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From: Sharon Hawker [REDACTED]
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Objection to Policy W4 Land at Brooklands Farm.

Sharon Hawker
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I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed housing development on Brooklands Farm.

First and foremost, Brooklands Farm is a precious green field site, in a rural area with irreplaceable good quality agricultural land offering a vital sanctuary for wildlife and contributing to the overall ecological balance of our community.

1) The scale of development area as well as the positioning of it, is unrealistic. It lacks any thought behind an additional 2000 + cars travelling between Whitstable and Canterbury. And due to the estate being between the two, access to main shops , doctors surgery's, schools, hospitals, in canterbury and Whitstable, Canterbury's policy of encouraging non- reliance on cars, is completely unrealistic. The scale is huge, and even walking from one side of the estate to the other is a distance.

2) The site lies outside of the town boundary on good quality agricultural land and will result in the unacceptable loss of open green space. It is Rural, not Urban, and should remain as such. Again, this is completely against Canterbury's city council's 2021 landscape charter assessment of retaining farmland and to protect agricultural land

3) There would be a deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient hedgerows and the Swalecliffe Brook. The significant impact the development would have on the local wildlife and their natural habitats is of grave concern. Birds of prey, sparrow hawks & buzzards etc, use the hedgerows for hunting. Bats are seen regularly across the fields, as is the albino squirrel. An abundance of birds use the hedgerows for nesting. We have regular sightings of woodpeckers, greenfinches, wagtails, goldfinches, and all the usual wild birds. There are many slow worms on the site and hazel dormice.

The destruction of this green space would result in the loss of biodiversity and disrupt the delicate ecosystem that currently thrives in the area. Preserving such natural habitats is essential for maintaining a sustainable environment and ensuring the well-being of future generations.

4) Flooding.

Brooklands Farm's green fields currently act as natural drainage, absorbing excess rainwater during heavy rainfall and reducing the likelihood of severe flooding. The replacement of these fields with impermeable surfaces such as buildings and roads would disrupt the natural drainage system and potentially exacerbate flooding issues, placing both existing and future residents at risk. The fields are London clay which is highly susceptible to volumetric changes depending upon its moisture content. During exceptionally dry periods or where the moisture is extracted by tree root activity, the clay can become desiccated and shrink in volume, and conversely swell again when the moisture content is restored. This can lead to many problems near the ground surface, including structural movement and fracturing of buildings, fractured sewers and service pipes/ducts and uneven and damaged road surfaces and pavings. Such damage is recognised to be covered by the interpretation of subsidence in buildings insurance policies, and the periods of dry weather in 1976/77 and 1988/92, in particular, led to a host of insurance claims. As a result, many insurance companies have now increased the cost of premiums for buildings located in the most susceptible areas where damage occurred, where the clay is close to the surface.

5) Sewage.

Brooklands Farm is situated in an area that already faces challenges with flooding & sewage. The increased strain on the existing system due to the additional housing could lead to overflows, pollution of water sources (the Swalecliffe Brook also), and a decline in water quality.

Southern Water is unable to cope with the present pressure it is under, let alone supplying an additional 1400 houses.

1400 more houses with one or two toilets will add to its already overstretched capacity.

The Swalecliffe Brook flows through the Thanet Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) before joining the north Kent coast to the east of Whitstable, a section of the coast which forms part of the Saxon Shore Way. It runs through Brooklands Farm.

It could have been classed as a Salmonid River (trout stream) due to having brown trout and eel, both of which are of conservation significance. There is also the possibility that three-spined sticklebacks will still be present, despite the 2013 sewage dump that polluted the brook at Long rock.

7) Traffic. Our roads in this area are narrow and are unable to cope with the amount of extra traffic that will be created by 3000 plus extra cars, not to mention the pollution and noise. The planned new junctions for the A299 would be dispensing traffic onto roads that are ill equipped to deal with it. The additional traffic then going through to Chestfield, South Street and Canterbury will create a significant impact on not only the roads and residents in the area, but going to Canterbury, the road goes through ancient woodland, and pollution and noise etc will have a detrimental impact on wildlife.

It is essential to thoroughly evaluate and address these concerns to avoid any negative consequences for both residents and the environment.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to reconsider the proposed housing development on Brooklands Farm. The preservation of this green field site, the mitigation of sewage issues, the protection of wildlife and their habitats, and the prevention of flooding should be of utmost importance. It is crucial to explore alternative options that prioritise sustainable development and do not compromise the well-being of our community and environment.

We have seen the huge houses estates in Thanet and in Maidstone, and it has certainly does little to reduce the housing crisis.

My family and I moved 8 years ago from Maidstone a. To be near my parents, and b. To move away from the house building and traffic issues getting around in Maidstone. An outing to the shops, to work, to a playgroup, the doctors needed strategic planning before setting off....and we lived 1.5 miles from the town but it took over 40 mins minimum to get into town. Canterbury and Whitstable was a breath of fresh air, literally. My current journey to Canterbury for work is pleasurable (when there are no roadworks) quality of life is better. However, it is already getting congested with the new huge housing estates in Herne bay and whitstable heights so already am needing to to leave at 7.30 to miss the traffic and school buses through Chestfield and Tyler hill. Let's not ruin Canterbury and Whitstable in the same way as these areas. The area has so much to offer and gain financially than just building

more houses. Please think creatively and long term.....this area could easily be an amazing benchmark for other towns within the uk and Europe with its iconic history, rewilding projects, the seashores and chalk streams.....the potential is endless.

We need long term solutions, not quick fixes that benefit the very few and cause irreversible damage to our open spaces, general wellbeing and happiness and beautiful town. The number of shops and buildings within Canterbury and Whitstable lying empty are crying out to be repurposed.....surely the development of these opportunities should be considered way before any building on green land.

Thank you for considering these concerns and taking the appropriate action.

Sharon Hawker