

From: Planning Appeals
Sent: 20 May 2026 11:32:57 UTC+01:00
To: "'PCU@communities.gov.uk'" <PCU@communities.gov.uk>
Subject: 20251116 - Land at Norwood Lane, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent DA13 0YE

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council to formally notify you, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2026 and the "minded to refuse" regulations for large-scale residential developments, of the Planning Committee's resolution regarding the above-referenced application.

The application seeks outline planning permission (with all matters reserved except for access) for a development of up to 150 dwellings, including affordable housing and associated infrastructure.

The application was presented to the Planning Committee on 13 May 2026 with a recommendation for approval from the Case Officer, as detailed in the attached Committee Report. However, having carefully considered the planning balance, representations of local residents, the applicant and other Members, Members of the Planning Committee resolved to refuse the application.

The Officer's Report recommended approval on the basis that the council's current lack of a five-year housing land supply triggered the "tilted balance" under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The report sets out the Officer's analysis that the site in their view is considered to meet the definition of Grey Belt, as set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF, and paragraphs 155-150 of the NPPF.

It further concluded that the provision of 150 homes, including a 50% affordable housing contribution, constituted "Very Special Circumstances" (VSC) sufficient to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm.

The officer's report considers that although the site is located in a rural area, the proposed access and infrastructure improvements could, subject to planning conditions and a Section 106 agreement, mitigate the impact on the local and strategic highway networks.

Despite the recommendation, the report acknowledged significant community opposition and technical concerns regarding the narrow nature of Norwood Lane and Green Lane. It balanced the environmental impact against the socio-economic benefits of housing delivery, ultimately finding that the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" should prevail. The report maintained that the identified harms to the Green Belt's openness were "moderate" when weighed against the acute local housing need.

The Committee rejected the officer's recommendation, citing the following grounds for refusal as set out in the Decision Notice of the Committee, these are below:

RESOLVED that the planning application be REFUSED permission for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development fails to safeguard the countryside from encroachment, thereby by undermining the remaining Green Belt, and is in an unsustainable location with poor access to public transport and local facilities and services. It is therefore considered contrary to Policy CS01 Sustainable Development, Policy CS02 Scale and Distribution of Development of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), and the requirements of Para. 155 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).
2. The proposed development would be inappropriate by definition. It would cause substantial harm to the Green Belt's openness and in the absence of very special circumstances to clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, or any other harm resulting from the proposal. It is therefore considered contrary to Policy CS02 Scale and Distribution of Development of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), and Section 13 Protecting Green Belt Land of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.
3. The proposed development, by virtue of the increase in the number of dwellings, would place additional demand on existing physical and social infrastructure that is insufficient to accommodate the scale of development proposed. The proposal would therefore give rise to an unacceptable burden on local infrastructure, to the detriment of both existing and future residents. For these reasons, the development is contrary to Policy CS10 (Physical and Social Infrastructure) of the Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

Given that this application involves 150 dwellings and represents a significant departure from the adopted Development Plan and Green Belt protections established in the NPPF, we submit this matter for your consideration as to whether it should be "called-in" for determination.

Copies of the application file, committee report (including supplemental report), consultee responses, neighbour responses and the committee decision notice are available for your review from a OneDrive link sent separately.

As requested in the guidance for called-in planning applications, it should be noted that the site is a potential allocation identified in the Council's Regulation 19 Emerging Local Plan, which is currently out for consultation. This document is available at <https://localplan.gravesham.gov.uk/Reg19/consultationHome> and the site is referenced as "Policy LP7.3A: Land west of Norwood Lane, Meopham".

We look forward to your acknowledgement of this referral.

Yours faithfully,

Sharon Bickerstaff
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Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents including informal design guidance are available at <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/local-plan-policy>

The Council has adopted a Local List of Validation Requirements (April 1st 2020)

Before you formally submit your application check that you have all the relevant documents, by reading our [Local Validation List](#). Failure to meet these requirements will lead to delays in processing your application, and it may not be registered.

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