

Alexander Gunyon

From: Caroline Armstrong [REDACTED]
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Name: Caroline Armstrong
Status: Resident of the Canterbury district
Address: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Telephone: [REDACTED]

Response to the proposed New Local Plan 2040

Key Changes

For me the key change in this plan is the removal of the Cooting Farm proposal. It is a really heartening sign that local voices have been heard and the arguments against clearly stack up: prime farmland, gorgeous countryside which once lost would be lost forever, lack of infrastructure (water, roads etc), a high level of biodiversity, and saving a community that has been rural for 1500 years (and considerably longer according to archeology). With the clear strain already on water and other infrastructure in East Kent the reduction in overall housing targets would also seem prudent. Scrapping the ring road/ zoning of the city is also welcomed, since it would have increased air pollution, decimated prime countryside, and is likely to have deterred tourists from visiting the City since the system would have been inhibitive.

Main Proposals

I support putting climate change and biodiversity considerations more firmly on the agenda. I hope in particular that when property developers say they are maintaining biodiversity that the rarity of it is shown to compare to what already exists. Eg Replacing orchids with daffodils, and dormice with foxes is clearly inappropriate. Increasing public transport etc is in keeping with the objectives for climate change and to be commended, provided this includes rural villages such as Adisham.

Strategic objectives

I note that the Plan identifies the need for significant affordable housing, of at least 30% of any development. I would call on the Council to enforce that rigorously, with at least some of that housing stock built before the money spinning variety. It is important to place that housing in areas close to amenities and not in the countryside, since people on low incomes are unlikely to be able to afford regular transport costs. I am concerned that developments to date have focussed on providing schools, but no overall town planning seems to have been involved. People also need shops, GP surgeries, fire and rescue services, play areas etc. I am glad to see that addressed on page 150-151, and that rural areas are deemed unsuitable for development for these reasons.

Policy C17

I am strongly opposed to this industrial development, which would seriously damage the North Downs landscape, lose significant farm land that is much needed, and cause serious congestion and dangers in the surrounding local lanes. This would increase air pollution since driving is the only way to access the site and light pollution from the increase in lighting. Both of these fly in the face of your own stated objectives to retain our beautiful countryside and minimise adverse environmental impacts.

Finally I see under **R12** that there is a proposal for 10 houses on the corner of Cooting Lane and south of Station Road in Adisham. This proposal needs closer scrutiny since the developers claim they will not touch the established tree line, but unless they intend to widen the single track road to Cooting the entrance to that site would require most of the trees to be felled. It also appears that they have designs to extend that site should the original development be agreed, as shown by the extended 'screen' marked on the map.

It is good to see so much more thought going into this draft plan than the previous one. However, I would just say that until the 4000 new homes at Mountfield New Town are built and the environmental impact is known, no more significant developments should be built south of Canterbury.

With regards,

Caroline Armstrong