And the closures are constant. They occur every year, every single half term, every summer. Whitstable Road, Blean have constant diversions. Canterbury Hill, St Stephens Hill and beyond to the Archbishop's School are constantly undergoing roadworks with partial or full closure. Last summer the closure and disruption began at the end of July and ended on 2nd of September. Gas maintenance, water leakages, potholes, power cuts, non existing lighting from Canterbury Hill to Wood Hill to Hackington Road; speeding motorists throughout the village(s) day and nights, our pets get killed. This is the present unsustainable situation for us residents. A sustainable strategy and policy must start with the improvement of the existing environment not degrading it further with a policy befitting for a 20th century strategy. Aren't there any innovative and creative thinkers amongst your strategists? According to the BBC local elections 2023 the average age of councillors is 60, young councillors are needed to bring in innovation and creativity.

Our preferred proposal would be to look at building another Eden-like project in the area to promote tourism. In addition, a care home a Paradise care home would better suited in the area.

2 – For the community and beyond

The policy speaks of amenities and sports. So why not building an Olympic swimming pool or/and an Olympic stadium. These would make Canterbury a sought after location to host international games, be this for football, rugby or cricket or athletics.

There is no place for Canterbury Football club to train; there are many higher leagues sports teams in the south east that could train in the ground, including premier league games. There is no rugby pitch in the area worth to accommodate international games and the cricket club is not suitable for big games. It's in the wrong part of city; the city needs a suitable ground in a much more favourable location - near to the A2. Blean would be more suitable for a sports ground. The University of Kent accommodation could be refurbished to attract visitors and sports fans from all over the country and from abroad.

3 – Demographics and entrepreneurship

Instead of houses, a couple of fields could have built three luxury care home to attract people from abroad, and attract and generate investments from foreign shareholders for example like China. With a luxury care home, Canterbury could to sponsor a great retirement place in the south east.

The policy does not stand out. It's both uninspired and lacks of innovation.

Save the Blean

How can a policy promoting sustainability with zero carbon emission based on a development of 2000 houses? Realistically and potentially each household could have 2 cars, minimums that would make 4000 cars. Nobody would buy a house on the outskirts of town and get the bus to go to work and where would the work be? Not in Canterbury or for either universities, which are all facing financial hardship. So an increase in traffic is inevitable; park and ride is not a solution for the majority of working residents. Travelling by bus may suit elderly people but not young people..

The description of sustainability is built on sands. There is no evidence to substantiate the zero carbon emission; there is no sufficient work and decently paid jobs in Canterbury. People who have skills, experience and qualifications will commute to London and for that they would drive to go the railway station. There won't be much return for a local authority to give the houses to people on income support, with health issues or to house homeless.

Infrastructure and houses developments are a vision of the past. Canterbury is a historical city that needs to develop sustainability prospects and attractions. It needs to 'build' on income generating projects. It needs to stand out to attract visitors and tourism from all over the world and not to stagnate on cement, on unemployment and on old 19 and 20 centuries old visions.

Thank you for your consideration on the matter.

Yours faithfully

Elisabetta Ebani-Annoot & Simon Annoot

