

PLANNING SUBMISSION

PLANNING STATEMENT

Like-for-like replacement dwelling • revised resubmission

Site	43 Beechwood Drive, Meopham, Gravesend, Kent DA13 0TX
Proposal	Demolition of the existing bungalow and erection of a like-for-like replacement dwelling, reoriented within the plot
Applicant	Mr Patrick Maughan
Prepared by	Rebecca Ali, Prideaux Planning
Date	20 August 2026

THE CENTRAL POINT

The replacement is not materially larger than the building it replaces. The established residential use, footprint and single-storey scale are retained; the building is simply reoriented to achieve a more coherent relationship with the plot.

1. Executive summary

This statement supports a materially different resubmission following refusals 20251223 and 20260373. The earlier schemes were rejected principally because the replacement dwelling was larger than the existing bungalow and was therefore not accepted as a Green Belt replacement-building exception. The present proposal removes that point of conflict.

The revised design is genuinely like-for-like in its built footprint and single-storey scale. The outline of the existing bungalow is retained and reoriented within the same established residential plot. There is no additional dwelling, no intensification of use and no detached garage. The proposal therefore falls squarely within national Green Belt policy GB7(1)(b) of the August 2026 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): a replacement building in the same use which is not materially larger than the one it replaces.

Because the proposal is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it should not be treated as harmful merely by definition and no case of very special circumstances is required. The revised siting and orientation do not increase spatial or visual impact; the existing access, generous plot, boundary vegetation and substantial open garden are retained.

2. Site and surroundings

The application site is a long, established residential plot on the western side of Beechwood Drive. It contains a lawful, permanent single-storey bungalow set well within the plot, together with an existing access, parking area and extensive garden land. The surrounding part of Beechwood Drive is characterised by detached dwellings on generous, verdant plots with varied footprints, orientations and architectural forms.

The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area. Its contribution to local character is derived principally from its spacious plot, low-density residential use, mature boundary vegetation and wooded setting. Those defining characteristics are retained.

3. The proposal

Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing bungalow and its replacement with a single dwelling of equivalent footprint and single-storey scale. The established residential use remains unchanged. The revised building is reoriented within the plot to provide a more logical plan arrangement and relationship with the access and garden.

- one dwelling replaces one existing dwelling;
- the replacement footprint is like-for-like and is not materially larger;
- the building remains single storey, preserving its low visual profile;
- no detached garage or additional built form is proposed;
- the established access and on-site parking arrangement are retained;
- the spacious garden setting and boundary planting remain dominant; and
- no mature tree or western boundary hedgerow removal is proposed.

4. Planning history and response to refusal

Application 20251223 was refused on 30 March 2026 and revised application 20260373 was refused on 29 July 2026. The latter decision identified four matters: Green Belt status and openness; scale and mass under Saved Policy C12; landscape character; and insufficient ecological information.

4.1 Green Belt and scale

The earlier officer assessment proceeded on the basis that the replacement was larger than the existing bungalow. That factual premise no longer applies. The present scheme adopts the existing footprint like-for-like and retains the low, single-storey mass. Reorientation does not itself create additional bulk, volume or floorspace. It changes the disposition of the same built form within the established residential plot.

The August 2026 NPPF is now the current national policy. Policy GB7(1)(b) confirms that replacement of an existing lawful building of permanent and substantial construction is not inappropriate in the Green Belt where the replacement is for the same use and is not materially larger. Each element is met: the existing bungalow is a lawful, permanent and substantial residential building; the replacement remains a single dwelling; and it is not materially larger.

The Council's earlier concern under Saved Policy C12 was likewise tied to enlargement. A like-for-like replacement is of similar scale and mass by definition. To the extent that the age and wording of Saved Policy C12 impose a more restrictive approach than current national decision-making policy GB7, the current NPPF is a highly material consideration. In all events, the core purpose of C12 - preventing disproportionate replacement dwellings in the countryside - is fully respected.

4.2 Openness

Green Belt openness has both spatial and visual dimensions. Spatially, the replacement does not add built footprint or a further unit. Visually, it remains a low, single-storey building within a generously sized residential plot. The reorientation does not project built development into previously open countryside; it rearranges the same building envelope within the existing curtilage. The absence of a detached garage further limits built form. There is therefore no material loss of openness compared with the lawful baseline.

4.3 Landscape character

The previous landscape reason referred to consolidation of sporadic development and erosion of spacious wooded character. The revised proposal cannot reasonably be characterised in that way: it replaces an existing dwelling with the same amount of built footprint, retains a single-storey profile and leaves the overwhelming majority of the plot open and green. The spacing to neighbouring dwellings, wooded boundaries and garden character are maintained. The proposal conserves the characteristics identified by Policy CS12 rather than consolidating development through additional mass.

4.4 Ecology

The resubmission is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), prepared by Bass Ecology. The PEA records that the affected

scrub/ruderal vegetation is of low ecological value; no evidence of badgers, great crested newts, hazel dormice or reptiles was found; and no removal of the western hedgerow, mature oak or other trees is proposed. It recommends ecological supervision and a precautionary two-stage cut during site clearance, together with timing demolition outside the nesting-bird season unless preceded by a nesting-bird check.

The revised PRA records potential access points but, having regard to their exposed and draughty nature, the limited shelter available and the absence of droppings, staining, feeding remains or other field evidence, assesses the bungalow as having low suitability for roosting bats. In accordance with current good-practice guidance, one dusk emergence survey is recommended during the appropriate May-August survey period before demolition. Any necessary mitigation or licensing requirements arising from that survey will be followed. A sensitive lighting scheme and integral biodiversity enhancements can be secured by condition.

5. Development plan and material considerations

Policy / guidance	Relevance to the proposal
NPPF (August 2026) GB6-GB7	GB7(1)(b) treats same-use replacement buildings that are not materially larger as not inappropriate Green Belt development. GB6 requires openness and Green Belt purposes to be considered.
NPPF DP1-DP4	Requires high-quality, context-led, functional and sustainable design.
NPPF N1-N6	Requires protection and enhancement of the natural environment, supported by proportionate ecological evidence and mitigation.
Core Strategy CS02	Directs the scale and distribution of development and protects the Green Belt. The proposal engages an express Green Belt replacement-building exception.
Core Strategy CS11	Requires safe access and appropriate parking. The established access is retained and adequate on-site parking remains available.
Core Strategy CS12	Protects landscape character and biodiversity. The spacious, wooded plot character and mature boundary features are retained.
Core Strategy CS19	Requires development to integrate with local character and safeguard amenity. The low-rise replacement respects the varied detached character of Beechwood Drive.
Saved Policy C12	Seeks similar-scale replacement dwellings in the countryside. The revised footprint and scale are like-for-like.

6. Design, amenity and highways

The previous officer reports accepted that a replacement dwelling could be accommodated without unacceptable neighbour impacts and found the design of the earlier dwelling

acceptable in principle. They also accepted that the plot could provide adequate amenity space and parking. The current scheme is no larger and remains single storey; it therefore presents no greater effects in these respects.

The broad relationship with Nos. 42 and 44 remains generous. A single-storey building, combined with the existing separation and boundary treatment, avoids unacceptable overlooking, dominance, loss of outlook or loss of daylight. Existing vehicular access is retained. Refuse storage is shown close to the entrance, and secure cycle storage and final refuse-enclosure details can be secured by condition.

7. Sustainability and self-build

Replacement of an obsolete bungalow with a modern home provides an opportunity to improve fabric efficiency, airtightness, insulation, glazing, heating efficiency and water performance. The dwelling will be designed to meet current Building Regulations and can incorporate low-energy lighting, water-efficient fittings and electric-vehicle charging.

The dwelling is intended as a self-build home for the applicant, who will have primary input into its design and layout. The statutory biodiversity gain exemption is relied upon only insofar as all legal requirements for the self-build exemption are met; the ecological protection and enhancement commitments in this statement apply regardless.

8. Planning balance and conclusion

This is not the previously refused enlarged replacement in another guise. The decisive revision is straightforward and measurable: the existing built footprint and low single-storey scale are retained like-for-like, with reorientation only. The proposal therefore responds directly to the first and second refusal reasons and meets the current Green Belt replacement-building exception in NPPF policy GB7(1)(b).

With no additional dwelling, no materially larger building and no detached garage, there is no material reduction in Green Belt openness. The generous and wooded character of the plot is preserved. The accompanying PEA and PRA address the ecological baseline and establish the further bat-survey and precautionary working requirements that will govern demolition and site clearance.

Read as a whole, the proposal is a proportionate and policy-compliant replacement of an established dwelling. Planning permission should therefore be granted, subject to appropriately worded conditions securing materials, landscaping, ecology, lighting, refuse/cycle storage and drainage details.

Document schedule

- T1343-B02-000 - Existing Block Plan;
- T1343-B03-000 - Proposed Block Plan;
- Beechwood Drive Preliminary Ecological Appraisal - Bass Ecology;
- 43 Beechwood, Meopham Preliminary Roost Assessment - Bass Ecology;
- Decision Notice and Delegated Officer Report - application 20251223; and
- Decision Notice and Delegated Officer Report - application 20260373.