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30 May 2024

Subject: Consultation on Draft Local Plan to 2040

Dear Sir/Madam

In response to the invitation by Canterbury City Council to comment on the proposals set out in the Draft Local Plan, I would like to make the following points:

Chapter 1: Vision for the district to 2040 (Section 1.17)

“A thriving environment” ... all four paragraphs within this sub-heading give me cause for concern, starting with the reference to “important habitats and landscapes....restored and enhanced...” How will this possible when the proposal calls for a “settlement” (effectively a small town) to be created within large swathes of agricultural land between Blean and Tyler Hill (also impacting on Rough Common)? This development would lead to the three discrete villages effectively merging into one town, itself joined to Canterbury – no more green buffer zone. Significant heritage assets, along with valued (and valuable) landscapes, would be lost. The plan appears to be in conflict with the Council’s emphasis on maintaining biodiversity, and would in particular do serious, perhaps irreparable, damage to the Blean Woodland Complex.

“Areas of Improved connectivity” ... I do not believe that the “high-quality transport infrastructure” referred to in this paragraph is viable. Bus services are already notoriously infrequent and/or unreliable, especially in my own village, Tyler Hill, and I do not accept that residents, whether present or future, will opt for walking or cycling (much as I would support the general idea) other than for recreation and exercise. Buses are fine within the city itself, but residents of any new settlement well outside the city centre will be highly unlikely to rely on public transport to get to work or access leisure activities.

“A range of new homes will meet the needs of the district” ... the country as a whole is suffering from an acute housing shortage, and it is clear that more homes need to be built, but surely consideration must be given to *where* these houses are built, and the kinds of housing to be provided. Will there be starter/affordable housing? Will there be more social housing? Perhaps flats in or near the city centre? Or will it be the oft-repeated scenario of huge housing estates with poor connections and unaffordable houses? Developers unable to find people who can not only afford the houses but are motivated to move to the area? Canterbury, a World Heritage Site with an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the South and a designated Special Area of Conservation, including SSSIs, to the North, does not seem to me to be at all an appropriate location for substantial developments such as those mooted in the Local Plan. I urge the Council to consider applying for an exception, to reduce its housing targets.

Chapter 2: Canterbury - Policy C12

Tyler Hill Road, running from my own village of Tyler Hill to Blean, is a narrow country lane, with a number of blind bends. I can say from personal experience that near misses are a fact of life at

present. I know the road well, and always slow down and keep well over to the left when approaching bends, and yet still my car was hit by a van ten years ago. The driver had not kept fully to his side, and although no-one was injured, my car was a write-off. Tyler Hill Road runs right through the middle of the proposed development, and despite assurances that traffic will be “minimised,” I am concerned that the road will become a “rat run” for residents of the new settlement, increasing the danger substantially. I avoid walking along this road, but others are less circumspect, and so I always keep my eyes peeled for pedestrians, who are often on the “wrong” side of the road, and often without lights or reflective clothing at night.

2000 houses will mean around 4000 additional cars, and even if 20% of residents choose public transport, walking or cycling, there would still be well over 3000 added to an already congested road infrastructure. Rough Common Road and the A290 Whitstable Road are already notorious bottle necks at certain times of the day (rush-hour traffic and school runs spring to mind) and although the proposals include additional roundabouts at the two entrances to the new development, I fail to see how these will mitigate the impact of thousands of additional journeys.

Potential loss of rare wildlife is another issue arising from the Local Plan. I have already made reference above to the loss of the green buffer zone around most of Canterbury, in particular between the City and the villages affected by C12, but the effects of 2000 houses on the natural world in this area would be catastrophic in terms of maintaining biodiversity and this ancient landscape. Skylarks, nightingales, yellowhammers, bats, great crested newts, butterflies, foxes, stoats, badgers and many other species, some of which are already endangered or at risk, would be severely impacted by the proposed development.

Finally, I am extremely concerned about the pressure on water supply and waste water management that 2000 houses would create. How will waste water and sewage be removed from the site? 2000 houses could be as many as 8000 people: that is a lot of water and other waste that has to go somewhere.

For the reasons outlined above, I am objecting strongly to Policy C12.

Yours faithfully

Jonathan A. Cane