

**Objection to Policy R20, of Draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2045, proposed development of - Aylesham south.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to place on record my objection to **Policy R20**, of Draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2045, proposed development of, **Aylesham south.**

My name is: **Paul Lukehurst**

My address:

Tel Number:

Email :

The reasons for my objection are as follows

**1. The loss of around 66.66 hectares of valuable farming land:**

With our ever-increasing population, this country will need every square metre of farm land to feed everyone. Building on farm land should therefore be avoided. Only after all other brown field or less productive parcels of land have been built on, should farm land ever be considered. The Draft Canterbury District Local Plan - 2045, details many such parcels of land. They should form the main priority instead of using productive agricultural land as an easy route to achieving housing targets. This farm land could be helping to feed people for centuries to come, but not if it's built on!

**My suggestion is that Policy R20 be removed from the DCDLP - 2045.**

**2. The disruption to local flora/fauna (wildlife):**

Policy R20 proposes building "around 420 new dwellings across approximately twelve ha" along with, "a new country park". If policy R20 were to proceed, a country park may have some positive effects for local flora/fauna (wildlife), however the inclusion of 420 new homes is likely to reduce any such benefits. Also, I suspect said parkland could/would later be gradually built on!

However, a more fundamental question is: If it isn't just paving the way for still more future development then, why is there a need to replace open agricultural farmland, woodland and footpaths with a country park? Anyone who actually lives in the countryside would never have thought of, let alone included that proposal! If it's a buffer that's required between Policy R20 and the village of Womenswold, then why not leave the land as it is in its current form, as farm and woodland?

I believe Policy R20 would cause serious disruption and have negative effects on **local flora/fauna (wildlife)** which would include:

- Physical disruption to the habitats of the native wildlife.
- Increased light pollution at night.
- Increased air pollution.
- Increased noise pollution.

As far as I can see, there has been no work carried out to quantify these forms of disruption/pollution or what their effects could be on local flora/fauna (wildlife).

**My suggestion is that Policy R20 be removed from the DCDLP - 2045.**

**3. The detrimental effects of a local population explosion on local services:** If Policy R20 were to go ahead then the proposed 420 dwellings (@ a possible average of 2 adults and one child per household), could easily translate into around 1260 extra local residents from Policy R20 alone. However, Policy R20 cannot and should not be considered in isolation. To consider the impact on local services properly, policy R20 must be examined alongside the proposed housing developments at nearby Cooting Farm, Adisham and south Aylesham. Draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2045 - Policy R1, proposes 3200 new dwellings at nearby Cooting Farm, Adisham along with a further 320 homes for single elderly persons. Also, neighbouring Dover District Council's Draft Local Plan - Policy SAP 24, Site reference: AYL003b, proposes building 640 new homes in South Aylesham, next to Spinney Lane, on land abutting Policy R20.

Using the same possible average dwelling occupancy of an average of 2 adults and one child per household then the numbers of extra residents in this small local area could rise by the following:

- DCDLP - Policy R20 - " Aylesham South" - 420 new dwellings could mean around **1,260** new residents.
- DCDLP - Policy R1 - "Land at Cooting Farm" - 3200 new dwellings and 320 single older person homes could mean around **9,920** new residents.
- DCDLP - Policy R22 - "Land west of Cooting Lane and south of Station Road" - 10 new dwellings could mean around **30** new residents.
- DDDLP - Policy SAP 24, Site reference: AYL003b, 640 new homes in South Aylesham could mean around **1,920** new residents.
- Also they have either just built or are still building another 700 new homes in Aylesham, so roughly another **2,100** new residents.

So, if all of these Draft Plan proposals go ahead then the estimated increase in local population could be as many as **15,230** new residents.

However, if the numbers of dwellings built, turns out to be more than so far proposed or the numbers of residents per household turns out to average out at more than three, then this estimated population increase could be higher still.

DCDLP - Policy R20 alone, represents a large and worrying increase in our local rural population that will bound to have serious effects on local services. However, when examined in conjunction with the other, above mentioned, house building proposals and current ongoing building projects throughout the larger local area, it becomes plain to see that without a massive injection of funding and resources, how could local services possibly hope to keep pace with such a colossal increase in demand?

As a comparison, currently it is virtually impossible to see a doctor face to face at the Aylesham Medical Centre. Getting an appointment involves telephoning the health centre, even though you are standing in front of the receptionist! Even then, you will likely be offered a telephone appointment in one- or two-weeks' time! So, a potential 1260 new residents from DCDLP - Policy R20 alone, will only exacerbate matters by providing greatly increased pressures. This isn't something a this DCDLP can prevent either as it would be for the NHS to resource the extra staff and resources. **Have the NHS been consulted on the DCDLP's implications?**

Furthermore, looking at the above-mentioned proposals for the whole area and it's plain to see the scale of the problems that this increase in population will generate. Unless serious investment is made in providing better services and facilities, such a development will only serve to severely reduce the quality of life for all local residents, both new and existing.

Unless that serious investment is guaranteed then:

**My suggestion is that Policy R20 be removed from the DCDLP - 2045.**

**4. The pressure on local water supplies:** In this part of Kent our water is drawn from underground aquifers. It is not unusual to have hose pipe bans during the summer months, due presumably, to falling water levels and dwindling supplies. Which makes me question whether Policy R20 and all the other current and proposed housing developments across East Kent, will be placing too much demand on our local water supply? Even the Government now appears to be waking up to the fact that we may have serious water shortages in the UK in the not-too-distant future. They recently launched an advertising campaign to persuade the general public to save water. Could this be just one reason for the recent U-turn on house building targets? Yes, there is a planned new reservoir in the Canterbury area but that has been planned for the last four decades! Given their recent history, I have no confidence in our local water supplier coming through on that project.

Sewage treatment in east Kent has also been the subject of so much media coverage of late. I would only hope that the Water Company concerned puts it's "house in order" before any of these local house building proposals are considered any further or "set in stone". It would appear that they cannot effectively deal with the waste water they currently have!

Until some form of research and subsequent joined up thinking takes place on whether East Kent's current fresh water supply and subsequent waste water treatment can cope with such a massive housing expansion program then:

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**5. The large increase in vehicle movements:** The emphasis within the DCDLP - 2045, seems to be on encouraging walking and cycling, which is as it should be. Clearly, the aim is also to cut down on vehicle movements, dependency and ownership. I suppose this must be the current "fifteen minute" thinking being put into practice! However, despite the best intentions of this thrust, it is unlikely to be as effective as intended.

Due to Policy R20's proposed location, this would still be a country-based community. The reality would be that, for most of these proposed new homes, residents would need two incomes to support both their family unit and their mortgage or rent payments. Since Policy R20 proposes building "420 new dwellings" on open farm land in what is essentially a rural location, employment prospects within the immediate area will always be limited. Therefore, the great majority of working residents would find themselves having to travel elsewhere to their employment. It should come as no surprise that living in the country actually means that a car or van becomes a necessity and not a luxury.

Yes, both Aylesham and Adisham do have railway stations, however, I doubt if using the train will suit all of these proposed working residents. Unlike railways within urban areas, these stations only serve one line that only goes in two directions. Ideal for those working in London, Dover or any intermediate stops perhaps, but getting to anywhere else for work would not be quite so easy, especially if the work involves taking tools or equipment. Reaching other parts of East Kent would likely involve a lengthy journey with train changes at Dover, Faversham or Canterbury. At Canterbury, commuters would also need to cross the city to get to the other railway station!

As for bus services, they do operate to and from Aylesham, but the bus company would have to seriously up their levels of service, for bus use to become a realistic option. Since they currently appear to be cutting services, I'm not confident that bus services would ever be good enough to persuade people to give up their cars. Any service would need to be both cheap and convenient. How likely is that?

Unless DCCLP - ensures these excellent transport links to everywhere in East Kent, then many of these proposed 420 households, would naturally turn to using the car to get about. As previously said, with many homes needing two incomes, many would need to drive to work and probably in different directions. So, despite the current "Garden Community" aims of reducing vehicle traffic and encouraging residents to stay in the community, that aim will almost certainly fail from the start. Furthermore, if each household were to have an average of 1.5 vehicles, that could mean around 630 extra vehicles from Policy R20 alone. How many extra daily vehicle movements would that create? And how much air pollution?

These extra vehicle movements will substantially add to the daily congestion on our already busy local roads. Current congestion spots are: Wingham and Barham junction with the A2. Again DCCLP - Policy R20, cannot and should not be looked at in isolation. The combined proposed number of houses to be built in the immediate area, as mentioned in the DCCLP -2045 along with Dover district Council's draft plan as mentioned in point 3 above comes to roughly 4970. At a ratio of 1.5 cars per household, that would mean an extra 7455 vehicles in the area! How many vehicle movements would they create each day? How much congestion would it cause? And how much air pollution would be created? And remember, 1.5 cars per household may be an under estimation!

Finally, vehicle movements would not just be confined to private cars. Every day, there would be post, recycling collections, utility services, builders, white van and super market deliveries, repair vans, visitors and the list goes on, each causing pollution of the

kinds mentioned earlier (in point 2). None of these estimated figures include movements to or from the other industrial and commercial developments proposed by both CCC and DDC in their draft Plans.

As far as I can see DCDLP - Policy R20, has been proposed without any serious consideration to the likely impact that these extra vehicular movements would have on our local roads and environment. Serious research should have been completed before proposing such a huge expansion in local housing. Expecting residents of such a community to do without their vehicles and remain local is unrealistic. If my above mentioned "fag packet" calculations are anywhere near correct then Policy 20 alone, will bring in around 630 extra vehicles from new residents alone. That is bound to seriously impact the daily weight of traffic thereby compounding the already congested pinch points. Add to that, the cumulative effect of all the vehicular movements created from all the other proposed housing developments mentioned above and the problems will escalate to mammoth proportions.

**My suggestion is that Policy R20 be removed from the DCDLP - 2045.**

**6. Increase in crime and anti-social behaviour:** With a greatly increased population there will be increased crime and anti-social behaviour. This will not improve anyone's quality of life. **Will there be extra police resources?**

**My suggestion is that Policy R20 be removed from the DCDLP - 2045.**

**7. The long-term merger of several local village communities:** Whether by design or by accident, when the DCDLP - Policy R20, proposed development of, " Aylesham south", is looked at in conjunction with DCDLP - Policy R1 "land at Cooting Farm" and neighbouring Dover District Council's Draft Local Plan for 2045 - Policy SAP 24, Site reference: AYL003b, the effect will be to merge and engulf several separate, close-knit communities into one vast unwanted and unsightly housing estate. In doing so, those communities will lose both their identity and their long standing geographic independence. Both Womenswold and Adisham, are both ancient villages with agricultural origins going back many centuries. Aylesham is barely a hundred years old and has both a separate character and origin based originally on the coal mining industry.

With specific regard to Policy R20, filling in the gap between Dover District Council Draft Local Plan's - Policy SAP 24, Site reference: AYL003b, 640 new homes in South Aylesham and the ancient village of Womenswold with DCDLP - Policy R20, would merely amount to infill on a grand scale. This policy would, in my view, be paving the way for future development on the aforementioned proposed new parkland.

As for "quality of life", there must be some benefits from such a development but I can't imagine anything in this DCDLP - Policy R20, that would in any way enhance that which is currently enjoyed by residents of this area.

**My suggestion is that Policy R20 be removed from the DCDLP - 2045.**

## **8. Lack of proper consultation:**

### **Your C.C.C website states:**

"How we've used your feedback to shape the draft plan

In 2020, we asked you to tell us about the issues affecting you and your local area. Using these issues, we drafted a set of options for different policies with our future Local Plan in mind.

In 2021, we consulted you on these options. We gave you the opportunity to comment on which of the options you thought were more appropriate and why.

These issues and options consultations were the beginning of the process of drawing up a new Local Plan for the district."

The first my wife or I knew of the new DCDLP – 2045 and specifically Policy R20, was at the beginning of October 2022! I have since asked many other local residents when they became aware? Nearly everyone I spoke to, said the same thing. They too, only discovered the DCDLP – 2045 proposals at the beginning of October 2022! Yet this has clearly been "coming down the pipeline" for some considerable time. How were the above-mentioned consultations carried out in 2020 and 2021, as very few people have any knowledge of having been consulted?

### **Has the proper consultation process been followed?**

I don't believe that proper consultation could have been carried out prior to the publishing of the DCDLP – 2045. Therefore:

**My suggestion is that Policy R20 be removed from the DCDLP - 2045.**

**To summarise:**

DCDLP - Policy R20 will add to a massive proposed local housing building program but at a very high price to both current residents and the environment, flora and fauna. It could only go ahead by sacrificing valuable productive farmland that could carry on feeding our Nation for centuries to come.

Despite the Plans proposals, local services will almost certainly become overwhelmed due to a lack of proper finance by the various agencies called upon to support these policies. NHS being only one. That would be to the severe detriment of all residents, both old and new!

This proposed development will almost certainly add to the unsustainable demand on water resources throughout east Kent and place considerable extra pressure on the already failing waste water treatment system.

Policy R20 alone would add a substantial number of extra vehicles to our already congested local roads. This in turn will add to air pollution in the area. When taken into account with the vehicles created by all the other proposed local developments and the congestion would become a massive problem.

With such a massive proposed increase in the local population it stands to reason that both crime and anti-social behaviour will increase as well. This will also adversely affect the quality of live of all residents, old and new.

I am convinced that proper consultations with the local community did not take place prior to the point that the DCDLP – 2045 was floated in October 2022.

Finally, I can only speak for myself, but it saddens me that there is far too much proposed development, way more, its seems than anywhere else, all concentrated in this immediate area. I do understand that new homes are needed but do we really need to swamp one location, more than any other in East Kent, with so new development so quickly?

Yours sincerely

Paul Lukehurst