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From: Guy Meurice [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 October 2025 22:17
To: Consultations
Subject: Response to the local plan consultation 2025

[REDACTED]

--Email From External Account--

I'm writing to you regarding the Local Plan Focused Consultation 2025. There are a number of changes within this document that are cause for great concern, however I will be focusing my response on those pertaining to Wincheap and South Canterbury, in particular proposed sites N1 and N3.

N3 - henceforth referred to as the Rec, or Thanington Rec, has been added with the intention of increasing the number of available Park & Ride spaces in Wincheap from 600 to 900. The reason for this proposal is that the intended slip road on the southbound lane of the A2 will remove around 100 spaces from the current Park & Ride.

The layout for the planned fourth slip road was not included in the document, while other proposed sites and developments did include supporting information, this was left out. This conveniently leads me to my first objection to proposal N3 - traffic management.

The Wincheap junction of the A2 is an absolute mess. It is not fit for purpose, and constantly causes congestion. The council have overseen repeated changes to this piece of infrastructure that have only served to worsen the situation. The current 'contraflow' slip road leading to the new Saxon Fields development is an outrageously poorly thought out addition. The proposed fourth slip road, and the accompanying changes to the road layout will only lead to more problems.

With the planned relocation of the Park & Ride to site N3, there will be a requirement for traffic to exit the A2 and then navigate the already overburdened junction, crossing the A2, then turning across the Canterbury bound traffic along the A28 to enter the site. This will massively increase the number of vehicles passing through the junction, which as I've said is already chaos during rush hour.

Thanington currently suffers from a severe lack of open green space. The council identified this in the Local Plan, but has decided to remove the only accessible open green space. At the overview committee meeting of 9th October 2025, the council's officers were asked about the removal of this green space, and suggested that alternatives were provided in planned developments. They were unable (or unwilling) to specify where these were, but it is immaterial. The NPPF policy 104b clearly states that any lost green space must be replaced by 'equivalent' provision in terms of 'quantity and quality'.

I have looked through the plans for the building at Saxon Fields, and the plans for the building at Cockerling Farm, and there are no green spaces of an equivalent size. Furthermore, those green spaces are being built on property that will be owned and managed by the developers or their agents. The major factors that provide the Thanington Rec with its value to the community are its size and the fact that it is open and free to anyone to make use of. Users of the Rec don't have to book, they don't have to ask permission, they aren't required to wear specific footwear, or be a part of a club.

The green spaces being built elsewhere in the new developments aren't large open fields, they're small parcels of landscaped grounds, unfit for any use other than looking at, and providing councils with a convenient 'gotcha' when responding to residents. It is entirely unacceptable to consider these as green spaces, especially when a portion of the green spaces at the current Saxon Fields development were dug up and turned into drainage ditches to combat

the poorly designed drainage for the site. These spaces aren't protected by law or convention and are liable to be removed at a moment's notice.

Further to this, I note that the council considers the church yard at St. Nicholas' to be open green space. This is a graveyard, not an open green space for the community to enjoy. It is a place of solemn respect and remembrance.

In addition to a requirement for equivalent quantity and quality, section 104b also specifies that this must be 'in a suitable location'. The council's suggestion that the new sports fields being built at Merton Park are a suitable alternative is absolutely disgraceful. The proposed location of sports facilities at Merton Park are a 46 minute walk from the current Recreation ground. They sit well outside the boundary of Thanington, and they require pedestrians to cross the A2 junction at Wincheap, which as I've previously stated is an absolute mess. Currently if you want to cross this junction as a pedestrian you have to cross a minimum of FOUR lanes that make up a slip road onto the A2. Those crossings are the only pedestrian access that Thanington has to the rest of Canterbury. Children from Thanington simply will not be able to make that journey. It is dangerous, and it is too long. 20% of Thanington's residents do not drive. They will lose access to the only green space they have.

Policy 103 of the NPPF clearly lays out the council's responsibility to preserve and encourage access to green spaces. Policy 104a of the NPPF clearly states the council's responsibility to make an assessment as to whether the green space is surplus to requirements. I suggest that the council has not done this, and therefore has not adhered to its statutory obligations in this matter.

Regarding the expansion of the Park & Ride, there are a number of suitable alternatives that the council must consider. One that has been mentioned on a number of occasions is a multi-storey car park on the current site. This has been dismissed by the council as prohibitively expensive, but I've seen no evidence that there has been any costings analysis done to explore this option.

Another alternative that was suggested is to provide better access from the A2 to the New Dover Road Park & Ride while it undergoes its planned expansion. If this can be achieved it would be a fantastic solution to a number of Canterbury's traffic problems. A south bound slip road at the New Dover Road Park & Ride site would only be a few minutes drive further along the A2 for commuters, and would allow direct access to the site without the constraints that the current proposed slip road at Wincheap has due to its proximity to the Hambrook Marshes. If there was also an accompanying redesign to the Wincheap junction that would allow for Canterbury bound traffic to more easily join the A2 then we could potentially remove the need for a Park & Ride at Wincheap altogether. As the railway bridge by the Wincheap roundabout constitutes an immovable pinch-point for traffic any opportunity to reduce the pressure should be explored.

The current Brett site at the Milton Manor roundabout is another possible option. It is a brownfield site, and already has the infrastructure and proven access for large vehicles. A link road from the A2 through Chartham Hatch could supply traffic with easier access that would again alleviate the pressure on the Wincheap A2 junction and the Wincheap roundabout.

Proposed site N1 - the land at Merton Park represents a huge development of an additional 2000 houses. In the latest documents for the consultation there have been two major changes to this that I feel make the proposed development entirely untenable. These are the removal of the A2 slip roads, and the removal of the link road on the land north of Hollow Lane. As the proposed plans remove Stuppington Lane, access to this site is now going to be limited to a junction at the bottom of Hollow Lane and a small lane off Nackington Lane. The Nackington Lane access road is single track for most of its length, and is flanked by private residential properties on one side and the A2 on the other, leaving very little option for widening. The access at the end of Hollow Lane will be only a very short distance to a roundabout, and its nearest main road, the A28 is accessed by the junction at the end of Homersham, which is part of the same junction that I mentioned above. This is a woeful lack of access to a very large site.

What will ultimately happen is that the additional traffic will make use of other routes around Wincheap which are already used as rat-runs, are undersized for modern vehicles and are in a terrible state of repair. Without the additional infrastructure this development is doomed to fail.

Further to that, policy N1 also represents the destruction of some extremely valuable biodiversity. The orchards, which are some of Canterbury's last remaining orchards have already been decimated in the past few years and turned into fields for growing crops. What's left is valued and treasured by the local community. It is used daily for exercise, walking pets, and finding some level of peace in the modern world.

As the site doesn't have the same level of accessibility as it did when it was first proposed for the plan, the council should explore the possibility of reducing the number of houses and ensuring the orchards are preserved for local residents (both current and those moving into the area) to enjoy. Canterbury's historical reputation is that of a city surrounded by verdant countryside. I give you a quote from the Pickwick Papers - "Kent sir, everybody knows Kent, apples, cherries, hops and women!" This is sadly becoming further and further from the truth. We are allowing national development policies, greedy landowners and developers to rob us of our heritage. We have to start thinking about how we can save these things which make our city special.

I recently attended a meeting that discussed saving the orchards, and one of the people who spoke was a local who kept a record of birds seen in the orchards. She listed 11 birds that were on the red list of endangered species and 12 that were on the amber list. These included Kestrels, Sparrowhawks, and Skylarks. Many of these birds require an environment like the orchards to survive. The planned alternative green spaces and 'green corridors' simply won't provide the same level of protection, and we will lose these animals from our local environment.

The biodiversity found within the orchards cannot be replaced. It is something that grows over time naturally. The sports pitches may represent a significant percentage in terms of area, but a monoculture of grass is nothing compared to the wild hedgerows and gnarled fruit trees in which animals have made their homes and residents have found happiness.

On a personal note, the orchards were an absolute godsend throughout the lockdowns during the pandemic. Myself and my family went for a walk every single day, as did hundreds (possibly thousands) of others. They allowed us some level of freedom while we were otherwise unable to leave the house. At the time we had family who were living in London, and we got an excited call from them one day as they'd managed to negotiate access to the 'garden' of the flat below theirs, which was unoccupied at the time. They sent us photos of them enjoying this outside space and it was a concrete yard barely 3x3m. It was devastating to realise that as hard as we were finding things people we loved had it so much worse. We had been able to enjoy all that our local environment had to offer and we hadn't even realised how lucky we were. From that point onwards every second spent in the orchards and fields around Thanington and Wincheap was held dear. During a particularly hard time in my life the memories of those walks stand out as a small glimmer of sunshine.

We are at risk as a city of giving up these wonderful things we take for granted bit by bit. We aren't considering the consequences of doing so. Once these things are gone, we can't get them back. If we concrete over the Rec and rip out the orchards they're gone forever. Not only are they gone for us, but they're gone for future generations too. We must consider ourselves to be the caretakers of these things, to preserve as much as we possibly can for our children and instill in them not a desire to build and monetise every single possible asset we have, but a desire to look after, protect, improve and pass on these things for their own children.

I'd like to finish this email with some thoughts regarding the way these proposals have been presented to the residents of Canterbury. In particular the effect that proposal N3's inclusion in the consultation will have on the people of Thanington. The level of hurt and anger that is being expressed at local meetings is palpable. We are hurt by the council's apparent lack of concern towards us. The apathy and nonchalance with which council officers answered (or avoided answering) questions at the overview committee meeting of 9th October was an absolute disgrace, and exposes a disturbing attitude bordering on contempt for residents.

People have put their lives into developing, maintaining and improving the Rec and the TNRC, and by including the Rec in their plan, and suggesting that it's good for nothing more than a car park, the council have made it clear that the people of Thanington (and indeed Wincheap as a whole) are not valued.

The effect this will have is profound. A great distrust has been sown between the council and residents, and the council will reap that for decades. There are children who feel that they're having the rug pulled out from under them by the very organisation that is meant to be providing for their future. They're asking "Why us? What have we

done? What else do we have?" and there are no good answers to those questions. They've done nothing wrong, yet they've been chosen as the children who will be left with nothing. For what? 300 extra car parking spaces?

It's clear the council needs to take a long hard look at itself and decide what it's purpose is.

Regards,

Guy Meurice