

I am writing to object to planning application **20260223**, proposing the construction of **50 dwellings on Green Belt land in Higham Village**.

1. Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

Relevant policies:

- **Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS02 (Scale & Distribution of Development)**
- **Saved Local Plan Policy C13 (Green Belt)**
- **NPPF Sections 137–151 (Green Belt Protection)**

The site lies within the **Metropolitan Green Belt**, where new housing is considered *inappropriate development* unless “very special circumstances” are demonstrated. The proposal:

- Reduces openness
- Encroaches into countryside
- Extends the built form of Higham beyond its settlement boundary

The applicant has not demonstrated any “very special circumstances” as required by the NPPF and local policy.

2. Harm to the Character and Setting of Higham Village

Relevant policies:

- **CS19 (Development & Design Principles)**
- **CS14 (Housing Type & Size)**
- **Saved Policy TC1 (Design of New Developments)**

Higham is a rural village with a distinct character and a clearly defined settlement edge. A 50-unit estate would:

- Represent a disproportionate expansion
- Create an urbanising effect
- Fail to respect the scale, grain, and rural setting of the village

This conflicts with CS19’s requirement for development to “conserve and enhance the character of the built and natural environment.”

3. Unsustainable Impact on Local Infrastructure

Relevant policies:

- **CS11 (Transport)**
- **CS10 (Physical & Social Infrastructure)**

The proposal would place significant pressure on:

- The A226 and narrow village roads, particularly as the entrance to the site is in the close vicinity of Higham Primary School.
- Limited public transport provision
- School capacity
- GP and healthcare services (there is currently a plan to close Higham Surgery)
- Drainage and sewage systems

CS10 requires developments to demonstrate that infrastructure can support growth — this application does not.

4. Environmental and Ecological Harm

Relevant policies:

- **CS12 (Green Infrastructure)**
- **CS19 (Natural Environment)**
- **Saved Policy C18 (Protected Species)**

The site contributes to the ecological network linked to Higham Marshes and the Thames Estuary. Development would:

- Remove habitat
- Increase surface water runoff
- Reduce biodiversity
- Undermine local green infrastructure

The ecological assessment does not demonstrate compliance with CS12's requirement to protect and enhance biodiversity.

5. Failure to Prioritise Brownfield and Sustainable Locations

Relevant policies:

- **CS02 (Prioritising Brownfield Land)**
- **NPPF Section 11 (Making Effective Use of Land)**

The Local Plan requires development to be focused on:

1. The urban area
2. Previously developed land
3. Sustainable locations with infrastructure capacity

This proposal does none of these and instead targets protected Green Belt land.

6. Lack of Evidence of Local Housing Need

Relevant policies:

- **CS14 (Housing Type & Size)**

The proposal does not demonstrate that it meets the specific housing needs of Higham residents. CS14 requires developments to reflect local need — not simply add generic market housing.

Conclusion

The proposal conflicts with multiple policies of the Gravesham Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. It represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt, harms the character of Higham Village, and places unsustainable pressure on local infrastructure. I feel it would also set a dangerous precedent for other Green Belt land parcels to be developed on if the application were permitted.

I therefore respectfully request that **Planning Application 20260223 be refused.**

Regards,

