

Alexander Gunyon

From: Matthew Showler [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 June 2024 15:46
To: Consultations
Subject: Draft local plan

Categories: Green category

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Dear Sir,

My email below relates to Chapter 1/ Q1, Chapter 1/ Q2 and also Chapter 2, Policy C12 of your Draft Local Plan.

I am writing to request the withdrawal of the Council's development proposal. This plan has been poorly conceived and is detrimental to our City: it should be withdrawn.

My family and I live in [REDACTED]; my parents live in [REDACTED]; and my sister and her family live on [REDACTED]. I have lived in [REDACTED] my whole life. I am, therefore, well placed to comment on the negative affect these plans will have on our City.

The impact of 2000 targeted homes on the University land and also the proposed 1500 homes at Brookland Farm will have an enormous and detrimental effect on those areas and the City as a whole.

- 1- It will seriously damage the area and its inhabitants' quality of life.
 - a. There would be negative financial consequences for those inhabitants whose house value is affected.
 - b. The environmental consequences will be catastrophic as acres of countryside (including historically significant sites) will be concreted over.
 - c. There will be negative health consequences for the inhabitants who will have to breathe in more polluted air. Rough Common Road is already a busy road. If it were to become a major arterial road the quality of life for those residents would be unhealthy, dangerous and noisy. The residents chose to live in this place because it is peaceful and close to nature. The development proposal would destroy that.
- 2- The European Court of Human Rights has recently held Switzerland to be in breach of the rights conferred under the European Convention for similar infractions to the above. Litigation would no doubt be brought by those residents against the Council and thus exposing the Council to this risk and any liability that follows from it. This risk would then, ultimately, be borne by the residents of the City (who are overwhelmingly opposed to the plan) in the form of higher council taxes.
- 3- It is unacceptable that any plans relating to the new slip roads are unavailable until after the consultation deadline. The inference of this failure is that it is being done to stymie debate on the matter by keeping residents in the dark. The failing to keep adequate minutes of Council meetings is a further example of this.
- 4- The demolition of Blean Primary school to build an access road onto Whitstable Road and to build another access road on part of the Crab & Winkle Way that goes past the Oaks Nursery School and comes out, opposite Kent College is unthinkable. There are a number of large, developed trees that will be destroyed. The number of HGVs and construction vehicles that would be required for this type of job would need to down Rough Common Road. The road simply could not take this type of traffic. The Crab & Winkle way is a site of global historic significance and yet the plans will, to all intents and purposes, destroy it. No regard has been had to this act of desecrating a site of historical significance: this is particularly important given that Canterbury's status as UNESCO heritage site is under threat.
- 5- The transport plan will not work. Canterbury is not Central London. People choose to live here so they can use a car. Insufficient/ no consideration has been given to those in wheelchairs, the elderly, parents with

young children, multigenerational families. These people need to use their cars. It is not an answer to this issue to say more buses will be provided as the current road lay out cannot cope with the current level of traffic. If it is the Council's plan to deal with this by making the use of cars so untenable that it hopes to make people give up using their car (e.g. in the form of exorbitant parking charges, extra traffic, further undisclosed plans for preventing people from driving from one part of the city to another) then it should say so now. Canterbury has a Medieval road layout: it has a city wall, with a fixed and finite number of roads leading into it. This cannot be changed and so it is not an option to keep funnelling more traffic down Whitstable Road, St Stephens Hill and the Harbledown Bypass.

- 6- The proposed housing development would drastically impact air quality, water quality, waste, sewage, health and heritage. The City already has a serious problem with healthcare - the nearest A&E being in Ashford or Margate! How do you intend to look after the health of the inhabitants of a further 3,500 new houses (which presumably will increase the size of the population by somewhere in the region of 10,000 inhabitants)? What about school places? The plan suggests that these infrastructure plans will be dealt with but if the Council cannot even deal with the issues it has at the moment (which it cannot) how does it expect to deal with even more people?
- 7- There are also literally 100s of residential dwellings that could be converted from the empty units in the City Centre. For example, the Odeon, Becket House, Debenhams, Nasons, Currys, the old DVLA building on Lower Bridge Street. Converting these units would deliver a significant portion of the 3,500 units the council wants to build but without increasing traffic on the roads into Canterbury since those units would already be in the City Centre. It would also have the additional benefit of actually using these currently empty buildings and bring more footfall into Canterbury which would help the local businesses that drastically need support. No doubt the council will point to the nutrient neutrality rules as its excuse for not doing this but this excuse is irreconcilable with the environmental damage that will be caused by the present draft local plan. This shows the incoherence in the Council's position.
- 8- Finally, I should state the most important point is that the Government imposed housing targets are not mandatory. The Council has the right to push back on any pressure from central government and it should be doing so on behalf of its residents whose views, overwhelmingly, are opposed to this plan. If the Council doubts that, or thinks otherwise, then I suggest it organise a local referendum on this issue.

Yours Faithfully,

Matthew Showler

