

Fwd: FW: Duke's Meadow Western bypass

1 message

Leo Whitlock [REDACTED]
To: CCC Consultations <consultations@canterbury.gov.uk>

27 July 2021 at 18:57

Mikey
Can you include these comments in the Local Plan consultation please?
Cheers
Leo

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Tue, 27 Jul 2021 at 17:45
Subject: FW: Duke's Meadow Western bypass
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]

Hi Both,

I received the below from a resident, I would appreciate this being taken into consideration as part of the consultation

Best

Alex

From: Curt Koenders [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 July 2021 12:52
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Duke's Meadow Western bypass

Dear Alex Ricketts,

I was very grateful to receive your letter. I had heard rumours about the plan and consulted both the County Council and the City Council websites, but could not find anything. Now that I know where to find it, I find responding to it very cumbersome and the way the website is organised, it is completely unclear how one should submit one's objections. Therefore, I am taking the opportunity that you offer in your letter and submit my objections to you in the hope that you will be able to forward them to the scheme's administrators.

The first thing to note is that the bypass is planned in an environmentally interesting and somewhat vulnerable area. There is an underground river that you would hardly notice in the summer months, but that spills over the path at the top of Neal's Meadow. The water then flows via a pond into the meadow where it is mostly absorbed by the storage capacity of the meadow as well as by the large trees that line it. It is a fine piece of environmentally responsible water management and one that Canterbury should be proud of. If it were not present substantially more water would flow into the city in the winter and add to the water management problems that are there already around the river Stour.

Because of the water that is supplied to the meadow a very interesting, bio-diverse environment has sprung up. That should really be protected. The bird life, for example, with numerous species of small singing birds and also larger ones, such as owls and woodpeckers and raptors are rare in a city environment.

If the plans for a road go ahead, that will certainly mean continuous lighting and traffic noise, which will negatively affect the bird life (as has been proven to do so in the scientific literature). Furthermore, a substantial road will affect the water storage function that the meadow has, while not completely, then certainly to some extent. This will have consequences for the houses directly below the meadow and also in a wider sense for the city. One should be mindful that with climate change winters will be wetter, which means that the water storage function of the meadow becomes more important as it dampens down the large fluctuations in hydraulic load that accompany extreme weather events.

The little road at the top of the meadow is used by walkers and cyclists. It is part of the Crab and Winkle Way National Cycle Network. In summer many tourist cyclists use it. In term time many parents use it, either walking or cycling, to take their children to and from school (I would say that these are sensible parents, as they have obviously decided that ferrying their children everywhere by car is not the best option for their health, plus it's quick! Also, the children can - possibly subconsciously - enjoy the biodiverse environment). The air is clean, which is important for asthmatic children. There are quite a few schools and a college that are served by the path. From the path a unique view of the city is commanded, which attracts walkers and cyclists from far and wide. People stop and take photographs. On Sundays the path is used to get to Blean Church by worshippers who combine their religious duties with a spot of light exercise. I myself regularly use the path to cycle to church, or to go to the shops in Blean or to see friends there. The path is an integral part of the local slow-traffic infrastructure.

It is unclear to me how the council intends to increase facilities for cyclists and pedestrians by concreting over a much-used cycle path. The planned road is intended to serve a potential park-and-ride facility in Harbledown. Presumably the idea is that motorists come from the West park there (in preference to the other existing underused park-and-ride facilities, or the recently completed parking facility by Canterbury West) and are then taken by bus to the city. The traffic on that new road would then mostly consist of the bus there and back. It is worth pointing out that there is a perfectly good road already that goes through Rough Common. Where else does the road go? To Giles Lane? Laughable! Note that the bottom of Whistable Road and St Dunstan's Road is already severely clogged up at times due to the level crossing gates.

Part of the problem with road schemes is that new roads are always built, but old roads are never destroyed. There is simply no mechanism for that process. The inevitable consequence is that slowly but surely the whole country is concreted over. Is that really what we want? I think not; we want less traffic, less pollution (both from particulates and exhaust gases) and more biodiversity, especially trees to soak up the CO₂ and, as explained above, the excess water that will be (and already is) the result of more extreme weather events.

I am 72. I cycle everywhere. Cycling on the main roads is a problem for me due to the pressure of car traffic (have you noticed how cars are getting bigger and bigger nowadays) and I have found a way of getting to most places in Canterbury via back roads and the (badly maintained) cycle path network. My wife and I frequently walk on the path above Neal's Meadow. We sometimes meet our family doctor; he approves.

I would hope that you might be able to use some of the points above in your response to the proposals.

Best wishes and many thanks in advance,

Curt Koenders

PS I will cc this to some other councillors too