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From: Marigold de Villiers [REDACTED]
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Stephanie de Villiers

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I am responding as a resident of the Canterbury District and in relation to Chapters 1, 2, 5 and 6 of the Draft Local Plan, particularly policy C12 in Chapter 2, I wish to state my opposition to the development of a 2,000-house town on a greenfield site near Blean and Tyler Hill.

Traffic Impact Considerations

An increase in traffic is an inevitable consequence of the proposed development. The influx of residents and the construction process itself will lead to higher vehicle density, potentially causing congestion, longer commute times, and increased emissions. Disruptive infrastructure upgrades to the A2 junction and road widening in Rough Common Road to accommodate the additional traffic load will be needed. There will be very substantial increases in noise and pollution, primarily for residents along Rough Common Road.

Historical and Cultural Context

The proposed development areas, encompassing Blean, Tyler Hill, and the Sarre Penn Valley, are significant beyond their physical boundaries, representing a confluence of historical and cultural narratives. The presence of Mesolithic hunter-gatherers and Bronze Age communities is evidenced by archaeological findings, including tools and burial sites. The Church of St Cosmus & St Damian stands as a historical beacon along the ancient Roman Salt Road, while the Crab & Winkle Way offers a cycling route steeped in tradition.

Ecological Considerations

These regions are ecologically rich, hosting a variety of bird species that contribute to the area's biodiversity. The development poses risks to the habitats of Nightingales, Yellowhammers, Skylarks, Linnets, Buzzards, Green Woodpeckers, Whitethroats, Swallows, Song Thrushes, and Blackbirds. The main entry point to the proposed town includes the Kent Community Oasis Garden, the University's Astronomical Observatory, and ponds with Great Crested newts, a species under long-term observation.

Development Proposal Analysis

The land is integral to local biodiversity and is proximate to ancient woodlands, underscoring its ecological importance. The Council's development proposal is inconsistent with policies aimed at conserving natural heritage. The rationale for converting greenfield sites into urban areas is insufficient, especially when brownfield alternatives exist that would mitigate environmental impacts.

Policy Implications

Policy C12 seems to be motivated by the University of Kent's short-term financial pressures. It will have a range of severely detrimental effects on the natural habitat, farming and the rural way life in the existing villages. The Council should impartially assess the proposal's merits, considering its alignment with established priorities and policies such as sustainability and preventing suburbia encroaching on countryside. It should remove proposal C12 from the plan and preserve the region's natural and cultural resources.

Yours faithfully,

Stephanie de Villiers