

Policy C6: Land at Merton Park

Firstly, I would like to discuss the concerns I have regarding Hollow Lane being turned into a link road. I am a resident of Hollow Lane, near the Wincheap end. Hollow Lane as it is is a very narrow road. Many residents who live in terrace houses, and therefore do not have garages or front gardens, park on the road outside their houses. Parking as it is is already extremely tight; a year ago the council increased double yellow lines on the road reducing resident parking; many of the residents - none of whom were consulted prior to this taking place - were extremely frustrated. As well as this, Hollow Lane is already extremely busy, and the road itself is not designed for so much traffic. Many residents on the street currently express frustration at non-resident drivers passing through Hollow Lane at high speeds, and scratching cars, knocking off side mirror, and most recently, an accident that happened on Hollow Lane near the primary school, where a driver turned the corner at high speeds; the car flipped, with a minor as a passenger, and smashed into two residents' cars in designated parking bays.

Your proposal to turn Hollow Lane into a South Canterbury link road is extremely concerning, as this will increase the amount of traffic using the road, which the road currently can't handle. In addition, how will this affect residents' parking on the road? If this road is to become busier due to passing traffic, the residents of Hollow Lane must still have somewhere to park - many residents including myself (an NHS worker) drive to work and no parking would drastically impact my ability to carry out my day to day work. Residents' access to parking must be considered in this plan should the link road proposal take place.

Secondly, I would like to express my frustration at the proposal of the Orchards behind Hollow Lane, and the fields up near the hospital being turned into resident housing and community hubs. I do completely understand that you are obliged to build a certain amount of houses in Canterbury a year; I do have major concerns regarding you building in this particular piece of nature.

- 1) The Orchards and surrounding fields are well accessed by residents of Hollow Lane, Wincheap, and housing estates surrounding the hospital, plus up near Simon Langton Boys Grammar School. The Orchards off Hollow Lane, in particular, is extremely well used, and was a safe haven for many local residents during the Covid 19 pandemic. I remember how incredible it felt seeing the seasons change that year of Covid and how incredibly privileged we were to have these Orchards so close by. The sunset in the Orchards is particularly spectacular. The Orchards are particularly popular for dog walkers, and was the main draw to many residents of Hollow Lane moving here. Destroying the Orchards for housing would be an incredibly devastating loss for residents; many of whom have spent many happy hours in the Orchards and feel so privileged to have these near our homes. I myself have cried at the prospect of these being destroyed, and I know that fellow residents of Hollow Lane have felt the same way. The grief at this important area of nature being destroyed would be felt far beyond Hollow Lane to other parts of Canterbury.

- 2) The Orchards and surrounding fields are home to a wide range of wildlife. During the early evening, I have seen rabbits hopping around the Orchards, and recently, I saw a beaver pop his head out of a bush. The awareness of the possibility of these animals' homes being destroyed broke my heart when I saw this beaver. If these Orchards are destroyed, what will happen to these animals? Will you ensure you keep these animals safe to the best of your ability, and rehome them where possible? How will you ensure that biodiversity is retained in this incredible areas? Or will these animals be killed when building commences? Will rabbit holes be destroyed when builders start building roads and home foundations. The idea that these animal's homes may be destroyed is absolutely heartbreaking, and I really urge you to reconsider your proposal on building in the Orchards in particular, but also on this particular area of land in general.

Thirdly, there are implications of building houses in this area due to its impact on Stodmarsh. The water quality as a result for sewage could decline. How will you ensure that this does not happen?

I have tears in my ears writing this feedback, because destroying this area of natural beauty would not just hurt the residents' of Hollow Lane and wider Canterbury, but also those incredible animals that call the Orchards and surrounding fields home. In a time of the climate crisis and fears of global warming, why would killing the hundreds of trees currently growing in the orchards and surrounding fields, be beneficial to the wider community?

Again, I really urge you to reconsider your plans for Merton Park. Even if you are unable to retain all of the natural environment, I urge you to consider ways to ensure residents still have access to some of the incredible nature that the Orchards and surrounding fields offer, to ensure that trees within this are retained, to ensure that you have a plan to protect the existing wildlife in these areas, as opposed to destroy it,, and to ensure that the Canterbury link road does not adversely impact the residents of Hollow Lane in regards to parking and excessive traffic on an already narrow road.

Thank you very much for your time.