

Alexander Gunyon

From: Aimee Dash [REDACTED]
Sent: 02 June 2024 20:57
To: Consultations
Subject: Chapter 2 (Canterbury), Policy C12 is the reference for the University of Kent development.

Categories: Blue category

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To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in response to the Local Plan Policy C12, in particular, Chapter 2 - University of Kent development.

I **completely disagree** with the proposed plans for the following reasons:

- This land has been put forward as a potential area for development purely for financial reasons; the University is in financial ruin with multiple restructures due to the debt that they are in. In 2019, the same area of land was considered as a potential site for Kent Business School. However, following a report by Penoyre & Prasad it was determined that the site was not suitable for a number of reasons, including: "this is a highly viable swathe of farm land...major development would be likely to have a significant impact upon the open character to the area north of Canterbury...The introduction of a new academic building in this area may also give rise to increased traffic in the villages to the north of Canterbury...The area includes large areas of trees and hedgerows which are likely to provide important habitat for a range of protected species and non-protected species." Therefore, the recent interest in the land can only be linked to the University's financial situation; the reasons the land was previously determined as not suitable remain the same, and the initial decision should not be changed based upon monetary gain.
- The proposed site is currently used as farmland for arable crops and grazing for livestock. It is Grade 3 agricultural land. Due to current issues with food supply, supply chains etc., this land should remain as farmland to ensure ongoing food security.
- As well as farmland, the area also includes ancient woodland, consisting of Wood Anemone, which only grows in mature deciduous woodland.
- The land is home to a plethora of wildlife, including some protected species, such as Great Crested Newts. As well as birds such as buzzards, owls, kingfishers, skylarks, yellow hammers, swifts, bats, voles, field mice, weasels, slow worms and grass snakes, plus too many others to list. Alongside this, the land is considered as a "Biodiversity Opportunity Area" in the Kent Wildlife Strategy. Which should be respected, and would be completely unattainable if 2,000 houses were to be built on the land.
- The roads and services around the villages of Blean, Tyler Hill and Rough Common are already overwhelmed; it is usual to have queues throughout the day on the roads around the villages, and the roads often flood when there is heavy rainfall. Also, the water pumping station at the bottom of Tile Kiln Hill regularly fails during times of heavy rainfall with sewage overflowing into nearby gardens. As such, the infrastructure is not suitable as it currently stands, and would definitely not be able to handle the extra traffic and impact from the proposed development.
- Similarly, the proposal suggests that residents would benefit from the bus service. However, presently, bus services are being reduced and buses often do not turn up. As such, this is not a feasible option, and considering the distance from the town centre, any potential residents of the proposed development would be likely to use their cars instead of relying on public transport or walking/cycling to town.
- Which leads on to access to the proposed site; the plan suggests that the Crab and Winkle opposite Kent College would become an access route to the development. This is currently used by local residents, visitors to Canterbury/Whitstable and the Canterbury Parkrun takes place along there every Saturday. The

University includes the Crab and Winkle as part of its Wellbeing Strategy, suggesting that students take a bike ride...ironic, considering they are putting the same land forward to be turned into a road! The drawings showing the access routes seem to be vague and not fully thought through; the access nearest to Kent College shows the road running alongside the Crab and Winkle. However, the land before this (near the junction of Rough Common/Whitstable road) is privately owned, and not owned by the University.

- It has been proven that being outside and in green space improves mental health; in February 2024, more than 1 in 7 UK adults said that their mental health was either bad, or the worst it's ever been. Given this statistic, surely more consideration should be made to the benefit the area not only provides as a provider of food, through its current use as farmland, and a home to a wide range of animals and wildlife, but also to the positive mental impact areas like this can have on residents and visitors to the area. One thing is for certain, a building site destroying green space and causing increased traffic and pollution, will not improve anyone's mental health.

I hope the Council undertakes further research into this area of land, so it can be proven that it is not a suitable site for a housing development, and instead, brownfield sites, such as the Council's old office are instead seriously considered.

Yours Faithfully,

Aimee Dash

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