

Helen O'Connor

From: Wayne Murray [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 October 2025 17:43
To: Consultations
Subject: Draft Local Plan, Focused Consultation

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Dear Sir

I was unable to fully upload my comments through web site, a full summary is below:

Dear Sir

My attention has been drawn by the Westbere Village Preservation Society to a proposal by the authority to allocate The Bread and Cheese Field for 150 houses in the next iteration of the District Local Plan.

Consultation

I would like to register that as a resident of Westbere for some 35 years this is the first we have heard of the proposal, much is made of a Regulation 18 Consultation, I am not familiar as to what the level of consultation requires but it clearly did not cascade down to many of the residents of Westbere, in fact the Preservation Society have suggested that they were only made aware on 9 September 2025 of the proposed allocation, I would venture you have failed to undertake a proper consultation.

Local Service Centre

I notice that Westbere is listed as a Local Service Centre in the Draft Plan, I believe this to be highly contentious regardless of the way in which the District Rural Settlement and the 134 Development Topic Paper came to this questionable conclusion, the Parish only has a church which is largely unused, a Village Hall which is only used occasionally and a pub, how can this qualify as a Local Service Centre?

Putting aside my reservations your policy for Local Service Centres clearly states:

However, infilling may not always be acceptable as open spaces within the settlement boundary can often make an important contribution to the rural character of the settlement. It is important to protect and retain areas of high landscape value or of ecological or environmental importance. Development needs to be considered in context with the size and rural character of the settlement it is planned for. Land outside of these settlement boundaries are within the countryside and should be considered in line with Policy R19.

It is clear to me that with the 2 Fields to the West of Westbere being a Green Gap, a matter endorsed by The High Court, the Bread and Cheese Field should be regarded in the same manner, something that is endorsed by the Policy for Local Service Centres within the Draft Local Plan, refer to the extract above, in allocating the Bread and Cheese Field you are in direct contradiction of your own policy.

Further more the Plan advises that development in Local Service Centres 'Within the boundaries of these settlements limited development which protects their rural character will be supported on suitable sites'. The proposed development would not comply with this

Rural Economy

Whilst it seems agricultural land is often cheaply designated for development the Plan does suggest that Agricultural land will only be allocated for development if all other options have been explored, the Bread and Cheese is still used for taking hay off and has recently been ploughed, see image below:



I would suggest the Bread and Cheese Filed is still being farmed.

Growth, Heritage and Proportionality

The village of Westbere has properties that date back to the 15th/16th centuries, the village has grown gently over the years that have followed to deliver a unique village with varying architectural styles and character.

In considering development you have to consider the history and the character of the village, it would be wholly disproportionate to build 150 houses that wont relate to the style layout or feel of the existing village and in fact it would overwhelm and completely alter the village. Villages across Kent are part of the Garden of England reputation and are what makes Kent individual, are you seriously going to knowingly detract

In conclusion I believe allocating the Bread and Cheese Field for development has not be duly consulted upon, contradicts the Draft Local Plan and is disproportionate, ill considered and is at total variance to the Village of Westbere.

Regards

Wayne Murray



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