

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 13/03/2026 10:17 AM from [REDACTED]

Application Summary

Address:	Land North Of High View School Lane Higham Rochester Kent ME3 7HP
Proposal:	Application for Outline application with all/some matters reserved for the development of up to 50 residential dwellings (including affordable housing), vehicular access road from School Lane, internal roads, car parking, landscaping, public open space, and other associated works and infrastructure. All matters to be reserved with the exception of the main site access.
Case Officer:	Mrs Lisa Fisher

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name:	[REDACTED]
Email:	[REDACTED]
Address:	[REDACTED] Steadman Close Higham ROCHESTER

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Member of the Public
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments:	I wish to formally object to the proposed development on land designated as Green Belt within Higham, Kent. The application conflicts with both national planning policy and the established purpose of the Green Belt designation. In particular, the proposal fails to demonstrate the "very special circumstances" required to justify inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The Green Belt serves several important functions including checking the unrestricted expansion of built-up areas, preventing neighbouring settlements from merging, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, and preserving the character of historic rural communities. The site in question currently contributes to the openness and rural character of the area surrounding Higham. Introducing new buildings, access roads, and associated infrastructure would fundamentally change the nature of this landscape. Even relatively small-scale development can significantly reduce the openness of Green Belt land by introducing permanent built structures where none previously existed. Under national planning policy, inappropriate development in the Green Belt is considered harmful by definition and should only be approved in very special circumstances. Such circumstances must clearly outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt. In this case, the application does not appear to provide sufficient
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evidence that these circumstances exist. The proposal would cause lasting harm to the openness of the countryside and therefore conflicts with the core principles of Green Belt protection.

Allowing development on this site would also undermine the strategic role of the Green Belt around Higham. The countryside between settlements helps maintain separation between communities and preserves the rural setting of the village. Development on protected land risks gradually eroding this separation and could contribute to the creeping expansion of built-up areas into the countryside.

In addition to the policy conflict, the proposal raises serious concerns regarding landscape character. The surrounding area is valued for its rural appearance, open fields, and natural features such as hedgerows and farmland. These elements form part of the local landscape identity and contribute to the visual quality of the area. Development would introduce urbanising features that would detract from the existing character and permanently alter the landscape.

Environmental considerations are also relevant. Green Belt land frequently provides habitats for wildlife and contributes to local biodiversity. Construction activity and the introduction of built development may lead to habitat loss, disturbance to wildlife, and increased levels of noise, lighting, and pollution. While mitigation measures may be proposed, they rarely compensate fully for the loss of established ecosystems.

The proposal could also increase pressure on local infrastructure. Additional traffic generated by the development would place greater strain on rural roads around Higham. Many of these roads were not designed for significant increases in traffic, which raises concerns about congestion, road safety, and environmental impacts such as noise and air pollution.

National planning policy also emphasises the importance of prioritising development on previously developed or "brownfield" land. Approving development on protected Green Belt land when alternative sites may exist elsewhere would undermine the principle of sustainable land use and weaken the planning system's ability to protect the countryside.

Another important consideration is precedent. If planning permission were granted in this case, it could encourage further applications on nearby Green Belt land. Developers may argue that similar proposals should be treated consistently, leading to incremental development that gradually erodes the countryside around Higham.

Protecting the Green Belt requires consistent decision-making that upholds planning policy and recognises the long-term value of preserving open land. Once development is allowed on Green Belt land, the loss of openness and rural character is effectively permanent.

For these reasons, the proposed development would cause substantial harm to the openness, character, and environmental value of the Green Belt surrounding Higham. The application conflicts with the principles of the National Planning Policy Framework and does not demonstrate the exceptional circumstances required to justify development in this protected area.

I therefore respectfully request that Gravesham Borough Council refuse this application in order to safeguard the countryside and uphold the integrity of Green Belt policy.

Kind regards