
Response to Consultation on Canterbury Local Plan

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Dear Planning Team

I am writing to register my strong objection to the proposed development of Land on Rattington Street (N32). As a resident of Chartham village, I have grave concerns about this proposal. Below I have listed my specific objections:

1. Location

The site is a greenfield site, so development of the field is contrary to NPPF Paragraph 148 which directs councils to prioritise previously developed land (brownfield sites) over greenfield sites. The site is not situated close enough to a public transport hub or other amenities such as shops, medical centres or community centres, to reduce reliance on cars. The site is located in between narrow, unlit, country lanes already suffering from traffic congestion. There are no sustainable solutions for vehicle access, including development traffic. Development of this site was refused in 2023 (for fewer homes); all of the conditions which led to this refusal still stand.

2. Traffic and Transport

The local plan does not include any proposals for vehicle access to the site, only cycling/walking. It is highly unlikely that residents of the site will not be car users, thus increasing the amount of traffic on already congested 'rat runs' through the village. Data from the Chartham Speedwatch group have carried out 20 sessions on Shalmsford Street in the last two years, observing 136 'speeders' indicating that speeding traffic is already a problem in this area. Increased traffic from the new site would increase danger for pedestrians and cyclists. The village bus service is infrequent and unreliable, and the train station has no car park, further increasing the reliance on cars. There are no pavements or safe cycle routes from the site to the school, shops or station – and creating these would have unacceptable impacts on the natural environment (see below).

3. Impact on the local infrastructure

Chartham Primary School is near capacity already; KCC has previously refused an application for a walking bus as they deemed the pedestrian routes to school unsafe. There is no secondary education in the village and travelling to Canterbury/Ashford for this further increases traffic. There are no plans for expanding GP services within the village – these are

already at capacity. There are already frequent problems with sewage and drainage in Chartham, with no plans to improve fragile existing systems.

4. Flooding, drainage and environmental risk

The area is prone to seasonal flooding (proximity to Nailbourne and Stour river systems), this would be exacerbated by surface water run off if the site is developed. There is no robust assessment of groundwater or drainage capacity in the draft plan. The development threatens the natural environment by enclosing ancient woodland, increasing light/noise pollution in a currently dark, rural area and potentially destroying protected hedgerows along Rattington Street if the road is widened.

5. Heritage and Landscape aspect

Nearby listed buildings and conservation areas are at risk of harm from the development. The development would erode the rural approach to Chartham, blurring the village boundary and contradicting the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment which seeks to preserve village separation. The rural landscape is defined by protected hedgerows, ancient woodland and open fields, many of which would be destroyed in this development.

6. Design and Layout concerns

The proposed high density housing is not in-keeping with the existing rural character, having no architectural relationship to the rest of Chartham. There is no evidence in the plans for suitable vehicle access, flood mitigation or sustainable drainage. Insufficient parking provision is likely to push the overflow into surrounding, already congested, roads. Pedestrian access to the school has already been deemed unsafe by KCC, there is also no safe access to other village amenities – and creating this would further destroy the natural habitat as outlined above.

7. Public health and wellbeing

Local health outcomes will be worsened by the air and noise pollution from extra vehicles – exacerbated by insufficient GP services. The development will increase safety risks for pedestrians, children and cyclists. Exiting villagers' mental wellbeing will be negatively impacted by the loss of green space and tranquillity. Increased light pollution from the development will negatively impact wildlife, as well as disrupting resident's quality of life. Lack of additional community infrastructure contributes to making Chartham a 'commuter settlement' with residents travelling elsewhere for all services.

I am supportive of a sustainable, community-focused development on proposed site N31 (Chartham Paper Mill). This is a brownfield site, and therefore should be prioritised for development, as it makes use of previously developed land and protects the surrounding countryside. It is central in the village, and major amenities are accessible on foot (GP, bus routes, train station, river path to Canterbury). It does not extend the village boundaries, and has infrastructure already in place which can be made use of. Development of the site support community priorities and aligns with the Parish Council's long term goals, as well as fitting with national policy. Development of site N31 would require careful attention to issues of flooding and impact on natural habitat, in order for it to be a sustainable development.

I therefore urge the council to withdraw its proposal to develop site N32, and to work closely with the Parish Council and community of Chartham to ensure a sustainable development on site N31.

Yours faithfully

Hannah Downs



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