

Comments on the Open Space Strategy

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Para 1.7 on Playing Pitch Strategy

We are very concerned that no site has yet been found for the Football Hub. It is a disgrace that the Canterbury Football Club was evicted from its home in Kingsmead, in order to build housing on the land, without any other site being made available within the city. Various alternatives have been tried, but none is satisfactory.

We would like to suggest locating the Football Hub beside the Sturry Road Community Park. This park was set up with high hopes and is potentially a lovely amenity but there are many problems, reflecting long-term neglect. The skate board area is very small by modern standards, the multi-games court is seriously dilapidated, and the whole park is located on the very edge of the city, so few people use it.

We would like to see the Canterbury Football Club given a ground and facilities adjacent to the Sturry Road Community Park. There would be the advantage of having ample parking in the Sturry Road Park and Ride. It would also bring much-needed resources and people to what is currently a neglected public park in a relatively deprived part of the city.

Para 1.84 Stour Riverside Strategy

We very much welcome the plan for a riverside path and the initiative which the council has taken in setting up the Friends of the Riverside. However, implementing this plan is long overdue. Canterbury is fortunate in having a beautiful, and many-stranded, river running through the city and the development of a riverside walk from Chartham has been talked about for 50 years. It is time now to turn words into action.

We hope that the whole of Kingsmead Field will be seen as integral to the riverside path. Part of the field has now been designated as public open space, but there is still a large area of the field which is earmarked for new housing. This is especially serious since the area in question includes a wild flower meadow with an enormous range of wild life, and a hedge which is a crucial corridor for wild life moving about the area. It is important that those responsible for open space in Canterbury are familiar with the field and are clear about which sections are still threatened with development.

Para 4.2.2 Amenity green spaces

The Local Plan was very concerned with the protection of the Green Gaps around the city. We very much welcome this proposal and give it our full support. In particular we welcome the mention in the Local Plan of the need to protect the open space between the University of Kent and the city

known as Chaucer Fields (para 11.44).. This is essentially an amenity open space adjacent to a large area of housing. We suspect that the University will challenge this proposal, but residents would be extremely concerned if they were to lose this much used and well-loved space.

We hope that those responsible for the Open Space Strategy will give their support to the protection of Chaucer Fields as an amenity open space, strengthening the recommendation in the Local Plan.