



Feedback on Draft Canterbury district local plan (October 2022), mainly policies C6 and SS4

1 message

Therése Hedlund-Heap

15 January 2023 at 21:38

To: consultations@canterbury.gov.uk

Hello
I'd like to give some feedback on the Draft Canterbury district local plan (October 2022), especially the policies surrounding the traffic zone system (south Canterbury access in particular) and policy C6: suggested development of Merton Park, as I am already resident inside the boundaries of the suggested development (6 households on Stuppington lane). We all care deeply about the unique rural setting we live in and we are happy to see that so many people walk/cycle/run past our houses every day, it's not at all a lonely place even though we haven't got immediate neighbours.
Some of my thoughts are on a general level where other things are more in the details, as is natural when policy C6 is on my doorstep in every sense of the word.

Policies

C6: Merton Park

SS4: transport and infrastructure (in particular South Canterbury link road and Merton park area)

The existing housing on Stuppington Lane has not been taken into consideration and the plan is too unclear to understand what is really suggested. This is a popular area for walks and runs and has old public footpaths running through and people often stop near the Oasts to admire the view west-northwest towards Wincheap/Thanington/Harbledown and have a little picnic. (I have actually seen the bulls in the field at top of Stuppington Lane stand to admire the sunset on several occasions). There are several established public footpaths through the orchards and fields, some of them ancient hollow paths.

For us who already live inside the suggested area it's important that our opinions and worries are heard, we may not be many households, but our living situation will be permanently changed with a new area built up around us. The suggested plan is too vague to give proper feedback on. For example is the land near the old lime kiln pot stable to build on?; what type of groundwork would be required to build on the land leaning into the dip between fields and orchard?

It is a natural area to expand the city towards, but the traffic situation needs to be addressed properly before any decisions are made, several smaller connections in different directions may be preferable instead of funneling more traffic via already congested roads and creating more air and noise pollution through A28/Winceap. The suggested road access seems to be requiring building a wider road of the Roman Hollow Lane and funnel traffic through already heavily congested Wincheap. The suggested zone map isn't even in the draft plan to illustrate the suggestion and proper feedback is hard to give.

Vehicular road connections need to be reviewed properly. For us who live on Stuppington Lane our current access into the city is north via South Canterbury road. If the suggested traffic corridors are implemented we would have to drive several miles further, via already heavily congested roads, to even get to the hospital, which is less than 500 metres away from us because it's in a different zone, adding travel time, congestion and pollution to those roads. The draft needs to be anchored in reality and not done based on looking at a map.

Where Hollow Lane meets Homersham road in Wincheap is very narrow and buildings on either side of the road are blocking widening of the road. Widening Hollow Lane southwards would require demolition of the roman hollow way and loss of historical value. The South Canterbury link road would not be sustainable with a narrow road like Hollow Lane.

Adding traffic via South Canterbury road/Nunnery fields is also problematic, largely due to the bridge over the railway line towards Dover being narrow and the roads on either side not aligned, meaning that only one vehicle can pass at the time. The amount of traffic during rush hour/school run often causes queues from the traffic lights by Old Dover Road all the way up to the junction with Nunnery road, hindering both bus traffic and ambulances to/from the hospital. Building new access next to the Rugby club is one potential, neither Stuppington road or Lime Kiln road are suitable for increased traffic.

When I think about the area I want to live in these are some of my thoughts:

- Node-based planning, this is a large area and a proper plan for where resident services like supermarket/pharmacy/café/postal services needs to be included in more detail.
- Wide and lit paths for walking and cycling, all the way into the city centre and through to the other side. Most of the existing foot paths towards the city are insufficiently lit and most people don't want to use them after dark. If the residents are to choose walking/cycling the paths need to be plenty, lit and safe.
- Larger size plots and smaller maximum building area per plot (for example maximum built on area 30% of plot size). Maximum height of buildings so as to not destroy the existing spectacular views .
- Solar-cells should be installed on all new-builds.
- Heating systems not relying on fossil fuels. The area is fairly exposed for wind and suitable for air source heat pumps, which should be considered in the planning of each of the buildings, alternatively ground source heating if the ground allows. This is another reason not to build too densely.
- Mostly self- and custom plots for an interesting and dynamic environment. Green corridors between roads/tree-lined roads to make sure the area's legacy of orchard land isn't lost. Densely built areas with similar looking buildings are not attractive and will only contribute to a feeling of being bunched into poor quality housing without any character to the area.
- Entry/exit to Canterbury East from the south side. There is no reason not to have access gates on the south side of the railway for access to the station, even unmanned gates would improve things.
- Waste water management; to handle this many new builds there needs to be added capacity to the waste water plant and the recipient (Stodmarsh) cannot handle increased capacity due to endangered species. Before any planning permissions for any development of the Merton Park land, the waste water question has to be solved. The planning permission for the conversion of the Oasts on Stuppington lane includes a report from the Environment Agency where it was stated that no untreated sewage could be let out through soak-aways. The properties now have closed cess pools which have to be emptied by lorry, the contents then still have to be treated at one of the nearby sewage treatment plants, which is why that only works as a small scale or temporary solution. Even a pipe line bypassing Stodmarsh and leading treated water out to the sea is a relatively easy solution.
- Impact on existing wildlife. We have at least 2 types of birds of prey often circling over the fields, unfortunately I haven't been able to identify which ones. There are regular sightings of pheasants, wagtails, blackbirds, all sorts of hedgerow birds, foxes (a lot of dens around the orchards) and lately also hedgehogs and on a few occasions, raven. Smaller rodents (various mice and shrews) can be found around the area, especially in the fields in the summer.
- Management of green areas. The land along the disused railway tunnel from the Elham valley railway is currently used to house bulls for part of the year. The area nearest the lime kiln seems to be used for drinking and littering, as well as, on some occasion, dumping garden waste which has led to Japanese knotweed growing at the bottom of the pit. This is a really pretty area that would be a shame to leave to grow unusable, but it requires proper management which needs funding.
- Create solutions before putting a squeeze on residents, primarily this relates to public transport and foot/cycle paths.
- Existing housing should be connected to the main sewage system, or else lorries for cess pool emptying will continue through the area. (It's not a very pleasant smell while the cess pools are open).
- Give priority to existing residents on Stuppington Lane to extend their plots to create green space between existing buildings and new builds.
- Street parking should be discouraged and all dwellings should have access to off street parking (better with garage where both cars and bicycles can be safely stored)
- The capacity of 500 parking spaces for Park and ride will add pollution to the area (both particles and noise), what measures would be taken to reduce this? For example tree planting? Charging posts for electrical vehicles?
- Functional bus service; as it stands now we can walk into the city centre from Stuppington Lane in 15-20 mins or we can opt to take the bus if we want to. If we want to go to the other side of the city centre, for example Sturry Road or the university area then we have the option of taking a bus to the bus station and change

1/16/23, 7:21 AM

EKS Partnership Mail - Feedback on Draft Canterbury district local plan (October 2022), mainly policies C6 and SS4

bus there, or take the car. Since it requires a bus change and potential waiting time, taking the bus is currently not a viable alternative to driving. Cross-city connections need to be created before it becomes a good option to use public transport.

I am relatively new in the area, having moved here from London during the pandemic. I'm struck by how the Canterbury economy is completely relying on tourism and university students, but very little is aimed at long-term residents and it doesn't seem like the city wants to keep any of the talents who are being educated at the local universities. There are very few high profile jobs in the area and with the pandemic and cost of living crisis it's obvious that the business model of focusing on tourists and temporary students is not sustainable. Focusing on building a self-sustaining business climate in the area, this is after all one of the logistics corridors between the continent and UK, would benefit the local economy hugely. A business park with high standard office buildings with access to both main roads and railways would make Canterbury a lot more interesting as a location for businesses.

If this draft plan had been existing when we were looking to move to this area we would not have considered moving here. We fell in love with a rural setting near the city where we didn't need to rely on a car to get anywhere for our daily life, but still surrounded by nature and with a spectacular view. The sunsets seen from the Oasts on Stuppington lane and also further up the lane are truly spectacular, all year round. It's no surprise so many people use this as a recreational area for walks, runs and enjoying a thermos of coffee with a view. In our minds it's a quiet area worth preserving and developing very very carefully. My worst nightmare would be rows of identical houses with a garden the size of a 1st class postal stamp and no driveways so all the cars are parked along narrow roads.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts. I sincerely hope that my concerns will be taken into account. I have met several people worried about the C6 policy and the Canterbury Circulation Plan sounds like it needs to be completely re-worked, and all the road locations actually visited before putting them into a plan.

Therese Hedlund-Heap