

**Too many houses and the wrong sort of houses
will significantly alter the character of the city in a very harmful way**

The Council's vision of Canterbury in 20 years is one of our pleasant cathedral city in the midst of a vast sprawl of new housing, ugly to look at where before there had been green fields and woods. Many new dwellings have already been built but under the proposed local plan the city will double in size. A new outer ring road will be choked with vehicles used by the residents in the new dwellings driving to work, often in London, or to a railway station, as well as, it seems, by all Canterbury residents going to other parts of the city, perhaps to do a supermarket shop which needs a car rather than two legs or a bicycle. The roads into the city centre will also be jammed, not just with residents' cars, delivery vans and lorries, but with crawling buses. Air pollution will be lethal in parts as many if not most of these vehicles will not be fully electric. Noise will be considerable, and it seems there will be serious problems with water, both fresh and foul.

Who will want to walk beside the traffic jams, along pavements that may well be in the sort of state they are in presently, cracked and broken, often too narrow and therefore dangerous, hoping to cross at junctions where two of the four roads have no crossing lights, where there are no benches for the weary, and no public lavatories at their destination? This is how things are at the moment and there is no indication in the local plan of how this can be improved when the contributions of developers are to be poured into new roads. Will the old ones still be full of potholes, making cycling more dangerous even as traffic has become denser?

New houses and flats for whom? What sort of accommodation? Passive houses - carbon neutral? If all houses and flats built over the next 20 years are not carbon neutral, the country will not achieve the climate protection targets it has undertaken to meet. There must be heating systems, using no fossil fuels at all, for each development. And indeed cooling systems, Kent now being forecast to have a 2-3 degree increase in average temperature by 2040 against a global average of 1-2 degrees.

Canterbury urgently needs significantly more social housing. To date, moreover, many developers have reneged on their obligations to build more affordable housing (not at all the same as social housing) citing cost increases and thus lack of sufficient funding to build them. Apart from this, Canterbury needs many smaller units, starter homes or flats for single occupation. It seems evident that few such will be built in the proposed new developments. Developers make much more money catering for the well-off, offering three and four bedroom properties.

Green space within the new developments does not seem to be insisted upon by the Council and of course the more houses and flats that can be sited on the developers' land, the greater their profits.

The draft plan needs serious revision with a very significant reduction in the number of new dwellings to be permitted if Canterbury's character as a pleasant place to live and as a World Heritage site is not to be destroyed.