

## South Whitstable - strategic development area: 3.13, 3.14

The TWRA welcomes the continuing protection of the parcels of undeveloped land adjacent to the new A2990 Thanet Way which were identified through the design of the new road to be protected as part of this scheme. We support the new designation of Green Infrastructure DS19 (clause 6) in this location that replaces the existing protection of OS9 and C24 of the 2017 and 2006 previous local plans with improved less ambiguous wording that should stop needless complex planning applications and appeals which as forecasted when the new bypass was built, these pockets would be subject to pressures from developers. In all planning appeals on these pockets of the land, the inspectors have upheld the local plan.

We are pleased that the previous allocation Land South of Thanet Way (previousW7) has been removed in line with this policy which would have introduced for the first time on this highway, major development on both sides of the road which would be particularly harmful.

The opinion of local residents is that these pockets of open land both inside and outside the urban boundary make an important contribution to the quality of the area. This is because of the positive effects of this land providing visual amenity and defining the open plan character.

Collectively these areas of farmland and pockets of natural environment on the urban boundary fringe, have coherence and collectively are impactful for good reasons. That is because each of these sites forms a significant and prominent link in a wider chain, which establishes a pattern along the road in particular from Benacre Woods to Chesfield, and which forms the pleasant open character of this area that is highly appreciated, enjoyed and valued by local residents.

Remarkably even though this is a very busy urban setting, with residential, retail, and industrial activities, and with the challenges of a major highway running through the middle of it, the combined effect of these elements of open open land dramatically soften the landscape and appearance of the whole area, producing an almost semi-rural characteristic, central to the quality of this setting.

In addition to softening the landscape the value of this site of both open farm land, a natural environment and a green-lung cannot be overestimated in this particular location. It, in conjunction with the other open spaces, offer relief from the harsh adverse effects of the busy Old Thanet Way running right through the heart of this area. These areas of green land provide an important function in mitigating the impact of that highway. They also provide an essential natural environment for wildlife with connectivity across the sites.

The loss of any of these individual sites would be particularly harmful because it would undermine their wider relationship to their adjoining sites, inevitably leading to the erosion of this continuous buffer and the pleasant open character they define.

It is easy to forget but when the new Whitstable and Herne ByPass was introduced, large areas of open land was consumed and part of that investment was to introduce new

protection measures designed to prevent the Old Thanet Way from becoming as busy as it was before the new one was built. Indeed the state of the road in the 1990s on a regular basis could only be described as armageddon with stationary traffic and unwelcome pollution along the stretch of this road.

When the new Whitstable Bypass was introduced, planning policies were established to:

- i) protect the visual amenity and open plan character of the area.
- ii) protect the Old Thanet Way from becoming as busy as it was before the road was built
- iii) take positive advantage of the road's altered status for amenity value.

Since then subsequent protection measures have consistently been applied by CCC. In chronological order these are: Local Plan and Technical Paper 3 1994, C24 (2006), OS9 (2017) and now by the Green Infrastructure policy DS19.

Full evidence of this is provided in:

TWRA Comments to Local Plan Jan 2023 Appendix A:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HRd0O05P6th24-6HcCr-LAAwVfKR2RDMivWEtgjA1Vg/edit?usp=sharing>

The points we made about the traffic on the Old Thanet Way in W4 are also applicable here in this section and also in W6 Bodkin Farm.