

I strongly oppose the proposal to develop the Brooklands Farm site by creating approximately 1,400 homes on open countryside for the reasons below.

The character of the neighbourhoods adjacent to the proposed development is rural in terms of the low density of housing, the culture and the natural landscape. These neighbourhoods are separated from Whitstable town by the 'Old Thanet Way'. They are entirely different in nature from the town of Whitstable and should have been classed as rural/agricultural in the council's plan. It is incorrect to consider these neighbourhoods as having the same characteristics of Whitstable town and the areas closely surrounding Whitstable town.

Unlike Whitstable town, the South Street and Chestfield areas (adjacent to the proposed Brooklands Farm development site) are characterised by fields, hedgerows and low-density housing that is on average more than 50 years old. These areas are naturally divided from each other by unmade roads such as Rayham Road, Shepherd's Walk and Grasmere Road, agricultural land, fields, streams and woodland (some of it ancient woodland). The proposed development would merge the two neighbourhoods into one sprawl of housing and industrial landscape, creating another homogenous housing estate and ruining the character and beauty of the hitherto largely unspoilt surroundings.

The above areas are currently suffering from increased flooding and there is already a worrying increase in the frequency of serious flooding across roads such as South Street, Chestfield Road, Grasmere Road and the Thanet Way itself following heavy rainfall. The proposed development area covers Environment Agency Flood Zones 2 and 3. The roads in both neighbourhoods have become treacherous and increasingly unpassable after rain. The junction of South Street and the Chestfield Road becomes dangerous to cars following heavy rain and several cars, whose drivers mistakenly thought they could drive safely through such deep water are left stranded at the edge of the road each year. The fields within and external to Brooklands Farm become sodden after heavy rain. The stream running under South Street often reaches bursting point. Chestfield football pitch near where Molehill Road meets Chestfield Road is bordered on one side by houses with gardens that are under water after heavy rain. Throughout the stream network within this area there are dangerous levels of water after heavy rain and some of the gardens on Grasmere Road are under water. Sand bags are a regular sight. I mention this because it is already a problem for the residents and the traffic wishing to pass and that is BEFORE any intensive development of houses and industrial buildings and WITH THE BENEFIT of the current network of open fields that act as a soakaway. If proposals to create 1,400 new houses are followed through, it will not only have a catastrophic impact on the character of the area but will create an unacceptable flood risk. Any proposal to reduce the amount of natural soakaway in this area that is already struggling with the impact of several new housing estates (see below), together with the general increase in flash flooding caused by climate change would be irresponsible. The Council includes details of the trees that will be planted, but the fields are what is needed in this area to stop a bad situation become a disastrous one. There is currently a worrying and increasing trend for raw sewage to be pumped into sea at Seasalter when the water levels rise due to heavy rain. It would be inappropriate to develop to the proposed extent in the area as the impact of increased development will ultimately mean more sewage ends up in the sea where families, young people and pensioners alike are enjoying themselves by paddling, sailing, kitesurfing, kayaking and wild swimming.

The South Street area has already been changed by housing developments that are 'popping up' all around them due to Whitstable becoming a fashionable tourist destination and desirable location for investment and second homeowners. The Golden Hill site next to the big Tesco, the Olympia Way site opposite the Tesco, the Grasmere Road (Chestfield) housing estate currently under construction on a field previously very popular with local ramblers and dog walkers, the new

Whitstable Heights site on another area popular with dog walkers, also currently under construction. These developments are all changing the character of the area significantly already. The fields nearby for dog walkers, ramblers, scenic views, biodiversity, wildlife, and providing a natural antidote to flooding are gradually disappearing. The Brooklands Farm development would completely destroy the rural character of the neighbourhoods that border it as well as destroy the woodland and wildlife within it.

The historically significant Crab and Winkle Way (site of the oldest railway in the country), the historic listed buildings of the Brooklands farmhouse and those at the top of Rayham Road (Rayham Farm) would be in the middle of a huge housing estate rather than in the middle of a rural setting. This decimation of local history, culture and rural landscape cannot be acceptable to anybody, whatever problem it is trying to solve.

The proposal would certainly bring traffic congestion every weekend to one of the only remaining routes between Whitstable and Canterbury that isn't log jammed with tourist related traffic during the warmer months.

Due to the age demographic in these neighbourhoods, I suspect there are a large number of residents who live in these areas that are very unlikely to be responding to this consultation. My parents in their late 70's who live in Little Paddocks, Molehill Road, Chestfield are prime examples of two local residents who are not going to object to this consultation but who would be negatively affected by it and are vehemently opposed to the ruination of the rural nature of the surrounding fields, ancient woodland and hedgerows.

The 'Local Plan' mentions open spaces that will be 'created' within the development. However, the undeniable fact that the net effect of such over development of the area will be that open spaces will be SIGNIFICANTLY reduced significantly by developing on Brooklands Farm. I would like to note that these are the open spaces that large percentages of the respondents to your Strategic Land Availability Assessments (July 2022) said should not be touched. **76%** of respondents supported protecting the environment, supporting wildlife and biodiversity. **68.2%** supported reducing the impact of climate change. It seems that the responses to the consultation prove that the respondents did not favour the creation of more housing estates on the unspoilt Kent countryside. The respondents favoured the development being on brownfield sites.

The Council states in its responses to some of the comments made by the public in earlier consultations on the Plan, that whilst Brownfield sites can be prioritised, not all brownfield sites are suitable and development on agricultural land will be required to meet the housing target set by government. As a local community it is my view that we should be provided with the evidence that all Brownfield sites have been located and assessed for suitability for development.

Turning for one moment to the housing target set by government, as that is what is driving the ruination of the local Kent countryside and open spaces. There would be no need to develop more housing on the fields around Whitstable's borders if so many houses in the centre of Whitstable hadn't been bought for use as second or investment homes. If these houses were owned by locals, the locals would be able to live in them. Not only do the local Kent residents have to put up with the resulting rising house prices caused by the unchecked second or investment home owners, pricing their children out of getting on the local housing market, forcing them to have to live in the less desirable areas, anti-social litter problems on the country lanes and the beaches, anti-social noise levels from houses rented out by those who don't live in Whitstable via Airbnb and anti-social behaviour by those renting out the beach huts, traffic congestion in and around Whitstable before,

during and after the summer. NOW THE LOCAL RESIDENTS ARE LOSING THEIR GREEN FIELDS. It is the ultimate betrayal by the local city council that is caving in under the pressures to overdevelop its surrounding countryside because of its own failures to develop appropriate road infrastructure in and around the city of Canterbury, and have failed to meet housing targets over recent years. Consequently, while a large number of the homes in Whitstable are being used for partying and for rich second and investment homeowners from out of area to make money, the local residents are being squeezed out and the green fields used to build houses for more people. People who presumably could live in the houses that are second and investment homes in the recently made fashionable town of Whitstable. This is a proposal for new housing that would not be necessary if the Government imposed effective controls to deter second and investment homeowners decimating the character of a local area for their own enjoyment and additional income generation. Instead of decimating the local fields, I expect my City Council to lobby the government to properly tax the second and investment homeowners to deter them from unsustainable actions that are to such detriment to local communities like ours.

The Council also mentions in its responses to some of the objections in earlier consultations about maintaining habitats and landscapes, the recovery of nature and increasing biodiversity. This is comedic and of course, is just simply inconsistent with the inevitable effects of such a proposal: the light pollution, air pollution, litter, arrival of approximately an additional 3000 cars into the area (at least two per household, more if there are adult children living at home), significant reduction in the fields in this area. It would be obvious to anyone that the proposed development on Brooklands Farm will destroy natural habitats, reduce air quality, increase light and noise pollution and therefore breach your own policies and strategies relating to climate change, maintaining and increasing natural spaces and protecting wildlife, increasing biodiversity. The responses to the Council's previous consultations show that this is not what the local community wants. The local community wants sustainable solutions and a sustainable future in the face of the Climate Emergency that the Council has itself declared.

My view is that any development such as the proposed 1,400 homes, if really necessary, should be undertaken on brownfield land, not on rural/agricultural land. As described, this is because of the extremely negative effect it will have on the rural, quiet, unspoilt character of the surrounding neighbourhoods. I am a resident of Rayham Road. It is a beautiful, quiet, unmade road with beautiful views around the rolling countryside. There are fields along half of one side of the very long road. This beautiful neighbourhood currently has no light pollution, air pollution, anti-social behaviour, litter problem, or unmanageable traffic congestion. These will be some of the inevitable impacts should this development be allowed to proceed. The damage will outlive all of us.