

From: **Keith Bothwell** [REDACTED]  
Date: Wed, 30 Sep 2020 at 16:25  
Subject: Local Plan Consultation  
To: CCC Planning [REDACTED]

Dear Sirs

I am writing in response to the Local Plan consultation in relation to two key issues: my recommendations for key strategies to be adopted when drawing up the plan and; how to address the Climate and Extinction crises in particular. The two issues are intimately related, as you will see.

### **Key Strategies**

On a local scale our city is currently dominated by and congested with vehicles — along the routes into the city, within the city and around it — which cause air pollution and early deaths, as well as physical danger to children and elderly alike.

On a global scale we face two critically-urgent existential crises — the Extinction Crisis and the Climate Crisis — that threaten absolutely everything that is necessary for our survival, let alone our well-being or pleasure. These two crises are intimately related to each other ... and tackling one will help tackle the other.

The new Local Plan can be designed to address all these problems simultaneously. If every strategy and every tactic within the Local Plan is drafted with the vision of a sustainable city in mind, we can tackle all these crises head-on. In this way we can roll back the damage being done to our environment, and rapidly begin making positive improvements.

Key strategies will include creating more **Diversity** and building networks of **Connections**, which will, in turn, create greater **Resilience**.

### **Diversity**

If we provide a variety of different housing types and there are many different employers and businesses, it will be much easier for people to move from home to home as their circumstances change and to change jobs as their skills develop or if a company goes out of business.

The local economy is at present over-reliant on the two universities. This reliance is unsustainable. Both universities are in a difficult financial position, which will be made worse as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic. The city is also over-dependent on tourism, and should diversify its activities to ensure a more reliable income stream.

The local economy needs a more diverse employment strategy, with encouragement given in particular to green and sustainable economic initiatives — the Green New Deal — building capacity to retrofit existing buildings and construct renewable energy systems, build new zero-carbon homes and other buildings, tree-planting and permaculture, etc.

### **Connections**

Continuous natural habitats are a fundamental characteristic of biodiverse landscapes. A key aim of the Local Plan should be to create a network of green corridors that join up presently fragmented wildlife refuges, so that plants and animals can move and migrate easily — a web of wildlife with a rich mixture of species — to help nature flourish once more. When creating and expanding this green network, many potential synergies can be exploited, in terms of finance and human effort. Some of these green corridors, and parts of them, can be shared with humans — for pedestrian paths, cycle routes, and nature trails. In turn, these paths will connect homes to schools and allotments, suburbs and villages to each other and to leisure facilities, markets and the city centre. In this way, walking and cycling will become far more pleasurable, and preferable to driving by car — thereby reducing pollution and carbon emissions, and improving health.

As new houses are built, with solar panels on their roofs, they can all be connected together with a microgrid — so that electricity can be traded between them as and when it is needed. Local energy renewable generation plants on roofs or hilltops or elsewhere — solar and/or wind and/or hydrogen — can all be linked to the local grid.

Local organic food producers can be encouraged to expand their businesses into town, growing some food on unused plots around the city and working together in a network or cooperative to their produce at local markets and other outlets.

## **Resilience**

A key priority for the local economy in achieving greater sustainability and the twin strategies of creating greater Diversity and more Connections will result in greater Resilience. We are currently reliant on long (often international) supply chains for essential goods — via pipeline or cable, road, rail, sea or air — for food, energy, products, materials for building and manufacture, clothes, etc. And, we are reliant on a few large companies and organisations for employment. The Covid-19 pandemic has made us acutely aware of the danger if these supplies or services become blocked — ie, we are not at all resilient when a crisis strikes. Food security with reduced reliance on imported food is essential. We should therefore aim to source many of these essential goods locally, encouraging local food production, local manufacture of products, local renewable energy generation (perhaps community-owned), and a greater diversity of small to medium sized employers. When we achieve all this, Canterbury could become a model sustainable city — an exemplar for others to follow — with clean air, good quality housing, zero-carbon buildings, renewable energy, excellent public transport, traffic-free streets and bustling activity in the centre. It would attract people to live here, businesses to set up here and visitors to find out how it was all achieved.

## **Climate and Extinction Crises**

The Extinction Crisis and the Climate Crisis are slow moving — we have known about them for thirty years and more — but they are absolutely deadly. They may not appear like a tidal wave thirty feet high looming over us, but they are even more life-threatening. It is not an exaggeration to say that we are fighting for our very survival.

Bearing in mind that Canterbury City Council has declare a Climate Emergency, as well as the national targets to reduce to net zero, it is essential that the Local Plan requires that:

- all new buildings are zero carbon or better (eg carbon negative) in use (eg Passivhaus plus) and in construction
- new buildings powered by clean renewable electricity only (or perhaps hydrogen in future)
- a truly sustainable transport plan is put in place
- wildlife is not only protected but comprehensively enhanced
- a massive tree-planting campaign takes place in the district, with tree-planting zones and corridors allotted in the Local Plan
- a network — like a spider’s web — of green wildlife corridors is created, linking green spaces together, and enabling wildlife to move and migrate easily
- existing housing and other buildings undergo a retrofit regime — installing extra insulation, triple-glazing, heat-pumps to replace gas boilers, solar PV panels to generate electricity, etc
- walking and cycling is given priority over vehicles to encourage people out of their cars
- new and expanded cycleways and footpaths are created, some within the green corridors — to make walking and cycling more preferable to driving by car
- road space should be reduced — widths narrowed; roundabouts removed; streets pedestrianised — to create more space for pedestrians and cyclists
- public transport is enhanced and powered by clean energy — ie, electricity or hydrogen
- cars are discouraged from entering the city centre by severely reducing the number of car parking spaces and making a congestion charge
- the city is declared a low-emissions zone, with the exclusion of polluting vehicles
- a comprehensive network of electric charging points is created for those unable to walk or cycle
- new infrastructure and roads should be net zero carbon

Best regards

Keith Bothwell

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[Redacted contact information]