

Canterbury City Council
Planning Department
Canterbury City Council
Military Road
Canterbury
Kent
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May 28th 2024

EIA- CA/24/00788 Scoping opinion request Brooklands Farm

Dear Sirs

Ref: Proposed Development Plans for 1400 newbuild dwellings off Brooklands Farm, South Street Whitstable

I have found it difficult/impossible to use the CCC online consultation form and so am writing to object to this development at an early stage. I have also sent this letter as requested by email as a response to local consultation meetings.

I object strongly to Policy W4 Brooklands Farm development. South Street environs.

Reasons

It is clearly obvious that housing is much needed in the UK but this should not be to the unacceptable detriment of local communities, diverting the cost of additional infrastructure onto local taxation, creating an adverse impact on existing utility systems, unacceptable pressure on already hard pressed local roads, requiring improvement and radical change to the abysmal public transport system in this part of Whitstable, loss of amenity green spaces, loss of good pastureland, ancient woodland and impact on the Crab and Winkle cycle and foot pathway, damage and loss to fragile eco-systems and great loss of bio-diversity as well as possible negative impact on local air quality.

Unacceptable detriment to local communities

I have never before been aware of so much stress, anxiety and anger over a local issue – People of all ages have been deeply negatively affected by this proposal. There is real anxiety that already stretched local services will be overwhelmed and the nature of the South Street/Chestfield area will be changed forever. The losses and impacts are significant.

Cost of additional infrastructure and facilities

Infrastructure such as schools, nurseries, dentists (we have looked and not found over 3 years for an NHS dentist anywhere in the District), Doctors, Pharmacies, Community Centres, Post Offices, Police, shops, roads, surface flood alleviation measures, sewers etc.

It is clear that the new huge development on Whitstable Heights which are a) not selling even with DIYSO and b) I understand there is deep miss-giving of these new families about the lack of infrastructure in that part of town and c) it is not clear how many **local** people will be housed there or for that matter at Brooklands Farm. **Whitstable is not in a position to sustain yet another very large development.** I am sure that Section 106 benefits will not cover all of the additional needs in any way adequately. Section 106 agreements are very often watered down or never materialise due to 'un-foreseen circumstances' and will put extra costs associated with the build of additional services onto local taxation.

Adverse impact on existing utility systems

Everyone has heard of the major local problems with raw sewerage and its disposal (usually into the rivers, streams and sea). Existing demand for sewerage treatment and containment far outstrips existing capacities. This is a public health issue of many years' standing. Adding to that existing new housing volume which will include Whitstable Heights, Grasmere Gardens new builds and now the 1400 Brookland Farm development. This is a **major issue** and is unlikely to be addressed within the next 10-15 years at the earliest. We should not be building more and more houses until the sewerage issue is resolved.

Pressure on local roads

South Street is a windy, poorly maintained rural road bordered by high hedging. Flooding always happens in a few areas including the bridge on South Street. Potholes are abundant on all surrounding roads. I presume a new road is planned to replace the existing but that will put immense additional pressure on the area around the Wilson Business park, Tesco roundabout and local roads which is already very busy indeed. With 1400 new houses each with a car, that will be a considerable increase in traffic volumes, impacting air quality and general 'busyness' for an area with a high percentage elderly population.

Inadequate public transport choices

Considering the high level of elderly people living in bungalows in this area around South Street it has to be said the buses are not used much as the service is so awful, up to a 2 hour wait in the afternoon and no mid-late evening service. Sunday services are very poor. The main part of the day is 1hr frequency. We (in our mid-70's) would love to stop running a car but the service is really poor with often cancelled services. People have to run cars as will those at Brooklands Farm adding to the pressure. This is a great shame. Many older people cannot walk with shopping etc to the more frequent services in Ham Shades Lane, The Monument etc which is not easy in poor weather or in winter.

The CCC Transport lead talks about sustainable bus services for those at Brooklands Farm but Stagecoach have NOT so far been willing to improve the No 5 service to an adequate level and so why will they now provide a whole new service more frequently to this new area just around the corner? The site is far from town and not walkable for many and children need to get to school. It is essential that cars are not the only option. Yet again. Cars certainly contribute to our emissions and should not be a necessity. In Finland when I stayed there the busses were clean, accessible to all, fast, comfy and very frequent, people did not need their cars.

Loss of green spaces

Whitstable is a small seaside town that has great charm and draws visitors in droves through the year. The gradual creep of anonymous, poorly designed, uniform boxes with no trees, shrubs or hedges and little green spaces will undoubtedly diminish the 'sense of place' that is Whitstable. Urban sprawl is unattractive but maybe attractive those escaping the larger polluted cities but holds little for local people. We need to have vision for smaller projects with a clear identity that can be used by and accessible to all. Existing Whitstable people also need green spaces. We are a dog-friendly town but need green spaces not only as a 'lung for the town' but as a place to relax, unwind, exercise, picnics etc.... The Crab and Winkle line is not only a cycle route but one where local people jog, travel to school, a well-used walking route into town, a main route to the railway station to commute, forage for blackberries, listen to the birds etc along its length – used by wheelchair users, elderly people using mobility scooters etc - **it is a huge asset**. On the section where the Brookland Farmhouse and sheds are now will be concreted over and that section of the Crab and Winkle running from Clowes Wood to the town will be through a housing estate and represents another depletion of Whitstable's 'soft' assets. Very sad indeed. The number of 'for Sale' boards has increased along South Street. It will change the area totally.

Damage to air-quality, damage to eco-systems and loss of bi-diversity

This plan will change the nature and identity of our local area irrevocably. This farm land currently supports arable and livestock. It absorbs much of the rainfall on its acreage and helps prevent local flooding. It acts like a sponge. The hedges are rich and mature and host so much wildlife through the year. It is a buffer between the town and the Blean and Clowes Wood, a beautiful green space much used by the local population. It will be cleared and concreted over. This, at a time where we are importing so much of our food. We should be growing much MORE food locally and not concreting over our assets that once lost will be lost forever. I understand that there are impact assessments being prepared in relation to particular wildlife species that will be damaged and/or lost. This project is unwelcome and will not in any way benefit our town for local people. We object.

Susan and Harry Pellegrino

