

## Helen O'Connor

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**From:** Lindsay Butler [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 09 October 2025 16:42  
**To:** Consultations

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Dear Consultation Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute my feedback regarding the Draft Canterbury District Local Plan, specifically concerning the proposal within Policy N3 to locate a Park and Ride facility on **Thanington Recreation Ground**. I am writing to express my profound concern and ask for your reconsideration of this proposal.

My family and I recently chose to make this community our home, and the easily accessible recreation ground was a significant factor in that decision. As a space we use every single day with our two young children and our dog, I have seen first-hand the vital role this park plays. It is one of the very few readily available green spaces in the area, and its preservation is crucial for the **health, wellbeing, and daily routines** of countless local residents, from young children to older community members. This community has been brought together as a result of this proposal with more than **200 people** joining together at this week's public meeting at the Resource Centre in defence of our Rec. At this meeting, the attendees shared their stories of the impact of the Rec on their lives - childhood, parenthood, walking dogs, sports, community gatherings and enjoying having the open space in the neighbourhood. What was also apparent is how much the **Thanington Neighbourhood Resource Centre** depends on the space for its events and income and its place as a hub in the community.

I know the Local Plan emphasises core commitments: protecting our open spaces, supporting community wellbeing, and encouraging active lifestyles. The suggested removal of Thanington Recreation Ground, however, appears to unfortunately contradict these very important goals.

For my children, this field is more than just open land; it is one of the only safe, established places nearby where they can freely play, explore, and connect with nature. When this cherished piece of land is developed, that irreplaceable benefit is lost forever to the existing community.

While I understand the council's intention to provide replacement pitches within the future Merton Park development, this sadly does not address the fundamental issue - replacing formal sports pitches in a new location is not the same as preserving the **current, familiar, and freely accessible community space** that local people rely on today.

Furthermore, this proposal raises serious environmental questions. Removing mature green space contributes to a loss of biodiversity, reduces our area's natural drainage capacity, and inevitably increases traffic density nearby. These outcomes run counter to the Plan's stated commitment to sustainability and protecting our valued landscapes. It's also sad for us all that more than 100 mature and newer trees will be impacted by the development.

I fully appreciate the need to find effective solutions for transport and congestion in the city. However, I sincerely hope we can achieve these necessities without sacrificing this precious

parkland. The council's own evidence base highlights the potential of developing brownfield sites and enhancing existing sustainable transport. I strongly urge the council to pursue these alternatives instead of destroying one of the last remaining, essential green spaces for this part of the city.

For the sake of our current residents and the wellbeing of future generations, I respectfully ask that you withdraw the proposal to allocate Thanington Recreation Ground for a Park and Ride and instead prioritise its long-term protection.

Thank you in advance.

Lindsay Butler