

From: Christian Archer [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 October 2025 14:54
To: Consultations
Subject: RE: Objection to the Merton Park Development Proposal – Request for Reduction in Scale or Full Reconsideration

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Dear Planning Committee,

RE: Objection to the Merton Park Development Proposal – Request for Reduction in Scale or Full Reconsideration

I am writing as a concerned resident of Canterbury to formally object to the current scale and scope of the proposed Merton Park development. While I understand and support the need for housing and infrastructure growth, the proposed plan in its current form risks causing irreversible environmental, social, and logistical damage to the community of Wincheap and the wider Canterbury area.

Areas of concern and consideration;

Loss of Biodiversity and Natural Habitat

One of the most critical concerns relates to the proposed destruction of the orchards on the site. These are not merely overgrown patches of land—they are biodiverse ecosystems that support dozens of bird species, some of which are rare and reliant on the unique microclimate and structure provided by the orchard trees. The loss of this habitat would be irreplaceable. Biodiversity in urban areas is vital for ecological balance, and its destruction undermines not only local conservation efforts but also national environmental obligations.

Once lost, this habitat cannot be recreated. The orchards serve as a crucial refuge for wildlife and a natural heritage for our community. Protecting them is not just an ecological imperative—it is a moral one.

Road Access, Congestion, and Child Safety

The traffic implications of this development are also extremely concerning. The current proposal no longer includes direct access from the A2, which was originally intended to mitigate congestion. As a result, traffic will be funneled through already narrow and busy residential roads such as Hollow Lane and Lime Kiln Road.

This change poses a direct threat to public safety, particularly around **Wincheap Primary School**, which lies in close proximity to the proposed access route. The increased volume of heavy construction vehicles and eventual residential traffic would raise pollution levels, elevate accident risks, and significantly degrade the quality of life for residents—particularly young children walking to school.

Lime Kiln Road, too, is simply not viable for the level of traffic projected. The road infrastructure, in its current state, cannot support the scale of the development without serious impact on traffic flow and public safety.

Climate Goals and Environmental Responsibility

At a time when Canterbury is striving to meet ambitious climate goals, retaining our natural green spaces should be a cornerstone of policy, not an afterthought. The existing orchards, fields, and green infrastructure act as carbon sinks, support flood prevention, and regulate local temperatures.

To remove them in favour of dense development is counterproductive to climate resilience. Every tree felled, every patch of earth paved, is a step backward from Canterbury's stated environmental commitments.

Loss of Public Green Spaces and Allotments

Green spaces are not luxuries—they are essential to public wellbeing. The area around Merton Park currently provides open areas for play, exercise, and mental wellbeing. They serve as inclusive, safe spaces where families gather, children play, and communities connect.

The removal of these spaces would have long-term negative effects on mental and physical health, particularly for those without private gardens or transport to reach alternative facilities. Moreover, original proposals indicated the inclusion of 75 new allotments, which are now absent from the plan. This is not just a broken promise—it is a dismissal of the needs of current allotment users and the community's growing interest in sustainable food practices.

Long-Term Disruption Without Adequate Mitigation

The duration and scale of the construction will bring years of noise, dust, congestion, and general disruption to the Wincheap area, with particular impact on nearby primary and secondary schools. There appears to be insufficient consideration given to how these disruptions will be mitigated or compensated. Local families, schoolchildren, and the elderly will bear the brunt of this upheaval without tangible benefits or support.

Scale and Infrastructure Concerns

The scale of the development is too large to be absorbed by existing infrastructure. From road access to school places, GP surgeries, and hospital capacity, the proposal does not account for the strain it will place on local services. Without significant additional investment in infrastructure, the development will degrade, rather than enhance, the quality of life in Canterbury.

A smaller, thoughtfully designed development—one that prioritises road access via the A2, protects natural habitats like the orchards, and includes open space, allotments, and infrastructure upgrades—would be far more acceptable to the local community.

A Call for Responsible Development

I urge the council to reconsider this proposal in its current form. If development must go ahead, it should be **substantially reduced in size**, with:

- **Guaranteed access via the A2 only** to protect residential roads and school areas.
- **Complete protection of the orchards**, ensuring the survival of the rare bird species and biodiversity they support.
- **Greater retention of green spaces** and public play areas for the community.
- **Reinstatement of allotment space** as promised in earlier proposals.
- **Full infrastructure planning**, including expansions to schools, GP surgeries, and traffic systems, before any construction begins.

Responsible urban development is about balance. This proposal, as it stands, fails to strike that balance and instead prioritises volume over sustainability, short-term gain over long-term community wellbeing.

I sincerely hope Canterbury City Council will listen to the voices of its residents and take the opportunity to pursue a more sustainable, inclusive, and environmentally conscious path forward.

Yours faithfully,

Christian Archer