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Downs Road

Istead Rise

Gravesend

DA139HW

2/9/26

Objection to Planning Application 20260649 – Land North of The Droveaway, Istead Rise

I strongly object to Planning Application **20260649**. The proposal is unsustainable, unsafe, environmentally harmful and contrary to national policy, Gravesham's planning strategy and the Council's Climate Emergency commitments. It should be **refused**.

Key Grounds for Refusal

Water stress: Gravesham is within a seriously water-stressed region. The application has not demonstrated water neutrality, enforceable efficiency measures, reuse, offsetting or long-term resilience. Adding permanent household demand in these conditions would be unsafe and premature, especially when considered cumulatively with Rose Farm and wider local growth.

Biodiversity and Green Belt harm: The site is not an ecological blank space. It forms part of a rural-edge network of hedgerows, fields, trees, margins and wildlife movement routes. Development would fragment habitat, increase disturbance, weaken biodiversity and remove Green Belt openness. The application has not shown that impacts can be avoided, mitigated or lawfully compensated through secure long-term Biodiversity Net Gain.

Loss of agricultural land: The proposal would permanently remove productive countryside and seal soils that support food resilience, carbon storage, rainfall absorption and biodiversity. If the land is best and most versatile agricultural land, the harm is especially serious. Once built over, this land cannot realistically be restored.

Traffic, safety and access: The A227 Wrotham Road, Tollgate/A2 junctions, Worcester Close/The Droveaway and Istead Rise shop parade are already constrained. Additional homes would increase queuing, conflict, parking pressure, emissions and risks to pedestrians, cyclists, children, older residents and disabled people. The application has not shown that the local road network can safely absorb the extra trips.

Car dependency: Walking and cycling routes are narrow, discontinuous, poorly protected or intimidating, particularly around Tollgate. Bus provision is limited and cannot support car-light living. In practice, residents would rely on private cars for work, school, healthcare, shopping and services, directly conflicting with sustainable transport and climate objectives.

Infrastructure capacity: Local schools, healthcare, roads, water supply, sewage systems and community facilities are already under pressure. The proposal offers no clear, funded, enforceable infrastructure strategy showing that capacity will exist before occupation or that cumulative impacts can be managed.

Conflict with policy and climate commitments: The scheme conflicts with the NPPF, Gravesham's adopted and emerging Local Plan direction, infrastructure-first planning, Green Belt protection, biodiversity policy, sustainable transport aims and the Council's Climate Emergency declaration. A car-dependent scheme that removes farmland, worsens water stress and increases emissions is not climate-resilient development.

Over-development and cumulative harm: This application cannot be assessed in isolation. Together with Rose Farm and wider Meopham-area growth, it would place substantial additional pressure on the same roads, schools, healthcare, water supply, sewage infrastructure and local facilities. The combined effect would erode the rural-edge character of Istead Rise and risk a disproportionate expansion of the village.

Failure to demonstrate local housing need: The application has not clearly shown that the homes would meet Gravesham's identified local needs, including genuinely affordable homes, smaller homes, family homes, accessible homes, downsizing options or homes for key workers. If the scheme mainly adds open-market housing while increasing infrastructure pressure, the local benefit is not justified.

Conclusion

For these reasons, the proposal is **not sustainable, not safe, not climate-resilient and not in the public interest**. It would cause cumulative harm through water stress, biodiversity loss, agricultural land loss, traffic danger, car dependency, infrastructure pressure, policy conflict and over-development. I therefore urge Gravesham Borough Council to **refuse Planning Application 20260649**.