



# **Representations of Robert Brett and Sons Limited to the Canterbury City Council Local Plan Regulation 18 “Focused” Consultation**

Re: Land West of Hersden (Westbere Butts)

**Prepared by Hume Planning Consultancy Ltd.**

Our Ref: HPC/1581

On behalf of: Robert Brett and Sons Limited

Date: October 2025

## **Contents**

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Land West of Hersden (Westbere Butts) .....	5

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This representation is prepared on behalf of Robert Brett and Sons Limited and responds to the “focused” consultation draft Canterbury Local Plan (Regulation 18) dated September 2025.
- 1.2 Robert Brett and Sons Limited have an extensive landholding within the District and this representation focuses on the Land west of Hersden (Westbere Butts) (omission site).
- 1.3 Robert Brett and Sons Limited would welcome the opportunity to discuss this land parcels with the Policy Makers of Canterbury City Council, before the plan progresses to the next Regulation 19 Stage for public consultation.
- 1.4 The adjustment in the local plan spatial strategy, the subject of this current consultation, is a consequence of the “de-selection” of the previous draft strategic allocation at Land North of the University of Kent at Blean (as a response to significant local opposition). The current focused response of policy makers purports to move the overall spatial strategy away from a ‘road building’ derived strategy to a walking, cycling, public transport and park and ride strategy that recognises that Canterbury itself represents the most sustainable location within the district. This is combined with the increase in the housing delivery requirements for the District following the Government’s revisions to the NPPF and the Standard Method at the end of 2024.
- 1.5 Bretts are fully supportive of this non-car mode-based strategy which is fully in accordance with national planning guidance. However, it is considered that Canterbury’s Policy Makers have focused the proposed substitute draft allocations on a limited number of large strategic sites and have not fully considered the range of suitable sites available to help spread the development needs of the district. These representations highlight peripheral locations within their land control which are easily accessible to the City of Canterbury and which Bretts can readily bring forward to serve the district’s development requirements whilst being of a scale that will be attractive to SME Builders.
- 1.6 These representations demonstrate that there is capacity at the fringes of the urban area of Canterbury and western edge of Hersden for further small and medium-sized sites to be allocated for housing, employment and recreational development, relieving some pressure on the large strategic allocations to the east and south of Canterbury to deliver completions in order to meet the District’s development targets and housing trajectory

profile. This objective is of greater importance given the anticipated medium term economic conditions and the level of upfront infrastructure investment that is necessary (affecting cash flow) before completions can start to be delivered.

- 1.7 The potential for edge of city centre opportunities to complement the revised spatial strategy (for the “without” Blean scenario) and better serve the stated policy objective of reducing car journey movements is more realistically achievable at the Brett site opportunities that we identify. These sites are of a smaller size and would not be reliant on upfront infrastructure investment and therefore would be more attractive to local SME’s thereby increasing the prospects of earlier housing delivery in the challenging economic conditions that will affect the plan period.
- 1.8 The spatial strategy set out in the “focused” Reg 18 consultation is rightly ambitious and underpinned by a desire to deliver on the objective of reducing car-based travel and this objective is strongly supported by Brett’s. The large strategic allocations to the east and south of Canterbury rely on land uses such as hospitals, sports grounds, park and ride or Fastway bus links alongside new junctions to major roadways which will be complicated to deliver. This increases the need for a balancing mix of smaller sites to deliver the housing trajectory profile over the lifetime of the shortened plan. This Brett’s site is in single ownership and can be delivered within the early years of the plan period and as identified below will deliver significant functional and recreational benefits.

## **2. Land West of Hersden (Westbere Butts)**

- 2.1 Significant development growth was directed to Hersden as part of a planned expansion in the adopted Canterbury Local Plan (2017). Hersden’s elevated position in the settlement hierarchy for the District (as a ‘Rural Service Centre’) is also reflected in the existing draft allocation of the Bread and Cheese Field site to the southeast of Hersden (draft Policy R5), and the recent draft allocation of Land at the former Spires Academy (draft Policy N33) immediately adjoining this site.
- 2.2 The emerging local plan continues to recognise the potential for growth at Hersden, as a sustainable location and the desirability of creating a permanent boundary to control sporadic outward expansion. These are objectives which can be met by the additional allocation of the identified Brett landholding to the west of Hersden (north of the A28). The potential yield of this site (circa 100 dwellings) would, with other medium sized sites,

offer a short term sustainable spatial growth substitute for larger scale sites that are reliant on significant infrastructure investment.

- 2.3 This site was submitted as a larger landholding that would be comprehensively master planned in our earlier representations highlighting the opportunity for biodiversity enhancements, public access and long-term management of the existing woodland blocks to provide a permanent buffer between the existing settlement edges on either side. However, the comprehensive approach to the landholding was unfairly disadvantaged as the SLAA Assessment only focused on the “enabling” housing development when examining SLAA ref 164. This SLAA assessment therefore failed to evaluate the benefits of the proposal as a whole and the underpinning objective of the masterplan which was to create a permanent and managed mostly undeveloped corridor separating the western side of Hersden from the eastern side of Westbere. Since the comprehensive masterplan was originally prepared, delivering 100 dwellings as part of a comprehensive masterplan for the wider corridor, Bretts identified the opportunity to deliver new formal sports facilities within the totality of its land holding. This has led to positive discussions between Bretts and Canterbury Eagles Football Club who are supportive of the proposals (and whose input is reflected in the supporting plans) who have for some time been seeking a permanent home for the Canterbury Eagles.
- 2.4 Canterbury Eagles will provide further written evidence to highlight the suitability of the Bretts site and alternative locations that have been assessed to create a permanent home for the Club, which is a significant sporting and community institution within the District. The site plan appended to these representations identifies a circa 2.6ha area within Brett’s wider landholding that could suitably accommodate 2 x. full-sized football pitches alongside club facilities. The pitches would be set away from the A28 Island Road to the south, allowing for the retention of a landscaped frontage to the road, and maintaining the green gap between Westbere and Hersden.
- 2.5 It is clear that the vision for the site could deliver substantial recreational, community, housing, biodiversity and economic benefits for the District by securing a permanent home for the Canterbury Eagles Football Club which would also function as part of a wider undeveloped buffer separating Hersden and Westbere as reflected in the attached masterplan. We would like to reiterate that unlike the earlier SLAA assessment it is critical for policy makers to consider the totality of the Bretts landholding in this area and that the “enabling” housing component comprises a small part of the overall “vision” that

would better serve to permanently safeguard the overriding planning land use objective of preventing coalescence between Westbere and Hersden.

- 2.6 Bretts would welcome the chance of discussing this vision with Policy Officer's of the LPA in advance of the publication of the Regulation 19 version of the draft Local Plan.