

From: Michael Samuel-Bryan [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 October 2025 20:29
To: Consultations
Subject: Objection to Proposed Development at Merton Park (Policy N1/SLAA151)

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Dear Planning Department,

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development of 1,930 new homes at Merton Park (Policy N1/SLAA151). While I understand the need for housing, this particular development raises serious concerns across several critical areas, including biodiversity, infrastructure, air quality, and heritage preservation.

Biodiversity and Environmental Impact

Merton Park and the adjacent orchards earmarked for development are home to a rich and diverse ecosystem, including numerous bird species listed on both the Red and Amber Lists of conservation concern. 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.

Local residents have documented regular sightings of these species, and evidence has been retained to support their presence. In addition, the area supports established badger setts, frequent bat activity, and sightings of hedgehogs, foxes, and slow worms—the latter being 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 demonstrate measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The proposed development at Merton Lane fails to meet these statutory requirements and would result in a significant net loss of habitat, biodiversity, and ecological connectivity.

Traffic and Infrastructure Concerns

The existing road infrastructure surrounding Merton Lane, Wincheap, and the A28 is already under immense strain. Many roads in Wincheap are often reduced to single-lane traffic due to on-street parking, as many homes lack driveways. Hollow Lane, the proposed

entry point for the development, is narrow and already congested, making it wholly unsuitable.

According to data from NimbleFins (2023), the average number of cars per household in the UK is 1.38. With 1,930 new homes, this equates to an estimated 2,663 additional vehicles on local roads daily. This surge in traffic will exacerbate congestion, increase the risk to pedestrians, cyclists, and school children, and further degrade the quality of life for existing residents.

Air Pollution

Wincheap already suffers from high levels of air pollution due to frequent traffic congestion. The narrow roads can become congested with stationary traffic. They are in close proximity to residential homes and pedestrian pathways. Introducing thousands of additional vehicles will only worsen air quality, posing serious health risks to the community, particularly vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly.

Landscape and Heritage

The Merton Lane orchards are a cherished part of Canterbury's historic landscape, offering sweeping views of the cathedral and surrounding countryside. The proposed development would irreversibly alter this unique visual and cultural heritage, contravening Local Plan Policy HE1 and the National Heritage Protection Principles. The loss of this landscape would be a profound detriment to the city's identity and character and would remove the crucial green space residents enjoy and make use of daily.

Conclusion

In light of the significant and irreversible impacts on biodiversity, infrastructure, air quality, and heritage, I urge you to reject the proposed development at Merton Park. Sustainable development must balance housing needs with environmental stewardship and community well-being—this proposal fails to achieve that balance.

Thank you for considering my objection.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Michael Samuel-Bryan