



Vigo Parish Council

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Planning Application 20260815: Woodlands Farm, Wrotham Road, Culverstone, DA13 0RQ

Outline application for the development of 67 dwellings, public open space and associated works, with approval sought for the principal means of vehicular access from Newlands Lane

Vigo Parish Council objects to the above application.

The Council recognises the need for additional housing within Gravesham and notes the proposed provision of affordable housing. However, it has significant concerns about the suitability of this site for development of this scale and considers that a number of important matters remain unresolved.

Green Belt, landscape and sustainability

The site is within the Green Belt and the applicant relies significantly on it being considered "grey belt". The Council notes that national planning policy changed following submission of the application, with a new National Planning Policy Framework published in August 2026.

Grey-belt status does not, in itself, make a site suitable for development. The sustainability and wider impacts of the development must still be considered.

This is a rural location and the proposal would introduce 67 dwellings into what is currently predominantly open countryside. The Council is concerned about the impact on the rural character of the area and the separation between the existing settlements of Culverstone and Vigo.

The Council also questions whether this is a sustainable location for development of this scale, particularly given the limitations of the local highway and pedestrian network and the likely reliance on private vehicles.

Highways and pedestrian safety

The proposed principal vehicular access would be from Newlands Lane. The Council has serious concerns about the suitability of this rural road to accommodate the additional traffic and pedestrian movements generated by 67 dwellings.

The applicant proposes changes to Newlands Lane, including carriageway widening and a new footway close to the development. However, Newlands Lane remains a narrow rural road without a continuous footway.

The Transport Statement predicts approximately 50 additional vehicle movements during the morning peak and 59 during the evening peak. It also identifies two recorded collisions within 250 metres of the existing access, one involving serious injury.

While the Council recognises that alterations to the access and visibility splays are proposed, it remains concerned about the practical effect of the additional traffic and pedestrian movements on the existing rural highway network, particularly for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

Flood risk and drainage

Surface-water drainage is a significant concern given the history of surface-water flooding in the wider Culverstone and Vigo area.

Although the application site is within Flood Zone 1, the applicant's drainage strategy relies principally on infiltration. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment confirms that ground investigation and infiltration testing have not yet been undertaken and that infiltration rates have therefore been assumed.

Kent County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, has identified a number of matters requiring further information, including drainage calculations, a catchment plan and evidence supporting the proposed infiltration rates. KCC currently recommends a holding objection until further information is provided.

Given the scale of the development and local experience of surface-water flooding, the Council considers that an acceptable and deliverable drainage solution should be demonstrated before the application is determined.

Ecology and biodiversity

There are also unresolved ecological matters.

KCC's Ecological Advice Service has concluded that insufficient ecological information has been provided to determine the application. It requires a further bat survey of Building B1 and clarification of the site area and associated biodiversity calculations before determination. Building B1 has been identified as having high suitability for roosting bats.

KCC advises that the surveys undertaken to date are insufficient against current best-practice guidance and that further survey results, together with any necessary mitigation or compensation, should be submitted before determination.

The Council considers that these matters should be properly established before permission is granted.

Infrastructure

The development would introduce up to 67 additional households into a rural area. The Council is concerned about the cumulative pressure this would place on local infrastructure and services, including roads, public transport, healthcare and education.

The Council acknowledges the benefits of additional housing and the proposed affordable housing contribution. However, these benefits need to be balanced against the suitability of the location and the unresolved issues identified above.

Conclusion

Vigo Parish Council considers that significant concerns remain regarding the suitability and sustainability of this Green Belt location, highway and pedestrian safety, surface-water drainage, ecology and local infrastructure.

Of particular concern is that both the Lead Local Flood Authority and KCC's Ecological Advice Service have identified that further information is required before the application is determined.

The Council does not consider that matters fundamental to establishing whether a development of this scale is acceptable should remain unresolved at this stage.

Vigo Parish Council therefore objects to planning application 20260815 and requests that Gravesham Borough Council refuses the application in its current form.



Joanne Glass
Clerk, for and on behalf of Vigo Parish Council