



## Comment on Draft Local Plan Policy SS4

1 message

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### Policy SS4 Movement and transportation strategy for the district

I write in strong opposition to this policy. The proposed new Canterbury Circulation Plan (CCP) (section 2) is completely unfeasible in the absence of a new outer ring road completely encircling the whole city. Proposal 2(f) to "Implement an ANPR-based sectoring system and modal filters to limit cross-city trips" is a grotesque infringement of civil liberties, and would make it impossible for most people in the City to live and work effectively. Proposal 2(g)(i) "upgrades at the A2 junction at Harbledown and at Rough Common Road" are deeply flawed, and would achieve little towards the aims of Policy 2 anyway.

To look at some details of my criticism. Referring to the colour-coded "Zone Plan" of travel districts which has been circulated in the local media, but does not appear in the Draft Local Plan itself. I live in the yellow (north east) zone. Under the proposals, I would not be permitted to travel by car into any other coloured zone without paying what is effectively a fine, unless I follow a much longer route (**increasing** overall CO2 emissions) via an outer ring road, which does not at present exist. The yellow zone contains only one large supermarket suitable for a weekly shop (Sainsburys in Kingsmead Road). I would face restrictions on travelling to the supermarkets in Sturry Road - Green Zone - (Asda, Lidl, Aldi) or Wincheap - Purple Zone - (Morrisons). Similarly for any of the stores on the Wincheap Trading Estate - Purple Zone - (furniture, tiles, DIY, etc) which the Council has worked hard for many years to expand and promote. I could drive along Broad Oak Road - dominated by car showrooms - but not to the Vauxhall Road / Sturry Road complex with its many retail outlets (Currys, The Range, Matalan, etc).

This restriction on my freedom of choice as to where to travel and shop is unacceptable. Comparisons with the sectorisation of Berlin in the 1960s have been drawn in the media, and they are completely justified. The scheme is just as likely to increase overall car CO2 emissions as reduce them. Moreover, a very likely consequence will be needless and wasteful duplication of retail provision in each coloured zone, which will result in the economic viability of the retail sector in every part of Canterbury being placed at risk.

How can I drive from the yellow zone into other zones without being fined? I can go via London Road or Rough Common Road to reach the A2050 Harbledown bypass and travel westwards away from the City. But at the junction with the A2 there is currently no way to get onto the A2 to travel SE to enter the purple zone at Wincheap, or connect with the new Eastern bypass to reach the blue zone. At Harbledown I have to join the westbound A2. To come back the other way it is necessary to use the slip road and loop round via Dunkirk, or travel all the way to the roundabout at Brenley Corner. Presumably the "upgrade at the A2 junction at Harbledown" is intended to overcome this by building a full interchange between the A2050 and the A2. But this would be impossible without obliterating the Harbledown Fruit Belt (in contradiction to Policy Local Character Area H1) or the historic Iron Age Fort at Bigbury Camp. A dozen years ago, a proposal for a Park and Ride site at Harbledown was discontinued for precisely these reasons; upgrading the junction would be much more damaging.

To look at the prospects for a Ring Road on the Western and Northern sides of the City. It is unclear whether the outer boundaries of the yellow zone on the map are supposed to represent the intended route of a ring road. On the western side, the boundary seems to follow a route consistent with Proposal 2(g)(i) "upgrades at the A2 junction at Harbledown and at Rough Common Road". This route is completely unfeasible for a new City bypass road. At the southern (Harbledown) end, there is a steep gradient far in excess of anything permissible for a major road (cf Palmars Cross Hill). If following the existing Rough Common Road, the residential character of the village would be completely destroyed. Compulsory purchase of many houses' gardens would be required, and property devalued so much that the compensation payments would be unaffordable for the Council. If routed to the west of Rough Common village, the road would require the destruction of large areas of countryside and Blean Woods, in contradiction of the Draft Plan's own policies such as DS19 : (Habitats and landscapes), and DS22 (Landscape character). This will never be permitted under modern environmental legislation.

I would not be surprised if the very existence of this proposal in the Draft Local Plan is already causing planning blight in Rough Common, adversely affecting the housing market there. Will the City Council be paying financial compensation to those in Rough Common who are unable to sell their homes at full market value during the lengthy time the Local Plan undergoes its consultation process?

What about the upgrade of the connection between the new road at Rough Common Road and Whitstable Road?

Whatever improvements are made to this junction, traffic arriving from the Harbledown direction has limited choice where to go from here: either NW towards Whitstable (if that is the journey destination, most traffic from the Faversham direction probably already uses the Thanet Way from Brenley Corner instead of coming to Canterbury along the A2), or to drive down Whitstable Road into the City (which the new road was supposed to bypass!). So the new road would achieve little or nothing towards the aims of Policy 2, unless it is continued around the north of the City to connect with the proposed Eastern bypass.

Think about continuation of the new Ring Road around the north of the City. This would require either a major upgrade of Giles Lane (doubtless totally unacceptable to the University) or, if routed further north, destroying large areas of ancient woodland (Brotherhood Wood) and high-grade farmland. Then, the north-easternmost boundary of the Yellow Zone directly traverses the Shelford landfill site. How would a new road cross this site - by a tunnel? There is also the proposed Broad Oak reservoir to consider - how would a northern bypass be routed here?

Quite apart from its totally unacceptable restrictions of civil liberties, the traffic zoning proposal looks like a purely desktop-based exercise, entirely detached from reality. It is completely undeliverable.

The "inverted pyramid" of Policy DS13 (Movement Hierarchy) seems to underpin Policy SS4, but it does not appear until page 215 of the Draft Local Plan. Despite being the result of several consultations in recent years, it is very simplistic. Its emphasis on the desirability of walking, cycling and public transport takes no account whatever of journey distance (it is not feasible for all but the youngest and fittest people to travel several miles by walking or cycling, especially where available time is a consideration); journey purpose (it is not possible to carry a supermarket "big shop" by any of these transport methods); or time of day (there is little public transport available at night, except by taxi which is unaffordable for most people). Sorry, but Policy DS13 would not pass muster in a GCSE coursework exercise.

**The entirety of Policy SS4 is totally unworkable and unacceptable. It needs to be withdrawn from the Draft Local Plan and completely reconsidered.**

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