



The Draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2045

1 message

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To: consultations@canterbury.gov.uk

Dear Canterbury District Council,

The Draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2045 contains some bold, visionary and radical proposals that could place Canterbury District on the map of forward-thinking and sustainable districts. However, far too much emphasis has been placed on housing and road development as the unique pathway towards achieving these sustainability objectives, and in so doing the objectives are severely undermined to the point of being unachievable.

This is evident with the Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan. Of the 135 schemes that have been proposed and costed, 131 are funded by CIL, S106 or S278, all of which are developer funds. Sustrans, Levelling Up, and Active Travel Funding account for just 4 of the projects. Modal shift and active travel are overwhelmingly contingent upon development. This demonstrates unequivocally the priorities of this housing-developer-led Draft Local Plan.

The alternatives have been insufficiently explored. This is most apparent with the Eastern Movement Corridor. The only alternative that is articulated in this consultation is the Transport Topic Paper with the "Do nothing approach" which recognises clearly and coherently a) that there is a traffic congestion problem in Canterbury and across the south east, and that b) 'The transportation challenges that additional development brings exacerbate this problem' (p.3). This second point is crucial. The additional development both of housing and road-building will clearly aggravate the very problems the Local Plan sets out to solve. However, the only alternative presented is doing nothing, as opposed to the articulation of plans and strategies to pursue all the sustainability objectives: public transport, modal shift, active travel, clean air zones, open spaces, protection of landscape and biodiversity, etc. etc. without the need for additional housing and bypasses. These alternatives are regrettably absent.

Now is the opportunity to be truly radical and to address the roots of the traffic problem. We must invest in public transport and active travel as a matter of absolute urgency, starting immediately. We must find ways to reduce the traffic, not encourage it. There is an appetite for this, as demonstrated in other cities and councils in the UK that have invested significantly in public transport and have deprioritised private car use.

Across the District there are active and engaged Friends Groups, Residents Associations, CICs, Parish Councils, expert bodies in conservation, biodiversity, heritage, housing and transport, student societies, faith groups, and other committed organisations. There is great energy and expertise here, and these civic bodies are vital for the future sustainability of Canterbury. They have, however, been deprioritised in favour of housing developers. This is neither inclusive nor sustainable. Great opportunities lie ahead for the City Council to demonstrate its capacity for radical thinking and visionary planning by working with the residents and the civic groups, by mobilising this energy and expertise – especially for funding bids – by listening carefully to local needs, concerns, knowledge and expertise, and by developing a Local Plan that puts the community and the land at its heart.

Myself and my family moved to Whitstable from Maidstone 6 years ago as Maidstone had become a stressful and unpleasant area to live in. Our village had 4 new housing estates built on historic farm and woodlands causing the already network of lanes to become gridlocked. The lack of forward thinking and sheer disrespect for all those living in the area is apparent and our concern is that Canterbury and the surrounding areas will become the same. We have a beautiful town and city on our doorstep and, with lots of creativity, can become an economic hub and inspirational place to live, without construction being at the driving force. We are surrounded by beautiful green spaces and gorgeous seas with a huge amount history.....please don't destroy this and go the same way as other towns and cities in the uk. As the pandemic highlighted, nature, less traffic, the arts, and space provides a better quality of life and can easily support the economy.

Many thanks for your time,
Sharon Hawker and Family