

Comments on Draft Canterbury District Local Plan 2040 from Thanington Parish Council taking into account local feedback.

While this plan is indeed a vast improvement on the previous draft, Thanington Parish Council does have concerns regarding certain details.

In general, Canterbury district has shown a distinct lack of 'big picture' thinking when it comes to road layout and traffic infrastructure and this plan shows nothing to waylay those concerns. The proposed South West Canterbury Link Road (site C11) is at risk of following suit. Considering very little feedback has been listened to in the past with the Wincheap Gyratory system, which was hugely and repeatedly opposed by locals, we have very little faith that when the time comes to review plans for C11 any and all feedback and opposition from those directly effected will not be simply ignored.

Despite it being one of the busiest and most congested roads, traffic from this new road wanting to head to Canterbury City Centre is still funnelled through Wincheap, either via Hollow Lane, or via the A28. The Wincheap Interchange is over managed, with traffic regularly getting stuck between traffic lights and causing traffic to back up, but there is still a plan to add yet another off ramp to the A2 directly onto the interchange and even traffic taking the proposed Gyratory road will still have to go through Wincheap Interchange. Thanington residents along the A28 regularly get 'trapped' in their homes by the gridlock on the Ashford Road caused by these issues.

While the addition of a new Park and Ride at Merton Park is a good addition, we have found that many locals are still using their cars more than they need to, as the park and ride price is not offered to locals, if a family who lives near the P&R facility wants to go to town, it is cheaper to take their car and park at the P&R car park, than leave the car at home and walk to take the bus. While a P&R is a great addition to encourage out of town people to visit the city, it does not serve the locals well, and certainly does nothing to discourage locals from using their cars to get around.

There has been concerns raised about the loss of disabled parking in the city centre. With a generalised policy of reducing parking in the city, we would like some built in assurance that lost disabled parking spaces from development/changes made to public car parks will be replaced with comparable alternative spaces elsewhere.

The public transport led scheme, while sounding good, is a concern. CCC has no control over what bus routes will be available long term. Loss of bus routes to outlying areas is already a huge problem, with many areas being totally lacking in public transport. Within the city and close areas, bus routes are regularly changed, removed and not serviced. The concern is that outlying areas will continue to be underserved, and new estates that are literally built around the availability of a bus route will be left stranded. Working within a plan that makes an assumption that locals will use the bus over their own car could lead to massive underestimates when it comes to traffic movement from new developments.

Site C10 shows access to the site via a small side road directly off of the A28, but also states that the main access will be via the spine road through the Redrow estate at Cockerling Farm. Will the access on the A28 be a through road, a private driveway? This is unclear.

Site C7 states that there will be a primary health facility, stated to be a doctors surgery on page 32. This has been long asked for, as Thanington has many elderly residents and new families are now moving in and we have no healthcare facility at all, however this has been promised before, not just in Thanington but in other areas, only to be removed as the NHS has refused to staff or fund the facility. Is there assurance that this doctors surgery will actually be built and staffed?

Thanington has been under development for many years now, and there are regular complaints by locals of those working on the sites breaking guidelines for what road they should use, issues with noise and mess (dust and dirt) being created without warning and general lack of collaboration with local businesses, groups and the Parish Council, with little help and correction from CCC. There is a great deal of concern that this will continue with new sites.

There is already problems with the management company on Saxon Fields. The grounds are unkempt, residents have been given wrong information regarding planning, the playpark was never secured and is not being maintained, the allotments were never finished to a good standard (the pathways were never grassed or any alternative put in, just left with sparse gravel. Over time weeds have of course taken root and now the pathways are overgrown. Complaints have been made, but nothing has been done. The concern is that the same will happen with any other estate, and we will end up with a mix of estates, all managed by outside and absent management companies and an increasing number of complaints that the Parish Council can't help with, and the management company won't help with.

Consultation with local groups and the Parish Council has been historically bad when it comes to developers. We have struggled to contact site managers, get and give feedback and generally have an opinion on what is going on. With a wish for these sites to integrate into the community, it seems that collaboration and cooperation would be a good thing, as we are the ones best placed to represent our community's needs.

While development is an inevitability, Thanington Parish Council's main concern is that it is done in a sensible order. Concerns are that we are going to end up with more houses, before the infrastructure to handle them is in place. So far, this plan focuses heavily on discouraging people from bringing their cars into the town, and relying on that to reduce traffic on the over used and heavily congested roads leading into the city. However, there are questions as to how realistic this is, as car ownership is going up nationally, not down, and with disabilities also going up, elderly population going up, the reliance on cars is still very much a problem that needs dealing with. Simply making it difficult to take cars into the city by removing parking is a risky strategy. The park and rides are excellent for this, but with a lack of collaboration with the general bus service, no accommodation for those who live nearby, the service remains underutilised, and the Wincheap P&R in particular being still so close to the city centre, does little to reduce traffic going through the Wincheap interchange, and nothing to reduce traffic on the A28. Perhaps the site at Milton Manor would be a better site for a P&R on the Ashford side of Canterbury, as it would remove traffic from the Ashford Road through Thanington completely, and would also free up the space at the current P&R to better place the proposed A2 slip.