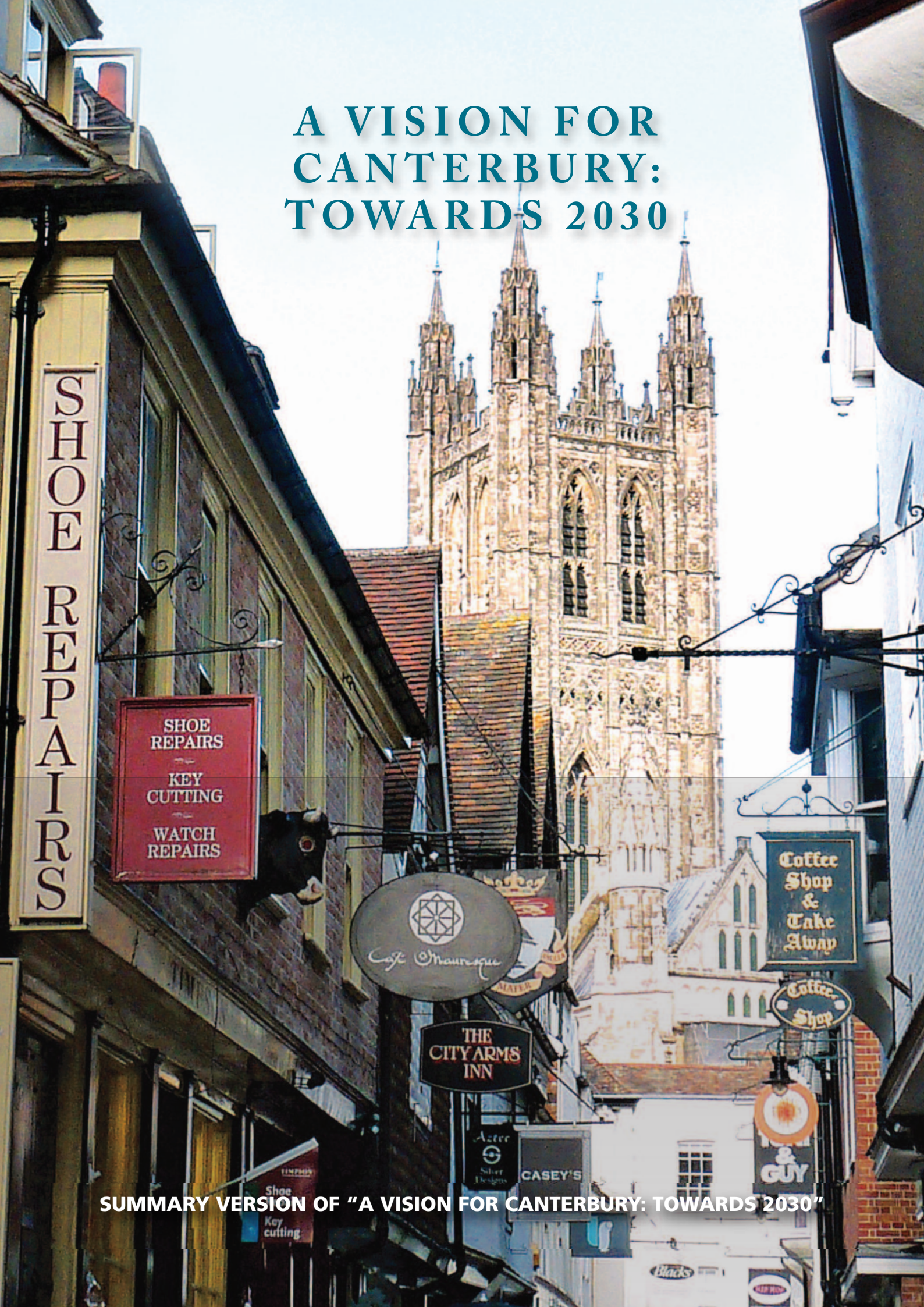


# A VISION FOR CANTERBURY: TOWARDS 2030



SUMMARY VERSION OF "A VISION FOR CANTERBURY: TOWARDS 2030"



# OUR CITY: OUR FUTURE

## Foreword

*"The Canterbury Society was originally founded to protect and enhance this ancient and often fragile city from adverse physical re-development and damage. The Vision that has been produced here is relevant and apposite as it uses the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a vehicle to delve more deeply into the social and economic causes of the City's present difficulties and their physical manifestation. It is therefore relevant to all who live in, work in or who just simply care about Canterbury and its long-term future. It is hoped that it will also offers a helpful framework and context to better inform those who will determine the future of this place"*  
Ptolemy Dean, President, The Canterbury Society

The aim of this 'Vision for Canterbury: Towards 2030' is to represent the views of local residents about the present and the future of the city. The Vision is based on the responses received from a questionnaire survey carried out over the past year. This asked local people to rank a series of major issues as to their perceived importance and to tell us what was "good" or "not so good" about living in the city. The sections of this Vision each represent a synopsis of the twelve major issues they identified. The order in which the sections appear follows the ranking given to them by local people, with the issues seen as most important coming first.

Each section presents the situation with respect to the issue and then explains the major concerns of local people. The heading to each section sets out the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are most relevant to that issue. The UN is making a major world-wide effort to encourage sustainability as it affects 17 major themes, stressing that it is important that all the peoples of the world 'Think globally – act locally'. It is thus clearly important to make efforts to implement the SDGs in Canterbury. Each of the sections concludes with a box outlining the main strategies proposed for action on that issue.

The Vision itself has been written by a voluntary team, most of whom are members of the Canterbury Society committee and who have some expertise in the specific areas they are writing about and experience in the social, economic and environmental trends that are affecting our lives. As well as using information derived from the questionnaire a wide range of documentary sources has been consulted, especially those produced by the Canterbury City Council, Kent County Council and assorted national sources. It should be mentioned that, since local and county councils are going through an extended period of austerity, the implementation of the Vision may be affected by any changes in a future funding regime

This "Vision for Canterbury: Towards 2030" follows an earlier Vision which was published in 2014. However, the five years that have passed since then have seen great changes in Canterbury, with more change planned for the future. Like the Vision of 2014 this Vision is to be available in both a shorter and longer version. This is the shorter, summary version. It is hoped that it will be a useful resource for local people and that it will help to inform those in the District who have responsibility for steering the city's growth and development.

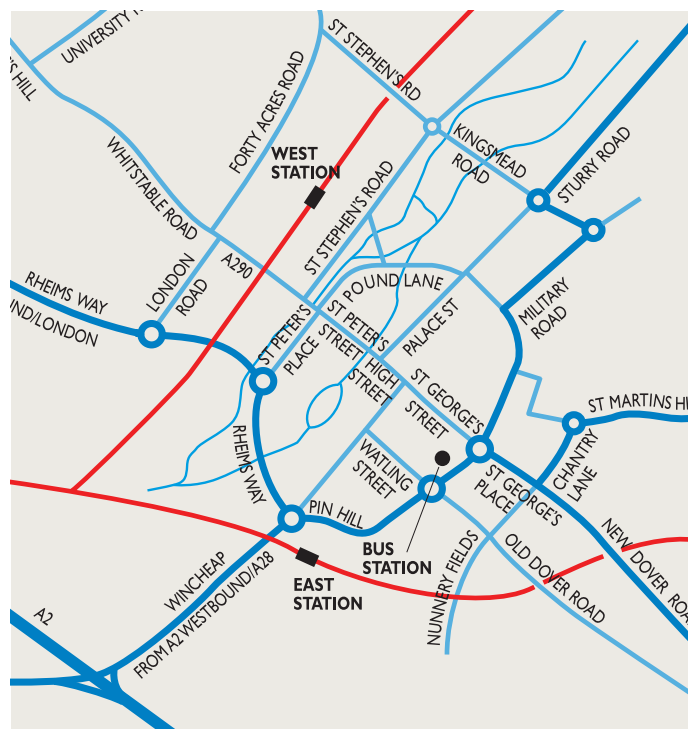
The full version of the Vision will be produced in the late Spring of 2019. It will be available on the Canterbury Society website and will contain more detail on each issue as well as up to a dozen recommendations for each thematic area. This summary version, however, is available in hard copy as well as on the web, and we are most grateful to the University of Kent for funding the cost of designing and printing. We should stress that the University has no responsibility for the content of the Vision.

Canterbury is a thriving East Kent town with three universities, about 55,000 inhabitants plus an additional 35,000 students during term time, plus over two million visitors each year. Its history goes back to pre-Roman times, and over the years it has accumulated a large and important historic heritage. However, it is often this heritage that is contributing to some of the issues facing the city, such as crowded streets, which do not adapt easily to use by cars and lorries, plus air pollution and a city centre facing considerable challenges. The problems are likely to be exacerbated over the coming decade during which the city is scheduled to add another 11,000 homes plus the necessary infrastructure. Taken together these facts underline the importance of the need for a Vision that can contribute to the shaping of policies that will improve the quality of life for its diverse residents and their contrasting lifestyles.

UN SDG 11.2 *"By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons."*

Canterbury acts as an important East Kent hub for road, rail and bus transport. With its wide array of retail outlets, eating places, heritage buildings and employment opportunities all transport modes are heavily used, though road transport is easily the dominant means. The centre of the city is particularly busy with much of it being pedestrianised and there are now further moves to restrict car entry by designating additional pedestrianised streets, plus charging higher fees for parking and progressively closing city centre car parks, and by opening enlarged edge of city Park and Ride facilities in appropriate places.

There is a major future concern about the quantity of houses that, under the Local Plan, have been allocated around parts of the city, with at least 11,000 to be built before 2031. But, with very little extra road space being planned and with no comprehensive traffic modelling being undertaken, this is clearly going to cause a major increase in car ownership and use followed by significantly worse traffic congestion.



Although the City Council has ambitious plans to cause a modal shift in transport use, i.e. which aims to greatly increase public transport use plus cycling and walking, the Canterbury Society remains to be convinced that the targets for modal shift will be achieved. Additionally, with the recent Local Plan showing little interest in transport issues, in combination with current governmental austerity measures, it is difficult to see that traffic problems will be readily ameliorated.

1. Fully linked North to South and East to West cycle routes through the city centre should be functional by 2023.
2. A dedicated travel planning manager should be assigned to manage and encourage “transport modal shift” on all future housing developments.
3. Clear transport targets should be in place including vehicle reduction rates, bus usage rates, cyclist numbers, number of electric car charging points, digital bus time displays, air quality measurements.



## CULTURE AND HERITAGE

UN SDG 11.4 *“Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage.”*

In many ways Canterbury’s heritage has been acquired by accident. Sequentially it was first a Roman settlement, then a 6th century foundation for St Augustine’s Christian mission; and the murder of Becket caused it to become a major medieval place of pilgrimage. Between the 16th and middle of the 19th century it hardly grew; it missed the industrial revolution remaining largely an agricultural and military settlement that retained many ancient buildings. Its major transformation came as a result of the 1942 Baedeker air raids, and the post war expansion due to foundation of universities, greater tourism and an growing retail sector.

We are aware of what has been left to us by way of natural beauty - our green heritage, as well as a magnificent cathedral, and numerous buildings reflecting the vernacular character of the city and county. This inheritance must be preserved against the pressures of commercialism which can easily destroy the city’s character. Housing developments around the city must be undertaken such that they are “Green” environments that avoid the monotony of most post-war housing estates that have characterised suburban development over the past 60 years.

Canterbury is a major tourist attraction with much to occupy and entertain both old and young visitors and give Canterbury a cultural buzz. The museums, such as the Roman Museum and Beaney, hold fine collections, and the former is a great educational asset for school and university students. The academic institutions, including three universities, provide not only research and education for students but also open their doors to the public through exhibitions, lectures, concerts, drama and films. The city’s modern theatre, the Marlowe, is large enough to host West End shows and the University of Kent’s Gulbenkian theatre offers cutting-edge and experimental drama. The Colyer-Ferguson concert hall provides a venue for orchestral works, as does Canterbury Cathedral plus several smaller venues including St Peters Methodist church. These assets are to be cherished.

Canterbury has lively festivals and street attractions not least being the two-week Canterbury Festival, with visiting professional performers as well as contributions by local artists. Aimed mainly at children and the young is the boOing Festival at the University of Kent each August bank Holiday. Other annual attractions for young and old include a Medieval Pageant, Food Festivals and the Cricket Week.



The Old Weavers House – High Street.

Canterbury is fortunate in having a number of green public spaces within the City walls including the Dane John Gardens. These need conservation and vigilant supervision or policing. Our nearby green heritage includes the North Downs, Blean Woods and Stour Valley and our section of National Cycle Route 1 utilises part of the track-bed of the former Canterbury and Whitstable Railway.

Canterbury’s future will place a huge reliance on all of its assets being well conserved so that the city can continue to be publicised as a major draw for young and old. It is to be regretted that in recent times there are too many signs of the city exuding a rather scruffy and tardy nature. Litter accumulates too quickly, streets and pavements are often unkempt, graffiti is hard to combat, plastic replaces wood, advertising boards clutter the main thoroughfare and repairs and renovations are slow to take place. Those with responsibility for preventing this slippage must realise that a “downward spiral” can only harm the “golden egg” that is Canterbury – can they be inspired to emulate cities such as York or Bruges?

### *Strategies needed:*

1. The City Council must prioritise the conservation of heritage by allocating sufficient resources to enable a higher standard of planning and preservation of these valuable assets.
2. Canterbury’s major tourist attractions should be promoted by an improved visitor information centre together with enhanced signposting of historical sites within and around the city centre.
3. The City Council should give urgent consideration to creating a museum which will tell the history of Canterbury.
4. The City Council and major sponsors must continue to support the annual Canterbury Festival as a means of promoting the City on the national stage.
5. There should be well planned rationalisation of the “random clutter” along both sides of the High Street, e.g. bins, tables, chairs, A-boards, bollards.
6. The conservation and supervision, or policing of green spaces within the City walls must be made a priority.

## POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS

UN SDG 1.2 "By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions."

Canterbury suffers from major wealth divides. Although the centre might exude an aura of affluence, bolstered by large visitor numbers, in reality there is considerable poverty and deprivation. Before taking into account housing costs, 25 percent of children living in Northgate Ward, 21 percent in St Stephens, 18 percent in Barton, and 16 percent in Wincheap are recognized as living in poverty. Many of these are in households whose members are in work. Canterbury is a low-wage economy, with many on zero-hours contracts. Low skill levels condemn many people to the bottom end of the job market. Many, especially lone parents, cannot take a paid job as there is a lack of affordable child-care.

The benefits system is difficult to navigate anyway, but it is particularly difficult for those with low cognitive ability, and/or have mental health problems. The Government has reduced the value of welfare benefits, designed to prevent poverty, and has tightened the regulations and the roll-out of Universal Credit which is likely to make matters worse.

There is a waiting list of 2,400 on the City Council's Housing Register, obliging many people to pay high rents for private accommodation in Canterbury. Once housing costs are taken into account, the percentage of children living in poverty rises sharply: to 40 percent in Northgate Ward, 33 percent in St Stephens, 29 percent in Barton, and 26 percent in Wincheap. It is very easy for families on benefits or low-paid work to fall into debt, and families often face the reality of eviction. To avoid this an increasing number of families are turning to the Food Bank for essential food for their children.

The stress of coping with poverty can lead to relationship problems, domestic abuse, family break-ups, and poor mental health. Very importantly poverty is transmitted to the next generation, as the family environment affected by poverty affects the children's ability to make progress at school. Because of this reality we believe the strategies recommended below must urgently be adopted.



Evidence of homelessness in a city centre doorway.

Since poverty and homelessness are at the least very widespread throughout the nation and beyond, any strategies to ameliorate these would not only apply locally. It seems that in the UK the situation largely derives from an increasing and widespread inequity in wealth distribution coupled with a reluctance to build sufficient numbers of social housing. There are certainly local powers to alleviate the latter of these factors. At its basic, our vision for the city should involve an extensive provision of various forms of social and/or affordable housing. Not only would this create jobs in itself, but it would also reduce factors such as physical and mental ill health while at the same time building self-esteem and housing security.

### Strategies needed:

1. The City Council should ensure the building of 1000 homes for letting at social and/or genuinely affordable rents by 2029.
2. The new City Council Homelessness officers should ensure that all tenants at risk of eviction have access to the benefits to which they are entitled.
3. The City Council, KCC, the Business Improvement District (BID), the Canterbury Society, the Marlowe Theatre, the cathedral, the universities, schools and faith organisations should work together to make the idea of 'One City' a reality by opening up the wealth of cultural provision in Canterbury to children in households in poverty.
4. The City Council, through its community grants programme, should make it possible for not-for-profit organizations, such as the Canterbury Housing Advice Centre, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Porchlight, Catching Lives and others, to increase their caseload capacity year-on-year.
5. A sustained effort should be made to open up the wealth of cultural provision in Canterbury to children from disadvantaged areas, who often suffer from 'poverty of aspiration.'
6. Local government should urgently promote the Kent Credit Union, to lessen the need for people in poverty to turn to commercial lenders, which often results in mounting debt.

## CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

UN SDG 5.2 *“Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.”*

These are important issues for local people, high on the list of priorities in both the City Council annual residents’ survey and in the survey carried out for this Vision. National crime statistics show that Canterbury is a relatively safe area, compared with much of the UK, but clearly these issues still concern local people.

City centre residents regularly report being kept awake by revellers, having their property damaged, or finding the detritus of drug use. Cutbacks in police resources mean that many minor incidents, very distressing to many people, are simply not dealt with by the police. Tackling these issues requires various approaches, including increasing the presence of police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSO), action by nightclubs and other venues, reductions in the availability of alcohol, and well publicised punishments for breaches of the peace.

Though anti-social behaviour may trouble residents, violence and sexual assault are actually more common crimes. In 2017-18 violence and sexual assault made up 33 percent of the crimes recorded by the police in Canterbury, compared with anti-social behaviour and public order crimes which amounted to 25 percent. These crimes are largely perpetrated by men, with both men and women as victims. They are often associated with the abuse of alcohol and other substances, though they also arise from a sense of entitlement and from anger. Changing male behaviour must be one goal towards eliminating violence against women and girls.

Responses to crime must be concerned with victims as well as offenders. In Canterbury, Centra are contracted by KCC to provide refuge for women who have had to leave home because of abuse. The Rising Sun Domestic Violence and Abuse Service provides support, counselling and domestic violence advocates. However, all these services have been affected by financial cutbacks. Last year the refuge in Canterbury accommodated 18 families but had to turn 44 families away. Moving on from the refuge is hard because of the lack of social housing.

Regular litter picks by local people produce enormous quantities of rubbish. The causes of litter are many, from the increases in take-away food, to the carelessness of some individuals, from reductions in litter bins to central government cut backs in Council funding.



Canterbury Society litter pick near the city centre.

Many actions have been taken locally. The Litter Roundtable brings together all those concerned, while the Litter Action Guide gives advice. The Grot-Spots Facebook page draws attention to litter and graffiti, and the BID carries out regular deep cleans in parts of the city centre. Crucially the Council provides equipment and insurance for litter picks.

Graffiti has become an increasing problem, requiring a variety of responses, from fining and policing to youth work and providing greater opportunities for young people. However, there continues to be considerable frustration locally at the inability of responsible authorities to solve the problems of litter and graffiti.

### Strategies needed:

1. Enough police and PCSOs should be employed to ensure they are on duty during the evening and at night when much crime and anti-social behaviour occurs.
2. Opportunities for alcohol consumption, and licensing hours, should be reduced.
3. There should be adequate refuge accommodation for those who have experienced abuse, plus support for women and children to move on into their own homes.
4. There should be a better and more comprehensive contract with the waste management service provider.
5. More litter bins should be installed, preferably with bin lids and divided rubbish bins for recycling
6. The businesses that create much of the litter, such as McDonalds, KFC and coffee shops, should take responsibility for clearing up.



## GOVERNANCE

UN SDG 16.7 “Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.”

In the 2013 Vision it was recommended that the Council should return to a committee system of decision making which would enable councillors to better represent the views of their constituents and to undertake a governance review to consider amongst other things whether the city should have a Town Council.

The City Council adopted this suggestion in 2016 and undertook a governance review in 2017 in which they stated that: *“The aim of the review is to consider and bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and efficient, more effective and convenient delivery of local services and ensure electors across the whole District will be treated equitably and fairly.”*

The review opted to introduce a system of Members Forums to replace the previous Area Member Panels. However, the new Forums are advisory only, have no powers or budgets, and depend for their effectiveness on their recommendations being adopted and acted upon by the relevant decision-making committees. This is where the problem may lie.

As an example, the first major unanimous cross-party recommendation by the new Canterbury Forum was that the Council abandons the idea of constructing a multi-storey car park in Station Road West. However, this recommendation was completely ignored by the Policy and Resources Committee on the grounds that it had already taken a decision to proceed with this project and therefore the matter was not open for consideration. This caused many local residents to question whether the new Forums are genuinely intended to meet the aims of the governance review or are simply a device for making it appear that decision makers are listening to people’s concerns when in fact they are disregarding them.

For the new system to be effective the public needs assurance that the Forum recommendations are going to be taken more seriously. Recommendations should be formally presented to the relevant Committee by a councillor from the Forum and the Committee should provide a formal response. The future of governance in the city needs more evidence that its citizens are being listened to, and at present we genuinely wonder whether city councillors are appreciative of the enormous responsibility they have in shaping the future of the city.



Canterbury City Council meeting in the Guidhall.

On the positive side, Forum meetings so far have been well attended by the public, and discussions have been more open and participatory than with the former Area Member Panels. The more permissive rules about speaking rights for members of the public have been helpful, as has the work of council officers to create a more informal atmosphere.

### Strategies needed:

1. A more collaborative approach between elected members and informed local residents should be implemented. At many committee meetings, when members of the public speak, they are better informed than committee members but their contributions are too frequently disregarded. Good quality decision-making is more likely when councillors take on board expert knowledge that is offered.
2. The decision-making committees should provide a formal written response to the recommendations of the Forums, giving their reasons for accepting or rejecting these recommendations.
3. ‘Question and Answer Sessions’ should be reinstated as an agenda item at most committee meetings. This feature of Area Member Panel meetings was a valuable opportunity for the public to raise issues about which councillors and council officers might be unaware.
4. A better record of local councillor attendance at the Forums needs to be attained.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

UN SDG 3.13 “Strengthen the capacity of all countries, . . . . ., for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.”

Acute care in Canterbury is in a state of crisis. In 2018 inspectors rated the Kent and Canterbury Hospital as “requiring improvement” for the safety, effectiveness, and leadership of its services. The East Kent Hospital Trust, which runs the three hospitals in East Kent plus the GP-led Clinical Commissioning Group, are currently in Special Measures because their budgets are significantly over-spent. The reputation of the K&C hospital has declined, making it difficult to recruit high quality clinical staff. In the winter of 2017/18 the Emergency units that serve Canterbury residents were overwhelmed.

In the past the K & C hospital was seen as the best location for an all-inclusive hospital serving the East Kent area.

However, the cost of re-building has always been seen as too high. However, a local developer has offered to donate land and build a five-storey hospital building next to the K & C site, but only if he receives planning permission for adjacent land. A decision on the location of the major hospital in East Kent is expected in 2019. In the mean-time the University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University have agreed to jointly establish a medical school in Canterbury.

The GP practices serving Canterbury have all been rated ‘Good’ by the inspectors, and have extended the range of their services. However, too many people without access to transport live outside walking distance from a GP surgery. Also, too many people turn up at hospital, instead of going appropriately to a GP.

There are many mental health services in Canterbury, though services for children and young people are inadequate with waiting times of up to two years.

There is a significant difference in the incidence of ill-health, physical and mental, between different electoral wards in Canterbury, and much more needs to be done to raise the quality of health in deprived neighbourhoods. The text box “Key Health Facts for Canterbury” above provides some local health indicators.

### KEY HEALTH FACTS FOR CANTERBURY

\*Both elective and emergency admissions to hospital due to diabetes have increased year on year since 2006/7

\*Overall Canterbury and Coastal CCG (CCCG) had a child admission for mental health rate of 91.1 per 100,000, as against 87.4 per 100,000 for the whole of England. Northgate has the highest rate in the district of contact for children and young people with mental health services

\*The rate of admissions to hospital for self-harm for the same CCCG was 261.3 per 100,000, as against 191.4 per 100,000 for the whole of England.

\*A survey of Canterbury Foodbank users showed that two-thirds of Food Bank users were disabled/had a long-term health condition.

\*The rate of alcohol admissions to hospital for under- 18s was 60.9 per 100,000 as against 36.6 per 100,000 for the whole of England.

(Sources: Canterbury District Community Profile/Canterbury and Coastal CCG Reports)

As with other issues, our vision for the future of health and social care in Canterbury is severely limited by government spending cuts. More recently there appears to be an awareness of the criticality of the current situation, and we would soon envisage special attention being given to increasing NHS capacity across most services, giving special attention to home care help which can reduce the hospital bed occupancy problems; attending to problems such as mental health with more vigour, but above all to adopting those measures that contribute to citizens maintaining healthy lifestyles such as taking more exercise and eating wholesome diets.

### Strategies needed:

1. Waiting times from arrival of patients at Accident and Emergency to referral for treatment or discharge should be brought down to at least the national standard of 4 hours.
2. The time from urgent referral to hospital to the start of treatment for cancer should not exceed the national standard of 62 days.
3. By 2020 no child or young person in Canterbury should be waiting longer than 12 months from referral to treatment by the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service, and by 2022 no longer than 6 months.
4. To combat the growing epidemic of Type 2 diabetes, Canterbury and Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group, KCC Public Health, KCC Early Help, and schools should plan effectively to reduce childhood obesity in Canterbury; and plan to reduce the incidence of Type 2 Diabetes by 20 percent by 2030.
5. All staff in Canterbury's schools should be trained to recognize mental health problems and to give Mental Health First-Aid by 2022.
6. There must be a rigorous campaign, launched and promoted locally, to foster healthy lifestyles, with the campaign operating in several spheres such as the NHS, in schools, among pensioners, at youth clubs, and in conjunction with achieving a modal transport shift whereby citizens are encouraged to walk, cycle or take public transport.



## HOUSING, PLANNING AND THE LAND QUESTION

UN SDG 10.3 “Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.”

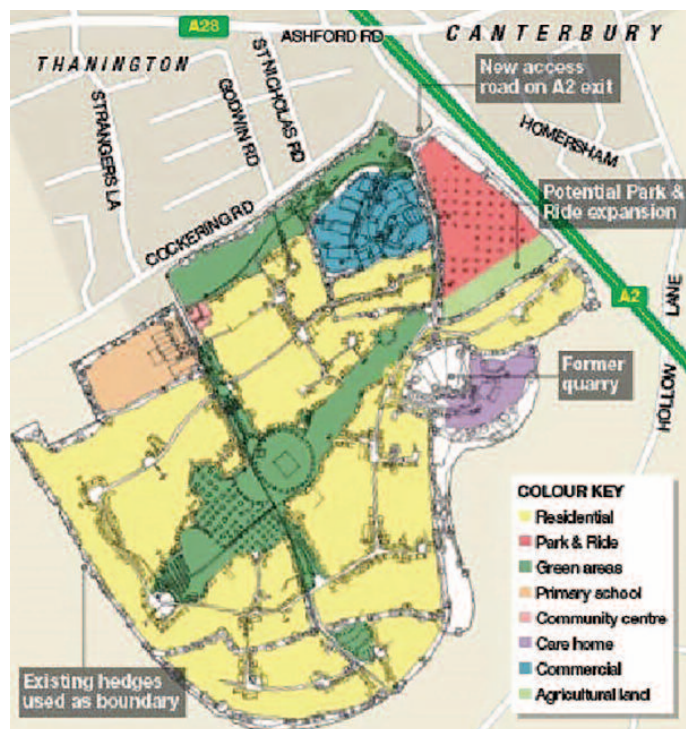
There is a consensus both locally and nationally that house building rates are not keeping pace with population growth or with changing demographics, but homes need to be provided in the quantity and at an affordable price for people to buy or rent and in areas where the need is greatest. It can be argued that on each of these measures the house building industry, the planning system, and the land owners are failing. The housing development system is operating for the benefit of the developers and landowners rather than the people who need housing.

Between 1997 and 2016 house prices in England rose by 259 percent while average earnings increased by just 68 percent. In 1997 the average home was 3.6 times average earnings whilst by 2016 this had risen to 7.6 percent. Clearly this is unsustainable and it cannot continue without very serious consequences.

When land is allocated for residential or mixed-use development in a Local Plan the value of the residential land immediately goes up from an agricultural value of perhaps £8,000 an acre to over £1 million per acre. This is because land with planning permission is a scarce commodity. The land cost of the average new home is a third or more of the overall selling price of the house. This helps to raise the selling (or renting) price to a level that is far beyond the reach of most ordinary people.

In the past attempts by successive governments to capture some of this increase have always failed because the landowner’s response has generally been to withhold land from the market to avoid any sharing of the increased value with the community.

A new system is needed whereby local authorities can compulsorily acquire land for development at values that enable affordable housing and community infrastructure to be provided. Councils would then be able to produce a masterplan that could deliver both the community’s vision for their own town or city and housing that ordinary people could afford.



Proposed large scale housing development on Canterbury’s SW urban fringe.

This approach would require legislation that compensated the landowners in an equitable way as between them and the community that granted the planning permission. The landowner would still receive many more times the value of the land before planning permission was granted but not the excessive amounts that are currently achieved on the so called “open market”.

### Strategies needed:

1. Both Central and Local Government need to respond to the crisis of housing affordability with a more radical approach to the underlying problem of high land values. This should include the reform of the Land Compensation Act 1961, which enshrines their right to receive ‘hope value’ – that arising from the hope of future development – in addition to any current use value in the event of compulsory purchase.
2. A major overhaul of the planning system is required so that it is communities and not developers who decide what is built in their areas and local authorities are given the necessary powers to deliver the affordable housing their communities need.

## SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

UN SDG 11.1 *“By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and to upgrade slums.”*

Responses to our recent residents’ questionnaire indicated that the issues of affordability and social housing were matters of great concern to local people. Figures published by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government for the year 2016/17 show 19,059 households were waiting for a council property in Kent, with Canterbury District needing 2,709 houses, the second highest in Kent. A key function of social housing is to provide affordable accommodation to people on low incomes, and therefore rental increases are regulated by law which means that rents are maintained at an affordable level.

Social housing is generally limited to people who are struggling with housing costs or in need of a more secure home. The present needs in Canterbury, and throughout most of the UK, far exceeds the supply, meaning that some families living in desperate conditions are forced to wait years for a suitable home. They may have to live for months in temporary accommodation giving them a very uncertain future. Others will be left with no choice but to live in the private rented sector. With short-term contracts, unpredictability, poor conditions and high costs, private rented housing is unsuitable for many families and households, especially those who are vulnerable and in need of a stable, secure home.

For too long central government has been indifferent to the crisis of social and affordable housing. By 2020 it is predicted that only a quarter of 30-year olds will own their own home, down from half in the 1980s, and over a third of people born after 2000 will be unlikely to afford to purchase a property during their lifetime. Given present trends most will have to rely on the private rented sector, i.e. that marked by insecurity of tenure and poor maintenance.

Local authority council housing has been decimated at a time when social forms of housing should have been encouraged and funded. The country needs to rethink its relationship with housing if it is serious about solving the housing crisis. Allocating more land for residential development in and around our towns and cities will help, but it is only part of the answer.

While land has a purchase price of over £1million per acre there is little prospect of any long-term solution to the affordability crisis, though in our previous section means were suggested as to how this problem might be addressed. More effort also needs to be directed towards the various community housing schemes that have been successful as well as the provision of high quality modular, industrialised housing structures that could be rapidly provided at relative low cost.



Potential modular housing.

### *Strategies needed:*

1. Now that the government borrowing cap on local authorities has recently been lifted, enabling them to build social and affordable housing for sale or rent, we recommend that the City Council embark on a major community house building programme to meet locally identified needs.
2. Local Authorities must ensure that developers and landowners comply fully with their obligations to provide genuine affordable social housing. These obligations need to be factored into the price developers’ pay for the land before the land is purchased not afterwards.
3. Central government needs to plan and properly fund the provision of social and affordable housing on a national and regional basis to ensure that local authorities can meet their assessed housing needs.
4. In order to speed up the rate of provision of social and affordable housing having good spatial standards, investment is needed in well designed, high quality factory-built homes that can be assembled on site in days rather than months.



## ENERGY, CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY

UN SDG 13.3 *“Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.”*

UN SDG 12.5 *“By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.”*

Our vision of a sustainable future for Canterbury is one in which a healthy environment, economic prosperity and social justice are pursued simultaneously to ensure the well-being and quality of life for present and future generations.

Unfortunately, at the present time, our lifestyles are not sustainable and this is leading indirectly to climate change and global warming. As a society resource consumption rates are too high and too much waste is created.

Many of us in the city, whether the Council, businesses, organisations or individuals are helping to make a difference, yet despite all our policies, initiatives and individual efforts, environmental matters keep getting worse and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has now given their starkest warning yet that there are just 12 years to avoid critical environmental changes.

Much more can be done to achieve changes towards a truly sustainable lifestyle. This includes the amount of energy consumed, how often we fly or drive, how our food is purchased, unnecessary material purchases and the amount of waste created. Leading a sustainable lifestyle also has countless benefits; apart from lowering emissions, it can increase community cohesion, decrease inequality, save us money, improve our health, create “green” jobs and is a source of hope for future generations.

To enable more sustainable thinking Canterbury should learn from other similar cities. Freiburg in Germany, for example, has for many decades had an integrated transport system, has promoted rigorous energy conservation measures, developed renewable sources of electricity and has adopted aggressive recycling policies. Some British cities are now following suit.

It is suggested that the way forward for Canterbury is for the Council to join forces with a range of local stakeholders and initiatives to create an Eco-Forum for the city (similar to the current Sustainable Transport Forum);



Marine-based wind turbines such as those off Herne Bay.

a joint venture, ideally lead by the Council and including community groups, businesses, academics, the County Council, environmental interest groups and national/local renewable energy providers. The remit of the Eco-Forum will be to create “Zero Carbon Canterbury” by 2040, with its main aims being energy conservation, renewable energy generation, reducing consumption and aggressive recycling.

The starting point for the Eco-Forum should be an energy audit of all the buildings in the City (free to householders and businesses alike) to inform and guide future policy and Community. It is also recommended that, via the Eco-Forum, a Community Benefit Society is set up to investigate and develop local sustainable energy possibilities.

### *Strategies needed:*

1. Canterbury City Council should immediately establish an Eco-forum, whose starting point will be an energy audit of the city.
2. All new homes and buildings in the City should be Zero Carbon by 2025 and, through refurbishment, existing buildings be required to greatly reduce their carbon footprint where necessary. This could create a large number of jobs and business stimulation.
3. Under the auspices of the Eco-forum, set up a Community Benefit Society to investigate and develop local sustainable energy generation possibilities.
4. In an attempt to improve their recycling rates the City Council should improve information on recycling. The goal should be to achieve a recycling rate of 70 percent by 2030 (as per the current EU target). All types of recycling bins should be offered free of charge to residents and all general waste bins around the city should be replaced with multiple recycling bins.
5. The Council should nominate an “Eco Day” for the City, a day on which events and exhibitions can focus on what Canterbury is doing to combat Climate Change and improve sustainability.
6. Through our buying habits, encourage supermarkets to discontinue plastic wrappings in favour of no wrapping, or where needed, the use of bio- degradable wrapping.

## THE ECONOMY

UN SDG 4.4 *“By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.”*

The Canterbury economy faces major challenges over the next few years, each of which will have a significant impact on employment, living standards and the quality of life for local citizens.

The higher education sector operates in a more competitive environment alongside a decline in the demographic numbers of home-based students. There is also likely to be a shift in the delivery of teaching processes reducing the demand for three-year, full-time residential study. These factors will impact severely on the local economy in terms of both employment and accommodation demands.

Likewise, the retail sector faces an uncertain future. The growth of online shopping will continue to have a major impact on Canterbury's shopping offer. National retailers will be less attracted to retain a high street presence leading to a change in the character of the City's streetscape. Small personal services and leisure/informal catering outlets will prevail. Market forces will lead to a reduction in rental charges, enabling more local entrepreneurs in this sector.

The night-time economy will be less significant in the face of a falling student spend.

Health and welfare, a major source of local employment, will continue to be under-resourced despite a local ageing population with its greater demands on services. The on-going growth of marketisation and sub-contracting of services will reinforce the substitution of secure, relatively permanent jobs with insecure and temporary appointments. The outcome for the lifestyles and psychologies of affected staff is significant.

Canterbury is a heritage city, punching above its weight in attracting daily visitors, but failing to realise its potential as an 'over-night' destination. It will continue to be over-dependent upon the draw of the Cathedral unless its leisure and/or entertainment attractions can be enhanced. If the final outcome of Brexit is "to leave", this could reduce the city's appeal for European visitors. Canterbury could do more to 'attach' itself to London as an international tourist destination by marketing its 55 minutes journey time.



Small businesses on Canterbury High Street.

It is important to nurture local entrepreneurship if the city is to have a sustainable future, less prone to global and national vulnerabilities. It must develop strategies to attract and develop the entrepreneurial, technical, professional and creative skills of locally-produced graduates. In addition, to attract digital businesses from London, Canterbury must offer attractive operating locations, lower costs and appealing life styles, all within easy access to London. For this, there needs to be an upgrading in the provision of broadband technologies.

### Strategies needed:

1. Planning permission should only be given for student housing developments on the condition that, should there be a fall-off in student demand, these properties can be converted for use by young couples and families.
2. Ultra-high-speed broadband for businesses and free Wi-Fi for citizens and visitors need to be urgently delivered across the City.
3. A strategy should be developed to attract more professional, creative, and digital businesses to the area to exploit the opportunities the City has to be a hub that is fully integrated into global supply chains.
4. To promote the City as a heritage destination by marketing its short journey times to-and-from London as well as increasing the range of Festivals and annual spectacles.
5. Support the BID into phase 2 with its strategy for improving the City as a shopping and visitor destination with its litter free campaigns, Canterbury in Bloom, the Xmas lights, etc. The BID should also urge the City traders to attach greater value to the importance of customer-focused staff training.
6. As part of improving the shopping experience, resources should be devoted to improving the general environment of St George's Place and to improve the footfall links between this and Burgate.



## OPEN SPACE, PARKS AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

UN SDG 11.7 *“By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.”*

Despite recognition of the importance of green open spaces for mental well-being and physical health, fostering cohesive communities, protecting heritage, and meeting challenges of climate change, such as improving air quality, biodiversity and flood control, Canterbury’s open spaces need protection. The combined forces of severe budget cuts to local councils, (by as much as 97% over 5 years) and an ever-increasing need for development are threats to their secure future and good maintenance. They are especially vulnerable as councils have no statutory obligation to fund or maintain them.

Several high-profile reports have recently highlighted the incoherency at the heart of public policy. The 2016 Heritage Lottery Fund report on the ‘State of UK Parks’ highlighted the inconsistency between the rising use of parks and the growing deficit in funds to maintain and manage them and

recommended that new ways of funding and managing parks be sought through collaborative action.

The Parks Charter of 2018, in line with the SDG goal 11.7, stresses the right of every citizen to have access within walking distance to a good quality public green space. In Canterbury many good quality parks and open spaces are now interconnected through the green corridor provided by the almost completed Stour Riverside pathway, and community campaigns have been successful in saving 80 percent of Kingsmead Field and, in the short-term, the Chaucer Fields.

However, the quality of green or open space provision throughout the city still varies widely. There is a lack of provision in South Canterbury and residents are concerned that many existing open spaces have become blighted by anti-social behaviour, litter, fly-tipping and graffiti. The increasing lack of funding for the management and maintenance of parks and loss of personnel, exacerbates the problem as neglect of open spaces leads to a rise in anti- social behaviour.



Kingsmead Field – recently saved from development.

### Strategies needed:

1. Lobby national government to give local authorities a statutory duty to ensure that all their parks and public green spaces are protected, managed and well-maintained by ring-fencing the funding and strengthening planning policies.
2. Strengthen CCC’s depleted parks and open spaces team with more personnel, additional Parks Community and Development Officers and a councillor as a Parks and Open Spaces champion.
3. Ensure that management plans for open spaces have a positive impact on the environment by minimising energy use and resource consumption in both landscaping and associated buildings, as well as increasing biodiversity and encouraging wildlife.
4. Local people should be motivated to develop a sense of pride in Canterbury’s open spaces by joining existing and forming new friends’ groups and participating in consultations on green open spaces.
5. The city’s open spaces should have improved litter and waste management plans, and particularly the Stour River green corridor, to counter fly tipping, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
6. Initiatives to green up, plant trees and create greater biodiversity on Canterbury’s roadsides and roundabouts should be implemented.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

UN Goal 11: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.”

Based on evidence gleaned from our Vision questionnaire, this section examines the public services and facilities that were seen as most important to local Canterbury residents and that have not been fully discussed elsewhere in this Vision. Most of these public services are those provided via local or county level government, but due to present government instigated austerity measures there is notable concern that some of the services or facilities are being depleted or are reliant on voluntary participation. Here the issues are simply stated relative to the main facilities or services mentioned in the questionnaire, followed by future strategies that might be needed:

- **Car parking.** Despite the wide range of parking facilities in Canterbury, parking cars remains a challenge for the authorities. Financially the Council relies heavily on remittances from parking, but high charges to customers appears to be a non-sustainable solution in a city which simply has better uses for valuable city centre land.
- **Tourist information.** Over recent decades the city has had problems with establishing a clearly identified location providing for visitor information. Although the move to the Beaney building may have temporarily solved this problem, the location is far from an ideal long-term solution.
- **Activities for younger people.** Because of the wide range of potential activities, plus age differences, diverse providers and the distraction now caused through the Internet, the provision of activities for young people are often a difficult provision.
- **Sports facilities.** For health and other reasons sport participation is important. The general sport provision in Canterbury is reasonable but it is of concern that sport and/or physical training has declined as a school activity, and this situation needs urgent reversal. The city's two main universities both have wide ranging sports venues and the Canterbury cricket, hockey and rugby clubs appear to thrive. Other dedicated centres are provided by some of the secondary schools plus a range of private facilities but some sports activities are not well catered for.
- **Public toilets.** Over the last decade city public toilet provision has reduced. Increasing reliance must now be made on private facilities in supermarkets, larger shops and restaurants and public houses. For a city with very high visitor numbers this is not a satisfactory situation.
- **Waste collection.** Given the quantities involved and the varied nature of “waste”, its collection gives rise to numerous “niggles”. Many residents have justifiable problems with the sorting of waste, and many premises have insufficient room to store council collection bins.
- **School education provision.** The range of schools in Canterbury is wide and in most cases their education provision is of a high standard. However, austerity measures are biting into this provision causing resources and staff reductions. The future may see a need for increasing voluntary parental inputs.



The Beaney Building on Canterbury High Street.

- **Quality of roads and pavements.** The recent rapidly deteriorating decline in road and pavement quality has led to considerable public concern. The present unending patching repairs cannot be sustained and presently there are few repair actions that are likely to be either sustainable or that will bring about improvements.
- **Library services.** The library service in Canterbury has always been good and since the refurbishment of its accommodation in the Beaney building, the service has been further enhanced. However there is a good argument to be made that a major public library could benefit from having its own identity.

A vision for the future must include ideas and suggestions on how these facilities and services could best be enhanced.

The strategies below give pointers to how improvements could be made though it is recognised that readers may have additional ideas.



## Strategies needed:

1. **Car parking:** In the shorter term more provision of Park and Ride is an essential component to resolve parking problems and new sites such as near Brenley Corner or locations between Whitstable and Canterbury or between Sandwich and Canterbury should be investigated in places that are not essential greenfield sites. Hours of opening for Park and Ride sites should be expanded. At the same time, and given the major new housing developments in the pipeline, a major emphasis must be made on “modal transport shift”, i.e. from cars to walking, cycling and public transport. Greater subsidies should also be secured for local bus services in order to prevent their spiralling decline and rising fares.
2. **Tourist information:** A dedicated building in a prominent central location must be identified for visitor information. At a time when austerity and the use of Internet shopping are curbing central city retailing, leading to store closures, there ought to be little difficulty in finding such premises. Additional quality tourist and heritage signage information is also required.
3. **Activities for younger people:** The use of the Internet now provides convenient source information on activity availability in the city. It ought to be possible for schools to enter into and encourage extra-curricular activities that do not place too high a reliance on additional education staff inputs. Additional activity venues such as the Kingsmead sports centre must be strongly considered.
4. **Sports facilities:** While some sports facilities in the city are excellent the situation is often fairly fluid. The City Council needs to bring up-to-date its 2011 report on the provision of health, fitness and assorted sports facilities in the District. This should then reveal both what is currently available but more importantly it should state what facilities currently need up-dating. Resolution of the lack of a football stadium needs urgent attention.
5. **Public toilets:** We question the heavy reliance on the discretionary access that shops and other private sources provide for this essential service, and believe that additional toilet facilities need to be provided at points along main roads or in public open spaces.
6. **Waste collection:** The Council must provide enhanced education and information on waste so that all waste producers are aware of the serious nature of this activity, and that the public have a much better idea on exactly what can and cannot be collected.
7. **School education provision:** Since the education facilities in Canterbury are good, and since changes to the process of education per se are beyond our remit, we only comment on the actual provision of same. It has long been clear that there is too much “busing” of secondary children around the District and that better comprehensive facilities should be provided both at the coast and with the regeneration of the Chaucer School.
8. **Quality of roads and pavements:** It is imperative that pavement repairs are carried out qualitatively via the use of paving slabs (rather than tarmac), which if laid correctly, will give pavements a longer life. And the constant filling of potholes is very short term, unsustainable and most unsatisfactory. Roads must be constructed properly in the first place so as to give a far longer life, and maintained via long lasting quality procedures.
9. **Library services:** Despite the enhanced library facilities, it might well be agreed that for the Beaney building is insufficient to have to be shared between tourist information, the public library, a small art gallery and Canterbury’s main museum. For a city of Canterbury’s importance, these services deserve their own premises. The City Council should urgently investigate this.

## Afterword

### THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

Many of 'Strategies for action' listed in this Vision essentially involve the spending of more money, either by Canterbury City Council or Kent Country Council. The response is likely to be that the money is simply not there to pay for these improvements. The fact that none of the chapters in the Vision has really tackled this issue makes it a sort of elephant in the room. Here briefly we face up to that elephant.

It is important to recognise that the level of funding for local councils is a political decision, made at national level. On 5th February 2019 the House of Commons debated local government funding. The debate highlighted the drastic cuts since 2010-11. Figures were presented which showed that spending on planning has fallen by 55 percent, on housing by 48 percent, on cultural facilities by 43 percent, on highways and transport by 40 percent and on the environment by 20 percent. This means that authorities such as Canterbury City Council have been forced to make drastic cuts in all their main areas of work.

Local authorities are key in supporting the quality of life. Good councils can create places which enhance the lives of all who live there. Some things cannot be bought by individuals, such as clean air, beautiful public parks, litter collection, policing, affordable housing and transport systems that work for the people that use them. Looked at from this perspective council tax becomes, not something to avoid, but rather the price we pay for living in a civilised society,

So, a final recommendation of this Vision for the future of our city urges a reconsideration of the funding of local government. This is an affluent society in which many people can afford to pay quite a lot to enhance their private homes. We must also be willing to pay council tax to enhance the public spaces where we live, work and play. The gains in terms of quality of life would benefit us all.

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