

Tom Hawkes

From: Rachael Reilly [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 October 2025 15:33
To: Consultations
Subject: Draft Canterbury District Local Plan: Focused Consultation

--Email From External Account--

Dear Canterbury City Council Consultations Team,

I am writing regarding the draft Canterbury District Local Plan - Focused Consultation 2025. I would like to commend Canterbury City Council for having listened to the views of the 1,244 people who responded to the last Regulation 18 public consultation on the draft District Local Plan 2040 objecting to Policy C12 (the construction of 2,000 houses and a community and transport hub on land north of the University of Kent).

I support the decision of Canterbury City Council to remove Policy C12 - land north of the University of Kent - from the draft District Local Plan. I fully support the arguments laid out in paragraphs 2.34 and 2.35 of the focused Consultation that the land north of the University of Kent "is no longer considered suitable for allocation due to concerns regarding provision of suitable access, impact on the highway network and impact on ecology, including the loss of ancient woodland, as set out in the SLAA (2025)" and the conclusion that "there are no suitable sites for a freestanding settlement, meaning this element is proposed to be removed from the district spatial growth strategy."

In reaching this decision, Canterbury City Council demonstrates that it has listened to the views of the local communities that would have been negatively impacted by Policy C12 and has taken into account the strength of local opposition. It also demonstrates a willingness to consider more sustainable ecological uses of this land, such as the proposal for the [Blean Biopark](#) put forward by the local campaign group, [Save The Blean](#), Kent Wildlife Trust and the RSPB. I support the Council's willingness to listen to local views and to change its plans accordingly.

This decision reflects the views of over 230 people who participated in an in-depth participatory social research project that I carried out in the impacted villages of Blean, Tyler Hill and Rough Common, over the course of 2024 - 2025. The final report [Voices of the Blean](#) was co-published by CPRE Kent, Kent Wildlife Trust, the Community Planning Alliance and UCL Anthropology Department and can be read [here](#). The report documents in great depth the strength of attachment that local communities have to their land and local landscape; how they use this land in their daily lives for recreation, fitness and mental well-being; and how the potential loss of the land impacted their health and social wellbeing. It also documents how local communities viewed the previous Regulation 18 public consultation (from March - June 2024) and how they organised to resist the proposed development. The report contains quotes, personal testimonies, oral histories, statistical graphs and data and local photographs to document the relationship between the local communities and the land proposed for development. It is a testimony to local residents' strength of attachment to their local area and their grief and despair at the thought of losing it.

Canterbury City Council listened to these views and acted in the best interests of the local community to protect threatened nature and wildlife. I fully commend this decision.

I am appalled, therefore, that the University of Kent has stated that it intends to go ahead with the development of 2,000 houses on this land. This flies in the face of the University's stated "civic mission" to serve local communities "by contributing actively and sustainably to their health, wellbeing, prosperity and success" as laid out in the [Kent 2025 Strategy](#). The University of Kent has shown zero regard for the "health, wellbeing and prosperity" of impacted local communities and has shown that its only interest is in financial profit.

Moreover, despite engaging in a lengthy and inclusive consultation with local communities, the University has completely abandoned its plans to promote environmental sustainability and biodiversity on its "Northern Landholdings" as laid out in its [2019 Framework Masterplan](#). The University's total disregard for environmental protection of its land flies in the face of its sustainability policy and undermines the work of the world renown [Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology \(DICE\)](#) that is housed at the University.

I urge the City Council to reject the University's plans for residential development in the Sarre Penn Valley on the grounds stated in the Focused Consultation (and in previous [landscape](#) and [sustainability](#) assessments) that the land is unsuitable for development due to lack of road access and the damaging environmental impacts, including the loss of ancient woodland. I encourage the City Council to work in partnership with the local community, Save The Blean, Kent Wildlife Trust and the RSPB to promote an environmentally sustainable use of this land that will enhance its ecological connectivity and biodiversity and provide access to green space, nature and wildlife that will promote the health and wellbeing not only of local communities, but for people in the wider Canterbury area.

In considering future plans for the land north of the University, I urge you to read the detailed social research that I carried out with impacted local communities that documents in great detail their strength of attachment to this land and their desire to protect and enhance it. The full report can be read [here](#).

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this focused consultation.

Yours sincerely

Rachael Reilly

