

## **SECTION 9 - CONCLUSION**

## CONCLUSION

We have demonstrated in this submission that:

- the proposed Chaucer Fields development would be contrary to Saved Policies in the Canterbury District Local Plan including the Green Gap Policy, the Open Space Policy and the Areas of High Landscape Value Policy (see Section 2);
- the development would be highly damaging and destructive to a natural environment which is of great value both to the people of Canterbury district and to the University itself, impacting not just on the site itself but on the southern slopes as a whole and the setting of the University (see Section 3);
- it is likely that the problems resulting from the transport impact of the development, particularly in its current form combining a hotel and conference centre with student accommodation, have been considerably underestimated (see Section 5);
- the development is likely to add considerably to the level of disturbance from which local residents already suffer as a consequence of their proximity to the University, and past experience suggests that attempts at mitigation are unlikely to be effective (see Section 6).

Some of these objections have been noted in Local Dialogue's consultation exercise, which has acknowledged that local people are overwhelmingly opposed to the choice of this particular site for the development. However, the University's response to the consultation has been simply to make minor alterations to the scheme and to offer to give 'consideration' to some limited ameliorative measures (see Section 7).

The reason given for rejecting alternative sites is the insistence that the components of the development should be a single package and that the intended synergies with the Innovation Centre require it to be located near the latter. We have shown that this insistence is questionable, and that once it is questioned, several alternative sites for the separate components of the proposal become available and would be preferable (see Section 4).

The planning application recognises that this development would be contrary to existing Local Policies, but claims that this objection would be outweighed by the economic benefits. These benefits have simply not been demonstrated (see Section 8).

- It is unlikely that the local community would benefit. Any income which might be generated by a hotel and conference centre would largely remain on campus, and indeed the local hotel and catering sector would if anything be likely to lose business.

- The scale of the proposed development would rule out tenders from local contractors. This would not be the case if the separate components of the proposal were separated out and additional student residences were to be provided in the form of additions to existing student accommodation, e.g. on the Parkwood site (see Section 4.6 of this submission).
- The assumption that the University itself would benefit economically from a thriving Business Innovation Centre underpinning the proposed development is highly speculative and unsubstantiated. In the current economic climate it appears unrealistically optimistic.
- If there are indeed potential economic benefits to the University, and to the local community in terms of additional employment, from the hotel and conference centre, these would still be achievable if that part of the development were separated out and sited in a different location.
- The claim that the development would release properties for non-student accommodation is unproven, and the projections for future home and overseas student numbers are questionable.

We conclude that the objections to the proposed development are overwhelming. We urge the Development Services team and the Development Control Committee to reach the same conclusion.