



The Crab and Winkle Line Trust



Registered Charity 1077110

<https://crabandwinkle.org/>



## Canterbury City Council Draft Local Plan 2025-2040

### Crab and Winkle Line Trust Response

#### Introduction

The Crab and Winkle Line Trust welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Canterbury City Council Draft Local Plan 2025-2040.

The Trust is primarily concerned with the preservation and promotion of the history of the Canterbury and Whitstable Railway, and its conversion into a sustainable, motor traffic free, transport route. We have no mandate regarding if and where housing should be built. We comment here in the interest of preserving the historical artefacts of the line that remain, the existing walking and cycling route remaining motor traffic free, and potential enhancements to the route and the paths that connect to the route to form the wider walking and cycling network. We defer the question of if and where new houses should be built to other groups.

With the transport policy emphasis now solidly away from bypasses and zoning, when new houses are to be built, the developers must now contribute significantly more than in the last plan towards sustainable transport schemes that would make a significant difference to the possibility and attractiveness of sustainable transport for local journeys, such as the bridges to complete the Crab and Winkle Way into Whitstable and re-opening the Tyler Hill tunnel to pedestrians, people on bikes and those with disabilities.

## Policy C12 - Land North of University

We are seriously concerned about potential adverse implications of C12 for the Crab & Winkle Way, which is well-established and popular with recreational walkers and cyclists, as well as providing a unique safe off-road route for cyclists between Whitstable and Canterbury.

The years of disruption during the construction phase followed by the built-up nature of the completed settlement envisaged in C12 will inevitably reduce the current attractiveness and visual amenity value of the route for recreational users

The substantial motor vehicle and motorcycle traffic generated by the occupants of 2000 houses will create safety issues at crossing points for walkers and cyclists using the C&W route.

While we welcome the references to improving connections to the city centre and Whitstable via the C&W cycle route and improved connectivity to the wider area, C12 makes clear that the C&W Way as a whole will be expected to carry a significant amount of new daily traffic to and from Canterbury and Whitstable by residents of the settlement, risking congestion and safety problems at junctions and on the route's steep down/up sections eg between the University and the church of St Damian & Cosmas.

We are also concerned about the risk of housing being built very close to the original C&W track bed which runs by the eastern boundaries of the development, compromising its potential as a wildlife corridor and future walking and wheeling route.

If C12 goes ahead:

Where the C&W Way passes through the new settlement (From Whitstable Road all the way through to Chapel Lane) it should remain an off-road bridleway open to walkers and cyclists but closed to motor vehicles including motorcycles. The temptation to run a new road alongside it should be resisted, as this would completely change the character of the path. The Way should remain at a distance from any new roads and either be part of a green corridor or be provided with surrounding green landscaping to preserve as far as possible its attractiveness and visual amenity value.

Where the Way crosses internal roads within the settlement safe junctions should be provided with priority for pedestrians and cyclists using the path.

If vehicular access to the settlement is provided through the current site of Blean Primary School this should not obliterate the current C&W shared use path.

The original C&W railway track line running alongside the eastern border of the proposed settlement is a conservation area and identified in C12 as a possible wildlife corridor. It also has potential for a walking/cycling path southwards from Tyler Hill Road providing a traffic-free route for Tyler Hill residents to access the University and beyond. This could run either along the trackbed itself or along the line of the current permissive footpath along the western side of it. Development at the eastern edge of the C12 site should be designed to leave open these

possibilities which could also provide a further safe route for residents of the new settlement living nearby.

The trust's long term aim is to re-open the disused railway tunnel as part of the Crab and Winkle Way for walking and cycling between Canterbury and Whitstable. As a former railway it is the flattest and shortest route. The Crab and Winkle Way would be more accessible than ever and its position strengthened as a genuine and attractive alternative to driving for many local journeys. We believe that if a large development is to go ahead in this area then funding the reopening of the tunnel should be considered.

The C12 site boundary north of Tyler Hill Road also runs close to the original railway track bed which forms part of the Canterbury and Whitstable Railway (Hackington and Blean) conservation area. It will be important that any development plans take full account of the need to protect the conservation area.

The section of Tyler Hill Road between the villages is narrow including tight bends with poor visibility. Given the likelihood that it would carry much more traffic, road safety improvements should be implemented and the speed limit reduced to 20mph on the sections in the villages and 20mph or 30mph on the rural section. Physical traffic calming measures should be added where the road crosses the Crab and Winkle Way.

If a road is to be brought through the current Blean Primary school site then if that was also connected to Giles Lane it might then be possible to close Tyler Hill Road to through traffic. Perhaps this can be given careful consideration.

## Policy W4 - Land at Brooklands Farm

### Crab and Winkle Way Bridges

We note that it is proposed that a condition of this development would be to provide bridges over Old Bridge Road and Teynham Road to complete the walking and cycling route to the harbour. CCC, KCC, DfT, NPPF all state modal shift as an aim. It is absolutely vital that this condition is included in any plan and that attempts to remove it or circumvent it by - for example - developers breaking the scheme down into smaller parts so that the separate S278/S106/CIL contributions become too small - is guarded against. All recent development has added more motor traffic - this development will too - but this level of mitigation is required to genuinely meet the aim of modal shift. Other funding streams for the bridges will be pursued in parallel, we will not solely rely on the potential funding from this development.

### Connection from Crab and Winkle to Chestfield

This would be a welcome additional route. The description says "off road/lightly trafficked" this is a little worrying because it might be so full of interruptions and sections shared with motor vehicles that it becomes useless for younger and less confident riders. Perhaps potential

developers could be told to consider it a motor traffic free route and design around it in order to interrupt it as little as possible.

### South Street Improvement

South Street is currently a weak link in the mostly off road Crab and Winkle way. If South Street is diverted around the farm and the current road through the farm is blocked, then safety where the path enters farmland will be improved. The development will bring additional traffic as will the proposed additional A299 slips. There are some further improvements to South Street that we feel are necessary (if the development proceeds or not). South Street should have its speed limit reduced to 20mph. The Millstrood Road junction is very wide and encourages last minute overtakes and fast entry from South Street. The corner radii also make crossing Millstrood Road blind from one road or the other depending on where you are standing. Tighten the radii up as much as possible to slow traffic and improve visibility. Perhaps add a raised table. South Street is narrow and improvements to pavements have already been made, but this could be re-examined to see if there is enough space to widen the pavement further to allow shared use.

### Policy W5 - Land south of Thanet Way

With the widening of the path along the A2990 (LCWIP W4), crossing (LCWIP W8), and connection between A2990 path and Invicta Way (LCWIP) this offers, via the Crab and Winkle Way, a motor traffic free route to Whitstable Railway Station. LCWIP W1 would complete this as a virtually traffic free route all the way to Whitstable Harbour. This would benefit not only existing and new residents but to users of the potential Park and Bus (Park and Pedal).

Depending on land ownership and future development, this area could be linked over the fields South of the industrial estate to LCWIP W12, this would benefit both routes. The proposed Toucan associated with Local Plan Policy W5 would enable residents from Central and the West of Whitstable to take an off road route to Chestfield, or more direct route to Canterbury without having to navigate the very busy area around Tesco. Safer walking and cycling access to the industrial estate could also be added.

### Summary

We hope our comments on the Canterbury City Council Draft Local Plan 2025-2040 are useful and look forward to the next stage.