

## MATTERS AND ISSUES 4

### CHRISTCHURCH URBAN EXTENSION

The necessity for more homes to be built is undeniable, but the choice of prime Green Belt land is unacceptable when other options are available.

It is not essential to develop one large area of new housing and it seems that the option of smaller, brownfield sites has not been rigorously explored. The era of massive unified housing is over in towns like Christchurch and there are a number of derelict brownfield sites around the Borough which are ripe for sensitive new development. Residents would welcome the renewal of current eyesores into homes for the future and several smaller developments in styles appropriate to their immediate area would be much more in keeping with a small town.

Another major concern is the requirement of numerous new services to large, new, remote housing developments. The proposed Urban Extension will require buses (which councils no longer control), shops, doctor's surgeries, schools etc. The development on a greenfield site needs the complete package of resources which would already exist if smaller, urban housing was built on a number of brownfield sites. The increased car traffic will cause major problems on the A35 and delays may well adversely affect the tourist trade.

Councils should always consider brownfield sites before greenfield sites---there really is no excuse for omitting such a requirement. The need to protect our countryside seems to be acknowledged by all except builders and planners! Once greenfield sites are developed species and biodiversity loss is almost always permanent. Suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANG) has not yet been proven to protect designated habitats. These concerns are not fanciful," tree-hugger" fears but essential protection against potentially irreversible actions. The erosion of Green Belt must be halted in order to deliver a living countryside to our future generations.

There will be a loss of productive allotment space if the development goes ahead and together with the farmland which will be lost, valuable local food resources will be reduced. The Transition Town movement believe that in future we will be forced to rely more heavily on local production and these views are steadily being accepted by Governments and industry.

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***Transition Town Christchurch is part of a global movement to move from a fossil fuel dependent way of life to a more sustainable one. A key strategy is building resilient communities. Transition Town Christchurch makes this representation in support of this aim.***