

Mr Robert Harper

Policy Team
Canterbury City Council
14, Rose Lane
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2 May 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Canterbury District Local Plan - Planning Reference - 25/00779

I write in response to the recently published above plan. Having lived in Whitstable for over 40 years I read this plan with utter dismay. You essentially plan to destroy everything that makes Whitstable unique and in effect may as well turn Whitstable, Herne Bay and Canterbury into a replica of the Medway Towns. Ultimately, that will lead to the type of deprivation you see there and in Thanet where the population cannot be supported by the local services and employment.

The plan for Brooklands Farm is heartbreaking. This is an area I have spent years, walking and enjoying. I have no doubt there is little consideration as to how each of these "small" developments across the country impact overall, how farming is impacted and ultimately our ability to feed our own population.

The recent development at the meadow off Grasmere Road has already destroyed a huge (when considering the green space locally) area of natural habitat and the traffic is already increasing at the roundabouts at Chestfield. As I sit writing this letter the traffic to the mini-roundabout to Swalecliffe is backed up a quarter of a mile as it often is, almost back to Tankerton.

What disappoints me most is that those of you who are here to represent us do not. We vote for local councillors who then tell me they have no way of voting against such planning proposals. If true, that is not democracy. However, with respect to my own local councillor, Keith Bothwell, I doubt it is. When he fails to vote on planning issues by abstaining and tells me there is "capacity" at the Swalecliffe Water Treatment Plant he is difficult to believe. He is certainly not acting in line with the expectations of those he represents. If, for example, the information regarding the treatment plant was true, why does Southern Water continue to pollute the sea and local streams with illegal dumping of waste despite huge fines? It is clear they would rather gamble the customers money on paying fines than they would use the money to improve the way they deal with waste.

As someone involved in property, another issue I always question is as to why the local developers are not made to install water recycling systems such as those which use rainwater to service the sanitary facilities in houses. Soak aways are one thing, but to reuse the water would be far better. Developers are making millions of pounds whilst being allowed to avoid the responsibility to be sustainable. Those charged with

the responsibility to hold them to account are failing to do so but at the same time providing them the opportunity to make millions in profits.

I turn specifically to the plan and the development at Brooklands Farm. It is clear there are several issues which are not being addressed and as a result of those it would, in my opinion, be unlawful for the council to authorise the development. In fact, I am so sure this would be an unlawful decision I would look to personally fund a Judicial Review into any decision to grant planning permission.

The issues I do not feel have been adequately considered are as follows:

1. Anyone who has lived in Whitstable for any period of time will know that when the "new" A299 aka the Thanet Way was built, three options were considered. They were known as the Blue, Red and Yellow routes. Two developed the existing A299 and a third, the blue route, was a new road. This was the chosen route but there was a key promise in that proposal - the area between the "new" and "old" Thanet Way now the A299 and A2990 would not be developed. I cannot see how the council is able to ignore these promises. I also question how the records of these proposals cannot be "found" by the council as they are key to the plan currently proposed. I have previously made a freedom of information request and been told they cannot find any such material. This, at best, looks convenient.
2. Following on from this, the new A299 road junction would be very likely to result in other opportunistic planning applications for large developments along the A299 New Thanet Way. Current planning legislation would make it difficult for Canterbury City Council to oppose these developments, so they must be considered as inevitable sooner or later if the new junction is built. The adverse impacts of these likely developments have not been assessed.
3. As I experience most days, there will be a further unacceptable impact on local roads, especially in residential areas. These include Chestfield Road, South Street, A2990 Old Thanet Way, and Clapham Hill. Kent County Council have made their position clear and objected that the developer's traffic modelling predictions as they "do not appear to be fit for purpose". More development will increase traffic exiting the Thanet Way. Currently this is a horrific accident waiting to happen most rush hours as traffic builds up back to the services and cars are travelling at speed and trying to get in and out of specific lanes.
4. You cannot ignore the impact of increased pollution. You know that Southern Water continue to dump waste illegally. By supporting the development, you will be conspiring with them to further damage the environment. This is short sighted and fails to consider your duties beyond "building houses". The development will result in an unacceptable increase in sewage effluent pollution on the coast at Swalecliffe and Tankerton, not just resulting in human health risks from E-Coli and similar infections, but also from hazardous "Forever chemicals" that are commonly found in sewage effluent. This affects residents, holidaymakers and wildlife in the International Ramsar wildlife site at Swalecliffe. Southern Water themselves say they will be unable to cope with the proposed developments.

5. There will be the loss of the much-loved and officially designated “Area of High Landscape Value” around the Blean woodland will be devastating. Those who vote for this will need to explain their decision to future generations. Only those making the decisions can stop this. I appeal to them to consider the wider impact of any such decisions and not just their perceived “duty to build” based on a promise from the Labour party in a party manifesto.
6. The adverse impact on wildlife on and adjacent to the farmland and Ancient Woodland (Longtye Wood, Convicts Woods, West Blean & Thornden Wood SSSI) will be fatal. The applicant’s assessment of Biodiversity impact is even more unrealistic and fanciful than their traffic modelling.
7. The adverse impact on already over-stretched local services such as our health service is not being considered. We simply do not have the medical facilities in this area to support a bigger population. The local Health Trust is already one of the worst performing in the country. There is no surprise that this is the case when local councils keep building developments without taking into consideration the wider strategic impacts their decisions have such as the ability to support the local populations health needs.
8. There are obvious increases in the risk of flooding. I doubt the developer’s flood modelling predictions are likely to be any better than their highly over-optimistic traffic and biodiversity modelling.

Decisions to build developments like Brooklands Farm do achieve one strategic requirement set by Central Government – build more houses. However, at what cost? What is the cost to local communities such as those here? Should we shoulder the burden of the country by making our corner of the United Kingdom even more populated when others do not. Developers love to build in the Southeast as they know their profits are so much higher. A new build in Kent goes for between £100k to £200k more than it does in the Midlands so, of course, developers are going to look to build here all they can. They do not care as to what the impact is on local communities regardless of any statements they may make.

Is it not time to make a stand to stop this enforced development when other areas of the country do not have the overcrowding issues that this area of England clearly does? Councillors are elected to vote in line with the wishes of those they represent. Sometimes, when in a position to do so, you must make a stance to do what is right, not what you are necessarily are told to do. We can look back in history at those who take the approach to do as they are told to do rather than what is right and it does not judge them well. I appeal to you to consider how this and other developments can be refused rather than taking the easy route, lining the pockets of developers and waving through these proposals.

Your sincerely

Mr R M Harper.