

Alexander Gunyon

From: Rachael Mitchell [REDACTED]
Sent: 01 June 2024 22:11
To: Consultations
Subject: Objection to Proposed Housing Development on Brooklands Farm (Policy W4)
Categories: Blue category

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Rachael Mitchell
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1st June 2024

Canterbury City Council
Planning Department

Dear Sir / Madam,

Subject: Objection to Proposed Housing Development on Brooklands Farm (Policy W4)

I am writing to object to the development at Brooklands Farm. I have lived in Whitstable for over [REDACTED] years and in that time, I have witnessed the continual development and building of houses. The time has come to stop, enough is enough.

I wish to object on several issues:

Brooklands Farm lies in an area of High Landscape Value.

Loss of high grade prime Agricultural Land: The development of land at Brooklands Farm will result in the loss of some of the best and most versatile agricultural land in the whole district/SE. Parts of the land are currently farmed for cereal crops and is therefore likely that these are Grade 3a rather than 3b. Grade 3a is best and most versatile agricultural land and its development for housing would be contrary to policy EMP 12 of the current local plan and policy DS12 of the draft local plan. In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework requires that local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality, and if agricultural land is to be proposed for development the economic and other benefits of that land should be taken into account. The housing evidence base which supports the draft local plan does not address this requirement.

Development outside urban area: The land at Brooklands Farm is outside the

settlement boundary of Whitstable and it has not been adequately demonstrated that its development is necessary to meet local needs.

Landscape Impact Brooklands Farm lies in an area of High Landscape Value. This is shown on the map page 10 of the 2017 Canterbury Local Plan. The landscape has not changed since then.

Brookland Farm is a precious green field site, offering a vital sanctuary for wildlife and contributing to the overall ecological balance of our community. 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.

There is insufficient evidence to suggest that there would not be a deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodlands as such there is a critical concern that there would be a significant impact on the local wildlife and their natural habitats – such as populations of nesting Skylarks and Great Crested Newts.

Negative impact on biodiversity and nature conservation and butting up to SSIs and ancient woodlands

Insufficient infrastructure

Huge increase in traffic. Road works this year with current levels of traffic volume have shown how one set of road works can bring this whole corner of the district to a state of gridlock with it very difficult to get into or out of Whitstable. Whitstable is already a traffic nightmare. The roads cannot cope with the flow of traffic at commuting times and the steady stream of traffic caused by visitors at weekends, queuing traffic reduces air quality and contributes to pollution. The proposed infrastructure has had no modelling so whilst buses may be the preferred method of transport for the council, the reality may and probably will result in thousands of more cars on the roads.

Increase in demand for water supply – every year we seem to have a hosepipe ban. Hose-pipe bans are a common occurrence in Kent - in fact, we are a "water stressed" area where abstraction is normally more than 20% of effective rainfall.

The proposed development on Brookland Farm raises the risk of increased flooding in the surrounding areas. The farm's green fields currently act as natural drainage, absorbing excess rainwater during heavy rainfall and reducing the likelihood of 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. Flooding issues already exist with surface water on parts of south street and Chestfield. The risk to diminution of any receiving watercourse and flow to the sea hasn't been considered.

The proposed development fails to adequately address the potential sewage issues that may arise. Brookland Farm is situated in an area that already faces challenges with sewage infrastructure. The increased strain on the existing system due to the

additional housing units could lead to overflows, pollution of water sources, and a decline in water quality. Our current system is already beyond capacity, discharging more into the rivers and sea at every available opportunity which is totally wrong and unacceptable. This risk has an environmental and economic impact on the town.

Impact on physical and mental well-being generally with lack of open spaces and increased noise and air pollution due to traffic etc.

Higher demand on local health services doctors, dentists and hospitals which already have issues coping with the current population. Whilst our local medical services have expanded it currently takes around two weeks to get a telephone appointment to speak to a doctor, hospital waiting lists are very long, Kent and Canterbury has been downgraded so QEQM is our local hospital. Given the amount of new housing in Thanet this is ridiculous. In February, my elderly father arrived at A&E before dawn and it was standing room only, thank goodness he was in a wheelchair, 19 hours later he was found a bed. Services were stretched across the board and tests results took over 3 weeks to leave the hospital. For my father this would have made little difference, but for a younger person needing urgent treatment this was wasted time and outcomes affected. Building new houses is just going to put a further strain on a health service that is on its knees as it is. The same with dentists and other healthcare services, we do not have the capacity for more people.

The majority of new housing is not affordable for young people, who were born here, continue to live and work here, and shared ownership schemes disadvantage them and narrow their options. We cannot keep building more and more on greenfield sites to meet government targets that even you yourselves do not agree with.

The proposed development at Brooklands Farm will give the local population no benefit whatsoever only adverse impacts to deal with. All the way through this process, veiled threats being made throughout in that if we don't agree, a developer will go directly to the government who will agree and we will end up with more houses being built.

Furthermore an item in the Chestfield Parish Councils recent newsletter relating to Brooklands Farm states "the particular planning application has yet to be submitted by the developer but this remains imminent" coupled with a member of the planning team being heard to say this land had been 'de-noted and was going to go ahead' and the fact that Canterbury City Council are only one of two councils (the other being Ebbsfleet, a growing community) that have agreed all large major housing decisions make me believe a decision has already been made and that unfortunately our planning office are not there to support what is best for the town. I feel, we the community, are being let down.

I trust you will take these points into account when making your decision.

Signed

Rachael Mitchell