



Outlook

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## Response to Canterbury Draft Local Plan focussed consultation - policy N3

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From Rev Nick White [REDACTED]  
Date Tue 10/14/2025 6:57 PM  
To Consultations <Consultations@canterbury.gov.uk>

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To whom it may concern,

I wish to object to the proposed Local Plan policy N3 regarding the relocation of the existing Wincheap Park and Ride to Thanington Rec together with associated traffic plans.

I write in my capacity both as a resident, a parent of school-age children and as the vicar of the Anglican Parish of Thanington, St Nicholas & St Faith. My concerns centre on the negative impact it will have on the well-being of many local residents, on community cohesion, on the local heritage and environment, and on traffic management.

### **Negative impact on health and well-being**

As the vicar of Thanington since January 2022, I see on a daily basis that Thanington Rec is a place where local people exercise and play sport - both organised and informal, children and adults. In the summer, it's a place where families and friends gather in the outdoors, have picnics, little ones safely run free, kids learn to ride bikes, teens let off steam. All year round, its a place where people walk their dogs together or simply find a few moments of respite in a busy week. It's a space where people enjoy nature, including the magnificent trees which surround the rec. It's a place where people find space to think and feel, laugh and cry, dream and pray for a better future.

Those with cars may be able to drive elsewhere to find equivalent open space. But there are significant numbers of people in Thanington who rely on travel by foot or public transport and who would not be able to easily access alternative green spaces in places like Merton Park (as suggested in the focussed consultation document). This includes elderly people who can no longer drive; households who cannot afford to own and run a car; and children who can play independently close to their home but whose parents would not feel safe for them to be playing a couple of miles away. It is worth noting that on Sundays there is no public transport connecting Thanington with other parts of Canterbury.

I have also heard it said that new open spaces are planned as part of the Saxon Fields development. However, I have two concerns about this. Firstly, I am already aware of complaints by Saxon Fields residents about non-residents using the existing communal open spaces and play area. Secondly, the open space which has been planned in Saxon Fields includes a cricket pitch, but this is not the equivalent of Thanington Rec and would not be suitable for a variety of informal sport and leisure uses.

### **Contrary to the City Council's own Open Spaces Strategy**

Canterbury City Council's recently adopted Open Spaces Strategy 2025 - 2040 states that 'Open spaces are more than just scenic spots - they are the lifeline for our health, culture and environment. They offer refuge from hectic urban life, promote active lifestyles, provide spaces for sports and recreation, and serve as green lungs in the fight against climate change.' This is an apt description of the role that the Rec plays here in Thanington. The Open Spaces Strategy goes on to highlight Thanington as having a 'shortfall across all open space types' (see pages 15, 16 and 26). So, as well as being detrimental to the health and well-being of local residents, the proposal goes against the Council's own policy.

### **Negative impact on community cohesion**

Thanington Neighbourhood Resource Centre was set up twenty-five years ago in response to high levels of deprivation and associated social problems in Thanington. It has been very successful. It's core funding comes from room hire to organisations and individuals, including for training, counselling, and community groups. This enables it to employ staff who provide valuable support to local residents, including youth clubs on 3 evenings a week, a food bank, seasonal community events, and access to computers. The building of a park and ride on Thanington Rec is likely to reduce bookings and therefore income and throw into question the future of the Centre and its valuable work. This would be a travesty considering the positive impact the Centre and its staff have had over the past 25 years, including significant reduction in crime.

### **Negative Impact on Heritage and Environment**

I am also concerned about the impact on the local environment. I note that Canterbury's Green Infrastructure Strategy (2022) lists Thanington as part of the local Green Infrastructure network and the GI Objective 2 commits to protecting such existing green spaces. Run-off from a 900 space car park is bound to wash pollutants into the adjacent River Stour, impacting water quality and the ecology of the river both here and downstream. The inevitable increase in the volume and intensity of run-off from rainfall will also increase the risk of flooding both here and downstream in Canterbury.

In addition, the proposed site for the park and ride is less than half a mile from two listed buildings, namely the grade II\* St Nicholas Church and the grade II Thanington Court farmhouse. I imagine that Historic England would be concerned about this. It will inevitably alter the setting of these two historic buildings, both because of a change in the landscape and because of traffic build-up on the A28 Thanington Road / Ashford Road as vehicles turn into and out of the proposed park and ride.

### **Traffic concerns**

I am in favour of greener transport solutions and reducing congestion in Canterbury. However, the proposed slip road linking the A2 to Ten Perch Road will simply increase traffic at Wincheap junction and on the A28, which is already one of the most congested and polluted entry roads into the city, and one which is also residential.

Together with the growing amount of traffic joining the A28 from the Saxon Fields housing development, building a slip road here will only worsen the noise and air pollution on the A28 in Thanington. We already experience daily queues of slow-moving traffic along Thanington Road and Ashford Road, morning and evening. Canterbury's Air Quality Action Plan (2023) warns against traffic-generating uses inside AQMA's, such as Thanington and Wincheap. Has this been taken into account?

If an additional slip road at Wincheap cannot be avoided and if demand exceeds capacity of the existing park and ride, surely the existing park and ride could be extended upwards in a low-rise multi-storey car park. This seems to me a more responsible and sensible solution than destroying a valuable public green space like Thanington Rec.

Another alternative location for a park and ride on the south of Canterbury would be outside of the built up area, such as on existing brownfield sites beside the A28 on the northern edge of Chartham near Milton Manor roundabout. This would also help to reduce congestion on the A28 crawling through both Thanington and Wincheap.

I would also strongly support a park and ride on the entry from Harbledown into the A2. Indeed I recall using a park and ride on that route many years ago. That way, there would be a park and ride to help reduce traffic on each main route into Canterbury.

## **Conclusion**

Replacing Thanington Rec with a park and ride is not a better future for the people of Thanington. It will be to the detriment of Thanington's community life, and to the health and wellbeing of local residents. Moreover, the people who would lose out the most would be those who are least well off, who don't have their own gardens, who don't drive, who can't easily get to open spaces in other parts of Canterbury. The proposal would threaten the financial sustainability of Thanington Neighbourhood Resource Centre and the valuable community work they do. Finally, the proposal will also have a negative environmental impact on the River Stour and a negative impact on the setting of listed buildings.

Therefore, I strongly object to policy N3 in the draft Local Plan and urge the council to rethink, research alternatives, and come up with a traffic solution that protects Thanington Rec, takes seriously the health and wellbeing of Thanington residents and which will actually reduce congestion on the A28 through Thanington and Wincheap.

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