

Objection to Planning Application C10 – Merton Park (Wincheap Orchards and Fields), Canterbury

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to formally object to Planning Application C10 on the grounds that the proposal represents unsustainable development and fails to adequately address critical issues relating to water supply, environmental impact, traffic congestion, infrastructure capacity, and biodiversity loss.

1. Water Supply and Prematurity

The Canterbury area is classified as being under serious water stress. The application fails to demonstrate that a secure and sustainable long-term water supply can be provided without adversely affecting existing residents.

There is no clear confirmation from South East Water that sufficient capacity exists to support the proposed development.

Furthermore, the proposed Broad Oak reservoir is not expected to be operational until several years after the first homes are occupied (circa 2030–2031), and will require additional time to fill before contributing meaningfully to supply. This creates a clear and foreseeable risk of water shortages, particularly during warmer months when demand is highest.

In these circumstances, the development is premature, as it relies on infrastructure that is neither currently available nor guaranteed to be delivered in line with the development timeline.

2. Environmental Harm and Tree Loss

The proposed removal of approximately 16,000 trees represents a substantial and irreversible environmental loss. Trees provide critical ecosystem services, including carbon sequestration, air pollutant filtration, temperature regulation, water absorption, and habitat provision.

The loss of this volume of mature trees will:

- Increase atmospheric carbon dioxide levels
- Reduce removal of pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter
- Increase surface water runoff and elevate flood risk
- Raise local temperatures
- Result in long-term biodiversity loss

Replacement planting cannot compensate for these impacts for decades.

3. Traffic Congestion and Air Pollution

Wincheap is already subject to severe congestion and frequent gridlock. The proposed development will generate significant additional vehicle movements.

This will result in:

- Increased queuing and idling traffic and higher emissions
- Longer journey times and reduced road efficiency
- Additional pressure on already constrained junctions

This impact will be further exacerbated by the inclusion of a school and sports complex within the development, generating additional peak-time traffic and increasing congestion beyond that associated with housing alone.

4. Infrastructure Capacity, Waste and Services

The development will place additional strain on existing infrastructure, including waste collection, drainage systems, and local services.

This will lead to:

- Increased waste volumes
- Additional service vehicle traffic
- Greater pressure on drainage systems due to reduced natural absorption

In addition, the inclusion of a school and sports complex will further intensify demand on infrastructure, generating additional traffic, parking demand, and service requirements.

There is insufficient evidence that infrastructure can accommodate this demand.

5. Wildlife and Habitat Loss

The site supports established wildlife habitats including hare warrens. Development will destroy habitats, displace wildlife, fragment ecosystems, and reduce biodiversity.

6. Personal Impact

As a resident of the local area, I experience congestion and infrastructure strain regularly. Traffic delays are frequent, and water supply is an increasing concern. The orchards provide important environmental benefits that will be lost.

7. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The proposal conflicts with key NPPF paragraphs including 8, 11, 20, 92, 104, 111, 152, 153, 174, 180 and 186.

Conclusion

For the reasons set out above, the proposed development is fundamentally unsuitable for this location. The scale of environmental harm, loss of mature trees, increased traffic congestion, pressure on already constrained infrastructure, and the absence of a secure and deliverable water supply demonstrate that the site cannot sustainably accommodate this level of development.

These issues are not temporary or capable of being resolved through future mitigation. Even with potential future infrastructure improvements, including the proposed reservoir, the cumulative impacts on the environment, local infrastructure, and quality of life would remain significant and unacceptable.

Accordingly, I strongly object to this development both in its current form and in principle, and respectfully request that planning permission is refused.

Yours faithfully,

Shirley Linsdell