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From: Fiona Stevens [REDACTED]
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To: Consultations
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Brooklands Farm Objection

From: Fiona Stevens, [REDACTED]

I strongly object to policies W3 and W4 (Brooklands Farm) of the draft Local Plan to 2040 for the following reasons:

1. There will be a sudden and significant increase in the size of the local population - roughly 10% - without a corresponding increase in amenities and infrastructure, which will have a significant impact on existing residents and visitors to Whitstable.
2. Last year (2023), there was a hosepipe ban in Whitstable and the surrounding area, despite there having been ample rainfall, simply because South East Water does not have the capacity to process water quickly enough. Adding another 1400 houses and gardens to the area, will only increase the likelihood of more frequent and longer hosepipe bans. If capacity is to be increased who will pay for it? It should be paid for by the developers and new home owners and not added to the water bills of existing residents.
3. The local sewage works cannot cope with the existing demand, and regularly releases untreated sewage into the sea, causing instances of serious illness for people on local beaches. The new outfall under construction does not solve this problem, it merely makes it everyone's problem, not just locals. Sewage should be fully treated before it is released into the environment and, as it is clearly not the intention to increase processing capacity in the near term, the release of raw sewage into the environment will only increase with the addition of many more houses contributing to the outflow.
4. Increased flood risk downstream on the Swalecliffe Brook. At present heavy rain is held on the farmland before it evaporates or trickles into the Brook. Vast areas of storage would be required to accommodate rainwater run-off from any urban development. Again, who would pay for this?
5. Loss of an Area of High Landscape Value with wonderful rural views. CCC's Landscape Character Assessment 2020 recommended that CCC should reinforce the open rural setting south of Whitstable and resist development in the A299 New Thanet Way corridor.
6. The proposed new junction linking the A299 to Chestfield Rd and South Street would create significant increases in traffic. This is already a difficult junction for pedestrians and cyclists to navigate, increased traffic will only make things much worse.
7. Increased demand on local health facilities. Already local residents find GP appointments hard to come by. A big and sudden increase in local population can only make waiting times much worse and treatment more difficult to obtain.

8. This is not a sustainable place to build a large development, from which (if its like the rest of south Chestfield) more people would be commuting to Canterbury than any other destination, almost all of them by car. It will also contribute to traffic congestion in the north Canterbury area. This week (the last week of May 2024) there was only one road open between Whitstable and Canterbury - through Blean - and that route was operating traffic lights for single file working on part of it, creating significant congestion. Bringing thousands more people into the area will only exacerbate this problem. Building or improving roads to deal with this would only mean the removal of even more natural habitat and amenity.

9. CCC needs to recognise that housing developments affect coastal towns much more severely than Canterbury. Canterbury can expand to north, east, south and west. Whitstable can only expand southwards, as it is constrained by marshland to the west, and by Herne Bay to the east. What little farmland that remains within easy walking distance of Whitstable is needed for residents' recreation and well-being as well as to preserve the last vestiges of the natural setting of this tourist destination town. Therefore, the farmland between the Blean woodland and the existing urban edge of Whitstable should be given statutory protection.

10. Loss of "Best and most versatile" agricultural land.

11. Bad for wildlife. This large development and the removal and replacement of the existing varied habitats, with an urban development will have a serious negative impact on biodiversity.

12. The knock-on effect of removing existing habitats, puts pressure on the surrounding habitats, creating an adverse effect on the Local Wildlife Site at Convicts Wood.

For the reasons listed above, I believe the proposals are unsustainable and would contravene paragraphs 135c, 168, 173, 180a, 180b, 180d and 191b of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.