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Categories: Blue category

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Hello, I'd like to register concern about the proposal for yet more houses along the A28, which are in danger of now blurring Hersden into Westbere into Sturry, completely eroding the historic identity of Westbere.

The traffic along this road is already horrendous, regularly backing up past Westbere at rush hour. It's getting worse with every new housing scheme that is built, and the planned bypass of the Sturry level crossing, which hasn't even begun to be built, will not alleviate thousands more cars on the road as a result of the thousands of houses built at Hersden and Broad Oak. There are a complete lack of amenities for these houses. No new schools. No new quality retail. No new dentist or doctor. Just endless, homogeneous housing estates eroding the boundaries between the historic villages that make the area special. Sturry is already the most appallingly neglected town in terms of any sort of quality amenities - it relies on hideous retail parks at Vauxhall Road, and will have a soulless new Tesco inflicted on it at Broad Oak. These endless new houses will simply expand the facelessness of Sturry all the way up to Hersden, swallowing any fields in the way that currently provide some kind of green belt separation.

Specifically, I would like to register objection on the following grounds:

- Any development on the Bread and Cheese Field will effectively result in the merger of Westbere and Hersden by removing the Green Space between the two settlements that the Field provides (even though an attempt has been made to show this isn't the case by excluding the houses on Bushy Hill Road from the official settlement of Westbere in the draft Local Plan). This effectively destroys the individual identities of Westbere and Hersden, and results in continuous ribbon development along the south side of the A28.
- According to a recent report produced by ACRA, (Alliance of Canterbury Residents' Association) Canterbury City Council has grossly over-stated the population growth for the area and, therefore, the demand for houses. The Bread and Cheese Field is not needed as a development site.
- The Bread and Cheese Field, along with the ancient woodland and hedgerows, provide a vital source of biodiversity and supports a wide range of wildlife (including kestrels, buzzards, foxes, swallows and bats that have been sighted hunting on or above the Field). This will largely disappear with any development. R5 cites "opportunities for green corridors" and a 20% biodiversity net gain. Surely leaving the Field as a green space achieves these objectives more effectively than building 150 dwellings on it!
- Current infrastructure in the area, such as local shops, Doctors, Dentists as well as the lack of work opportunities are woefully inadequate for the existing population, let alone the inhabitants of another 150 homes.
- The A28 is already a busy A road, that has got busier with the recent large housing developments. This is a major problem and can lead to safety issues when trying to join the main road when leaving Westbere. The A28 cannot keep supporting the increase in traffic that new development would create.
- The Field is of significant historic importance to the village of Westbere, with a charitable history that can be traced back over 300 years and is still continuing today (see Community Governance Review – Westbere and Hersden parish boundary).

This area simply cannot take any more new housing.

We also suffer from inadequate waste water and sewage in this area, which has been flagged at a national level: the Stour is suffering from SE Water's lack of investment and new houses here are putting intolerable strain on

Westbere lakes and the marshland that is supposed to be a site of Special Scientific Interest, though you wouldn't know it for the utter lack of investment in conserving any of this land.

Thank you

Stuart Lambert

