

Response to Canterbury District Local Plan - Draft Options for the District.

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e-mail

I think that the Draft Strategic Objectives are fine and should be aimed for:

‘Capitalize on our rich and distinctive heritage and culture. ‘

‘Support the sustainable growth of our rural communities with affordable housing, community facilities and transport and take advantage of opportunities to grow the rural economy’

‘Protect and enhance our rich environment creating spaces, supporting wildlife and biodiversity’

I am very concerned since the preferred option in most cases appears to ‘drive a coach and horses’ through these worthy objectives.

The quota for Canterbury District is 9000 homes, why are 14000 – 17000 homes being aspired to by 2040 within the District?

An upgrade to the A28:

It’s construction through the Old Park Military land would pass through an SSSI affecting wildlife and the sensitive biodiversity and arable farmland which we should continue to protect.

Limited growth and community infrastructure at Sturry:

The ‘limited growth’ growth and upgrade has little scope within Sturry itself. The growth would be within the ‘Sturry Cluster’ with land being put forward by Landowners, developers, organizations and members of the public largely centered on the village of Broad Oak which has already been the target of the current Local Plan, this is of great concern. It takes time for communities to, hopefully, gel and the expansion of this village again would be a disaster. I note that one of the pieces of land put forward is the Green Gap at Millbrook, suggested use housing. I understand that no particular sites are proposed or suggested as part of this consultation but the sites submitted do have bearing on the delivery of the housing target set by the version of the Draft which is put forward.

The vision Map for the Sturry area shows a Reservoir at Broad Oak. This is not a forgone conclusion. Water to fill this is to be extracted from the river Stour. The flow of the river to make this possible will be maximised by adding treated waste water from the Thanet Weatherlees Sewage Treatment Works. There is no guarantee that the ensuing water quality will be either pure enough for domestic use or that the rate of flow and extraction by pumping, from the river Stour to the reservoir, will be sufficient to fill it. This proposal will be examined and considered with scrutiny when the planning application is submitted but it is not a ‘done deal’ and should not be treated as such.

Growth **Focus A** and **Focus C** look towards 9000homes as minimum growth. The **Rural Focus** also aims for 9000 homes minimum growth and it mentions public transport improvements connecting urban and rural areas. This is most important.

Broad Oak village is historically ribbon development along Sweechgate and Shalloak road. Residents in the village, although only 2 miles from Canterbury, have only a rural bus service.

Hourly Monday – Saturday and no service at all on a Sunday. For residents of Shalloak road a considerable walk is needed to access the ‘Triangle’ bus service on the A291. The car reigns supreme for those residents wishing to go to Canterbury, Herne Bay or beyond. Compare that with the regular bus service to the London Road estate in Canterbury. If homes are built in rural areas and villages then a regular, reliable bus service should follow. The larger developments should be accessible to buses and their routes changed/initiated to accommodate them.

Meeting housing needs must make sure that it respects the character, landscape and historic nature of the area:

There is no reference that the ‘visions’ have been drawn up with either local groups or Parish Councils, this is a failing that needs to be addressed.

Existing Local Plan: many of the district rural settlements have seen very limited development in recent years.

This is not the case for Broad Oak which has seen a planning permission granted for 456 homes on strategic site 2 and permission for 30+ homes within the village, in recent years.

Development on the edge of villages is largely restricted:

Once again, not in the case of Broad Oak. The housing is not for local need within the village. The % of affordable housing should be increased or the threshold for affordable housing should be lowered in developments in or adjoining villages. At the moment the 11 homes qualifying criteria for affordable housing results in applications being put forward for 10 homes or arguments plausibly being made for the 30% affordable housing quota not being met. The planning department must enforce affordable housing, and ensure that it is provided. One item which is missing from the ‘Vision’ document is mention of Temporary Accommodation for Seasonal Agricultural Workers. This village, Broad Oak, saw an application for a very large caravan site for the workers, the only limit being exerted by planning at Canterbury is that such a site needs permission for winter storage of caravans. Permission was granted in spite of concerns that the large influx of workers and caravans would have on the village, if the site was set up and occupied. With Brexit and Covid the situation has changed and at the moment fewer seasonal workers are occupying the caravans. I objected to the Planning application and in my research of the topic I was aware that many Local Plans in other regions do have very specific details of what is acceptable within their region. Most farmers employing seasonal workers do adhere to the advice but the current lack of policy allows for large scale development at sites such as Nickle Farm and Goose Farm. The size of sites and land occupied for such a purpose should not have winter storage as the only consideration and limitation.

I will admit to viewing the Draft Vision through the eyes of a Broad Oak resident but I feel very strongly about the loss of identity that this village has suffered by recent planning consents and the possible further loss of arable land to development. Broad Oak is classified as a village in the October 2020 Rural Settlement Study. Future development should not be at the expense of rural and village character. Previous land use and quality should be thoroughly evaluated from quality analysis and historical use. High grade arable land must be retained and not used for development.

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