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From: A HAYNES [REDACTED] >
Sent: 21 October 2025 20:36
To: Consultations
Subject: Response to Canterbury District Local Plan: Focused consultation 2025

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--Email From External Account--

Dear Sir/ Madam

As a Littlebourne resident I should like to make the following comments on the updated Local Plan. These comments supplement my previous submission on the original Plan.

Given the forthcoming reorganisation of local government in Kent and the increasing unpopularity of Housing Ministers' high-handed interventions, Canterbury City Council needs to ensure that its Local Plan as a whole (not just the updated components) represent a strategy that meets the realistic needs of the district, in particular maintaining its character (USPs), addressing LOCAL need, whilst minimising damaging impact on the environment and sustainable quality of life for residents. Some of these aspirations conflict with current government dogma and the transient (and often unreliable) commitments of corporate developers and non-farming landowners with an eye for a quick profit. At present the Plan appears to be driven by arbitrary government targets (increasingly recognised as unobtainable) and the Council's fear of the consequences of being in "presumption".

In respect of presumption, the now slowing rate of build-out of sites WITH planning permission seems deliberate on the part of developers, both to maintain the pressure on councils and to maintain high profit margins. Furthermore, lack of ability of utilities to provide adequate infrastructure, or amelioration such as through questionable nutrient credit schemes and unrealistic realistic water-saving features to facilitate new-build occupancy in the life of the Plan mean that even designating sites and agreeing planning is unlikely to resolve presumption. In this case, and despite wavering government resolve (if not complicity) on compelling developers to deliver the affordability and community facilities written into permissions Canterbury Council must make its position, knowledge-based logic and constraints watertight and above-board.

Having had to withdraw plans for the large Blean development, that housing allocation (plus some extra) now appears to have been transferred to land to the south and east of the city (principally sites N1, N4, N5 and N6), the last three strangely being listed as several different but adjacent sites. Is this an attempt to make the numbers look smaller to reduce opposition? In reality, these sites, when considered in conjunction with other sites with permission, but yet to be built, would complete an almost solid band of over 7000 houses occupying an arc of around 120 degrees on the fertile agricultural land that has for centuries conferred on Canterbury, and its globally-renowned Mother-Church, its characteristic, unique, rural setting in the Garden of England.

Quite apart from this aesthetic damage, the Council needs to look at the practicalities: Just as the previous "zoning" plan was laughed out of town for its ill-considered impracticality, so the latest updated Plan suffers similar shortfalls, especially ironic given that the principal reason for rejecting the Blean proposal was "access problems":

- 1) The road system to the east of Canterbury is already under severe strain with bottlenecks and accident blackspots on the A257, in multiple places along Bekesbourne Lane, Stodmarsh Road and round Fordwich. The repeated road closures and diversions at the top of St Martin's hill reflect both disastrous pre-planning and developer disregard of planning constraints over The Barracks development. With five times as many dwellings being proposed on the A257 and the inadequate diversion routes, further compromised by construction works and construction traffic, years of mayhem would ensue.
- 2) In terms of numbers of dwellings concentrated in one zone, the unemployment rate in Canterbury, currently standing at a respectable ~3.5% will be adversely affected by an influx of thousands of new residents (the envisaged housing numbers are way above "local" demand) so most will need to travel to employment elsewhere, overloading station parking and access to the A2 bypass.
- 3) Once complete, a system relying on park and ride would have limited value but detrimental impact – it will not address traffic movements for out of town employment, while residents of the local estates are unlikely to find it economic, especially when most of the frequently-accessed shops are out of town – it will simply increase congestion on the site's access roads and the feeder roads such as that through Littlebourne, thereby making the proposed 300 houses there even more impractical.
- 4) While there are suggestions for a link road from the Bekesbourne Lane sites across the railway and onto the A2 through the Mountfield site, such a road serving so many houses would become a noisy and dangerous rat run, especially if it subsequently became used by traffic from Sturry trying to bypass Canterbury's inner ring road, adding yet more traffic to the A257!
- 5) The concentration of so much housing on one side of Canterbury will also overload the water supply and treatment facilities as well as the run-off handling capacity. Contaminated surface water from The Mountfield site and from N4, N5 and N6 will all end up entering the headwaters of the Lampen Stream, leading past further poorly-controlled run off from the illegal disturbance to former landfill sites next to Swanton Lane and then directly to Stodmarsh SSSI. Additionally, one of the options offered by Southern Water for foul water drainage from Mountfield's 4000 dwellings is across the N4/N5/N6 site to an 11 km pumped sewer alongside the A257 to Dambridge, a treatment works that, in SW's own documentation is currently only expected to be upgradable for around an additional 2000 dwellings, how will 6000 be serviced – the suggestion of on-site treatment is similar to those previously made for several new estates, and then rejected.

In its present form the updated Local Plan therefore not only compounds criticism already expressed of other sites already considered for allocation (e.g. The Hill, Littlebourne) but loses much of what was promised in the original one (extra connectivity, updated health facilities and explicit, binding commitments to deliver essential community infrastructure) and even, in the case of N3 (Thanington) removes an existing much-used facility. All this appears to be a knee-jerk reaction that shifts a grossly disproportionate burden onto one side of the city, an approach that will likely become a universally-recognised example of failed and compromised implementation of ill-considered government directives, if even only half of it is built before 2041.

Canterbury City Council must take the bull by the horns and ensure that what is required across the whole Local Plan is fully integrated, balanced and fit for purpose, and that developers and government do not escape their responsibilities to deliver appropriately and proportionately, in keeping with the ethos of one of the best-known of British cities.

Kind Regards

Anthony Haynes

