

Canterbury City Council
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Our ref: KT/2006/000189/CS-13/PO1-L01
Your ref:
Date: 29 July 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Canterbury District Local Plan: Draft Vision and Options – May2021

Thank you for consulting us on the above. We have the following comments to make.

Land and Water

Section 1 Growth options

- The quality and capacity of the existing wastewater treatment works and sewerage network should be considered to ensure there is infrastructure to support planned growth and there is no deterioration of water quality. Southern Water Services will hold information and data to help with this. Additional capacity may be required to serve increased housing numbers. Where this is the case Canterbury DC should work with water companies and the Environment Agency (EA) to understand the impact increased development would have on the receiving water environment, and the practicalities of water companies providing necessary upgrades.
- -Consideration should be made to any incidental impact on a water body from development e.g. regenerating contaminated land (surface water runoff and groundwater infiltration) and ensuring effective management of surface runoff to avoid diffuse pollution.

Section 3 Housing

- As with section 1
- To reduce the risk of pollution to surface and groundwater we require connection to the public sewerage system, where feasible rather than allowing a proliferation of private treatment plants. Any significant housing development in rural communities should therefore be steered to sewered areas.

Section 8 Sustainability

- As with section 1, consideration should be made of whether drainage infrastructure is able to meet future development demands without adversely impacting on the environment.

- The plan needs to consider the environmental capacity of the water environment using evidence sources such as the River Basin Management Plans. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) through the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) sets out the environmental objectives which will need to be met for surface and ground water bodies in order to comply with the requirements of the Directive. The RBMP should therefore be an important focus for water quality improvements for LPAs and developers

Flood Risk

Section Seven: Historic and Natural Environment

Heading: Water Environment and How it Connects with Communities

Issue: Development in coastal protection and overtopping Zones

Option: NE10

We would support Option NE10B providing individual flood protection would not result in significant enlargement of properties or inhibit the delivery of any future coastal maintenance or improvements works. Further discussion with relevant stakeholders would need to take place before a formal policy is in place.

Please also note that Seasalter is not only susceptible to wave overtopping but also coastal erosion as there is the potential for the beach to narrow at this location threatening the safety existing properties.

Integrated Environmental Protection – Water Quality

Section one – Draft vision and growth options

Statements have been included that indicate the importance of the natural environment, e.g. “*Growth and investment in the district will be centred on Canterbury, and complemented by an enhanced historic and natural environment that will create vibrant cultural and creative areas, and improved biodiversity*”. However, statements such as this do not go far enough and will need to be expanded, especially for water quality. The current issue around nutrient neutrality is enough reason to have more focus on water quality.

Many of the water bodies in the area are currently at less than good status, in particular for physico-chemical elements, such as phosphate and nitrogen. This plan should therefore highlight the need to not only protect the water bodies, but should stress the need for actions to improve water quality. All development in the area should have enhancement / improvement of water quality as one of the conditions for development.

Section three – Housing and new communities

This section rightly identifies the need to improve water efficiency and how climate change forecasting shows that more serious water shortages are expected. This section should go further and state that in addition to the need to improve water efficiency, we also need to do more to improve water quality because climate change will not only affect quantity of water available, but will also affect quality of the water as there will be less water available for dilution of pollutants. There will need to be a focus on not only water efficiency, but also on reducing the concentration of pollutants in wastewater from housing and new communities.

Environment Agency

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Section seven – Historic and natural environment.

This section identifies designated sites and acknowledges the need to protect these sites. The current nutrient issues affecting Stodmarsh should therefore be seen as a lesson in identifying measures to permanently improve water quality, not only for designated sites but for all water bodies in the area.

Groundwater Hydrology - Water Resources

Section one, Draft vision and growth options, draft strategic objectives, Bullet 2

This section should also refer to water efficiency: "Make sure housing is.... energy and water efficient..."

Also the final bullet: "Adapt to and reduce the impacts of climate change...highly energy and water efficient..."

We note that Section three includes "improving water efficiency" as an issue, and it doesn't appear to be mentioned in the objectives as they stand. There is no mention of water at all.

Section three, Housing and new communities, Issue HNC8. How should we improve water efficiency?, Option HNC8I – (preferred option):

Although we support the ambition to exceed the optional higher water efficiency requirement in the Building Regulations, our understanding is that under current legislation local authorities can only encourage, not require standards higher than 110 litres per person per day, and that consequently this preferred option may be challenged.

Re the remark "We would also welcome views on whether water efficiency levels higher than this are achievable" a recent publication in this respect is the BRE's Home Quality Mark ONE Technical Manual, [HQM manual](#) specifically sections 8.1 & 10.3. 11 credits here correspond to a target water consumption of 100 litres per person per day. This has been cited in another local authority's plan. It's our understanding that to achieve higher levels than this is costly, and examples of where it has been done previously tend to be relatively small-scale.

Fisheries, Biodiversity and Geomorphology

Section seven - Historic and Natural Environment

Heading – Managing outdoor lighting to support tranquility

Issue – NE6

Option – Option NE6B is welcomed. River corridors and wetland areas must be kept dark to limit disturbance to local protected species and migrating fish species, including salmon, now known to reside within the Great Stour.

Heading – Water environment and how it connects with our communities

Issue – NE10

Option – Option NE10B should be approached with caution. With the development of individual coastal defences, effects of erosion and natural beach processes may occur

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in unexpected ways. Consultation with geomorphology experts within the council and the Environment Agency is essential.

Heading – Water environment and how it connects with our communities

Issue – NE11

Option – Option NE11B is essential. All developments must contain sufficient SuDS and utilise all extra benefits SuDS schemes can offer, including benefits to biodiversity.

Heading – Water environment and how it connects with our communities

Issue – NE12

Option – With the changing climate and increasing population, a more proactive approach to protecting groundwater supplies for human use, wildlife and the environment is crucial, as mentioned in Option NE12B. Clear and strict criteria must be set for all future developments to achieve this.

There are current and on-going issues with regards to water quality and current nutrient levels negatively affecting the designated areas in the Stour catchment. Identifying measures to permanently improve water quality throughout the catchment is essential in moving forward with future developments. There are a number of known nationally and internationally protected species within the Canterbury City District, with a special emphasis on the Great Stour. There are many opportunities to protect and improve the quality of the environment and habitats to benefit these protected features.

Groundwater and Contaminated Land

The geology of the Canterbury area varies in composition and includes Clay, Chalk and Sandstone bedrocks, with superficial layers of head, alluvium and river terraced deposits observed throughout. Additionally, there are several Source Protection Zones across the area which must be considered during these early planning stages.

At this stage, the Environment Agency does not provide detailed site-specific advice or comments with regard to land contamination issues apart from identifying the site sensitivity as above.

Whilst we will not be providing specific advice at this stage in the planning process, it is recommended that the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are followed. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels water pollution. Therefore, in completing any site investigations and risk assessments the applicant should assess the risk to groundwater and surface waters from contamination which may be present and where necessary propose appropriate remediation.

In making our response we have considered issues relating to controlled waters. The evaluation of any risks to human health arising from the site should be discussed with the Environmental Health Department.

We recommend that the following documents are considered as part of any development proposals:

- Refers to the Environment Agency Land Contamination: Risk Assessment guidance, which is based on the Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination (CLR 11);
- Uses BS 10175:2011 A2:2017, Investigation of potentially contaminated sites – Code of Practice as a guide to undertaking the desk study and site investigation scheme;
- Uses MCERTS accredited methods for testing contaminated soils at the site; and
- Consult our website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk for further information about any permissions that may be required.

Groundwater Protection

Section 8 Development where there are coastal protection and overtopping hazard zones.

We are pleased to note that Section 8 makes reference to national legislation with regards to our groundwater protection zones, Safeguard Zones and Nitrate zones. However, little expansion is made on this.

Proposals for development within the Groundwater Source Protection Zones will only be permitted if there is no risk of contamination to groundwater sources. If a risk is identified, development will only be permitted if adequate mitigation measures can be implemented.

Proposals for Sustainable Drainage systems involving infiltration must be assessed and discussed with the Environment Agency to determine their suitability in terms of the impact of any drainage into the groundwater aquifer.

Proposals for piled foundations must take account of disturbance of any ground to cause turbidity (where applicable) in water supply and to prevent creating pathways for contamination materials to reach the groundwater beneath any sites impacted by contamination or landfill.

Contamination

Having read the sections provided as part of this consultation, there appears to be little or no reference to proposed developments where contaminated land may be present.

Development will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Council, having regard to the other relevant policies in the Local Plan, that any contamination can be effectively addressed in a manner that ensures the site would be suitable for its end use through remediation measures.

In the case of sites where contamination is only considered to be a possible risk, a site investigation will be required by condition. Planning conditions will be attached to any consent to ensure that remedial measures are fully implemented, before occupation.

Water Ecology

Section - Historic and Natural Environment

The section does not appear to address nutrient neutrality issues and the impact of more development on the rivers and Stodmarsh SAC. Our concern is increasing development adding nutrient pressure from discharges and abstraction pressure from more local demand upon the blue features. How is the money from environmental enhancements they talk about being used to mitigate this pressure? We would like to see more evidence relating to this and how we can improve our blue systems rather than hold the line or deteriorate them.

Bearing in mind the term of this proposed local plan, it is worth noting that whilst Stodmarsh is currently the focus for addressing nutrient neutrality there are other designated areas that could also be brought forward in the future further downstream on the coast, where NN mitigation may also be required.

We are also concerned with local flood defences as well and how to predict overzealous actions damaging protected or important beach /intertidal areas.

We hope you find our comment useful.

Yours faithfully

Ms Jennifer Wilson
Planning Specialist

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