

**VIEWS ON CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL'S "NEW LOCAL PLAN 2040",
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE PROPOSAL FOR A NORTHERN BY-PASS
FROM CHARLOTTE PRAGNELL, 12 MEADOW ROAD, CANTERBURY CT2 8EU**

I am writing to give my comments on Canterbury City Council's Local Plan 2040.

Like every resident of this area, I wish East Kent to be an economically strong area of the UK, where residents have a good quality of life.

I accept that there is a need for new residential development, to enable current substandard housing stock to be demolished and replaced, and to provide homes for more people who wish to relocate to East Kent. The issue is how this development is managed so that it contributes to a strong economy and enhances to quality of life of existing and future residents.

"Freestanding development"

I believe that the creation of a purpose built new small town would be the best way to facilitate this development ("freestanding development" Option 5).

This is because such a new small town can be developed to meet the needs of 21st century life in terms of its housing style, lay out, road, cycle lane and pavement layouts, IT connectivity, energy creation facilities (solar, thermal, wind etc), public services and amenities etc, and it could be located to have direct access to the A2 or A299 and HS1. Done with vision and sensitivity, this development could be an exciting opportunity for urban planners to design a highly sustainable small new town – indeed, the design has the potential to be a development of international importance – a place where people want to live, and businesses will wish to locate to.

I do not believe that bolting on various housing estates onto the fringes of Canterbury (or indeed any of the other existing towns in the area) either contributes to the local economy, or enhances the quality of life of existing or future residents. Canterbury city centre has a medieval road layout, and its infrastructure is buckling under the current volume of residents as it is. The roads are highly congested and building more houses on the outskirts will only clog up roads still further as the residents of the outlying estates will be hooked into the City's infrastructure in terms of amenities. Furthermore, development of the outskirts will eat into the City's green belt. It is the green belt with gives Canterbury its fundamental charm of being a small cathedral city. Building on the outskirts of Canterbury therefore brings no economic benefit – indeed, perhaps economic damage, as it would make Canterbury become a less attractive place to live in and visit (tourism currently being an important trade).

Northern By-pass

I note that there is a proposal to construct a "by-pass" to link the A2050 to the A290 (Whitstable Road). The Council has not yet made sufficient information available to identify the exact route of

this proposed road. However, whatever the exact route, it would cut through several of: national cycle route1, an organic farm, a school site, school playing fields, existing houses and gardens, Neal's Meadow, Duke's Meadow and a copse.

Furthermore the junction of the new road with the A2050 would require considerable space. The A2050 is located in a steep cutting where the junction would be located, and it is hard to see how there would be sufficient space to create a safe junction. At the eastern end of the new road, the junction with the A290 Whitstable Road would be located on a blind corner at the crest of a steep hill, opposite one school (St Edmunds) and next to another school (Kent College). Such a junction would be very dangerous from a road traffic perspective.

Duke's Meadow and Neal's Meadow form part of the City's Green Belt, the City's green lung. They are much loved recreational areas for walkers, cyclists and families, and are a habitat for wild animals. During the recent pandemic they were an invaluable resource for the mental and physical well-being of the residents of Canterbury. Furthermore, the view of the Cathedral and the City from Neal's Meadow can be truly classed as "iconic" – there is possibly no finer view of a Cathedral city in the entire country.

Building a road is a hugely expensive project, and should only be undertaken when the benefit of the financial outlay is clear. I cannot see what the point of this road is, and therefore I cannot see the benefit:

Most of the traffic travelling down the A2050 is bound for Canterbury, and will therefore continue to drive all the way down to the A2050 to join Rheims Way, even if this northern by-pass is built.

The traffic which currently turns off the A2050 to go up Palmers Cross Hill is mostly traffic bound for Rough Common itself, Blean village, and the university. Traffic for Rough Common and Blean Village will continue to use Palmers Cross Hill even if the northern By-pass is built.

It is therefore essentially only traffic bound for the university that would use this new road. The university now has in place a policy of discouraging car use by its staff and students, so building a new road to facilitate vehicular access to the university "drives a coach and horses" through the policy of seeking to reduce vehicle use.

The simple question is, whether the financial outlay of road construction, the commercial damage to two schools, the destruction of gardens and the environmental destruction of highly prized natural areas is worth it, simply to enable a couple of hundred vehicles from the university to shave approx 5 minutes of their drive time to access the A2.

In short: I believe the construction of such a northern by-pass is a waste of resources, and would not contribute to the Council's goal of making this area of the UK economically strong, with a good quality of life for its residents.

Charlotte Pragnell

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