

# Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 01/05/2025 2:15 PM from [REDACTED]

## Application Summary

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| Address:      | Land At Wrotham Road Meopham Gravesend Kent DA13 0AA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Proposal:     | Request for a screening opinion in accordance with The Town and Country Planning Act (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 in respect of an EIA Screening Opinion to determine whether two outline planning applications for residential developments, one for up to 350 dwellings and one for up to 120 dwellings, at Meopham, Wrotham Road constitutes EIA development. |
| Case Officer: | Ms Amanda Cue                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

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## Customer Details

|          |                                       |
|----------|---------------------------------------|
| Name:    | [REDACTED]                            |
| Email:   | [REDACTED]                            |
| Address: | [REDACTED] Bocoda Hill Farm Gravesend |

## Comments Details

|                 |                                              |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Commenter Type: | Neighbour                                    |
| Stance:         | Customer objects to the Planning Application |

Reasons for comment:

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| Comments: | <p>I am writing to strongly object to the proposed residential developments outlined in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request submitted by Wardell Armstrong on behalf of Richborough, concerning two outline planning applications for up to 470 dwellings (350 on Site A, 120 on Site B) in Meopham, Kent.</p> <p>While the applicant contends that the proposals are not likely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore do not require an EIA, I believe that this conclusion underestimates the scale of impact such developments would have on the local community, infrastructure, landscape, and environment.</p> <p>1. Loss of Agricultural and Greenfield Land<br/>The proposed development would result in the permanent loss of over 20 hectares of high-quality agricultural land in a rural setting. Both sites are currently open farmland and form an important part of the landscape character of Meopham. This urban expansion threatens the rural identity of the village and sets a dangerous precedent for further erosion of greenfield land.</p> <p>2. Impact on Local Infrastructure and Services<br/>Meopham's existing infrastructure is already under strain. Local roads such as the A227 Wrotham Road and B260 Longfield Road are congested at peak times, and the addition of 470 new homes would introduce hundreds of additional vehicle movements daily. Furthermore, schools, GP practices, and other community services are at or near capacity, and no guarantees have been made that these will be expanded in line with the proposed population increase.</p> <p>3. Traffic, Pollution, and Road Safety<br/>The screening request acknowledges likely air quality impacts and traffic increases but relies heavily on mitigation yet to be specified. The area around the two schools (Meopham Community Academy and Helen Allison School) already</p> |
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suffers from congestion and road safety risks at school pick-up/drop-off times. Adding new housing estates adjacent to these facilities will only exacerbate these issues. A temporary construction phase may last several years, creating prolonged noise, dust, and disruption for local families.

#### 4. Proximity to the Kent Downs AONB and Visual Impact

Site A lies just 260 metres from the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and the screening report fails to adequately acknowledge the cumulative visual harm to this protected landscape. The claim that existing vegetation sufficiently screens the site is highly questionable, especially during winter months. The development would significantly impact views from the AONB and local footpaths.

#### 5. Biodiversity and Ecological Concerns

The development would result in the loss of habitats adjacent to priority woodland and areas within a designated woodland improvement area. Although mitigation is promised, this relies on assumptions and future assessments. No detail is provided about how biodiversity net gain will be meaningfully achieved, and habitat fragmentation remains a serious concern.

#### 6. Heritage and Conservation Area Impact

The development is in close proximity (approx. 190m) to the Grade I listed St John the Baptist Church and the Grade II listed Church Cottages within Meopham's historic conservation area. Despite assurances of buffer planting, the heritage setting would be compromised by increased traffic, urbanisation, and encroachment on the village's historic character.

#### 7. Cumulative Impact Not Fully Addressed

Although the screening report mentions a lack of nearby developments, it ignores the incremental nature of growth in Meopham and nearby parishes. The cumulative impact of this development, when combined with other recent or proposed schemes in the borough, has the potential to significantly alter the area's landscape, traffic patterns, and environmental quality.

#### 8. Prematurity and Lack of Local Plan Context

These proposals are being brought forward ahead of a full review of the Local Plan. A development of this scale should be considered in the context of borough-wide housing need and spatial strategy, not via speculative applications outside the development boundary.

#### Conclusion:

This proposal represents an unsustainable and inappropriate urban expansion into the rural village of Meopham. It will erode the landscape, place pressure on already stretched infrastructure, and damage the quality of life for existing residents.

I urge Gravesham Borough Council to issue a positive screening opinion and require a full Environmental Impact Assessment for both sites. Furthermore, any future planning applications should be refused on the grounds of unsustainable development, loss of countryside, and unacceptable environmental and community impact.

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Kind regards