

I vehemently object to the planning proposal of 154 dwellings on land off of Downs Road resulting in the demolition of 32 and 64 Downs Road and Rose Farm, please take the following points into consideration stating why this development is inappropriate and fundamentally flawed.

1. Inappropriate development on Green Belt, this development lies entirely within the Green Belt and outside the defined village boundary. This fundamentally undermines the purpose of Greenbelt.
 - a. The purpose of Greenbelt is to prevent urban sprawl and merging – this development would be encroaching on New Barn joining the 2 villages.
 - b. Istead Rise area is surrounded by countryside as claimed and promoted by Gravesham Borough Council, therefore this development encroaches onto the countryside.
 - c. The Greenbelt character would be lost to the detriment of the character and setting of Istead Rise.
2. As published in the last copy of 'Your Borough', Gravesham Council say that priority for housing developments will be on brownfield sites first – there are many brownfield sites around Gravesham that have been left dormant. This has also been confirmed by MP Lauren Sullivan.
3. This is 9.6 Ha of agricultural land which is actively being used, we cannot afford to lose our farmland – it would result in the loss of food security, biodiversity and climate goals.
4. There are many protected species that live on and use this land: Barn Owls, Tawny Owls, Little Owls, Red Kites, Sparrowhawks, Kestrels, Buzzards, Adders, Bats, Muntjac deer, bats and badgers.
5. The site currently supports many mature trees and hedgerows that are paramount for the area and the habitats they provide for our wildlife.
6. Access points are dangerous and inappropriate:
 - a. The main access to the proposed development is too close to the primary school and 2 nursery schools making this dangerous and an accident waiting to happen on a road which is already exceptionally busy at school run times – this will impact everyone both during development and once the development is completed.
 - b. The extra traffic next to the schools will increase air and noise pollution affecting the health of these children as well as their education.
 - c. The pedestrian/emergency access along Downs Road between properties 30 and 34 is inappropriate, I do not believe that a fire engine or ambulance could safely navigate this access point which is tight and would be incredibly dangerous, this point is also between 2 private residences affecting their security and privacy.
 - d. The 3rd access point in Long Walk which is listed as a pedestrian/emergency access is inappropriate in that this is a narrow cul-de-sac that is already extremely tight for parking due to the road being narrow and positioning of driveways making this too tight for emergency vehicles. The planning request also states that the pedestrian access will continue onto pavements in Long Walk – there is no pavement at the top

of Long Walk, it is road which is used for careful and considerate parking and a turning point.

7. This development does not meet the housing need of Gravesham.
8. The NHS – GPs and Darenth Valley Hospital have not been considered appropriately in this proposal. Darenth Valley is struggling already and cannot cope with current demand. The data Esquires have quoted for the GP surgery is false, this has been challenged by Downsway in writing that they are at capacity already and cannot meet the need of any new residents. Meopham medical centre is in the same position.
9. There are a number of planning applications in Meopham also, all of these applications need to be considered for their cumulative effect and not dealt with individually as they all use the same infrastructure.
10. Istead Rise Primary school is already operating a waitlist for new students proving their lack of capacity.
11. Local secondary schools are also already oversubscribed with no additional capacity. Mention is made of increasing capacity however, there is a shortage of teaching staff and teachers that want to remain in education.
12. The traffic along Downs Road and throughout Istead Rise is already an issue. It is regularly used as a rat run when there are issues on the A2, the roads in Istead Rise are too small to deal with the quantity of traffic already let alone any increase.
13. There are only 3 entrance/exit points into Istead Rise. Downs Road to Broadditch road – a non-curbed road that is narrow turning onto New Barn Road – these are country lanes and not suitable for further traffic. The exit onto the A227 is also extremely busy and dangerous.
14. Downs Road already floods due to heavy rain with standing water covering the majority of the carriageway at the bend of Downs Road/Broadditch Road which is dangerous, with the loss of the fields this will only get worse. There are other points along Downs Road that are subject to flooding. A reminder that Downs Road was originally a river bed.
15. The residents of Istead Rise are a car dependent community with many houses having more than 2 cars due to the lack of infrastructure with regards to public transport.
 - a. Meopham, Longfield or Gravesend stations are not accessible by foot.
 - b. There is no safe cycling route to anywhere as both New Barn Road and the A227 are not safe for cyclists due to speed and sheer weight of traffic.
 - c. The bus service has declined unfavourably over recent years so therefore is not a reliable form of transport to access employment, education or training.
16. There is no safe walking route into Gravesend town as you have to cross multiple A2 slip roads which are dangerous. There are also no safe walking routes to Meopham or Longfield due to no footpaths.
17. The Post-16 NEET figures in Gravesham are already high and the addition of new residents is likely to increase the figure further due to the lack of Post-16 provision. Both Gravesend and Dartford College are not accessible by public transport and there are no other options for the less academic students who cannot access A-Levels.

I do not believe national or local policies have been considered in this application: NPPF and Gravesham. There are no special circumstances or justification that exist within this proposal to warrant destroying Green belt land.

Regards,

