

Alexander Gunyon

From: Miranda Showler [REDACTED]
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Categories: Green category

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Good afternoon,

Like many, I was shocked and disgusted at the Council's plan to build 3,500 additional homes (2,000 on University land and 1,500 Brockland Farm).

I am writing to explain why the Council should withdraw this local plan for development. I set out my response below.

Introduction

Canterbury is medieval city surrounded by ancient **protected** woodland and it has UNESCO status. It is a busy city with **existing traffic issues**. The Council is already attempting to put into place measures to deal with the volume of traffic. Therefore, it completely defies sense to build 3,500 additional homes which would:

- a. destroy the protected woodland; and
- b. significantly increase in the volume of traffic in the local area.

My following comments relate to Chapter 1, Q1 & Q2 and Chapter 2 C12 of the Council's plan.

1. Government Targets

The government has explained at length that housing targets are merely advisory and "are a starting point, with new flexibilities to reflect local circumstances."

In the case of Canterbury, it is clear that the local circumstances set it apart from most other cities in the U.K.. It is a city with huge national and international importance due to Canterbury Cathedral and the medieval city centre with UNESCO status. The City has grown over the years but this has been done delicately and with consideration to ensure new housing is positioned in places that would not upset the existing villages many of which have stood for many hundreds of years.

As a Council you should be standing up for our City and trying your hardest to preserve its unique historical and natural importance so you should be doing everything you can to push back on this type of proposal.

2. The Natural Environment

The Council claims it is committed to protecting the local environment and biodiversity but this plan would drastically affect the natural environment around Canterbury in terms of:

- a. pollution from the construction;
- b. pollution caused by traffic from the new homes;
- b. detriment to water quality / additional sewage requirements; and
- c. destruction of ancient woodland, farmland which would have a huge negative impact on climate change and biodiversity!

It is obvious that this plan completely contradicts the Council's commitment to the environment.

3. Historical Canterbury

The shops and businesses in Canterbury City centre have suffered like many others around the country. The transport plan which has been suggested will not only alienate local people and make it even harder for them to go into town but it would also discourage tourists. This has been the effect in Oxford and we should learn from their mistakes. It would be a disaster to continue with the proposed plan. It would kill the businesses in Canterbury and force people to go to Ashford or Bluewater instead where one can actually park!

Suggestions

The Council should consider building smaller developments that do not negatively impact the local environment.

Brownfield sites are highlighted in your plan with Wincheap is referenced as a priority. I understand that Becket House may also be converted. These plans make far more sense for our City than the proposed plan. There are other sites that could be used too, namely, Debenhams, Nasons and Curry's buildings. Also, the old Odeon. These buildings are obvious options to create more housing. If there were more people living in town it would benefit local businesses too and increase the likelihood of these new residents walking/ using the bus networks as they would already be close to town.

I understand one of the reasons Debenhams hasn't been converted is because of sewage problems at Stodmarsh. How can the additional 3,500 proposed new houses be acceptable to the sewage situation? Surely this development would put a huge strain on the existing sewage system which would result in even more waste being pumped into the sea in Whitstable.

Finally, I can't see why the City and its residents should be penalised because the University cannot manage its finances. The fact the University wants to use this land for thousands of new houses shows how little it cares about the City or the natural environment that it should be committed to protecting.

Your faithfully

Miranda Showler

