



Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council – Response to the Canterbury District Local Plan Consultation

Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the emerging Canterbury District Draft Local Plan. We recognise the considerable challenge faced by Canterbury City Council in balancing housing needs, economic growth, environmental protection, and infrastructure delivery across the district.

The Parish Council supports several of the Plan's broader objectives, particularly the intention to improve sustainable transport links, encourage active travel, support local business growth, improve biodiversity, and provide additional housing.

The Parish Council would also like to acknowledge and thank the officers and individuals involved in preparing the Draft Local Plan. We recognise the significant challenges involved in balancing housing needs, environmental protection, infrastructure delivery, and economic growth across the district.

We acknowledge the need for future development across the district and recognise the importance of ensuring that younger generations have access to suitable housing and employment opportunities.

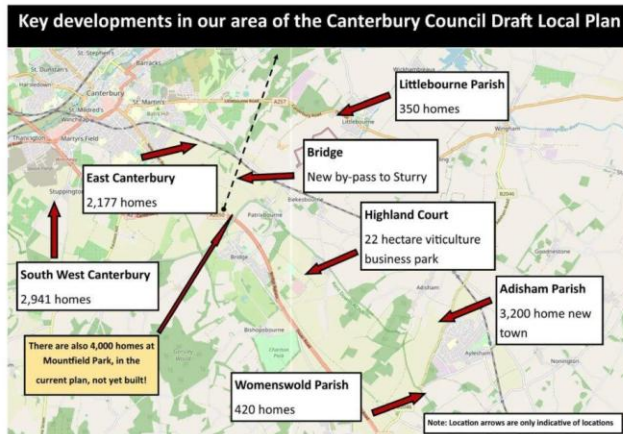
However, whilst the overall aims of the Local Plan are understood, the Parish Council remains concerned about the impact that several of the proposed developments may have upon the rural communities of Bekesbourne, Patrixbourne, and the surrounding villages.

Infrastructure and Cumulative Impact

The Parish Council is also concerned by the concentration of proposed development to the south and east of Canterbury. When considered alongside Mountfield Park and other approved schemes, the cumulative scale of development would create an almost continuous band of housing extending close to the parish boundary, amounting to well in excess of 6,000 dwellings.

The Council is concerned that such a concentration of development risks fundamentally altering the character of the surrounding rural landscape and placing unsustainable pressure on infrastructure, services, and the road network across neighbouring villages.

The Parish Council is particularly concerned about the cumulative impact of proposals **C15 and C16**, alongside the existing and approved developments at **Mountfield Park** and **Saxon Fields**. Taken together, these schemes represent a significant increase in housing and associated traffic within an area already served by constrained rural infrastructure.



The road network serving the surrounding villages is narrow, historic in nature, and unsuitable for sustained increases in traffic volumes. Whilst we note the proposed new road connection to the A2, there remains concern that the infrastructure currently proposed may not provide sufficient capacity to prevent traffic diverting through surrounding villages.

There is a real risk that motorists will seek alternative routes through Bekesbourne, Bridge, and Littlebourne in order to access the A2 more quickly. In particular, Bekesbourne Lane and Station Road could become heavily used as informal cut-through routes.

This would inevitably lead to:

- Increased congestion on unsuitable rural roads;
- Higher levels of noise and air pollution;
- Greater road safety risks for residents, cyclists, and pedestrians; and
- Damage to the rural character of the area.

The Parish Council therefore asks Canterbury City Council to clarify whether the necessary highway improvements and mitigation measures will be delivered prior to, or alongside, development progressing.

Recent local Speedwatch data has already highlighted concerns regarding speeding and road safety within the parish. Additional traffic, without meaningful mitigation, would significantly worsen existing issues.

Flooding, Drainage and Utilities

The Parish Council also remains concerned regarding flooding, drainage, and sewerage capacity across the area, particularly within **Littlebourne and Patrixbourne** where existing problems are already evident.

Residents have experienced incidents of drainage overflow and sewage surcharging during periods of heavy rainfall. Given the scale of housing proposed across the district, the Council believes stronger evidence is required to demonstrate that existing infrastructure can support the level of growth proposed.

The Parish Council therefore requests:

- Detailed assessments from the relevant utility providers;
- Clear delivery plans for drainage and sewerage upgrades;
- Evidence that flood risk to neighbouring communities will not increase; and
- Confirmation that local water supply infrastructure can support future demand.

There is understandable concern that additional hard surfacing and increased surface water runoff may place further pressure on local rivers and drainage systems.

Environmental Impact and Landscape Character

The Parish Council strongly believes that development proposals should be assessed not only in technical terms, but also for their impact on the wider landscape and visual character of the district.

As a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, Canterbury is recognised nationally and internationally for its historic setting, heritage significance, and surrounding countryside.

It is therefore disappointing that some recent developments, particularly Saxon Fields, appear to have been delivered with insufficient regard for visual integration into the wider landscape.

The uniformity of housing design and limited landscaping at that site have created an urban appearance which detracts from the character of the approach into Canterbury.

Future developments should therefore:

- Demonstrate higher design quality;
- Include substantial landscaping from the outset;
- Protect important views and rural gateways;
- Respect the historic setting of nearby villages; and
- Integrate more effectively into the natural environment.

The Parish Council also requests assurances that proposed walking and cycling routes will not adversely affect ancient woodland, wildlife habitats, biodiversity corridors, or established rural pathways.

We support sustainable transport initiatives in principle, particularly where they encourage public transport use and reduce reliance on private vehicles. However, sustainability measures must be meaningful, deliverable, and properly maintained over the long term.

Policy Concerns

Policy R1(2)(b) – “Protecting and Supporting”

The wording within this section is considered overly broad and potentially open to interpretation. Greater clarity and more measurable criteria would assist both residents and decision-makers.

Policy R1(2)(c) – “Sustainable Transport”

Whilst the Parish Council supports sustainable transport objectives, the policy currently lacks sufficient definition regarding what constitutes meaningful delivery.

Experience elsewhere within the district has shown that minimal measures can sometimes be presented as fulfilling sustainability obligations without delivering genuine transport benefits.

The Parish Council would therefore support stronger and more enforceable standards, including:

- Improved public transport provision;
- Properly integrated bus routes;
- Safe and accessible walking and cycling infrastructure;
- Long-term maintenance commitments; and
- Measures that genuinely reduce dependency on private vehicles.

Policy DS4 – Rural Housing

There is growing concern that the cumulative scale of development proposed throughout the district risks eroding the distinct rural identity of many villages.

The Parish Council believes the Local Plan should place greater emphasis on protecting settlement separation and preserving the rural character of the countryside.

Site-Specific Comments

R9 – The Hill, Littlebourne

Littlebourne already experiences flooding and drainage difficulties. The Parish Council also notes that references to improving walking and cycling connectivity appear unnecessary in locations where such routes already exist.

Priority should instead be given to addressing existing infrastructure deficiencies.

R21 – Land at Canterbury Business Park

The Parish Council notes the recent withdrawal of the proposal Chapel Down and questions whether sufficient evidence exists regarding long-term commercial demand for this site.

Consideration should be given to whether the withdrawal of a well-known English wine producer may affect the future viability and attractiveness of the development.

Developer Accountability

The Parish Council believes Canterbury City Council should adopt a stronger approach to developer accountability and due diligence.

Too often, commitments made during the planning process — including landscaping, infrastructure delivery, and environmental mitigation — are delayed, reduced, or not fully delivered once permission has been granted.

The Parish Council would therefore support:

- Stronger monitoring of planning obligations;
- Greater transparency regarding developers' previous delivery records;
- Consideration of compliance history as part of future applications; and
- More robust enforcement where agreed obligations are not fulfilled.

Conclusion

Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council supports the principle of carefully managed growth and recognises the need for housing, employment opportunities, and sustainable transport improvements across the district.

However, the Council remains firmly of the view that development must be infrastructure-led, environmentally responsible, and genuinely sustainable.

Without substantial investment in highways, drainage, sewerage, water supply, and environmental protection, the cumulative impact of the proposed developments risks causing lasting harm to the character, safety, and sustainability of our rural communities.

The Parish Council respectfully requests that Canterbury City Council considers the concerns outlined above before progressing the Local Plan further.