

Response to the Canterbury Draft Local Plan 2040

I wish to comment on the Vision for the District and Policy C12

Vision for the District

It is right to have a vision for the future of the Canterbury district but it obviously completely wrong to propose policies that simply ignore that vision.

To say that '*our important habitats and landscapes will be restored and enhanced ...providing significant increases in biodiversity*' and that '*existing communities will be enhanced*' is completely at odds with the implementation of policies like C12. That will simply not be the case if Rough Common, Blean and Tyler Hill are basically merged within a new urban (not rural as claimed) development adjacent to the University of Kent.

Ensuring that the right number of homes in the right place is also questionable. Have the correct figures been used in determining the actual number that the district needs and why has that quantity not been challenged with central government?

Comments on C12

The proposal to build 2000 new homes and a business hub on greenfield land is madness. To describe it as a freestanding rural settlement is a real stretch of the imagination. It would simply remove the existing green gap status between Rough Common and Blean and also infill between Blean and Tyler Hill eliminating the individuality of the three villages, whilst linking the whole area through the university to the city.

The '*significant investment in movement and transportation infrastructure*' is not simply developing a bus led strategy with walking and cycle paths to the city centre and Canterbury West railway, it is the destruction of Rough Common village as it is now. By requiring developments to the A2 junction with the provision of two new slip roads at Harbledown and the upgrading of Rough Common Road it is in effect raising the spectre of the previous administrations vision of a 'western bypass'. Considerable costs have already been determined for the upgrades which would indicate substantial work.

Rough Common Road is a major walking route through the village for parents taking children to two pre-school nurseries and Blean primary school. How can potentially widening, increasing speed limits and removing weight restrictions be acceptable?

Upgrades to the road through Rough Common equates to a downgrading in the value, consideration, health and wellbeing given by the City Council to of all the residents of the village.

But despite this we find that the City Council still has no traffic assessment report for this proposal which really makes a nonsense of asking for comments on something of which we AND the council have no firm knowledge.

Owning a property fronting on Rough Common Road I am very aware of the currently very high levels of traffic especially at certain times of the day which cause tailbacks in both directions. Adding to this all the construction vehicles and then the number of journeys that cars from 2,000 homes would make will make life extremely challenging.

There are no details, only a sketchy map, but the primary access route to this development would appear be from a new road opposite an entrance to Kent College. Building a major road here will no doubt do damage to this conservation area which includes listed buildings, a public right of way, bridleway, the start of the Crab and Winkle way and also part of the National Cycle route 1. This type of amenity deserves protection, not destruction. It offers cycling and walking, precisely the kind of alternative modes of transport that the council are trying to encourage and maximise.

The Sustainability Appraisal Report 2024 for the site SLAA319 (C12) indicated negative impacts on Biodiversity; Geology; Landscape; Water and Heritage. These are the same factors that contributed to the rejection of this land in 2022. The only change has been in transport with the determining access which will be via a conservation area described above and by knocking down Blean school rated as outstanding by Ofsted!

Canterbury City Council have an ambition to achieve a 20% biodiversity net gain and a 20% minimum of tree cover for new developments. This is plainly not achievable! The loss of the current levels of wildlife and biodiversity with destruction of 102 Hectares of grade 2 and 3 farmland simply couldn't reach that.

Policy C12 would also, if implemented contradict a number of other policies including DS19 (Habitats, Landscapes and sites of local importance), DS21 (supporting biodiversity recovery), DS22 (Landscape character), DS23 (Blean Woodland Complex), DS26 (Historic environment and archaeology) and DM18 (light pollution and dark skies)

Conclusion

It is for all the above reasons that I ask Canterbury City Council to reconsider policy C12 and remove it from the Draft Local Plan 2040.

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