

Planning Application: 253071

Submitted by: Lee Cripps

OBJECTION: Proposed Pedestrian Footpath Link – Canberra Lake Way

Dear Planning Committee,

I am writing this particular letter to formally lodge a strong objection against the inclusion of a pedestrian footpath designed to convert the current cul-de-sac of Canberra Lake Way into a throughway.

Since the first occupation of these 25 homes in 2021, Canberra Lake Way has developed into a rare example of a truly cohesive and secure community. The stability of our neighbourhood speaks for itself: in five years, only two homes have changed hands. This 92% retention rate is a direct reflection of how happy, safe, and content the residents are in the environment as it was originally designed. There is not a door in this street that I could knock on and not receive a warm welcome or offer of help.

Our objection is based on the following critical points:

1. Increased Crime and "Leaky Cul-de-Sacs"

Guidance from Thames Valley Police specifically warns against the creation of "leaky cul-de-sacs." Research and police observations consistently show that providing multiple "permeable" escape routes for pedestrians significantly increases the risk of opportunistic crime, such as burglary and vehicle theft. By turning a secure dead-end into a throughway, the council would be providing an easy entrance and exit for those looking to scout or target properties, effectively removing the natural "eyes on the street" security we currently enjoy.

2. Erosion of Child Safety and Community Privacy

Currently, Canberra Lake Way is a space where children freely ride bikes and play outside without the fear of heavy foot traffic or unknown "pass-through" visitors. Because there is only one combined road and pedestrian access point, anyone entering the street is almost certainly a resident or a guest. The introduction of a footpath removes this filter, inviting strangers to use our residential space as a shortcut. This will fundamentally diminish the feeling of safety that has been the bedrock of our community since 2021.

3. Mitigation of Overspill Parking from New Developments

The proposed footpath would create a direct link to the newly designed neighbouring development, where parking provision is highly insufficient. This creates a significant risk that Canberra Lake Way will be used for overspill parking by non-residents seeking an "easy option" to compensate for the lack of space in the new site. It is vital to note that the parking spaces within our street are **not council-adopted**; they are private spaces maintained solely at the financial expense of the residents of Canberra Lake Way. It is fundamentally unjust to expect our community to bear the maintenance costs and the daily inconvenience of parking congestion caused by the design shortcomings of a separate development.

4. Minimal Gain vs. Maximum Impact

Wokingham Borough Council must weigh the marginal convenience of a through route against the wholesale destruction of a settled community's security. Allowing this footpath would knowingly diminish the safety and well-being of 25 households for a negligible gain in local permeability. It would not even save time by using the footpath, the route is largely the same distance as walking Park Lane.

5. Contradictory Safety Standards and the Park Lane Assessment

Wokingham Borough Council's justification for this footpath is fundamentally at odds with its current stance on Park Lane. The Council has previously maintained that Park Lane is a "safe route" to school and local amenities, asserting that it only requires a painted crossing rather than a fully managed, signalized crossing.

If the Council now argues that a new pedestrian throughway via Canberra Lake Way is necessary for safety or connectivity, they are effectively conceding that the existing infrastructure on Park Lane is inadequate. By implementing this footpath to divert pedestrian flow, the Council would be tacitly admitting that their current assessment of Park Lane—as a route needing only minimal safety markings—is incorrect. The Council cannot logically claim Park Lane is safe enough to avoid a proper crossing while simultaneously forcing a throughway into a private cul-de-sac to provide an alternative route.

We urge the Council to respect the established character of Canberra Lake Way and prioritize the safety and proven contentment of its tax-paying residents by rejecting this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Lee Cripps