

Alexander Gunyon

From: Sandy Hadfield [REDACTED]
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Categories: Green category

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My name: Sandra Hadfield
Status: Resident of the Canterbury District

[REDACTED]

My comments on the Canterbury District Local Plan to 2040 are as follows:

Chapter 1 Spatial Strategy for the district

Vision for the district to 2040

I am extremely pleased that CCC have made the very wise decision to remove R1 (Land at Cooting Farm) from the Canterbury Local Plan. Adisham is a small and peaceful village with a long history, of at least 1400 years, as a separate rural community. To suddenly increase the number of houses by over 1000% would have had a negative impact on the area and all who live within it:

Farmland - we need to protect our farmland for future generations, producing food locally has a positive effect on carbon emissions and air quality.

Roads - our very narrow local roads, and the B2046, are already busy and would be totally inadequate for the increase in traffic caused by such a massive development.

Wildlife - any development in the area would have a devastating impact on our ancient woodlands and the flora and fauna that live within it. The public rights of way are well used, and walking in the un-spoilt and peaceful countryside is proven to be extremely beneficial to physical and mental health.

Health services - we have a shortage of GPs locally, a situation already made worse by the growth of nearby Aylesham, and more housing would mean even less chance of seeing a doctor.

Water - the local sewage infrastructure is already inadequate so any large scale development would add to the problems.

Pollution- the potential increase in noise, air, and light pollution would have a negative impact on residents and wildlife.

I believe there should be no further large scale development in the Canterbury district until the huge estates at Mountfield Park are up and running and the effects observed.

Maybe be a fairer option would be if every town or village in Kent was obliged to allow, and find a location for, an increase of 5% more houses than they currently have. This might avoid existing houses feeling smothered by inappropriate amounts of new builds, as well as ensuring better integration of new residents into communities.

Strategic Objectives for the district

I support the Strategic Objectives for the district.

Canterbury's economy relies greatly on tourism, but I don't think the city centre is currently "vibrant". We need to encourage more small independent shops and businesses rather than an excessive amount of cafes, vape shops, and nail bars etc. My recent visits to Bath and York, both similar to Canterbury in historical attractions, have shown they have obviously got the right formula. Their town centres are thriving with plenty to attract local residents as well as tourists.

Obviously we need to tackle the causes of climate change. The air quality in and around the centre of Canterbury is so bad you can taste as well as smell it. An improved public transport network might help reduce

reliance on cars, in and around the district. Rural communities would benefit from a reliable bus service between villages. As I don't have a car, it is impossible for me to get to Wingham or Bridge for dentist and GP appointments without catching a train into Canterbury and then a bus.

Our green spaces, farmland, and landscapes are precious to us and to our wildlife, but seem to be constantly under threat of development. We need farmland to grow our food and more should be done to help our farmers in their valuable work.

Our rural communities might find some more housing helpful, but this needs to be affordable and the right amount in the right place. We do not need huge estates dumped on agricultural land, as would have been the case with the old R1, Land at Cooting Farm, and the old R20, Aylesham South near Womenswold.

Policy SS1: Environmental Strategy for the district

I support the Environmental strategy for the district.

Our green spaces, ancient woodlands, and landscapes must be protected for future generations. Our Public Rights of Way, including the historically important North Downs Way, must be looked after and preserved for us to make the most of our beautiful countryside.

This confirms that Canterbury City Council definitely made the right decision in removing the old R1 from the new Local Plan as it would have meant:

Loss of valuable agricultural land

Negative impact on air quality

Increase in noise and light pollution

Wildlife habitats destroyed

Threat to our ancient SSSI woodlands

Increased stress on our already inadequate water and sewage infrastructure

Policy SS3: Development Strategy for the district

I support some aspects of the Development strategy for the district.

I agree with the emphasis on city and town regeneration and on using brownfield sites first. Attracting more tourists and businesses to the area would create more jobs, but more needs to be done for small independent businesses and shops. Our town centres are becoming wastelands, only worth visiting if you require a nail bar, vape shop, mobile phone repair or several different brands of coffee.

However, **I do not agree** with the emphasis on viticulture, especially if valuable agricultural land and precious wildlife habitat is destroyed for its development. At a time when we are being encouraged to explore the "great outdoors" and increase exercise for our mental and physical health, and decrease alcohol consumption, viticulture seems both morally wrong and totally unnecessary.

Policy SS4: Movement and Transport policy for the district

I support the Movement and Transport strategy for the district.

We need to improve air quality in the district and lessen the reliance on cars, therefore I support the idea of a bus-led strategy. However, rural communities must be included in this, including regular and reliable bus services connecting all towns and villages. Currently I can get on a train at Adisham and end up on the continent, but I can't easily travel to Bridge or Wingham, our neighbouring villages. As long as the bus services were reliable, and ran at times that were helpful to people, they might be more inclined to leave their cars at home. Improved and safe walking routes between villages would be very welcome too.

Policy SS5: Infrastructure Strategy for the district

I agree with the principle of "infrastructure in first" for any development. This would stop developers making promises of new schools and GP surgeries etc which never materialise.

The new and improved wastewater treatment facilities, and new Broad Oak reservoir, are long overdue. The district's water and sewage infrastructure can't cope as it is, and the huge new estates which are planned for Mountfield Park between Canterbury and Bridge will add to the problem.

A new and improved Kent and Canterbury hospital would be very welcome. However it must have all the departments you expect from a hospital, ie Maternity and A&E, to make travelling to the William Harvey at Ashford, or QEQM at Margate, unnecessary.

Chapter 2 Canterbury

Policy C1: Canterbury City Centre

I support the strategy for the city centre.

Small independent shops should be encouraged to open in the town, and fewer nail bars and vape shops etc. Currently the high street is an embarrassment with so many of these types of places.

A better selection of some larger shops in the city centre would be very helpful, for instance smaller versions of some of the out of town stores, ie Dunelm, The Range, and maybe a DIY store. This might avoid people having to drive across town, thereby improving air quality, and would also benefit people without cars. Other towns and cities like Canterbury, and with similar historic value, seem to thrive, possibly because they have many unique shops that people want to visit. I think we rely too heavily on the cathedral and the chain stores in Whitefriars to attract visitors and we need to greatly improve the city's reputation as a shopping and tourism destination. Canterbury used to be such a pleasant place to shop but I feel there really isn't much worth the train fare now.

Policy C17: Land at Canterbury Business Park

I am strongly opposed to policy C17 and believe it should be removed from the plan.

No further development should be allowed until the huge site previously occupied by Gomez has been utilised. It is ridiculous that a building that size should stand empty while developers are digging up more of our precious farmland and destroying our wildlife habitat just to allow the development of similar buildings.

The Chapel Down Winery, which is currently subject to a legal challenge, should never have been approved. There is no evidence of a proven need for a Viticulture Hub in this sensitive location. There are NO exceptional circumstances, and it is NOT in the public interest. There is no public transport to the site so "wine tourism" would necessitate travel by car, as would any employment at the site. As stated by the KCC Transportation Team Leader in a letter to CCC:

"I have read the transport assessment and framework travel plan. Unfortunately I do not consider that the travel plan will encourage any employee to adopt sustainable transport".

Development at this site is strongly opposed, by local residents and many statutory consultees; Natural England, Kent Downs National Landscape, and Historic England. CPRE Kent are also opposed to it.

Development would have a significant harmful impact on the Kent Downs National Landscape, and will not conserve or enhance it, thereby contravening policy LB1 of the Canterbury District Local Plan 2017.

A site at the Business Park has already been approved for Brett Concrete to build a new plant. If further development is allowed, many more HGVs will be using Coldharbour Lane and the junction with the A2, making it even more dangerous for all road users as well as increasing air pollution to unacceptable levels. If there is a problem at the A2 junction these huge lorries will attempt to navigate our narrow local roads. Light pollution at Canterbury Business Park is already a problem and if this were to increase it would affect any wildlife still in existence following any development.

The nearby Grade 2 listed Higham Court is currently in a beautiful, historically important, rural setting. Any development would have a detrimental effect on this, causing a significant loss of agricultural land and drastically changing the landscape character. We should be conserving such land and not allowing unnecessary development. Historic England have stated: "The construction of large industrial buildings would entirely remove an area of productive landscape associated with the Higham Court Estate which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Highland Court Conservation Area".

The North Downs Way runs along the edge of the Business Park, and links up with footpaths and bridleways in the area. All are well used by ramblers, pilgrims, school groups, horse riders and cyclists. Many of these important Public Rights of Way run beside wildflower meadows which are full of pollinators in summer and have taken years to establish. They include very rare and delicate species of Orchid, colonies of at least six different types of bat, and many bird species. Any environmental upheaval in this area would have a disastrous effect on them and they can't be tidied away and moved at the whim of developers. All pollinators are essential for our food production and we destroy them at our peril.

Canterbury Business Park is home to a nationally rare Orchid, the White Helleborine, which is listed as vulnerable on the GB Red List for Vascular Plants. Two further colonies, in Adisham and Kingston, are linked by the White Helleborine population at the Business Park, making them crucial for the long term survival of the species in Kent. The planned Chapel Down development is very close to the location where this Orchid has most recently been recorded. This, along with any further development, could wipe out the species entirely from the Highland Court area. Another of the UK's rarest species, the Lady Orchid, has recently been recorded within half a kilometre of Canterbury Business Park, and any changes in habitat and pollinator behaviour would threaten their survival.

Chapter 5 Rural Areas

Policy R12: Land west of Cooting Lane and south of Station Road

I strongly oppose policy R12.

Although a few small starter-type houses might be beneficial to the village, I believe this location would be unsuitable. If development were allowed, I can't envisage any possible way that the resident's cars could exit onto Station Road safely or easily. The blind spots and the speed of the traffic going both ways can make it a very dangerous road, for pedestrians crossing it and traffic entering it on the existing junctions. Station Road narrows considerably, because a shortage of off-road parking space results in residents having to park on the road, so to add possibly another 20 cars trying to pull out onto Station Road would only make it more dangerous for all road users. With this in mind, I don't believe it would be possible to conserve the existing hedgerow. Much of it would need to be removed to allow good visibility for traffic and pedestrians leaving the development. Another problem is the drainage of rain water, the bottom of Station Road already floods when it rains, allowing any development is going to increase the surface water run-off.

There is a footpath running through the area, from The Street to Blooden, which is very popular with ramblers and dog walkers. It is rich in wildlife and has much to see throughout the seasons. Development alongside it could turn this peaceful path into something resembling an urban alleyway.

A better option might be developing the remainder of Bossington road, from the existing houses up to the corner at the bottom of Station Road, but no further.

This concludes my comments on the Canterbury District Local Plan.

Yours faithfully,

Sandra Hadfield (Mrs)