

Land to the north of The Drove Way,
Istead Rise

Grey Belt Appraisal

Final Draft REPORT

PTARMIGAN LAND A Ltd

May 2026

tor
&CO

torandco.com



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- Appendix B Extract from Gravesham Borough Green Belt Assessment – Site IR4
Appendix A of the August 2020 Study by LUC.

1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 tor&co has been appointed by Ptarmigan LAND A Ltd to prepare a Grey Belt Appraisal for Land to the north of The Drove Way, Istead Rise.
- 1.2 The site is 5.7 hectares and lies on the northern edge of Istead Rise. It comprises a single field in arable cultivation. The site is contiguous with the settlement edge on its southern boundary, with rear gardens backing onto the land, except along the south-eastern edge where boundary vegetation lies between the rear gardens and the site. The remaining boundaries to the east, north and west are strongly contained by mature and dense treed hedgerows and, to the east, a small woodland that is located between the site and Istead Rise Community Centre.
- 1.3 Proposed vehicular access into the site will be via an existing boundary gate located at the end of short spur road off The Drove Way.
- 1.4 Electricity pylons are located immediately to the north of the site. The A2 Watling street dual-carriageway and HS1 mainline railway lie approximately 1km further north.
- 1.5 The western and north western part of the site represent the lowest points at 58m above ordnance datum (AOD), rising gently towards the south & south eastern boundaries to approximately 63m AOD.
- 1.6 To the north, there are open arable fields and occasional hedgerows. A single right of way, footpath NU27, runs north-south along the north eastern boundary of the site which connects between Gravesham and the rural settlement edge of Istead Rise, crossing the A2 & HS1 Rail corridor to the north of the site linking with the wider public footpath network and Wrotham Road to the north.
- 1.7 The site red line boundary and immediately context are shown on figure 1.
- 1.8 Istead Rise is a small village approximately 1.3km to the south of the southern edge of Gravesend. It is listed in Wikipedia as having a population of 3,437 at the 2011 Census. A small parade of shops is located centrally on Istead Rise road. The housing immediately to the south of the site comprises lower density, mostly two storey housing built in the 1960-70's.
- 1.9 The settlement is not a typical nucleated village with a historic core, instead mostly comprising suburban housing estates. The eastern edge of the village is well defined by the Wrotham Road, whereas the remaining settlement edge is more fragmented and irregular including the edge next to the site.
- 1.10 The settlements of Southfleet, Hook Green, New Barn, Hook Green and Sole Street lie to the west, south and east.
- 1.11 This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), which provides an overview of the existing site conditions, relevant planning policy and the landscape baseline including a review of landscape character and site intervisibility.

- 1.12 The site is located with the administration boundary of Gravesham Borough Council. The council have prepared a number of Green Belt Studies most recently in 2018 and 2020. Notwithstanding the new national guidance on Grey Belt, the findings of the council's reports remain a relevant consideration and have informed this appraisal.
- 1.13 With the publication of the December 2024 NPPF, several important changes to Green Belt policy occurred at the national level. The NPPF has now introduced the concept of Grey Belt, defined as *"land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143."*
- 1.14 In February 2025 Green Belt Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provided additional guidance on the approach to assessing Grey Belt land.
- 1.15 The site currently comprises a single agricultural field and therefore does not meet the first criterion of previously developed land. Accordingly, the focus of this appraisal is to determine whether the land parcel fulfils the second criterion, namely that it does not strongly contribute to any of the purposes (a), (b) or (d).
- 1.16 The Green Belt PPG has set out further guidance on the approach to assessing Grey Belt land which this appraisal has adopted in full.
- 1.17 This appraisal does not consider footnote 7 in the context of Grey Belt or establish if the golden rules, as defined within the NPPF, are met (leaving this assessment to the Planning Statement). With reference to the landscape strategy set out in the Vision Document it does appraise the potential for improvements to public open space, nature conservation and the landscape setting which are a specific requirement of the release of Grey Belt land, as set out in paragraphs 156 and 157 of the NPPF.

2.0 Approach to appraisal and methodology

- 2.1 Para. 142 of the NPPF states:

"The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence." Para. 143 goes on to state: *"Green Belt serves five purposes:*

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other "*

- 2.2 Para. 148 of the NPPF notes that, *"Where it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give priority to previously developed land,*

then consider Grey Belt which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations.”

- 2.3 When defining new Green Belt boundaries, para. 149 f) requires plans to *“define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.”*
- 2.4 In addition to the exceptions set out in para.154 of the NPPF, development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate if it meets all four criteria in bullets a), b), c) and d) of para 155. Bullet a) states: *“The development would utilise Grey Belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.”* This appraisal reviews the sites against this key test for Grey Belt.
- 2.5 While there is no agreed methodology for Green / Grey Belt assessments, the recent guidance within the PPG has provided additional direction and criteria on the approach, specifically when appraising Grey Belt. It is not, however, comprehensive and the methodology adopted for this appraisal has drawn on previous Green Belt assessments undertaken by tor&co, along with the PAS Green Belt Guidance report (updated February 2015).

Green Belt parcels and boundaries

- 2.6 As noted above para. 149 (f) of the NPPF states when defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should *‘define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.’*
- 2.7 Any potential alterations to the Green Belt must therefore be based on a readily recognisable and likely permanent boundary, although there is no definitive definition of what these are. This would normally comprise the following types of features which are considered permanent man-made and natural features:
- Motorways
 - A and B roads
 - Railway lines
 - Canals, rivers, brooks, and waterbodies
 - Natural ‘buffer’ features such as ridgelines.
- 2.8 It is not, however, unusual for Green Belt Assessment to considered additional boundary features such as:
- Unclassified public roads and private roads
 - Smaller water features, including streams, canals and other watercourses
 - Prominent physical features (e.g. embankments)
 - Existing development with strongly established, regular or consistent boundaries

- Well established woodland edges, tree belt and hedgerows.
- 2.9 The approach to reviewing boundaries has broadly adopted the above criteria.
- 2.10 The guidance in the PPG notes that in most cases it will be necessary for authorities to divide Green Belt into separate assessments areas (or parcels) for assessing Grey Belt. In this case the site is very well defined by boundary vegetation and the northern edge of Istead Rise and has therefore been assessed as a single parcel.

Assessment criteria

- 2.11 The assessment criteria for determining the contribution land makes to Green Belt purposes A, B and D have been clarified in the PPG and are set out in full in appendix A. If a site does not contribute strongly to any of the three purposes, it can be identified as being Grey Belt, subject to other considerations including the Golden Rules and the exclusion of land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.
- 2.12 The contribution to the purposes is defined in the PPG as being either *Strong*, *Moderate* or *Weak /None*. These categories and the assessment criteria have been adopted (see appendix A).
- 2.13 In respect to purpose A - *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas*, the guidance is clear that sprawl relates to large built-up areas and not to villages. Istead Rise is a village and as such should not be categorised as a large built-up area.
- 2.14 For purpose B - *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another*, the guidance is clear again that this relates to the merging of towns and not villages. The nearest towns to the site lie to the north of the A2 corridor and include Gravesend, Ebbsfleet, Swanscombe and Dartford. Growth over time has resulted in the merging of these settlements resulting in an almost continuous conurbation north of the A2 transport corridor. Strood lies approximately 4km to the east. The smaller settlements to the west, south and east noted earlier are all villages.
- 2.15 A key function of the green belt in this location is to maintain the break in development between the eastern edge of Gravesend and the Medway Towns (including Strood) which is one of the few barriers preventing the further eastward sprawl of London and the merging of towns along the southern part of the Thames Estuary. It is relevant that the site plays no function in maintaining separation between the above built-up areas, with the open land located approximately 2.5km to the north of the A2/M2 corridor.
- 2.16 The distance between towns however is not the only factor that can influence towns merging into one another. Visual separation can also be a factor, along with the type and extent of physical features within the gap. For example, ribbon development of smaller settlements along a transport corridor between two towns can lead to the perceptions of merging. This is considered as part of this appraisal.

- 2.17 Purpose D - *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns*, relates to historic towns and again discounts all villages. The PAS guidance is relevant here as it helps to clarify what should be considered as a 'historic town.' It states *"This purpose is generally accepted as relating to very few settlements in practice. In most towns there already are more recent developments between the historic core, and the countryside between the edge of the town."*
- 2.18 Istead Rise is not a historic town, and as such the site makes no contribution to Purpose D.
- 2.19 Purpose C - *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment* is not a relevant consideration to Grey Belt and is not considered further.
- 2.20 The assessment also considers the extent to which the release or development of Green Belt land would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area as whole. In reaching a judgement, it has been considered whether, or the extent to which, the release or development of Green Belt Land would affect the ability of all the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan from serving all five of the Green Belt purposes in a meaningful way.

3.0 Gravesham Borough Council Green Belt Assessments

- 3.1 A number of previous Green Belt assessments have been prepared by the Council. The two most recent studies which are relevant to this Grey Belt Appraisal, comprised:
- Gravesham Green Belt Study April 2018 by Gravesham Borough Council
 - Gravesham Stage 2 Green Belt Study August 2020, by LUC on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council
- 3.2 The 2018 study assessed a larger tract of land to the north of Istead Rise, while the Stage 2 Study review the actual site. A summary of the key findings is outlined below.

Gravesham Green Belt Study April 2018 by Gravesham Borough Council

- 3.3 The Council 2018 study assessed the Green Belt in Gravesham against the national and local purposes of the Green Belt. The local purposes related to the specific function of the Green Belt in this locality.
- 3.4 It has been noted already that the site plays no part in the break in development between the eastern edge of Gravesend and the Medway Towns, which is one of the main local functions. A further local function was to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment by minimising the expansion of the Borough's rural settlements. This related to Purpose C and therefore is not relevant in the context of Grey Belt, other than when considering if development of Green Belt land would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt.
- 3.5 The assessment criteria comprised three categories:
- Land that makes a **minimal or no** contribution to Green Belt Purposes

- Land that makes a **contribution** to Green Belt Purposes
 - Land that makes a **significant** contribution to Green Belt Purposes
- 3.6 While these three categories align reasonably well with the new guidance in the Green Belt PPG (strong, moderate, weak or no contribution), it is important to note that the criteria underpinning the assessment are quite different.
- 3.7 The site was assessed as part of a larger tract of land to the North of Istead Rise (Parcel 12). This parcel extended all the way north to the high-speed railway line and represented a much larger extent of the Green Belt than the site in isolation. Nevertheless, no significant contributions were determined even for this much larger area.
- 3.8 In respect to Purpose A, it was noted the area does not abut either Gravesend or Strood so it does not directly check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas. A **Minimal / No** contribution was determined.
- 3.9 The parcel does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood and therefore it does not play a role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them. Accordingly, the assessment determined a **Minimal / No** contribution to Purpose B. The assessment did note the parcel contributed in maintaining separation between Istead Rise and Southfleet, but both of these are villages and therefore not a relevant consideration to Purpose B in the context of the new guidance on Grey Belt.
- 3.10 The assessment determined no contribution to Purpose D.

Gravesham Stage 2 Green Belt Study August 2020, by LUC on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council

- 3.11 This assessment looked at individual parcels, including this site (ref: IR4). In terms of the contribution to Grey Belt, the appraisal adopted a five-category scale of contribution - High, Moderate High, Moderate, Low Moderate and Low. The main assessment provided a single overall score rather than individual scores for each purpose. The site was assessed as making a **Moderate** contribution overall and therefore can be said to be in the middle range. This was based on the more detailed assessment in Appendix A.
- 3.12 In Appendix A the site description for parcel IR4 states "*The boundaries of residential gardens provide minimal distinction between the open field and the urban edge, but the woodland on the eastern edge of the parcel creates a stronger edge. The boundaries of the parcel with adjacent Green Belt land are defined by well-treed hedgerows and woodland.*"
- 3.13 It also states there are no urbanising features, but that contradicts the above reference to minimal distinction between the open field and the urban edge. The site's proximity to the north edge of Istead Rise does have an urbanising effect, with some of the housing visually exposed when viewed from the site.
- 3.14 Each of the Green Belt purposes were assessed individually with five levels of contributions - significant, relatively significant, moderate, relatively limited and limited / none.

- 3.15 It is important to note that the council's own assessment concluded for Purpose B and D **limited / no contribution** and **relatively limited** for Purpose A. These are all at the lower end of the scale of contribution and a clear indicator of the site suitability. Indeed, the assessment concluded:

"Releasing the parcel would not extend the settlement edge significantly northwards and the open field's strong boundaries limit the extent to which its release and development would cause urbanising containment of adjacent Green Belt land. The hedgerows and woodland would form strong boundaries which mean release would not significantly affect the integrity of the remaining open land between Istead Rise and Gravesend."

- 3.16 The overall Moderate contribution was a reflection of the site's contribution to Purpose C, which is not one of purposes relevant to Grey Belt.
- 3.17 While the Council's own studies determined the suitability of the site for Green Belt release, this pre-dates the new guidance on Grey Belt. Accordingly, section 4 appraises the site based on the current guidance in the NPPF and Green Belt PPG.

4.0 Grey Belt appraisal

- 4.1 The site is assessed as a single parcel (refer to figure 1).
- 4.2 Before turning to the assessment, in the LVIA the site's intervisibility with the adjoining land has been determined. This has established a number of important characteristics associated with levels of visual containment.
- 4.3 As part of preparing the LVIA a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was prepared. This indicates locations where potentially develop could be visible from the surrounding landscape. In combination with field studies this work has established that the site is visually well-contained by strongly vegetated boundaries to the north, east and west. To the immediate south of the site, development on The Drove Way and, to a lesser extent, Fairview Road south west of the site effectively form a visual barrier, screening the site from the remaining settlement area of Istead Rise.
- 4.4 Views from the local landscape to the north are increasingly restricted with distance, by intervening vegetation. The clearest views towards the site are very localised, gained from Bridleway NU27 that passes adjacent to the east of the site and crosses over the agricultural land between Istead Rise and Gravesend, north of the site.
- 4.5 Even at relatively close viewpoints the role of the site boundary vegetation combined with the intervening trees and hedgerows and rising topography screens the site and most of the existing development at Istead Rise. Development at Fairview Road is however visible west of the site, but not prominent, being partly screened by vegetation.

Site boundaries and parcelisation

- 4.6 The site has well defined boundaries, being enclosed by established, dense treed hedgerows, woodland and the existing settlement edge. These are all readily recognisable and permanent.

Purpose A - to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

- 4.7 While the parcel is free of existing development, the northern settlement edge immediately adjacent to the site is clearly visible and visually exposed in places. The land has a clear association with the settlement edge.
- 4.8 The site is strongly contained by perimeter vegetation which will restrict and contain development.
- 4.9 Most significantly the site is not adjacent to a large built up area and plays no part in maintaining the unrestricted sprawl between towns. This is a key indicator that the site makes only a weak / no contribution to this purpose, which is supported by the council's own Green Belt studies.
- 4.10 In the context of Istead Rise, development of the site would not represent an incongruous extension to the pre-existing settlement pattern which as noted earlier has an irregular edge along its northern boundary. Strong and defensible boundaries provide a clear limit to potential development.
- 4.11 Based on the criteria listed in appendix A, this **parcel** is considered to make a **Weak / No** contribution to purpose A.

Purpose B – to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- 4.12 At the local level the site does not lie directly between Gravesend and Strood and therefore it does not play a role in preventing these neighbouring towns from merging into one another or maintaining the break in built development between them.
- 4.13 It does not form part of the gap between towns or contributed to visual separation. The ZTV in the LVIA demonstrates there will be no intervisibility from the open land between Gravesend and Strood. Indeed, potential views will be confined to the local landscape.
- 4.14 It has been clearly established that development at this location would not materially alter the physical separation between towns. As such, the assessment concludes **Weak / No** contribution to this purpose.

Purpose D – to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 4.15 As noted earlier, it is very clear the site makes no contribution to Purpose D, which is supported by the council own Green Belt assessments.
- 4.16 As such, the assessment concludes **No** contribution to purpose D.

Contribution of the land to the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan

- 4.17 The above assessment has established that the site makes only a Weak / No contribution to purposes A, B and D.
- 4.18 The contribution of the remaining land in the Green Belt in respect to the purposes taken together would not materially change or alter in a fundamental way.
- 4.19 The ZTV mapping has determined that the extent of intervisibility within the remaining Green Belt is limited. The remaining Green Belt would still function as a comprehensive designation, maintaining openness and avoiding coalescence between built-up areas, with the sense of open countryside retained. The locally important gap between Gravesend and Strood would remain fully intact.
- 4.20 The Council's own 2020 Green Belt assessment determined No/ Negligible impact on the contribution of adjacent land to the Green Belt purposes.
- 4.21 As such, this appraisal has concluded that development of the parcel would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area as whole.

5.0 Summary

- 5.1 Table 5.1 below summarises the key assessment outcomes. The assessment has determined that the site does not make a strong contribution to purposes A, B or D, and that development of the parcel would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area as a whole. Indeed, the assessment has concluded that the land's contribution is at the lowest end of the scale. As such, that site can be identified as Grey Belt, subject to meeting the other criteria noted in chapter 1 of this appraisal including the Golden Rules (as demonstrated by the Planning Statement supporting this application).

Table 5.1 Green Belt appraisal key conclusions

Contribution to Green Belt purposes and openness	The site
Purpose A	Weak / None
Purpose B	Weak / None
Purpose D	None
Would the release or development of the land fundamentally undermine the purpose (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt?	No. The national and local Green Belt purposes will remain intact with development of the site resulting in small proportion of the Green Belt being released that will not undermine the purposes taken together of the remaining Green Belt
Can boundaries be defined by physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?	Yes, readily recognisable and strongly defined boundary vegetation establishes a robust edge that will be retained and further enhanced by landscape proposals.
CONCLUSION	Grey Belt criteria met

Red = Strong contribution

Orange = Moderate contribution

Green = Weak / No contribution

Landscape strategy

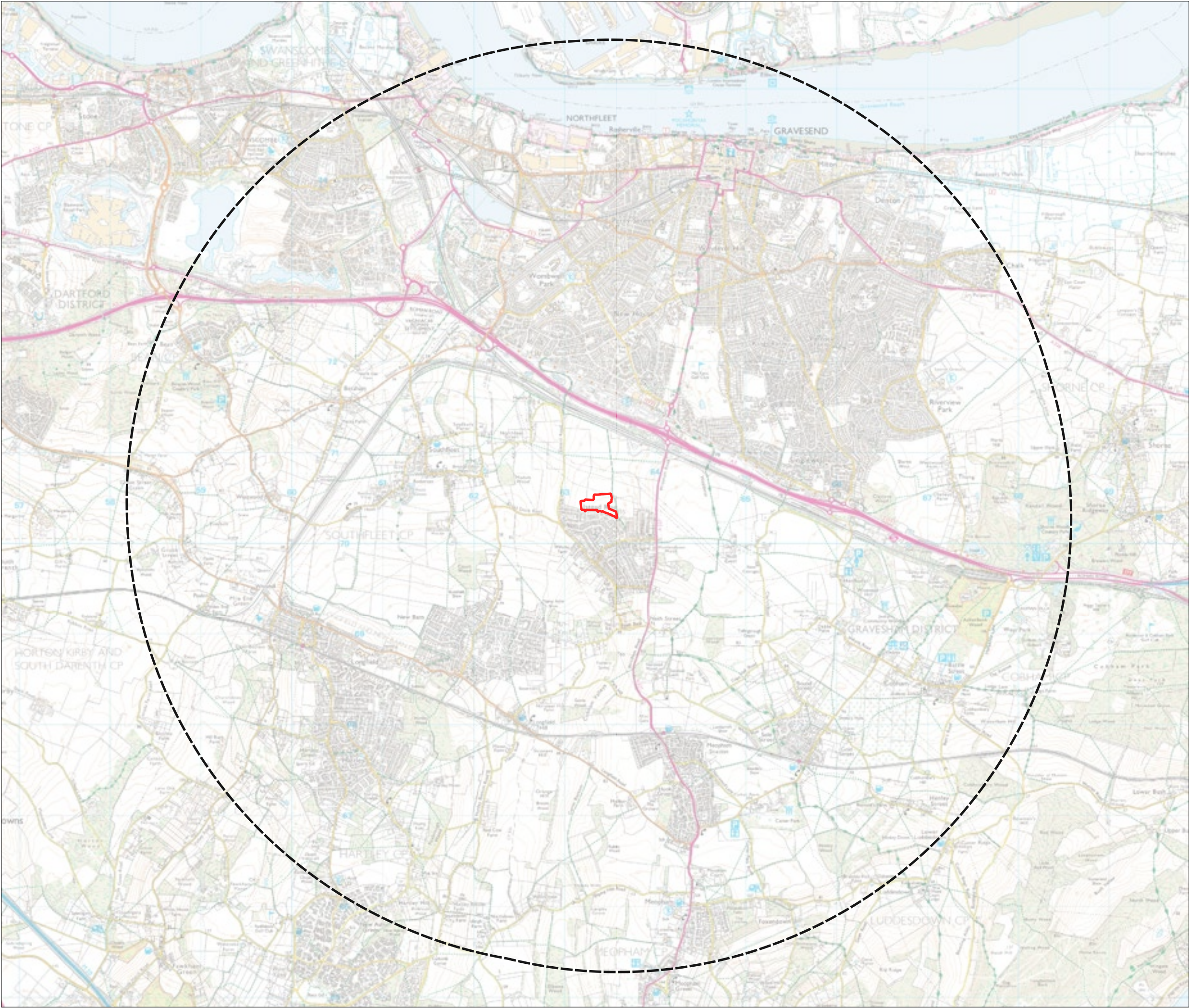
- 5.2 This appraisal has concluded that the land can be identified as Grey Belt as per the requirements of para 142. We now consider the other landscape related considerations relevant to determining whether a site satisfies the requirements of Grey Belt as defined within the NPPF.
- 5.3 Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt, para.156 of the NPPF requires additional contributions to be made. Specifically, para. 156C states:

'the provision of new or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.'

- 5.1 The landscape strategy seeks to maximise the ecological and landscape value of the site's landscape resources. The planting proposals are designed to fit into and complement the local landscape and seek to enhance the habitat structure and biodiversity of the local area and have been informed by the ecological report.
- 5.2 Key primary measures to minimise the initial predicted impacts of the proposed development include the following:
- Retain, protect and enhance all of the existing hedgerows and trees on the site boundaries, with limited removal only where needed to enable essential access or other essential infrastructure.
 - Avoid development within the root protection zones of trees and hedgerows except where essential to enable the new vehicle and pedestrian/cycle accesses.
 - The proposals seek to maximise the ecological and landscape value of the site's landscape resources with appropriate management and enhancement.
 - A minimum of 30no. trees in the new open space, green infrastructure areas, providing an attractive setting but also contributing to softening the effects of development, reinforcing local landscape character and biodiversity enhancement.
 - Open space areas managed mostly as species rich grassland providing a rich habitat for insects, mammals and nesting birds.
 - Grassland along the hedgerow margins will be managed to maximise wildlife connectivity
 - The planting proposals are designed to replicate and complement the local landscape and seek to enhance the habitat structure and biodiversity of the local area and have been informed by the ecological report.
- 5.4 The above landscape strategy is considered to provide a comprehensive approach to developing the site.
- 5.5 These proposals met or exceed the relevant local POS standards, as set in within the landscape chapter of the Design and Access Statement. These measures afford considerable potential for improvements to public open space, nature conservation and the landscape setting of the site, which are a specific requirement of the release of Grey Belt land, as set out in paras. 156 and 157 of the NPPF. With the appropriate retention and enhancement of the existing landscape structure outlined above, a strong defensible boundary, mitigating any future potential encroachment into the remaining Green Belt, is achievable.

Figures

Figure 1 Site location



 Site boundary
 5km study area

Notes/Revision

Land to the North of The Drove Way, Istead
Rise, Gravesham
Ptarmigan Land A Ltd



Figure 1: Site location

Status:	Drawn by: JC	Checked by: PW
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Appendix A

Criteria for assessing the contribution land makes to Green Belt purpose

Appendix A: Criteria for assessing the contribution land makes to Green Belt purposes

Purposes A, B and D are taken from the Green Belt PPG update dated 27 February 2025.

Purpose A – to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas

This purpose relates to the sprawl of large built up areas. Villages should not be considered large built up areas.

Contribution	Illustrate Features
Strong	Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development, and lack physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development. They are also likely to include all of the following features: • be adjacent or near to a large built up area • if developed, result in an incongruous pattern of development (such as an extended “finger” of development into the Green Belt)
Moderate	Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to be adjacent or near to a large built up area, but include one or more features that weaken the land’s contribution to this purpose a, such as (but not limited to): • having physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development • be partially enclosed by existing development, such that new development would not result in an incongruous pattern of development • contain existing development • being subject to other urbanising influences
Weak or None	Assessment areas that make only a weak or no contribution are likely to include those that: • are not adjacent to or near to a large built up area • are adjacent to or near to a large built up area, but containing or being largely enclosed by significant existing development

Purpose B – to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

This purpose relates to the merging of towns, not villages.

Contribution	Illustrate Features
Strong	Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development and include all of the following features:

	- forming a substantial part of a gap between towns - the development of which would be likely to result in the loss of visual separation of towns
Moderate	Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to be located in a gap between towns, but include one or more features that weaken their contribution to this purpose, such as (but not limited to): - forming a small part of the gap between towns - being able to be developed without the loss of visual separation between towns. This could be (but is not limited to) due to the presence or the close proximity of structures, natural landscape elements or topography that preserve visual separation
Weak or None	Assessment areas that contribute weakly are likely to include those that: - do not form part of a gap between towns, or - form part of a gap between towns, but only a very small part of this gap, without making a contribution to visual separation

Purpose C - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

This purpose seeks to safeguard the countryside from encroachment, or a gradual advancement of urbanising influences through physical development or land use change.

Contribution	Illustrate Features
Strong	Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be completely free of development or urbanising features and are also likely to include some or all of the following: - exhibit the characteristics of countryside - is not adjacent to the settlement edge and has a strong relationship with the countryside - have no development within it and/or very limited urbanising features within the parcel or adjacent to it.
Moderate	Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to have a stronger relationship with the countryside but have some urbanising features. They are likely to exhibit all or some of the following feature: - Contain the characteristics of open countryside - have some limited urbanising development within or adjacent to the parcel and relate in some way to both the settlement and the wider countryside - relates more strongly to the wider countryside than to the settlement, but openness is compromised by urbanising development within it.
Weak or None	Assessment areas that make only a weak or no contribution are likely to have a stronger affinity with the settlement edge

	and contain a variety of urbanising features, or urbanising features of scale. They are likely to exhibit all or some of the following feature: • Do not contain the characteristics of open countryside and have urbanising development that compromises openness. • lack any relationship with the wider countryside and makes little or no contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
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Purpose D – to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

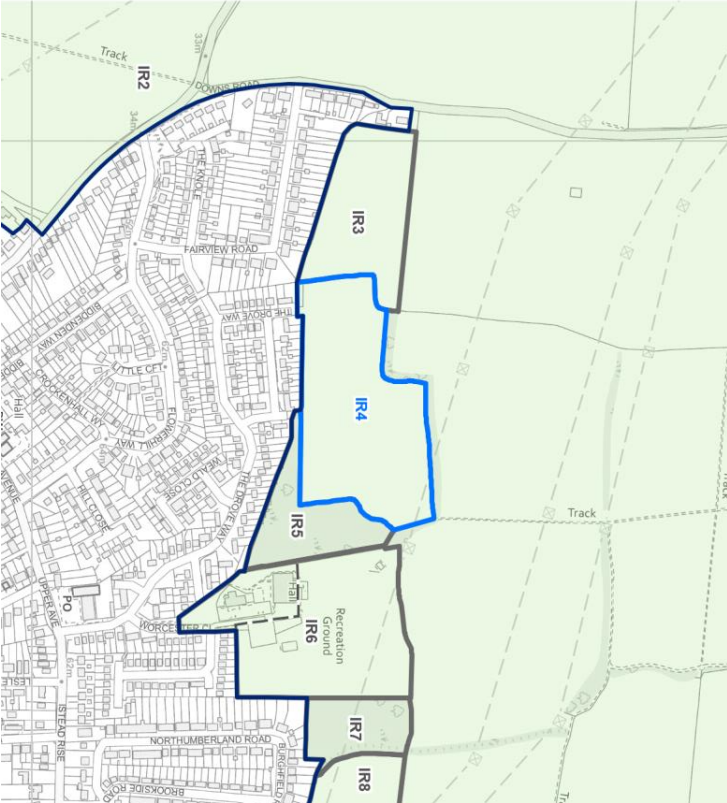
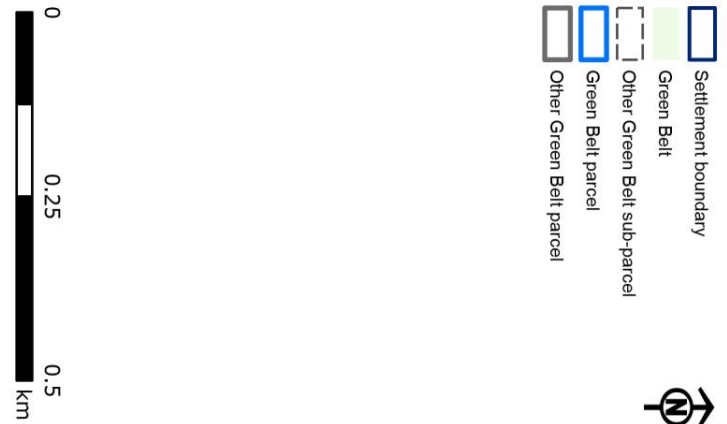
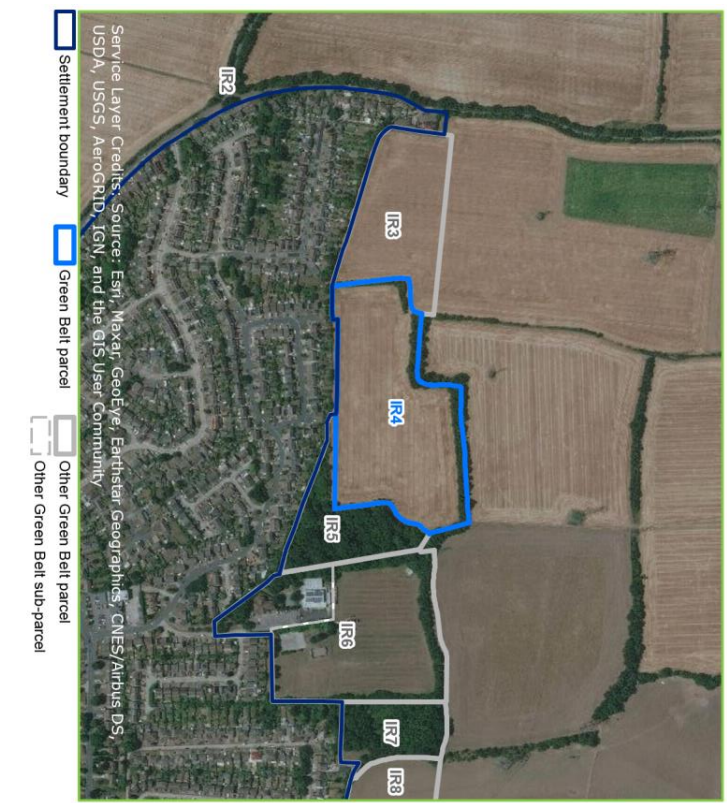
This purpose relates to historic towns, not villages. Where there are no historic towns in the plan area, it may not be necessary to provide detailed assessments against this purpose.

Contribution	Illustrate Features
Strong	Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely be free of existing development and to include all of the following features: • form part of the setting of the historic town • make a considerable contribution to the special character of a historic town. This could be (but is not limited to) as a result of being within, adjacent to, or of significant visual importance to the historic aspects of the town
Moderate	Assessment areas that perform moderately are likely to form part of the setting and/or contribute to the special character of a historic town but include one or more features that weaken their contribution to this purpose, such as (but not limited to): • being separated to some extent from historic aspects of the town by existing development or topography • containing existing development • not having an important visual, physical, or experiential relationship to historic aspects of the town
Weak or None	Assessment areas that make no or only a weak contribution are likely to include those that: • do not form part of the setting of a historic town • have no visual, physical, or experiential connection to the historic aspects of the town

Appendix B

**Extract from Gravesham Borough Green Belt Assessment –
Site IR4 Appendix A of the August 2020 Study by LUC.**

Istead Rise Parcel IR4



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Description

Farmland adjacent to the northern edge of Istead Rise, sloping very gently down northwards toward Gravesend. The parcel contains no urbanising development to diminish openness and is not contained by urbanising development. The boundaries of residential gardens provide minimal distinction between the open field and the urban edge, but the woodland on the eastern edge of the parcel creates a stronger edge. The boundaries of the parcel with adjacent Green Belt land are defined by well-treed hedgerows and woodland.

Istead Rise Parcel IR4

Contribution of parcel to the Green Belt purposes

*How relevant is each Green Belt purpose to land in this parcel?
To what extent do 'openness' (in Green Belt terms), distinction between the inset settlement and Green Belt land, and containment by urbanising influences affect level of contribution to the Green Belt purposes?*

Purpose 1 Contribution - Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

Relatively limited

Istead Rise is a settlement which is located close enough to the large built-up area of Gravesend to have some relationship with it. The parcel relates more strongly to Istead Rise than to Gravesend. As open land which is uncontained by urban development it does have a stronger relationship with countryside than with the settlement, despite having mostly weak boundary distinction from it. It therefore has a relatively limited role in preventing the outward sprawl of Gravesend.

Purpose 2 Contribution - Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

Limited / No contribution

This land does not lie in a gap between neighbouring towns and does not make any contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 3 Contribution - Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

Relatively significant

The absence of significant distinction between the parcel and the inset settlement limits the contribution of the field to this purpose, but it is open and uncontained and therefore still has a stronger relationship with countryside than with the settlement.

Purpose 4 Contribution - Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

Limited / No contribution

Land does not make a significant contribution to the setting of any historic town.

Purpose 5 Contribution - Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

Equal contribution

All Green Belt land is considered to make an equal contribution to this purpose.

Impact of release on the contribution of adjacent land to the Green Belt purposes

To what extent would release of land for development within the parcel increase containment of adjacent Green Belt land? Would this increase the overall level of harm? Would the release of land result in a weaker distinction between the urban area and the countryside?

No/Negligible

Releasing the parcel would not extend the settlement edge significantly northwards and the open field's strong boundaries limit the extent to which its release and development would cause urbanising containment of adjacent Green Belt land. The hedgerows and woodland would form strong boundaries which mean release would not significantly affect the integrity of the remaining open land between Istead Rise and Gravesend.

Instead Rise Parcel IR4

Overall harm to Green Belt purposes from release of land

Applying professional judgement, consider the contribution of the land parcel to the Green Belt purposes, together with the impact that its release would have on the contribution of adjacent land to the Green Belt purposes, to determine the overall relative harm to the Green Belt purposes that would result from its release.*

** It is assumed that release will result in development that will constitute a loss of openness.*

Moderate

Release of the parcel would constitute relatively significant encroachment on the countryside and relatively limited impact on the Green Belt's role in preventing sprawl of the large built-up area. It would constitute a negligible weakening of the integrity of adjacent Green Belt land. Therefore, the harm to the Green Belt purposes of releasing this parcel would be moderate.

Variations in harm within the parcel

Are there smaller areas within the parcel that could be released with less harm to the Green Belt purposes? Or conversely are there areas where harm would be higher?

There is no potential for reduced release of land that would result in less harm to the Green Belt purposes.

Harm beyond outer boundary

Explain why harm to the Green Belt purposes would increase if the release of land was to extend beyond the parcel boundary.

Releasing the uncontained, sloping land to the north beyond this parcel's outer boundary would constitute a significant encroachment on the countryside , and would also weaken the integrity of the wider Green Belt by narrowing the gap between Istead Rise and Gravesend, resulting in high harm to Green Belt purposes.

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