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KENTISH GAZETTE

CANTERBURY AND DISTRICT

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480 homes here?

- Uproar over massive housing estate plans
 - Nearly 500 homes could be built on farmland
 - Residents speak of traffic congestion fears
 - Objectors pack council meeting to protest
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HUGE OPPOSITION: Parish council taken by surprise

Outrage over homes plan for farmland

by Gerry Warren

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PLANS for a massive housing development on farmland on the edge of Canterbury have caused uproar.

The scheme is for nearly 500 homes at Cockerling Farm in Thanington – a site which is designated solely for agriculture in the Local Plan.

The application, which is for land between Ashford Road and Cockerling Road, has caused anger in Thanington where a meeting of the parish council on Monday night was packed with objectors.

Clerk Roger Cheeseworth said: "It has taken us by surprise because we have already been through this debate during consideration of the Local Plan.

"There is huge opposition to it locally. For starters it is designated farmland of high landscape value and therefore greenfield.

"It is squeezed in between the existing urban area and Larkey Valley Woods, which are themselves protected.

"Secondly, there are simply not the amenities like local shops to support it. The

scheme is proposing a new roundabout on the Ashford Road but the extra traffic exiting onto the A28 would add to the already bad congestion."

But he also feared that increasing pressure at Government level for more homes in the South East was threatening greenfield sites.

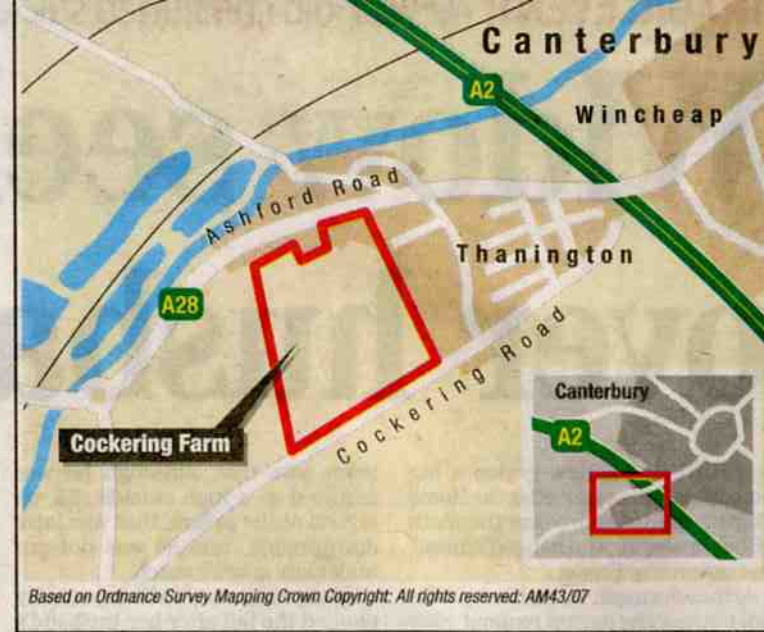
Mr Cheeseworth said a formal objection was being submitted to the city council which itself is expected to vigorously reject the application.

On its website the applicant, Pelham Homes, claims success in achieving development on greenfield sites and steering applications through the "minefield" of planning legislation.

It has, however, already failed to have the farmland reclassified in the Local Plan as available for housing, following a challenge by the city council.

Full details of the application and Thanington's response can be found at www.thanington-pc.gov.uk

Neither the landowner nor the developer had returned our calls by the time we went to print.



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Parish councillors, left, Ian Bain and Terry Davis with Ashford Road Community Association chairman David Swaine and parish council clerk Roger Cheeseworth at the site of the planned development

Picture: Gerry Warren pd 1324821