

Leslie Mitchell



14th January 2023

To Whom it may concern,

RE: OBJECTION BROOKLANDS FARM

I am writing to object to the proposed development planned for Brooklands Farm, Whitstable. My objections are listed below.

Whilst I accept the need for additional houses across the country, Whitstable has been the focus of development for many years; I question the figures provided by ONS and the projections put forward for our area. The recent decision by the government I understand means housing quotas can be revisited and I wonder if this has happened within Canterbury City Council. Has the impact of all these developments on our environment and community been considered? The damage cannot be undone. Current decisions have only attracted migration to the town and not benefited the local community.

1. This planned development is vast and can only be classed as building a new town, there is currently a heavy commercial area adjacent to South Street and with the current developments ongoing along with the proposed further houses / car parks any green spaces will be lost. This will only isolate and separate the community

2. Chestfield and South Tankerton are merging under this current scheme, a token grass verge does not count as separation. There should be a minimum distance, currently it is just land that will flood and is unbuildable.

3. We are currently amid a global environmental crisis and we all need to do our part, even if this means houses need to be re-located to areas that are brown field sites or to unused and discarded land that can be compulsory purchased. Do not use grade 1 agricultural land, this land has always successfully provided crops and dairy/cattle grazing vital for the country. Plus, it is an outstanding area for the diversity of wildlife it has living in its care, continue the success it has made.

4. Whilst the list for housing in our area maybe long, most of the social housing is purchased by London boroughs and our 'local' people will not feel the benefit of these, especially under the debunked affordable purchase scheme. These homes are still being sold at high prices. The planners at a meeting in Whitstable acknowledged they could not control who buys them so

those from Whitstable will probably miss out. Couple this with second homeowners and Air B&B, this is where policy work needs to be done, look at who buys, how and why.

5. Southern Water sewerage system cannot cope with the houses we currently have and even though work is being undertaken I question if a new / revised system could in fact cope with an additional 1300 houses, commercial units, sports facilities and shops. This is along with the additional houses being proposed in the plan and houses currently being built in Herne Bay and Whitstable.

5. The travel infrastructure has only cosmetically addressed the issue to an extent and is critical to this development, but the cost of this will be enormous and I cannot imagine the CIL payment will cover this, especially if a large portion of monies paid to the council will be put towards the planned ring round in Canterbury or other areas that the council do not have funds for. I would ask more transparency of fiscal planning, who will pick up any additional cost? Again, more consideration is needed.

If it did go ahead, what effect will this have on other areas. Will the infrastructure be put in place given the cost or will there be just more traffic squeezed in small seaside town. On most days and weekends you have to already queue to get into Whitstable off the A299 because of the bad planning layout of traffic lights and roundabouts near estuary view in a very small distance. This is another area that needs to be addressed first. The planned parking and ride I understand is just a car park with a bus stop so of no use to local residents meaning the traffic issue would remain and the shop keepers of Whitstable would not see any benefit.

6. If access was given via Chestfield east only to the A299 this would only attract drivers from/to Greenhill and surrounding developments and create lots of dangerous rat runs and bottle neck it in a village. What stops highways changing this to west as well? Lets hope there are not any accidents on the A299 and push the traffic through the towns that happens regularly. Please note that there are consistently accidents on the stretch of A299 between Herne Bay and Whitstable at the best of times and the road quality is appalling. Also, there is nothing mentioned to mitigate the increased noise due to traffic. This needs to be considered for the wildlife and notwithstanding the wellness of the current residence and community

7. I note from the plans there are areas of biodiversity which given the UK is near the top of the list of countries that have lost their own biodiversity is pleasing to see but again makes me question why develop here? We are in a global crisis; grade 1 agricultural land should be protected not sold on for development. We all need to reduce are carbon footprint and become more food self-sufficient to feed us as a nation. Regarding the plan itself, the main areas highlighted for biodiversity are on a slope and would make for poor housing or in danger of flooding. The current areas of tree lines and hedge rows seem to have less protection on the plan. If this is going to be considered much more area needs to be given to the whole perimeter giving space to the biodiversity and supporting the current residence with the dramatic impact of this development.

8. Last year we faced a hose pipe ban and even though we have recently had much rain, with the world getting warmer each year water shortages will become more common issue. Why is there a plan to build so many more houses in Whitstable when the north of the country did not have a ban, surely a common-sense approach is needed across government as a whole and some thought put into where these houses are best placed or look at regeneration of buildings. Along with the houses being built / proposed, there are numerous student accommodation blocks being constructed that do not appear to be taken into account, these will also be looking at Southern Water for service. Given all of this, this large proposal does not make sense, how can this be considered? A reservoir is being considered but we have been told the figures used for its construction / size is different again to those used by the council for developments. We will again not have enough water. Infrastructure needs to be in place before consideration

9. Schools are proposed but I note only 2. But 3 are needed SEND, Grammar and Secondary. Whitstable is already oversubscribed and cannot meet the needs of the community. These will need to be built before any build starts, SEND school will attract children from wider areas due to the lack of them in Kent and will be full the second you open the doors, again this is without 1300+ increase in residential. This highlights the lack of future proofing and awareness of current needs of the community. These are needed now! Where will the children go to school and who will pay for the schools? Not only the building but fitting out the school and teachers.

10. There is no mention of doctor / medical centres on a system that is already over stretched. Surrounding hospitals are not coping now, I am not aware of anything happening in pipeline. This is of grave concern to anyone wanting to live in the Canterbury and surrounding areas and needs to be considered under the wellbeing/safety. It can take 45 mins + to get to the either Ashford or QEQM that's if you drive

11. A gain, I am not against houses and developments but the whole approach needs to be turned on its head. Just building an additional 1300 homes in an area where sewage is regularly pumped into the sea, suffers hose pipe bans and whose biodiversity is disappearing at an alarming rate does not help our communities in the longer term. We need agricultural land to grow crops and feed animals. We need to be looking on how to promote successful farming that produces jobs which look after our wildlife and truly look to the future

12. I appreciate Whitstable and surrounding towns are popular and therefore expensive; it is this that drives developers to approach landowners to sell their fields with profits for both parties but the long-term cost is to our detriment; this does not help our younger generation. We should be recycling not building without thought on such a large scale which always results in the greatest number of houses being squeezed on a given space and cut and paste layouts of design. Never any thought to space, please drive around any newly finished estate you have approved, they all look the same overcrowded. You will see that the roads are too narrow, not enough allowance of space to cars and vans, people do have more than 1 car in there family easily 3 vehicles today including many having works vans. These are parked up on paths and on the roads. Not a nice environment for children to move around safely, they just feel intense and imposing, the analogy I could only think of is battery farming in human lives. Design over

developers' profit is needed. Not enough enfaces on sustainability for houses, PV/heat pumps/recycling/ water recyle.in houses that blend into surroundings. We have already one poorly designed at Olympia way and we have a commercial centre in the Wilson estate, we do not need more.

In summary, the Brooklands farm project does not meet any of the criteria needed to allow to build a small town 1300+ on successful Grade 1 farmland, all that has been proposed to support this project in infrastructure and community needs only meets the needs of the impact of the current developments in place. It is becoming quite apparent of the lack of infrastructure/schools/healthcare/local business needs for the current Whitstable community for the last 15 years, adding more cars/houses/commercial and ultimately more pressure on our grade 1 farmland is not the answer. It is recognised by the government that we must come more self-sufficient with our nation's food needs, cutting away at our farmland is a travesty. So much more must be considered and infrastructure built and in place before a development of this magnitude and devastation can is even if ever be considered. Do not base decisions on revenue raising/developers' greed. I do recognize the need for housing but this size of development is not the answer.

Lastly, I have read many times that our views matter, the Government Planning Team Inspectorate is legally obliged to take objections into consideration yet the developers have approached those that will be advantaged by this plan (not the current farm owners) and have said this is going ahead as Canterbury City Council has not reached its planning quota and this development will tick the box. This it seems is quite common knowledge and I am appalled if this is the case. Ironic the developers don't want to speak to the residence who will be disadvantaged by this development. Can you imagine that when you bought your dream home that circles the perimeter of the farm under the belief grade 'A' farmland is protected and safe! Is there a clause that says only from general public only, not developers. This will only open the door that can't be shut. Please can you confirm your view on this?

I look forward to your reply.

Kind regards

Leslie Mitchell