**GENERAL POINTS WHY THE BODKIN FARM AND BROOKLANDS FARM DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE CANTERBURY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN 2045 SUBMITTED BY THE GRASMERE VILLAGE RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION (GVRA) COMMITTEE**

This document sets out a number of general points of objection that have wider implications for the draft Canterbury District Local Plan 2045. It is submitted by the Grasmere Village Residents’ Association (GVRA) Committee. This Association is a formally constituted and elected body representing the 42 households located on the unadopted section of Grasmere Road.

The first point that we should like to make is that the combination of the Bodkin Farm and Brooklands Farm development proposals, if they were to go ahead, would completely overwhelm and change the character of the historic designated Conservation Area village of Chestfield which deserves to be protected.

In addition, we supply separately more specific objections to the Bodkin Farm and Brooklands Farm development proposals.

These two development proposals for large new areas of housing and associated facilities proposals contained in the current draft Canterbury Area Local Plan 2045 will at least double the size of the village over the period of the Plan, irrevocably change its character and swamp it with through traffic, making it increasingly dangerous for residents.

This, we believe, constitutes overwhelming and unacceptable urbanisation of this traditional and historic Conservation Area village.

However, there are wider problems that we believe are not being properly acknowledged and addressed by the current draft Local Plan 2045. These are as follows.

Major new developments are being repeatedly proposed along the Old Thanet Way, A2990, without proper consideration of the necessary corresponding infrastructure improvements, namely road capacity and drainage system improvement requirements, the latter including both surface and foul water. The latter capacity deficiencies have in turn led to repeated releases of raw sewage to the sea in recent years. These problems will inevitably increase in future because of forecast climate change.

For example, there is increasingly unfettered development along the Old Thanet Way, A2990. Even open spaces like the Church Street public playing fields are now threatened. This is causing ever increasing traffic along the Old Thanet Way, between the top of Borstal Hill at the Whitstable end and the Greenhill Bridge roundabout at the Herne Bay end.

Even the long-standing Green Gap between Whitstable and Herne Bay, again reiterated in the current Local Plan draft, is threatened by the latest Bodkin Farm proposal which has been repeatedly turned down in the past, including by Planning Inspectors, both for good traffic and Green Gap reasons.

And, it seems, CCC planning officials are now showing demonstrable inclination to overlook traffic assessments, involving Ratios of Flow To Capacity (RFC) and Queue Length (Q) figures that they have for good reason deemed unacceptable in the past.

This is true of both the closely linked Chestfield Road roundabout, the Herne Bay Road/St Johns Road mini roundabout and the Reeves Way triple roundabout system to the west and the complex Greenhill roundabout to the east. Previous planning applications have demonstrably shown RFC figures exceeding 0.85, and sometimes in excess of 1.0, clearly indicating overloading, and unacceptably long Q, queue length, figures in peak periods for both these junctions. To reiterate, these overloading figures, it seems, are now being ignored by CCC and KCC officers.

It is also known that stretches of the Old Thanet Way repeatedly get flooded at times of heavy rainfall in the winter months, and that increasingly heavy winter rainfall events are forecast in future years due to climate change.

There have also been problems with household water supply systems and foul water drainage systems that have not been addressed and solved. This has led to early hosepipe bans and repeated discharges of raw sewage to the sea in recent years.

And although the draft Local Plan mentions the proposed Broad Oak reservoir water supply system, there is no guarantee that this will materialise within the period of the next Local Plan given all the potential problems associated with it and the public outcry it will cause which all will need to be lawfully addressed.

Finally, it has been reported in the local press that that the rate of new house building proposed in the draft Local Plan is double that achieved over the last ten years by Canterbury City Council. A key point is that if the Council fails to achieve its proposal for substantially increased house build rate in the next Local Plan it will, under Government rules, lose all control over where future houses are built. This is unacceptable.

If this were to happen or be knowingly risked, it would perpetuate the view that Canterbury City Council councillors and officers are out of touch with those people they are supposed to represent.

Robert Jackson (Dr)

GVRA Secretary

**May 2024**

lpgeneralcomment5