

Canterbury City Council Draft Local Plan 2045

As a local resident of Canterbury I am writing to oppose the 2045 CCC Draft Local Plan on the basis that the scale of development suggested is unreasonable for a city such as Canterbury.

The figure of 31,300 new dwellings given in the 2045 Draft Local Plan is, I understand, a Government set target based on figures from the Office for National Statistics rather than any meaningful assessment of local housing needs. One wonders if the Canterbury City Council has any idea of the type of housing required in the area and where, across the wider Canterbury district, this housing is needed? As CCC themselves do not build housing, development can only occur on land offered by landowners and is only built by private developers who understandably want to maximise the profitability of their various schemes. Often these developments are of 3-4 bed properties, which have tended to be attractive to those wanting to move into the area but are not necessarily the properties needed for single occupancy or by smaller families already resident in the district. In addition, these bigger developments can frequently result in the loss of prime agricultural land, which is needed for growing food. Usually there is also need for some level of additional infrastructure, which might range from the provision of basic services, such as water supply and sewerage, to improved transport provision, schools and health facilities. 2022 will have made everyone aware that the impact of global warming, together with a lack of investment by the water companies, that there are limits in the south-east both in the availability of water and the ability of the water companies to manage waste responsibly.

Few would deny the need for some increase in housing in the area but this should not take place at the detriment of existing communities or the fundamental character of the area. Indeed, in early December 2022, Michael Gove, in his role as Levelling Up Secretary, confirmed that the planned Levelling Up Bill will now be amended to abolish mandatory housing targets. Mr Gove states that any council should have the freedom to build fewer houses if they face genuine constraints and the density suggested would significantly change the character of the area. I welcome this development, which should provide an opportunity to stop central government destroying existing communities. Those of us who live in the City of Canterbury are also well aware that none of our elected councillors are represented on the Council's Executive Group and feel that particular constraints on the City of Canterbury itself can often be overlooked.

As a UNESCO World Heritage Centre Canterbury attracts visitors from outside the region as well as those of us who choose to live and/or work in the area and contribute to its economy in that way. However, as the case of Liverpool has shown, this status once given, if not respected in planning decisions, can also be taken away. Should this happen in Canterbury this would represent a loss of income to the city and would have a further negative effect on an already struggling city centre.

As a local resident my greatest fear is that Canterbury will end up circled by housing developments which are too big to be integrated into the city but are not large enough to form fully independent communities with their own local facilities. There is, in my opinion, another Kentish town not far away from Canterbury that has fallen into this trap.

The traffic scheme recently mooted by the Council is totally inappropriate for the City and will alienate residents who will eventually be forced to make extra polluting journeys to travel short distances. In the meantime, until new developments produce sufficient funds to build these roads, the situation will be made worse by these new residents who will also want to bring their cars onto the City's roads.

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