

RE Canterbury City Council Draft Local Plan Consultation

Charles Bodle

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I am writing to object to the above and in particular:

Chapter 2, Policy C12 – University of Kent Development

Chapter 1, Q1 – Vision for the District

Chapter 1, Q2 – Strategic objectives for the District

Chapter 6, DS14 & DS15 – Buses and Highways

I believe that this proposal is a travesty along the following lines: Statistical issues, environmental, and human impact.

Local Impact, Chapter 1 – Q1 & Q2

I vehemently **object** to this proposed development of 2000 houses offices and shops in the village of Blean for the following reasons

- This development is twice the size of the walled part of Canterbury. Thus will substantially alter the feeling and culture of the town. Moreover this is a disproportionate development in a totally wrong setting.
- What evidence is there to suggest that this number is deemed necessary or required in our rural Villages, other than Central Government's Targets? The population of canterbury has decreased, see census information, and the 16% student population is indeed in itself and indicator of the unique character of the town. Canterbury would surely benefit for an exception to the ONS figures driving the housing plan. Given this dates back to 2014, the figures are themselves outdated but Canterbury in line with those figures is not in need of more houses.

The national policy planning framework is not working for canterbury. Local houses are being bought up by London boroughs and outbidding the council.

We are in essence building homes for folk who need them but not local to the area. Canterbury warrants an exception.

I fear this plan is in part due to pressures on the council beyond their control. The planning framework is failing us, see above. Moreover, the University of Kent's poor financial situation is by no means the peoples of Canterbury's fault. This development will fundamentally join three villages, destroy farmland, go against the very biodiversity and environmental plans the CCC and Uni of Kent have put together for the land and finally will rip the soul out of the area. This has become a no party political issue with all against the plan.

Other factors that will impact locally:

- Provision of Medical care- Estuary View, QEQM and William Harvey all under pressure. Most local folk do not have NHS dentistry already and have large waiting times for health care
- Schools- I believe the plans educational plans are deeply flawed see below.
- Traffic- see below
- Policing and blue light services already struggle to cover the district and will only struggle more with this development, 1300 homes in Chestfield and the 1000s of additional homes being built around the city.

Traffic, C12, DS14 & DS15

The local roads cannot cope at present. Highways England, KCC and the CCC all blame each other for the poor upkeep of our roads as well as the the poor management of our road systems. Their appears to be a constant lack of thinking-joined up-thinking which consistently results in roads being dug up, re-laid and dug up again. Recently, the village of Tyler Hill was practically cut off from the city district following the closure of roads on both sides of the village. One road had to re-opened early in order to allow traffic through following a burst water main elsewhere.

- This proposal will bring an extra 2.36 people per household into our rural villages which equates to an increase of approx. 4720 people and **2440 cars** on our already congested pot-hole stricken roads.

The current system cannot cope, this will cripple the area and bring about most congestion. Moreover, the local air quality is critical, see St Dunstan's 2023.

Road users will continue to suffer and the residents nearby themselves from both traffic and pollution.

In recent years the A290 Whitstable Road has been in the top 10 most dangerous roads in the UK (2019) Road Safety Federation. This itself is outrageous and recent work to make it safer has been severely jeopardized by terrible town planning and KCC roadwork decision. At present, there are more than three main access roads in and around these villages, in and out of the town, shut. This is a constant in recent times. I have not travelled to Canterbury without some form of road works, on route from Whitstable, since 2020. The road the A290 has had several deaths and suffers consistently with congestion not just at peak times in the day

- C12 site is described in the Land Assessment as being “car dependent”
- CCC Officers outlined a plan DS14 & DS15, 21/5/24 Westgate Hall, to increase bus services and the use of bicycles, but **FAIL to produce adequate research or detailed planning on it**

The above points are in themselves undermining the whole development. The bus services are privately owned, the CCC can only pressure the companies and not force their hand. This development is in the middle of agriculture land and thus will need cars. It is stated in C12 as being car dependant.

Tyler Hill road is already a ‘rat run’ for motorists and dangerous. The winding country road has no pavements and would not be able to withstand the extra traffic usage, the recent closures of this road has proven this point.

Rough Common would be a main route for construction traffic, which is totally unacceptable. This is contrary to councillors suggesting they have thrown out plans to make the road a by-pass. It will not be a by-pass in name but will become the main artery for the development. While knocking down a school with Victorian and Edwardian buildings, crossing SSSI land and running over the National Cycle Route no.1 the Crab and Winkle!

CCC have failed to produce adequate research regarding the use of extra buses & cycles, for this reason I have a very reasonable fear for health and safety for my families and fellow residents of Blean Tyler Hill and Rough Common. The very cycle and walking lane that has been championed as an exemplar will be severely hit by this development over 10 years or so of building. Crab & Winkle Way would be non usable due to the access for construction vehicles

Heritage

- This proposal will have devastating impacts on our local heritage assets, St Cosmos and St Damian Church, the remains of a Roman Villa, Medieval Tile Kilns both of which are scheduled monuments and Conservation Areas.
- There are ancient meadows, ancient oaks, ancient woodland and indeed the Sare Penn. This area needs preserving.
- CCC in their Environmental strategy state that the districts heritage is a sensitive topic, and they are committed to protect it for the future. This plan join three villages, rip the heart out of the agricultural community.
- Blean Salt Road/Crab and Winkle Way from St Cosmos and St Damian church is the gateway to the Ancient City of Canterbury, the tranquillity of this special place will be ruined for ever. The Salt Road is priced as the route the Romans used to walk between the coast and what is now canterbury.

Food & Farming

- Loss of land for food production, Grade 2 and Grade 3
- Loss of livelihoods for the local farmers
- Local Plan has a policy to protect the best quality agricultural land outside of urban and settlement boundaries

Waste Water

- Sewers cannot cope with the current infrastructure
- More Sewage outputs in our coastal towns, denying people the right to swim safely in the sea
- Local properties potentially will suffer with the addition of wastewater treatment works, at the northern part of the development
- Environmental impact on wildlife and wellbeing of residents
- House price impact
- Water pressure is drier in Blean, further impact on residents

Access

I previously mentioned access. The access to this site is totally flawed. The Jacob's report 2023 Cleary shows and indication of a rural road being built across established farmland, the university's coined 'Sare Penn Valley' biodiversity and environment land, an established cycle path, across sites archaeological importance; not to mention the need to build a bridge over the Sare Penn, Beavers and Pine martens have been spotted here. It will

have to knock down an existing school, to build an access road to build a new one.

Blean School

- Blean School is Ofsted Outstanding with an excellent reputation; it should not be demolished to make an access point. Children staff and parents benefit from the nature rich environment that the school offers which aids learning and wellbeing
- Unnecessary disruption to our children's education and expense to build another school
- Rough Common access Kent College end is via a conservation area that includes the Crab & Winkle National Cycle Route 1 used by many on foot bike or horse and Grade II listed buildings. This would be dangerous for all users and affect wellbeing and mental health of all.
- Were the school consulted? Has due diligence been carried out? The governors were not informed prior to the school being informed. **Did KCC know? These technicalities need to be checked.**

Wildlife & Biodiversity

- CCC declared a biodiversity emergency last year, the site C12 contradicts this policy as it is between The Blean Woods Complex and has bountiful wildlife, surrounded by different parts of the National Nature Reserve.
- Numerous rare and endangered species on the red list live in the fields hedgerows ponds and Sarre Penn Valley. Nightingales Swallows Skylarks, Song Thrush and White Throat to name but a few are welcome visitors and residents because there is an abundance of biodiversity and they all have the habitat to settle and breed.
- The Sare Penn has had Beaver sightings, Atlantic salmon, and trout fry and most recently pine martins.
- CCC policies state the importance to connect up the areas of woodland in order to protect and promote the wildlife which we have. This also backed up by Kent Wildlife Trust and others.
- As a country we are nature depleted and we need to nurture and nourish what we have, once it's gone its gone. This plan will ruin the natural environment.
- The local area has been estimated to have beavers, more than anywhere else in the country, we now have bison, konik ponies, long honed cattle and deer. Iron age pigs are reside locally; we should be looking to join up these natural areas, not throw them out.

Rural Landscape

- CCC has a policy to protect agricultural land in the Local Plan. They state on the Landscape Character Assessment that this has a “strong rural character” with a mix of farmland woodlands and orchards. The Sare Penn valley will be decimated. Planting and implementation of environmental plans has been poorly, at best, and non existently carried out, at worst, in this valley. Post purchase of the land, the University of Kent has done very little to enhance biodiversity. The site will be ruined.
- This will damage existing communities’ wellbeing, existing villages and existing cycle routes and green corridors that are used by the community.

This plan is horrendously thought out and four sides of A4 can barely explain the travesty that it is. There are serious concerns surrounding the plan, as laid out in my introduction, and these can fundamentally be explained as, statistical, environmental, and human impact. I feel this development is not required and the office for statistics’ data leading the national house building framework, are wrong and misleading. Canterbury must be seen as an exception to the rule. This is not Nimbyism, this the difference between ruining a community or preserving it. The environmental issues are laid out above and are clear for anybody to see, the site is superb for biodiversity, the university have not followed through on their plans and this makes a mockery of themselves, CCC and others for working collaboratively. Finally, the human impact is enormous. Traffic is a real-life reification of the issues that this development will produce in the future. Access points are controversial, in knocking down a school, crossing SSSI, destroying wildlife and biodiversity as well as damaging existing walking, cycling and outdoor spaces.

Councillors please support the very people who voted for you and have the moral courage to challenge Central Government.