

From: Nina Coulthard [REDACTED]
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To: Consultations
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Dear Council members

I wish to raise my great concern regarding the plans for using the Thanington Recreation Ground for a Park and Ride facility.

Much as I would value the convenience of an A2 southbound exit at Wincheap, being a local resident, the current plans come with huge detrimental impacts on the local environment and community.

1. The A2 slip road would bring a great deal of additional traffic up to an already congested junction, including large commercial lorries. It is already the case that cars often can't get across the junction despite green lights because of the back up of traffic (and sometimes the poor synchronisation of the light changes.)
2. The congestion will then have a detrimental effect on the businesses in the retail park as it will put people off shopping there.
3. Extra traffic turning right towards Ashford would then have to cross the Canterbury bound stream to access the Park and Ride, causing more slowing and congestion. There are already 6 sets of traffic lights between Dunelm and the Recreation Ground, one of which, parallel to the A2 London slip road lights, seems pointless as there is no pedestrian crossing or junction there! We really cannot have yet another set for a Park and Ride entry.
4. Traffic in the area is getting greater all the time with the number of new housing developments being allowed in this area, with inadequate infrastructure planning and provision.
5. The loss of a large percentage of the Recreation Ground will be devastating for the community. It is an invaluable resource for the mental and physical well-being of the community, being the only green space accessible in Thanington. Many people of all ages use it for peace and quiet, walking their dogs, getting exercise, playing sports, etc. It gives many young people somewhere to safely play and gather instead of roaming the streets trying to find ways to let off steam and amuse themselves, sometimes with serious consequences. There seems to be no clear indication of what is intended by the 'temporary' provision for some sports there. How temporary? What then? What sports would be safe without the danger of balls - and therefore children, straying into a busy car park?
6. Other facilities at the Resource Centre may well be negatively impacted due to congestion, the pollution of the Park and Ride traffic and lack of the green space alongside. This centre provides valuable support for all ages through a variety of different services and activities. This was evident from the testimonials of a number of young people who spoke at a recent public meeting about the difference it had made to them, supporting their mental health and helping them to become responsible, confident and useful members of the community. To lose this centre would be an act of vandalism to this community.
7. The whole proposal contradicts the council's expressed plans and commitments to the health and well-being of the community it is supposed to serve, and the preservation of the environment and green spaces. It is putting cars before people.
8. If a slip road is to go ahead, then consideration should be given to alternatives such as

- * a multi-storey Park and Ride area in the existing space
- * an additional P&R car park further up the A28 in the Chartham area (I'm sure their residents would value the facility). It would only add a little to the journey for incoming A2 traffic and the bus could still stop at Wincheap as well, for the remaining local P&R.

Please, please, listen to the community and rethink these plans.

Yours sincerely

Niina M Coulthard (Rev'd)