

15 May 2026

By email to consultations@canterbury.gov.uk

Draft Canterbury District Local Plan (2042/43) Regulation 19

Westbere Parish Council representation:

Throughout the construction of the Canterbury District plan, Westbere Parish Council has continued to feed into the process at the various stages, highlighting the issues it has with the plan, and feel we have simply found ourselves falling on deaf ears. We have maintained that the plan does not cover the entire parish development pressures it finds itself under right now. Within this plan the N/E of the village is to be a strategic site, but the village already has development completed, with further development granted, and with yet further being proposed to the N/W of the village, which the plan does not currently consider. The green gap to the S/W of the village has been half purchased by a large building company, and we can only surmise that they have done so for no other reason than on the premise of development in the future. Planning permission has been sought for 3 houses in the centre of the village, with the suggestion of more. Canterbury City Council continues to not meet its housing delivery targets and cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and is therefore under pressure to accept any proposed development, and the parish council feels exasperated by its current position.

We therefore make yet further representation, with this our local response from Westbere Parish Council, along with that of our MP and the Westbere Village Preservation Society. We believe that the shortcomings we have identified are symptomatic of wider issues with specific site policies within the Plan which consistently have been changed since the Regulation 18 version such as to make the Plan undeliverable and unsustainable, and thus unsound.

Whilst we are happy with the Regulation 19 Canterbury District Local Plan green gap designations in and around Westbere, ie. The Two Fields site – land at the junctions of the A28 and Westbere Lane; “Headley’s Field” on the A28 in Westbere, and Westbere Butts, a former quarry site on the north side of the A28 Island Road between Sturry and Hersden, we have the following two points to draw attention to:

1. Rural Service Centres / Local Service Centre designations

Westbere classified as a Local Service Centre

In our Regulation 18 response we drew attention to The Canterbury District Local Plan Development Topic Paper (February 2024) points 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16. which identifies Westbere amongst others as a “Local Service Centre” where these settlements are said to “provide a more limited range of services and facilities than rural service centres”.

Westbere has no shops and its only facility is The Yew Tree Public House. The village hall has a nursery occupying it 4 days a week, limiting its availability for any other uses. Therefore, Westbere Parish Council cannot understand how its tiny village could be classified as a Local Service Centre.

Since we made our Regulation 18 response there is now new information - we were advised in March 2026 that the Church council have been unable to recruit a vicar to officiate services at All Saints Church, Church Lane, Westbere and have just written to the Diocese to advise that they wish to stop services at the Church / close the Church.

We do therefore feel that the classification for Westbere in the [Rural Settlement Study](#) should be downgraded from Local Service Centre to Village or even Hamlet – to protect its rural character, especially as none of its roads have any pavements.

2. The CCC Settlement boundaries

An extract from Section 5 in the [CCC Development Topic Paper](#) re Settlement boundaries has section 5.4 stating that “settlement boundaries have been largely traced along the outside of roads and property curtilage boundaries, to be in line with the existing form of the settlements”. *However, 19 of the existing Westbere Bushy Hill Road homes have been excluded from the settlement boundary of Westbere.*

This is seen by some residents in this area as a direct manipulation to allow development of Policy R6 The Bread and Cheese Field (which takes its name from the original two-acre Bread and Cheese Field adjacent to the A28 within that allocated site) in the Draft Canterbury District Local Plan (2042/43) Regulation 19 for 150 homes, by excluding them.

No-one wants Hersden and Westbere to merge so it is wrong to take out the Bushy Hill Road homes. Some of those properties have existed there since at least 1800. The first was a cottage at the very end of the Road, at the intersection with the A28. That was owned by the trustees of the Bread and Cheese Field Charity and which provided accommodation for the poor of Westbere. Over time, this part of the Road has seen a shop come and go, stables for horses during WW1 and property infill, starting in the early 1900's, resulting in a continuous line of houses until it joins Westbere Lane.

Residents, the Parish Council and the Westbere Village Preservation Society believe that the removal of part of Bushy Hill Road from the Settlement is without justification.

Both the parish council and residents in this area feel the lines drawn are wrong and they do not agree with the settlement boundaries as they currently stand.

In the Regulation 18 version CCC explicitly stated that the development of R6 must “relate to the pattern, scale and character of existing development and ensure that development does not result in coalescence between Hersden and Westbere”. That stipulation, along with 8 other policy requirements (mostly relating to environmental protection), has been deleted from the Regulation 19 version without any explanation and no evidence that any public comments caused such drastic changes. We believe such changes, which have been repeated at other site allocations across the Regulation 19 version, render the Plan unsustainable.

Regardless of the erroneous drawing of the settlement boundary to include site R6 in Hersden rather than Westbere, which it is in fact very clearly a part of both geographically and as a community, developing this site must cause such coalescence especially given the indicative travel links shown on the concept masterplan show travel to Hersden not Westbere, as does the intended provision of a community hub.

Related to that, Policy R20 Countryside says that “All parts of the District outside of the Settlement Boundaries ... are defined as countryside where priority will be given to protecting the rural character of the district.” Thus, even if the Council's view that houses on Bushy Hill Road are not part of Westbere were to be taken as correct, the Council has failed to give any priority to protecting the character of that area, and thus is in breach of its own proposed policy.

Further, clause 4 of R20 says “The Council will protect and support improvements to the network of valued open spaces ... [and] will resist development which ... would erode the separation

between, or the setting of, individual settlements". Development of R6, which is de facto and de jure in Westbere, would breach that Policy.

Section 5.6 of the CCC paper re Settlement boundaries states that “Agricultural... land has not been included in the settlement boundary...as deemed as countryside.” – so the Bread and Cheese Field should not be included in the Hersden settlement boundary *because it is an agricultural field. Again, the Council’s proposal for R6 is in breach of its own Policies.*

Some residents, the Westbere Village Preservation Society (WVPS) and the parish council object to, and do not agree with, the settlement boundaries as they currently exist.

In July 2022 Canterbury City Council published its [Strategic Land Availability Assessment Report](#). In the section on Site Assessments and under SLAA163, Bread and Cheese field, the column entitled 'Townscape/Landscape (AP)', reads:

*Townscape: The site is located adjacent to a small row of houses on Bushy Hill Road to west **which are part of the Westbere settlement**, with the site also extending to the development to the east (Hoplands)...*

The Strategic Land Availability Assessment Report was the first occasion in which CCC declared Bushy Hill Road to be in the Westbere Settlement. Later versions of the Strategic Land Availability Assessment papers published in 2025 and 2026, continued to confirm it as part of the Westbere Settlement. **And yet this has been consistently contradicted in the revised Local Plans published in April 2024 and 2026.**

In April 2024 the new Local Plan was published. Again, without explanation, the Westbere Settlement Boundary had been amended to exclude the majority of Bushy Hill Road. The significance of this is that the Road was reclassified as Countryside.

The following map (see Fig 3.) shows the proposed Westbere Settlement Boundary outlined in black together with the Bread and Cheese proposed development in pink. The arrow denotes that part of Bushy Hill Road that has been excluded:



Fig. 3

Reference:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/1e8c61757821421e8dc7d1eab938ed98/?draft=true>

In August 2025 The Strategic Land Availability Assessment File was published and repeated in 2026, which further compounded the confusion over the precise Westbere Settlement Boundary. [Appendix B](#) to the document takes you to a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet lists all the proposed SLAA sites. Under SLAA163 Column AP, the following statement is made:

“Townscape: The site is located adjacent to a small row of houses on Bushy Hill Road to west which are part of the Westbere settlement, with the site also extending to the development to the east (Hoplands). While not part of a designated green gap (one is located to the north), **development of this land could result in the coalescence of Westbere and Hersden**, as the site would connect the Hoplands development to the residential dwellings on Bushy Lane.”

Point (c) under Design and Layout in the Regulation 18 Plan for the Bread and Cheese Field allocation (then referred to as Policy R5 – now Policy R6 in the Regulation 19 Plan) stated that the design and layout of the site should “Relate to pattern, scale and character of existing development and **ensure that development does not result in coalescence between Hersden and Westbere**”.

However, in the Regulation 19 Plan this criteria has been removed meaning that coalescence between Hersden and Westbere would undoubtedly occur.

How is this removal between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 versions justified by CCC? What is the proportionate evidence?

Preventing the coalescence of village communities has been central to CCC’s policies for many years. In its [Green Gaps and Local Green Spaces Review – April 2021](#), it states:

“Gradual coalescence can not only harm the character of the open countryside, but can also adversely impact the setting and special character of villages and the separate identity of the coastal towns.”

Request for further notification:

Please notify the parish council c/o the Clerk by email to clerk@westbereparishcouncil.gov.uk of the next steps:

- That the Canterbury District Local Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government;
- Details of the Independent Examination in Public later this year or early next year;
- The publication of the Planning Inspector's Report;
- The adoption of the Canterbury District Local Plan.