



Draft Canterbury district Local Plan 2020-2045

1 message

Christian Siegel

16 January 2023 at 16:59

To: "consultations@canterbury.gov.uk" <consultations@canterbury.gov.uk>

Regarding the Draft Canterbury district Local Plan 2020-2045, I strongly object to the proposed 'bypass plan' through upgrades to "Rough Common Road" and the routing Canterbury-bound traffic through Rough Common and Whitstable Road. Those areas would come off worst of all, which is not only unfair to affected residents but also poses serious risks to pedestrians along those roads as the pavements are not designed for this.

My objection is based on a series of arguments that I ask you to take into consideration:

1. Rough Common is an independent village that has flourished over the years. Sending all Canterbury-bound traffic from the North or the West through Rough Common would fundamentally change its character. It never was the main route into Canterbury and residents built their lives on the notion that traffic is limited, not only based on not being on the main route into Canterbury but also based on the current ban of all HGV traffic (deliveries exempt). There is village life either side of Rough Common Road, and the village must not be cut in half by making it impossible to cross the road.
2. To 'upgrade' Rough Common route to handle more traffic poses fundamental issues as the width of the road is limited by old buildings. For instance, between St Gabriel's church and Ross Gardens the pavement is very narrow, measuring just over two foot. While resurfacing work might improve the road surface, the capacity of the road cannot be increased.
3. To proceed to enhance road capacity and to send HGVs along that route anyway would be endangering pedestrians, in particular in narrow patches such as between St Gabriel's church and Ross Gardens. With an overhanging building and hedges the effective space for pedestrians to walk avoiding protruding car mirrors is already very narrow, yet with more vans or even HGVs coming down that patch there would be a high risk of collisions between the mirrors and pedestrians' elbows. Matters are further complicated by the bend in the road, which might catch out drivers from the Harbledown direction and would result them in mounting the kerb. Yet precisely this pavement is the main route for pedestrians in the village, as it leads to the footpath to Oaks path and is the way primary school children walk to Blean every morning -in the dark during winters- (and back in the afternoons). Likewise parents with toddlers in push-chairs use that pavement bringing their children to the pre-school (on the other side of Rough Common Road).
4. While I understand the desire of the proposal to increase the wellbeing of pedestrians in the City of Canterbury, this should not come to the detriment of residents and pedestrians of Rough Common. In fact, the dangers of sending more traffic through Rough Common are much higher than maintaining the current traffic system in Canterbury, as the roads in Canterbury, such as Rheims Way but even London Road were designed with wide pavements – unlike the ones in the village of Rough Common. It would not be just to put more traffic where the pavement or other footpath infrastructure is worse!
5. I agree with the proposal that the use of public transport should be encouraged more strongly. Yet, Rough Common which is meant to take the biggest burden out of all KCC areas no longer has a bus service through the village as this was cut a few month ago (the 3B service). So, a bus service surely must be reinstated as part of the proposal. Yet the irony of it is, where would the bus stop? If on Rough Common Road, it would cause congestion and long tailbacks during the rush hour.
6. Finally, I'd like to make another point regarding road safety. Already now, residents along Rough Common Road (a 30-mph zone) witness very aggressing driving behaviour, with cars speeding, overtaking other cars, not stopping at the pedestrian crossing (close to a secondary school!) – sometimes even accelerating or swerving into the other lane to avoid a crossing pedestrian. These tendencies are particularly bad during afternoon rush hours. If the road gets formally upgraded or even just informally treated as a Ring Road, it is more than likely that drivers will drive even more aggressively, as they would treat as the main artillery road rather than a village road. So many more traffic calming measures would be needed, such as lower speed limits with speed bumps or speed cameras as well as pedestrian traffic lights.

Kind regards,

Dr Christian Siegel

