

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to voice my thoughts over the proposed housing development (case 20260649) in Istead Rise, as I feel this would become a problematic development for the local area.

I live near the Co-op in Istead Rise and can already see many disadvantages to an extension of the village. For starters the traffic, and through traffic, utilising Upper Avenue/Istead Rise is already rather heavy and dangerous for the neighbourhood, especially when the A2/M25 have their regular issues and the road through Istead Rise becomes a detour for many. The addition of extra houses will add further cars to an already busy road, demoting the safety of current road users and pedestrians. In addition, the junction by the parade for drivers turning onto Istead Rise from The Drove Way already poses visibility problems that would be emphasized by greater road traffic.

Alongside the jeopardised safety of road users, the practicality of busier roads will be less than ideal for everyone who uses the roads whether that be on foot, cycling, driving or horse riding. This pressure on the local infrastructure extends to the education, public transport and GP facilities in the surrounding area (within Istead Rise and further afield) that are already struggling to maintain their services to a strong standard, as much as I'm sure they try. Surgeries and schools being neglected is nothing new in the local area or across the nation, and although this is a much bigger issue, they will only be dragged down more by more housing being built and vital services will be unavailable to many of the current and new residents.

The proposed site for the additional houses is protected land that supposedly prevents urbanisation and promotes local greenery and wildlife. By ruining part of this natural landscape, the new development would act against the national legislation of the Green Belt Act that is designed to reduce urban sprawl and keep some of our land in its natural state. To my knowledge, the only instance in which the Green Belt Act can be overturned is in special or unique circumstances and my current understanding is that the developer has not presented adequate evidence of said special circumstances, thus the development can not be justified in this respect.

Furthermore, the destruction of natural habitats, however significant, can not be condoned regardless of whether they are protected or not, especially in this case where the land is arable and well utilised by the locals.

This point is further highlighted by the current proposition for a new data centre between Ebbsfleet and New Barn. Whilst I appreciate that this is not part of Gravesham Borough Council, I'm sure that many of your representatives and residents will have plenty of negative feedback on this proposed development, and a large area of new housing is on a similar scale. The destruction of north Kents natural habitat should not and can not safely continue. Locally, nationally and globally there is an ongoing crisis surrounding the environment and it requires more active engagement to ensure a substantial amount of resistance is placed against large new developments such as the new housing estate in Istead Rise.

I would like to end with a consideration - the new development is to increase the housing capacity of Gravesham Borough Council, however there are already many many houses that stand empty and unused; would it not be better to try and make use of these vacant houses before further damaging our local area with a new development?

Thank you for your time,

