

Esquire Developments have obviously invested a great deal of time and effort in preparing their proposal, and money in purchasing options over the land.

However, it seems an ill considered plans with only one access into Downs Road, just beside the Infant and Primary school. The proposal is for 154 houses and given that all houses these days have more than one car, and most have two or sometimes more, you are proposing to channel an additional 300 plus cars into an already busy road in close proximity to a busy infant and primary school. The area around the school already suffers from painful congestion at school times and the increased traffic will pose a real danger and increased air pollution to the young and vulnerable pupils. The plan does not show garages for a fair proportion of the houses so parking on the proposed estate will immediately become an issue and almost certainly overflow onto Downs Road.

Downs Road is in a valley and the fields behind it are currently in use for food production which provide natural drainage. Building on these will create a flood risk and food production should not be sacrificed for profit.

The Developers claim to have calculated the availability of GP care and say that between Downs Way Medical practice and Meopham GP practice there would be adequate capacity. We would disagree. The Downs Way Medical Practice currently struggles to meet the demand for appointments and adding an addition 300 - 400 patients will increase the pressure. Meopham will be confronting a much larger problem with the number of homes proposed for their village so the suggestion that they could absorb overflow from Istead Rise is at best disingenuous and at worst deliberately specious.

The plan includes the removal of the wooded area between Rosegarth. This is not shrub scrubland as suggested by the developers, it is a woodland. The area is a nesting site for crows and pigeons and currently a pair of herons, which are a protected species, and home to foxes and a variety of small animals whose habitat should be protected.

At present Istead Rise has one bus per hour during only part of the day and not in the evenings. This means that any new residents will need to have cars which will increase pressure and congestion on the junctions onto thr A227, Wrotham Road, and onto New Barn Road.

The Council should be concentrating on their brown field sites for both affordable and general housing with better public transport access. They should be ensuring that the vacant town centre sites, where there are transport links and job opportunities, are actually built on.

Most of the residents of Istead Rise chose to live here specifically because it was surrounded by green belt, and paid a premium for their homes because of that.

We moved to Istead Rise in 1977 when we first got married and chose it because it was a village surrounded by green belt. When we moved house it was within Istead Rise, we

brought up our family here and have stayed into retirement because of the peaceful surroundings.

We actively oppose this planning application at every level and are taking professional advice on how best to contest it up to and including Ministerial Review.

