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From: Stephen David Banfield [REDACTED]
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To: Consultations
Subject: Local Plan Chapter 2 (Canterbury): Project C12

Categories: Blue category

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Dear Council,

I trust that the header of this email makes it clear that I am responding to the public consultation about new housing in the Blean. I have read the C12 paper, and fear that much of it is idealised generality where the apparently sensitive restrictions on local developers are concerned. There are contradictions within and beyond those conservation and quality-oriented demands. Nor do I believe that such restrictions, even if properly obeyed, in any way outweigh the loss of what we have now. I am abroad at the moment, therefore not able to have attended the public meeting on 21 May or to go on the march tomorrow. I would otherwise have supported both.

I wrote to my MP about the Blean housing project and its larger implications. It is the latter that concern me most; here is the 3rd paragraph of my letter to her:

The city of Canterbury is ill-equipped to be tasked with yet more suburban sprawl. The regrettable green belt loss that has already taken place in Thanington is bad enough. Granted, in that case access to the A2 is right next door; but it is perilously close to one of our nation's most revered and special landscapes, the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Blean development would be far worse. Canterbury already has atrocious traffic congestion and can never enjoy a proper ring road unless it be built underground. New housing should be on brownfield sites, and there is no remaining availability of these in Canterbury, whereas there are plenty in Medway and probably some in Dover or elsewhere. Canterbury West station is already entirely inadequate for the increasing amount of rail footfall it carries. Massive new housing developments will horribly exacerbate these problems.

I followed it up by asking:

What would a Labour Government's attitude be to the current hamfisted approach to housing development that we have seen from Westminster in the past decade and more? Would it be any more sensitive to the problems and damage I have outlined above? The Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 has made Britain a model of wise countryside conservation, much admired by other nations, throughout my lifetime (I was born in 1951). The Act's provisions are now being rapidly eroded, not just in east Kent.

Ms Duffield's reply acknowledged the following:

The housing numbers . . . are also set by central government. For the last fourteen years, the Conservatives have continued to push for higher and higher housing numbers in the South East of England with fewer and fewer requirements on developers to provide the necessary infrastructure. At the same time, they have limited what councils have been able to do to increase the amount of affordable new housing for local people.

She stated that the Parliamentary team would be best placed to outline what a Labour Government's policy would be. I hope to hear from them, though I expect the sudden call for a general election will mean that they won't now have time to write before it.

My question to *you*, the Council, is:

Should you not pause this proposed destruction of Canterbury's rural hinterland until the likely and now imminent change of national government produces more sensitive demands on and opportunities for local wellbeing?

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Banfield
[REDACTED]

