

Mrs CML Williams



I object to the Draft Local Plan for the following reasons:

Whitstable:

Policy W4, Policy W5

Agricultural land must be protected and should not be sacrificed to building- brownfield and greyfield sites must be found and prioritised for development. The threats of climate change and war and the imperative for less reliance on imports should dictate that more and greater variety of crops and livestock be maintained to counteract extremes of weather or failed crops or price and supply shocks on the international market.

Amenities- it is essential that amenities such as open space and playing fields like Church Street are preserved and improved (e.g the return of toilets and changing rooms- removed over 40 years ago). That Church Street is even considered for development when sites adjacent to existing schools were available, such as Vulcan Close/ Ladesfield by Joy Lane School, or in Invicta Road, and were instead given up for housing highlights fundamental inadequacies in earlier plans. Most local amenities, e.g. Church Street, Westmeads, Cornwallis Circle or Chestfield Road are decades old. Any new development needs to take into account the need for new equivalent playing fields and open spaces, or allow provision for innovations such as forest schools. Similarly, regarding other open air facilities- there is a waiting list for up to five years or more for allotments in the area and the town's cemeteries are rapidly nearing capacity.

The areas of Whitstable referred to in W4 and W5 are largely unspoilt and various paths and roads (e.g. Chestfield Road, South Street and Radfall Road) already offer plenty of opportunity for walking and cycling. Similarly the footpaths in these areas offer invaluable amenity and biodiversity that are easily accessible for residents. This will all be undermined by the proposed developments.

There should not be any additional exits from the A299 at Radfall Corner or anywhere else between Whitstable and Herne Bay. The whole justification for building the off-line 'Blue Route' New Thanet Way in the 90s- through farmland- was to avoid the congestion caused on the old Thanet Way by local traffic and its various exits and sometimes dangerous junctions. Therefore, new exits would introduce local traffic, cause congestion, add to risk of collisions and defeat the whole purpose of the road's existence.

Previous developments set poor precedent: Whitstable Heights, for example, is generic, poorly designed off-the-shelf housing which fails to take advantage of its location (once one of the finest views in Whitstable- the houses simply face each other rather than the sea) and

could have been built 40 years ago such is their failure to take into account environmental innovations or reducing impact on their surroundings (grass roofs or solar panels, for example). They ignore local architectural traditions and materials, impose on the skyline and loom over adjacent existing houses, are yet again built on agricultural land and yet again have worrying implications for drainage. There is nothing to suggest such issues are even taken into account in the Draft Local Plan, let alone that any lessons have been learned or such failures will not be repeated at the sites referred to in W4 and W5, or anywhere else in the Plan.

Sprawling, out-of-town suburbs are not the answer- this and other recent developments encourage car dependence and make walking and cycling less appealing and less safe. Currently, cycling around the outskirts of Whitstable is still practicable and safe, but a dramatic increase in cars which such large scale housing developments will undoubtedly produce, will make it much less desirable and far more unsafe.

Park and Ride- it's not clear for whom this is intended. It offers little benefit to locals who almost certainly won't use it and I'm not convinced visitors will either. What evidence is there that there is sufficient demand to justify its existence? It would be preferable to do more to facilitate and encourage visitors to use the train. Again, sites close to existing or proposed schools or workplaces would be far preferable for a special school than sacrificing Church Street Playing Fields. There needs to be more consideration of how development sites may interact, re: traffic and likely impact.

Canterbury:

Policy C12

I object to this planned 'rural settlement' and it should be rejected out of hand. The University's financial problems should not be any basis for destroying an area of such biodiversity, that includes ancient woodland (irreplaceable by definition) and high quality agricultural land that also provides an irreplaceable amenity for local people including walking, cycling, riding and bird watching, also including many at-risk species. It is delusional to suggest that this is not merely suburban sprawl and will not cause irreversible damage to biodiversity and the character of the area. The area already has a great deal of traffic but it is currently manageable- a development on the proposed scale, or anything like it, will create huge problems for congestion and air pollution.

Regarding such suburban sprawl, local need should be prioritised and local authorities from outside the area should be prevented from buying up housing en masse. Whilst new families are preferable to the high levels of transient people in HMOs that have mushroomed in recent decades, The change of a scale and pace that cannot be easily absorbed. To be frank, if we import from other areas en masse, then we will also import their problems en masse. Even without such problems, the lack of job opportunities or infrastructure to facilitate working locally, commuting or working from home should be obvious. Such excessive new development will make every existing local issue- drainage, water supply, water quality, air pollution, lack of schools, dentists, doctors and jobs,

exponentially worse. These are not factors that can be 'minimised' or 'mitigated' against. The proposed development should be rejected wholesale.