

On Tue, 3 Jan 2023 at 08:53, Maria Short [REDACTED] wrote:  
Good Morning All

Happy New Year.

We have received the petition below regarding building houses on Chartham's Green Fields, wording below. Please can you let me know if this is a valid petition or if not how to respond to the petitioner.

Many thanks

**Title:** Save Chartham's Green Fields

**Statement:**

Our representations are against Policy R7 and Policy R8 together with the associated text in the draft local plan. This involves an allocation for around 170 homes on site R8. Details of the allocation are provided in Policy R8 which includes a concept master plan. We raise a number of concerns.

**Justification:**

Is the location of this draft allocation acceptable in principle?

As a starting point, we consider the way in which this matter is covered in the adopted Canterbury District Local Plan. Policy SP4 sets out the strategic approach to the location of development focussing on the main three urban areas. In addition, Policy SP4 supports the provision of new housing that is of a size, design, scale, character and location appropriate to the character and built form of the Rural Service Centres of Sturry and the Local Centres of Barham, Blean, Bridge, Chartham, Hersden and Littlebourne, provided that such proposals are not in conflict with other Local Plan policies relating to transport, environmental and flood zone protection and design and those of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan where applicable.

The current adopted Canterbury District Local Plan provides a sound strategic approach to the location of development with a sequential approach concentrating development primarily in the urban centres of the District with limited new development in the rural settlements, proportionate to their scale and position in the settlement hierarchy. It also aims to make best use of brownfield sites. It emphasises that rural allocations are generally small in scale, except in the Rural Service Centres and Local Centres where a higher level of development might be supported. Chartham is identified as a Local Centre. Paragraph 1.51 gives some assistance on what kind of scale of development might be acceptable, requiring it to be considered in context with the size and character of the village it is planned for. It puts forward the possibility of development of a vacant site of 5 to 10 homes within a larger village such as the Rural Service Centre of Sturry or one of the Local Centres as the scale of development which might be considered acceptable.

Paragraph 6.7 of the draft Local Plan states that development in the countryside and outside settlement boundaries (which this is) is generally considered to be unsustainable and will only be supported in very limited circumstances

We are very concerned that this and other large allocations within the rural area are probably driven by the substantial housing delivery numbers which are part of the draft Local Plan. These are substantially above those which have previously been required. We are aware that the government has recently indicated a less rigid approach to housing delivery. Our firm belief is that if the housing delivery figures were to be significantly reduced, then that would remove the need for substantial large scale allocations such as this and located outside the built confines of the rural settlements.

We consider that the substantial proposals beyond the settlement boundary of Chartham are, in the words of paragraph 6.7 of the draft Local Plan, unsustainable and should not be supported. We conclude that they are unacceptable in principle.

## Landscape and visual impact

This field is part of the rising sides of the River Stour valley which extend in an easterly direction above the Stour valley. The result will be a transformation in the character and appearance of this important valley landscape. The rural lane, Rattington Street, would also be transformed as a result of these proposals.

The site is widely visible because of its elevation and its steeply sloping character from a number of public vantage points along Bakers Lane, Summer Peace Grove, The Crescent and Rattington Street. It is also viewed from Beech Avenue through gaps in the vegetation to the north east.

Rattington Street is a narrow rural lane with extensive areas of open land on either side. The introduction of large scale development to the west of it would unacceptably harm its rural character.

This proposal will result in the coalescence of Chartham with St Augustine's. At the moment, the two areas are largely separated by the field which is the subject of this draft allocation. That coalescence will also have a significant visual impact which is accentuated by the fact that the land slopes steeply upwards from Chartham in a southerly direction towards The Crescent.

We conclude that these proposals are out of scale with Chartham. They will not only result in unacceptable coalescence between Chartham and St Augustine's but cause significant adverse visual impact and harm to the surrounding rural landscape.

## Impact upon the adjacent conservation area

The north eastern section of the site abuts the Chartham Conservation Area. One of its key characteristics is the proximity of that built development within the conservation area to open countryside in that part of the conservation area which is located on the south side of the River Stour. The conservation area is currently drawn tightly around the historic nucleus of the village. The development of the site for housing would impact adversely upon the setting of the conservation area and would fail to meet the statutory requirement of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## Highways and transportation considerations

A surprising omission from the master plan is the location of the vehicle access, in spite of the reference in the key to an indicative location for vehicle access. The location of the access to the proposed development is a crucial matter in order for it to be assessed in terms of: its impact upon the living conditions of neighbours near to the access; in relation to matters of detailed highway engineering such as the provision of visibility splays, junction detail etc. ; the effect of those works on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and in order to assess the capacity of the highway network to accommodate that access without resulting in an unacceptable reduction in highway safety. These are fundamental considerations as, without suitable access, no development can proceed. We are surprised that this matter appears not to have been addressed very fully before making such a substantial allocation. Without that thorough transport assessment, we consider that it is unreasonable to allocate so substantial an area of land for so many dwellings.

## Impact upon ecology

We are concerned at the potential adverse impact of the proposals upon the substantial copse which lies within the heart of this draft allocation. With the introduction of housing there would inevitably be access or trespass from nearby residents into this area of woodland. There would be damage to wildlife as a result of predatory domestic pets. The ecological value of the site would be diminished as a result of the proposals.

## Stodmarsh

The site is located within the River Stour catchment area. We are aware of the constraints imposed by the impact of nutrients from inadequately treated human waste upon the Stodmarsh International Nature Reserve. That has resulted in an embargo upon housing development which is unable to achieve nutrient neutrality.

## Other concerns

We have a range of other concerns including the possibility of redeveloping the newly available site at Chartham Paper Mill – there appears to be a unique opportunity to create a new development here which could include all that has been suggested for R8 and more without building on greenfield sites within Chartham.

In the summer of 2022 the government made an announcement relating to the governments levelling up agenda, it has allocated of £180 million new money for development of brown field sites with £40 million going straight to councils. This clearly changes the old argument of developers not been able to develop brown field sites due to cost.

We will need to build houses as well, the advantage these houses will have they be within a couple hundred metres of the station and with the new rail automated crossing traffic will be no more than a hop onto the A28 rather than trying to traverse via Ratti

**Jane Lacey,** [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]