

Draft Canterbury District local plan 2040

Comments and objections to the plan by Tatiana Swaffer and Clive Bowley (June 2024)

Preamble

These representations constitute a personal objection by Tatiana Swaffer and Clive Bowley to policies W4 and W5 of the Draft Canterbury District local plan 2040 and the proposal to make a connection from the A299 into the area at Chestfield (Radfall Corner).

Tatiana Swaffer is a resident of the locality and her partner, Clive Bowley is a heritage professional.

Comments:

in general terms, we wish to object to the proposed development allocations contained in policies W4 and W5 of the draft Canterbury District local plan 2040 for the following reasons:

Loss of productive farmland.

Given the general and wider concerns about food security, it seems more than unwise, indeed foolish, to consider such large development allocations that consume such a vast area of productive farmland.

Visual impact on the countryside and Whitstable as a whole and the failure to take account of the topography.

The W4 Brooklands farm allocation, and especially the eastern part of it and the land south of South Street nearer Radfall Corner are located on rising ground and will have a visually intrusive impact on the countryside here at the southern fringes of the Blean.

The W5 allocation south of the Thanet Way is located on the highest ground – the crest of the hillside, overlooking, and forming the setting of Whitstable. Development here will appear especially visually intrusive in views of Whitstable as seen from the north, and especially in views from the sea. It is difficult to think of a more prominent site in the entire area and, as such, this site should not be developed.

A flawed, unsustainable fundamental development model.

The siting and layout of the proposed concept masterplans of both sites (W4 and W5) appears to perpetuate the tired old model of low-density suburban development. The allocations are wasteful and land hungry. They create a pattern of development unconnected to existing centres of settlement and, by their siting, force the future residents into their cars to make any journeys.

Failure to accommodate the natural environment.

The unrealistic aspirations of the "open space/biodiversity opportunities indicative locations." and "opportunities for green corridors are essentially 'greenwash'.

In reality, these areas are just the leftover bits of land around the 'blobs' of development, that cannot be built over due to the existence of rivers and streams or are there to buffer the development from existing housing. These areas are fragmented and will be of no real benefit to local wildlife. The narrow 'green corridors' will become miserable leftover and neglected spaces of no practical benefit – in the same way as the existing green corridors along the southern edge of Chestfield are already neglected and abandoned.

Traffic issues.

Traffic in this area has become much more intense and intrusive in recent years. This is, no doubt, due to the amount of recent development that has already taken place in the area. The proposed developments here will yet further increase the traffic to an unacceptable degree – not least because of the car based suburban nature of the proposed allocation sites.

The proposed additional connection to the A299 at Chestfield/Radfall Corner will lead to yet more traffic penetration into the area to the detriment of the locality and we object to this proposal, in particular.

Wider structural issues.

At a wider level, our concern is that the concentration of growth proposed here in this area, combined with the even larger proposed development of housing at Blean will create huge increases in traffic pressures on the local road network between Whitstable and Canterbury which would lead to an inevitable pressure to widen, 'improve' the Radfall Road into Canterbury. This would cause structural harm to the integrity of the Blean, which is of course contrary to another stated policy, **DS23**, which seeks to protect the environment of the Blean Woods.

An alternative vision for the area.

If there really is to be more development to the south of Whitstable, then this needs to be planned in an entirely different way, with the aim of creating a dense hub of development immediately to the east and close by the straight run of the north end of South Street, on land behind the houses here but not extending out into the countryside to the south of Rayham Farm. This area of land is potentially the least visually intrusive area outside the existing settlement.

if the development could be concentrated here as a tightly planned, high density, urban type settlement, this would help reinforce South Street as a village centre and would make for a much more sustainable development within walking distance of facilities – the Tesco store, bus stop and the crab and winkle walkway into Whitstable.

it is a time for a change! The current proposals perpetuate the tired old model of suburban housing, which is intensely land hungry and reliance entirely on residents using their cars. A tighter, more concentrated development close by South Street would minimise the land take and because of its closeness to facilities would encourage residents out of their cars for many of their journey needs.

Tania Swaffer and Clive therefore request that these comments on these particular aspects of the local plan affecting Whitstable should be registered as their comments on the Canterbury District Local Plan 2040 - consultation stage.

Yours faithfully,

Tatiana Swaffer

Clive Bowleys