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From: Marion Allison [REDACTED]
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Categories: Green category

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I strongly object to Policy W4 of the draft local plan to develop the land at Brooklands Farm for the following reasons:

The existing CCC Local Plan (2017) states that the Brooklands farmland is in an Area of High Landscape Value. The previous CCC Landscape Character Assessment (2020) states that the rural setting south of the Whitstable urban area should be reinforced and building in the A299 New Thanet Way corridor should not take place. This proposed development disregards both these stipulations.

This development is contrary to paragraph 191b of the NPPF which states that planning policies should protect tranquil areas which are valued for their recreational and amenity value. Brooklands farmland is highly valued by local residents for its footpaths, local wildlife and countryside views. It is a scenic rural landscape which will be turned into suburbia.

CCC's proposal to increase biodiversity by 20% is as reprehensible as it is unachievable- mere words. The Brooklands Farm site contains ancient wet woodland and is a Local Wildlife Site. It also has traditional cattle pasture and a brook. Because of this it supports a huge diversity of wildlife including dormice, bats and skylarks and wild plants which thrive on this land. There is no way that much of this will survive with the intention to build 1400 houses on the site. Even if so called "wildlife corridors" are created, the noise and movement of development, cars, street lighting and people will disturb the few wildlife species that remain when much of their habitat is destroyed. Other species may move in but those which are adapted only to this environment will be lost.

This area is prone to flooding at times of heavy rainfall. This lies on the land where it is gradually absorbed or drains into the Swalecliffe Brook. Building over this area is likely to increase the risk of flooding in the local area and is predicted to become a more severe problem as climate change increases the frequency and intensity of rainfall.

There is inadequate infrastructure in Whitstable to support this development. GP surgeries are already full. Traffic levels on local roads, already congested, will rise. Sewage is already discharged frequently into the sea, with detrimental effects on health, as the system cannot cope.

Many of these residents on the Brooklands site will commute into Canterbury, so more new building should be concentrated there. Development in Whitstable can only be to the south, which is currently valuable agricultural and rural land whereas Canterbury can expand in all directions so there is more scope for development there.

The local councillors should represent the views of the people they are elected to serve. In responses to the previous draft plan, this development was the most unpopular of all proposed developments for the good reasons stated above. Completely ignoring these views, CCC has now increased the number of dwellings in this proposal. Instead of massive developments initiated by land management companies and national developers, councillors should identify smaller sites that can integrate new residents into the local community and be less destructive to the ever dwindling agricultural and rural land surrounding Whitstable.

Dr Marion Allison
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