

Alexander Gunyon

From: Miranda Haynes [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 June 2024 15:32
To: Consultations
Subject: General comments about the overall housing strategy and reference to Policies R7 and R8

Categories: Green category

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Dear sir/madam,

I'd like to raise my concerns regarding the revised Canterbury Local Plan.

The new Local Plan appears to include an excessive number of new houses, especially when the 6,000 approved from previous plans (but not yet built) are taken into consideration. Together these would add around 20% to the housing stock and this surely far outweighs any genuine 'local need'.

Given Canterbury's distinctive, renowned rural setting and World Heritage status, together with its surrounding high-quality agricultural land as part of the Garden of England, I believe this should necessitate the special consideration that the Government indicated should be taken into account in planning decisions. In this case there would be a far less drastic build-out across pristine countryside than that currently envisaged.

However, at a recent consultation, the Council appeared concerned that it may be compelled to accept inappropriate developments because of claims of past 'under-delivery'. Isn't it crucial to recognise that this under-delivery has primarily been due to housing developers slowing their build-out rates because of plummeting pre-build sales? The developers' hesitancy to construct homes therefore appears to have more to do with restricting any oversupply that would lower prices and profits. If the responsibility for low building rates lies with the developers, the council surely cannot be held responsible and forced into unnecessary planning approvals?

Indeed, as the houses being built are often too expensive for local buyers, the claimed requirement for more land to build on to meet 'local need' is fatuous. Such a mismatch distorts the apparent requirements underlying the new local plan, perpetuating a cycle of unaffordable housing that fails to address actual needs, which would still be carried forward to subsequent plans.

Working in [REDACTED], I regularly travel from [REDACTED] to Canterbury West Station and find that the amount of building that has already taken place along the A257, together with the constrictions at the bottom of St Martin's Hill can result in significant delays. Yet another big estate (R7 in the Plan) leading into an already congested stretch of road on The Hill would make this journey much worse as well as more dangerous. The development on Court Hill (R8) would further exacerbate the problems in Jubilee Road, which is already a rat run.

As well as the traffic issues, the inadequate proposals for the treatment of sewage and wastewater have already been raised in previous planning applications for site R7 and these still stand, especially as they now appear to rely on external upgrades to offsite sewage pipes and the Wingham sewage works, together with untested created wetlands and the purchase of nutrient credits. Such approaches continue to place the SSSI at Stodmarsh at high risk of further damage.

As a result, I believe that both proposed developments in Littlebourne are unwarranted and inappropriate, given that they would also drastically change the character of the village and its tight-knit community.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Regards,

Miranda Haynes

