

From: Amanda Bates [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 October 2025 14:18
To: Consultations
Subject: Objection to Policy N1 (Merton Park)

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Dear Team,

I am writing to strongly object to the allocation of Policy N1 (Merton Park) in the Draft Local Plan. The proposed development of nearly 2,000 homes is unsound for multiple reasons:

Transport & Infrastructure:

With the A2 slip road scheme abandoned, no credible mitigation exists for already congested roads. The plan relies on a complex, uncertain fast bus route across multiple landowners, risking isolated, car-dependent growth and traffic chaos. Local services, schools, and healthcare are already overstretched with no robust infrastructure plan or funding.

Environmental Harm:

The site includes a Priority Habitat orchard supporting Red Listed bird species. Its destruction causes irreversible biodiversity loss, violating national policy. The development severely damages the setting of the Canterbury World Heritage Site, harming key views and historic landscape character. The plan ignores nutrient and water neutrality requirements crucial to protecting the Stodmarsh protected sites, relying instead on vague future mitigations.

Light, Noise, and Amenity Impacts:

The settlement and regional sports hub will create significant light pollution, harming nocturnal wildlife and breaching NPPF biodiversity requirements. Increased traffic will cause constant noise pollution, severely degrading local residents' quality of life. The plan lacks any assessment or mitigation of these impacts, which are not minor but permanent harms.

Construction Impacts:

The scale of the development means prolonged disruption. Tens of thousands of HGV movements will damage roads, increase congestion, and pose safety risks. There are no designated haul routes or construction management plans. Dust, noise, and utility works will disrupt residents for years without protections or contact points. This omission is unacceptable.

Social Inclusion & Accessibility:

The plan creates a largely car-dependent estate with poor public transport, isolating older and less mobile residents. Essential services, including healthcare and social care infrastructure, are inadequate or inaccessible, contradicting local demographic needs.

Spatial Strategy:

Concentrating growth at Merton Park strains infrastructure and neglects other communities. A more balanced distribution across the district would be fairer, more sustainable, and resilient.

School Travel:

The development worsens existing school-run congestion. With no new secondary school proposed and reliance on walking or cycling unrealistic for many pupils, the policy creates unsafe and congested journeys, making it unsound.

In conclusion, policy N1 disregards critical environmental, heritage, social, and infrastructure constraints and fails to align with national and local policies. It is speculative, unjustified, and risks severe, lasting harm to the district and its residents. I urge the council to withdraw this allocation and develop a sustainable, evidence-based strategy.

Yours faithfully,

Amanda Bates

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