

Additional Response to Local Plan 2045 from Patience Vince

General Comments

The aims of the bulk of the policies seem reasonable and even admirable with the exception of the actual number of proposed houses which is excessive. However, the whole enterprise depends on implementation, financing, oversight and in some cases, interpretation.

It seems totally wrong to make any public infrastructure dependent on the financial support of any one commercial sector ie house builders to finance roads. This gives far too much power to a sector who may well have vested interests different from those of the community.

It is also important in my view that there is a monitoring structure in place to ensure the policies as agreed are actually implemented. Too often for example 'biodiversity' has been reduced to a few fast growing trees, grass and perhaps a pond. The care and maintenance of existing green spaces particularly older trees is vital (Trees do not begin to sequester carbon until they are at least ten years old). Any newly created areas must be developed with the long term firmly in view. Again, care and maintenance must be built into the plan.

As our infrastructure generally is already under considerable strain, my own feeling that a programme of modernisation and expansion particularly with regard to water and sewage must be in progress before any further development is undertaken. In addition, every new house should at the very least have solar panels and a rain harvesting system for watering the gardens. The latter could be done on an individual house basis or on a sector basis.

With further regard to housing, 'affordable' needs to be carefully and clearly defined. Affordable for whom? Where possible there should be a retention and increased construction of bungalows to allow older residents to downsize and free up larger family homes. Finally, representation should be made to central government to allow councils to build more social housing to be able to offer decent homes to the most disadvantaged in our communities.

With regard to Herne Bay specifically, I feel there is too much emphasis on Herne Bay as a tourist destination, specifically a Summer one, and not enough on the social and cultural needs of the residents.

Herne Bay has I believe a fairly large cohort of disadvantaged families who would benefit from social housing and the up grading of other rented accommodation.

There is not enough on offer for teenagers many of whom would appreciate a skate park as well as expansion of indoor sports such as roller skating, tennis etc. This is even more important in view of the expansion of housing.

Several community enterprises are in need of larger premises at reasonable rents such as Beach Creative, the Umbrella group etc. If this was new build, a community centre might also be a welcome addition to the amenities of the town.

The library needs an up grade so, it too could become a community hub for public lectures, short courses and other community events. Though the policies refer to all these things in general terms, much more specific goals need to be in place to ensure that development is actually in line with the policy aims.

Michael Vince's additional observations

There needs to be much greater identification and publicity to the mass of the people of Canterbury on the significant risk to the world's survival if carbon is not removed from our atmosphere. The enormity of the risk was demonstrated by Nicholas Thurston to the SDG members on Friday last in which he drew attention to the environmental costs of running empty buses eg Herne Bay to Margate Hospital usually starts with no passengers, does it pick up many more or would a Hopper bus be more efficient most of the time?

Vehicle sharing is essential and should be promoted in the first instance and recognition of the significant benefit of electric vehicles when seeking to reduce the noxious gases.

The plan should be needs assessment based and have clearly timed targets which are monitored rigorously.