



E.M.C. and zoning

1 message

Chris Wilson-Sharp [REDACTED]

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To: "consultations@canterbury.gov.uk" <consultations@canterbury.gov.uk>

A response to Canterbury City Council re the planned Eastern Movement Corridor and city zoning

My family and I have been residents of Fordwich since 1989.

The proposed Eastern Movement corridor

This is the most expensive route and would negatively impact Fordwich in several ways:

1. The natural environment

At a time when we are so aware of the need for protecting the environment and flora and fauna, it is astonishing that the city council plans to put a large road through an area of flood meadows, farmland and ancient woodland, destroying habitats, established woods and wildflowers and archaeological artifacts. Fordwich is visited all year round by people who value the riverside, the walks, the ambiance of this ancient town, the cycle path and the Stour Valley Walk and St Augustine's Way. During the lockdowns, we were inundated with people who needed the recreation and renewal that being in Fordwich brought them. Yes, this caused problems with parking and careless treatment of the fields and riverbanks, but I do not begrudge others the opportunity to enjoy the countryside round Fordwich. In and around Fordwich, we have seen beavers, foxes, bats, rabbits, kingfishers, a variety of fresh-water fish, herons, egrets, water-rails, cormorants and many other birds, lizards – common and a rare sand lizard. Checkers Wood and the other woods and land to the south of Fordwich is so rich in wildflowers that the list is too long to mention. What is the point of destroying older established woodland and then planting saplings which, experience shows, are often neglected and die.

2. Flooding and sewerage

The EMC would impact the flood meadows it would skirt. Even more damaging would be the thousands of houses planned, which I understand are needed to pay for the road. We need flood meadows. Fordwich has known severe flooding at least twice in the time I have lived here and most winters the flood meadows flood along the river. If the flood meadows were not so effective, we would have had worse flooding more often. During such times and at other times of high rainfall, we have had raw sewage and toilet paper come up through the drain in the middle of our Close. Despite some measures taken to improve matters, the problem remains that the present water-treatment works cannot cope now, so building yet more houses will make matters much worse. I understand that it is planned that there will be a storage tank to take wastewater and sewage from the development to the north of Fordwich, and that tankers will empty it. Where will they be emptied – at the coast, or at the Sturry Road treatment works?

3. Zoning the city

Making it difficult for people from the satellite villages to drive into Canterbury and to the part of Canterbury that they want to visit, will kill the city centre. Already shops are badly affected by the lockdowns and the current economic crisis. Building thousands of new houses (one or two cars each?) and causing people to drive five or so more miles to get into the city, will not reduce car usage and pollution, but increase it. Once in the city, they will presumably then have to pay a high parking fee and walk to wherever they wish to go. Not everyone is able to walk far, nor to cycle. Especially as we get older, we need our own transport. Park and Ride was good and helpful in many ways, but the Sturry Road one is shut. Some villages, like Hoath, now have no bus service at all.

The result of this misguided scheme will be the death of Canterbury as a tourist and shopping centre. It will become a large student accommodation and entertainment zone and students do not pay Council Tax. Also, I understand that student numbers are falling.

Zoning has worked in Ghent, but that city has, in effect, multiple townships where facilities are available to the residents. This is not what is planned for Canterbury.

I urge you to scrap this ill-thought-out interdependent scheme of more housing/more roads/E.M.C/zoning and concentrate instead on the character of Canterbury, the River Stour and the surrounding countryside and villages and try to find a way through the current crisis which doesn't destroy what we have.

Christine Wilson-Sharp 14.01.23