

## CANTERBURY LOCAL PLAN 2022-2045 RESPONSE MAY 2024

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### INTRODUCTION

We have perused the local plan published by Canterbury City Council with particular reference to Littlebourne, its environs and, specifically, Bekesbourne Lane where we have been resident for [REDACTED]. We are therefore very well qualified to comment on the Plan and its adverse impacts.

### OBJECTION

Despite the extremely expensive mitigations proposed by the local authorities and utilities companies, the sheer number of dwellings proposed for the area will massively overload the already very stretched carrying-capacity of our local infrastructure and amenities. It will also result in the permanent loss of high-quality productive farmland. In addition, again despite attempted mitigations and the proclaimed aims of the Council (namely to sustain and improve the environment) the proposals will result in severe disruption. In many cases this is likely to bring about the destruction and loss, of numerous local ecosystems – many of which have international recognition and significance. A very sad legacy for our descendants!

Discussion of these impacts follows:

#### 1. RESOURCES

Key resources include

1.1 **Water supply:** the Climate Change trends towards hot dry summers is predicted to worsen. This not only will critically reduce overall water supply but also greatly reduce the flow of the rivers Stour and Little Stour. The reduced flow, of course, means that waste-water treatment plant outputs will have an even greater impact on the rivers and their biodiversity.

1.2 **Waste water treatment and disposal:** the current level of housebuilding has already outpaced the capacities of the local network of sewers and waste-water treatment plants. After heavy rainfall, it is necessary dump sewage with surface water directly to natural waterways and the sea. Also, hundreds of tanker-loads of waste-water must be pumped from local sewers for road transport to water treatment works.

These acute infrastructure deficiencies are further highlighted by the fact that the Water Management companies are already receiving substantial fines for polluting local rivers and the coast. There would obviously need to be massive, and probably unaffordable investment in sewers and waste-water treatment, to overcome these deficiencies. We see little likelihood of this.

The River Stour will be expected to bear the increasing nutrient burden of waste-water pollution. Unfortunately, the number of houses being built in the Ashford area means that the river water running through Canterbury is already increasingly loaded with ecologically stressful levels of nutrients. Hence, down-river of Canterbury, even more pollution will be evident – this will, of course be exacerbated by reduced water levels in drought years; and, due to Climate Change, this is expected to increase.

Such effects are likely to raise the nitrate, phosphate and organic matter quantities to dangerously eutrophic levels that will badly impact the Stodmarsh Nature Reserve SSSI and

Preston Marshes. Indeed, this has already been seen with current loadings of wastewater pollution.

In our own village of Littlebourne, the large R15 development proposal currently includes its own waste-water treatment plan (with attendant noise and odour nuisances). Output from this plant is supposed to feed into the pristine Little Stour chalk-stream. Surely the inevitable destruction of this internationally significant stream (there are very few such environments on the whole planet) cannot be countenanced.

Particular concern must thus be focussed on the **City Council's legal obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2017**. This is of particular importance to the Stodmarsh Nature Reserve.

**1.3 Waste disposal:** the Canterbury Land-Fill / LandRaising waste disposal site off Broad Oak Road is already near capacity and is due to close and be capped off in the next few years. As far as I am aware, there are no new sites available nearby.

**1.4 Transport - with particular reference to our local area:** the rural/agricultural area to the east of Canterbury is served by the hilly A257 Sandwich Road. Sadly, there are already frequent accidents on this road that is already overloaded. There are long tail-backs into Canterbury every morning rush-hour.

- In Littlebourne there is a particularly dangerous accident blackspot at the staggered cross roads adjacent to the old Anchor pub where Nargate Street and Bekesbourne Lane intersect with the A257. Development R15 proposed by Gladman Developers links the A257 and Bekesbourne Lane A257. This, and other developments to the east, is sure to increase traffic flow and traffic density at this dangerous staggered crossroads.
- Where Gladman's Littlebourne proposal abuts the A257, an additional staggered crossroads is now planned a few hundred yards to the west. (This is close to the access road of the new Laurels development on the opposite side of the road).
- There is a road shown that bisects the new housing estate and links the A257 and Bekebourne Lane. Surely this road will create danger and pollution for the residents in this estate and also increase traffic levels on Bekesbourne Lane.
- Bekesbourne Lane is just a narrow country lane without any footpaths. It is used by local pedestrians and customers of Howletts Wild Animal Park. Due to the traffic levels, it is already dangerous for pedestrians who must use private driveways as refuges (but there are no refuges on the stretch of lane past Howletts).
- There are frequent "near-misses" between vehicles and pedestrians and also damage to drive ways and boundary walls - to the extent that local residents, particularly parents with pushchairs are reluctant to walk along the lane. This can only get worse.
- The lane is so narrow that motorists must also encroach on private driveway aprons to allow commercial vehicles to pass. When two commercial vehicles must pass one another on the narrower parts of the lane long tail-backs result.

**1.5 Farming:** with the vagaries and fragility of international food supplies, sustainability of agriculture and horticulture is essential for the UK. However, the majority of the proposed

developments will permanently destroy and cover “green-field”, productive, Grade 1 farmland thus worsening the nation’s food sustainability.

## 2. AMENITIES

- 2.1 **Education:** many local schools are already full and there are insufficient trained staff available.
- 2.2 **Health:** the same is true of local health services, GPs, surgeries, clinics, hospitals, community-care, care homes: these are already overloaded and are experiencing staff-shortages.
- 2.3 **Adverse visual impacts:** the replacement of farmland, woodland and hedgerows with housing will severely impact visual amenity. A case in point is R15 that will destroy the natural vista from the A257 and from the public footpaths that criss-cross Garrington farm in Littlebourne.

## 3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The topic of polluting, harmful raised traffic density appears to be largely ignored with no plan in evidence.
- 3.2 The large R15 development proposal for Littlebourne has been already been rejected by local residents and the Council
- 3.3 The scheme has now included the idea of having its own waste-water treatment plan (with attendant noise and odour nuisances). Output from this plant is supposed to feed into the pristine Little Stour chalk-stream. Surely the inevitable destruction of this internationally significant stream (there are very few such environments on the whole planet) cannot be countenanced. has already, rightly, been rejected by the Council. The substantial housing proposals are directly in discord with the Council’s stated objective of habitat and biodiversity improvement (rather than destruction!)
- 3.4 The Local Plan could lead to massive environmental degradation. This is obviously contrary to **City Council’s legal obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations 2017.**

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