



Thanington Parish Council

Response to Local Plan Focused Consultation (Regulation 18) 2025 from Thanington Parish Council.

The council would like to register their objection to the proposed use of Thanington Recreation Ground as a new site for the Park and Ride (defined as policy N3, hereafter to be referred to by its locally known name 'The Rec').

Thanington was identified in the Local Plan as an area severely lacking in both greenspace and local community spaces. As such, these spaces have been integrated into every planned development (at Saxon Fields, and at the site at Cockering Farm) removing what is currently the sole greenspace in Thanington countermands the NPPF Framework (policies 103 and 104). It was stated in the overview committee meeting (9th Oct 2025) that the planned greenspaces in the above developments should be taken into account, however we reject this premise. These planned spaces were intended to be *In addition* to The Rec, not in place of. None of these spaces were planned as replacement greenspace and should not be considered as such. The second is that with the removal of the Land North of Hollow Lane (policy C7) we lost the greenspace that came with it. We would suggest that a full assessment of the available greenspace currently in Thanington, along with the proposed greenspace at Cockering Farm and Saxon Fields be conducted before such a proposal is even considered. We are confident that we would still be found lacking when compared to national guidelines.

We also reject the proposal that the facilities that The Rec can be moved to the proposed development at Merton Park. The first reason being obvious: Merton Park is not in Thanington. The Local Plan states an aim for such facilities to be a 15 minute walk from the community they serve. Moving the facilities The Rec currently provides to grounds a 40 minute walk away (that crosses a major road in two places) or is only accessible by car fails to meet the standard set out in both the Local Plan itself and policy 104 of the NPPF. Further to this, there is the issue of accessibility. The Rec is a free space. Where anyone and everyone can access for a variety of activities. Will the football stadium allow people in for a bit of a kickabout? Will people be able to walk their dogs? Teach their children to ride bikes? We would suggest, that while a football stadium is a marvellous thing, it is not a substitute for a free space. And finally, an objection that mirrors the ones above. The greenspace at Merton Park was always planned to be in addition to land at The Rec, not as a replacement. No extra greenspace or community facilities have been added to account for the loss. It is also worth noting that all the new greenspace is located on private land, where rules of use have been proven to be unreliable.

The Parish Council feels that Canterbury City Council is not understanding nor taking the likely effects of removing The Rec seriously. The Rec is a huge draw for the Thanington Neighbourhood

Resource Centre, its patrons and the community it serves. The TNRC sustains itself by renting rooms, a practice that would be put in jeopardy should the greenspace around it first become a building site, and then a busy traffic hub. The protection from noise and pollution the greenspace provides users of the centre and its attached playground will be gone, as will the appeal of renting the spaces available. If the centre is unable to sustain itself, it will close and all the work that they have done and still do will be lost. TNRC is credited with being a key factor in the reduction of crime in the area and serves a community that is amongst the most impoverished in the country. Its loss would be a huge step back for Thanington and its residents.

The Parish Council also has serious questions regarding access to the site. There seems to have been no investigation as to how cars and busses would get on and off the site were it to be utilised as a Park and Ride. We can only assume that the plan would be to filter onto the A28 directly, adding a busy junction to an already over used road. Traffic on the A28 in and out of Wincheap is a constant battle, regularly at a standstill due to the overmanaged Wincheap Interchange. The A28 through Thanington and Wincheap really can't take any more. Adding another entrance/exit directly onto the road, likely adding yet another set of traffic lights is unlikely to ease the problem.

We also have begun to question the need for a larger Park and Ride at all. The current Park and Ride serves about 600 cars, with a loss of about 100 spaces projected when the (as yet not approved) 4th slip is constructed. However, the park and ride is rarely full. Is increasing the available spaces to 900 really necessary? We suggest that further investigation be conducted to determine an accurate picture of just how big the new Park and Ride needs to be, so the council can better assess suitable sites.

While we recognise the need for a Park and Ride and support the idea that traffic should be kept out of the city as much as possible, we suggest that there simply isn't enough space inside the Thanington boundary to fit the Park and Ride and that instead, Canterbury City Council should look further afield, outside of Thanington to the land around the Milton Manor roundabout or even further afield along the A28 from Ashford. Moving the Park and Ride further out removes the car traffic from the area completely, reducing the inbound and outbound traffic that bottlenecks at Wincheap, whilst still serving the areas that come from that direction. We fear that the City Council may be suffering from some tunnel vision in this regard.

In conclusion, The Parish Council feels that the assessment made in the initial stages of the LP were correct. The land at Thanington Recreation Ground is unsuitable for the proposed use, would create an unacceptable loss of greenspace in an already deprived area, add extra traffic to an already stressed area of the highway and complicate the area for pedestrians and cyclists who already have to contend with a circus of pedestrian crossings to get to the city. We feel quite strongly that not only should The Rec be removed from consideration completely, but should remain a protected greenspace and removed from consideration from development in the future.

Regards

Thanington Parish Council