

From: Lydia Joiner [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 October 2025 20:39
To: Consultations
Subject: Formal Objection to Proposed Development at Merton Park (Policy N1/SLAA151)

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Dear Planning Department,

I am writing to register my formal objection to the proposed construction of 1,930 new homes at Merton Park under Policy N1/SLAA151. While I appreciate the importance of addressing housing needs, this particular proposal raises serious concerns in relation to biodiversity, infrastructure capacity, air quality, and the preservation of Canterbury's historic landscape.

Biodiversity and Environmental Impact

The proposed development site, encompassing Merton Park and the neighbouring orchards, supports a rich and ecologically significant habitat. Numerous bird species listed on the Red and Amber conservation lists have been regularly observed by local residents, with supporting evidence retained. These include:

- **Red List species:** Eurasian Skylark, Starlings, Yellowhammer, Spotted Flycatchers, Fieldfares, Common Linnet, Cetti's Warbler, Herring Gull, House Martin, House Sparrows, and Greenfinch.
- **Amber List species:** Meadow Pipit, Redwing, Song Thrush, Common Whitethroat, Dunnock, Kestrel, Eurasian Wren, Black-headed Gull, Sparrowhawk, Rook, and Lesser Black-backed Gull.

In addition to avian life, the area is home to established badger setts, frequent bat activity, and sightings of hedgehogs, foxes, and slow worms—all protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Under Sections 174–179 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Environment Act 2021, developments must deliver measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The current proposal fails to meet these legal obligations and would result in a net loss of habitat, species diversity, and ecological connectivity.

Traffic and Infrastructure

The road network surrounding Merton Lane, Wincheap, and the A28 is already heavily burdened. Roads in Wincheap are frequently reduced to single-lane traffic due to on-street

parking, and Hollow Lane—the proposed access point—is narrow and unsuitable for high volumes of traffic.

According to NimbleFins (2023), the average UK household owns 1.38 vehicles. This means the development could introduce approximately 2,663 additional cars to local roads daily. Such an increase would exacerbate congestion, heighten risks for pedestrians and cyclists, and place further strain on already limited infrastructure.

Air Pollution

Wincheap is already affected by poor air quality due to frequent traffic bottlenecks. The proximity of stationary traffic to homes and pedestrian walkways poses a serious health risk, particularly to children, the elderly, and those with respiratory conditions. The proposed development would significantly worsen this situation.

Landscape and Heritage

The Merton Lane orchards form an integral part of Canterbury's historic landscape, offering uninterrupted views of the cathedral and surrounding countryside. The proposed development would irreversibly damage this visual and cultural heritage, in direct conflict with Local Plan Policy HE1 and the National Heritage Protection Principles. It would also eliminate a vital green space that residents use and value daily.

Conclusion

This proposal represents a clear threat to Canterbury's natural environment, infrastructure, public health, and cultural identity. I respectfully urge the planning authority to reject the development at Merton Park and seek alternative solutions that uphold the principles of sustainable and responsible growth.

Thank you for considering my objection.