

Graveley to be destroyed

Dr Desiree Scott, Parish Councillor for Graveley

We are now heading to the last date by which public complaints can be made about the Main Modifications carried out by North Herts District Council to its Local Plan 2011-2031, that is the 4th March 2019.

Complaints have to be made of a standard that Her Majesty's inspector will find persuasive.

The developers and North Herts District Council will make millions of pounds if the plan goes through, so almost everything is biased against us.

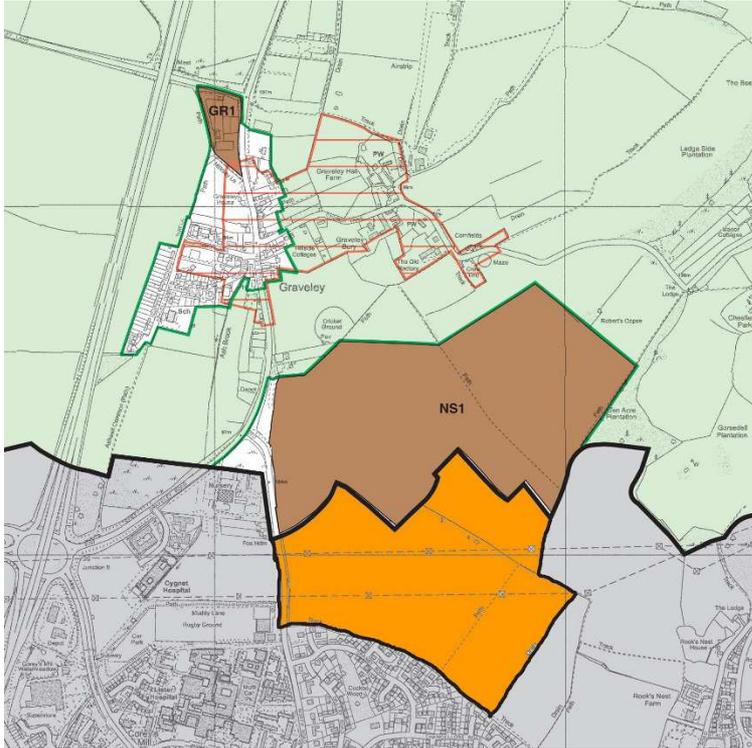
Complaints can only be made against the changes to the original plan that are detailed in a document, several hundred pages long, on their website called Main Modifications.

However, the biggest problem that has been noticed by the Letchworth based group, 'Save The World's First Garden City', of which I am the ecology officer, arguably is not in the Main Modifications. However it is so great a problem, and was not discussed adequately at the Planning Inquiry, so that we may be able to press to have it more adequately considered.

Although from the official NHDC map it appears that our village is separated by Green Belt from the massive 1,700 dwellings of development site NS1 (brown) plus the Stevenage Local Plan site (dark orange) on the maps, actually 1-17 and 2 and 4 High Street will be dominated by those two combined sites.

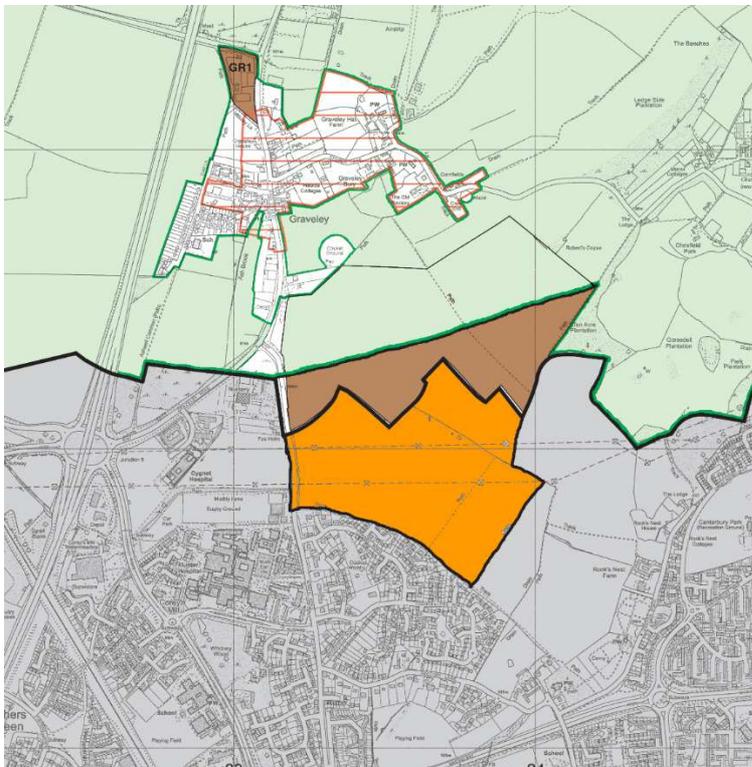
As you can see NS1 will extend very close to our Conservation area, marked by red hatching. The green outlined area of our village is one in which village cramming will be allowed because we are classed in the draft Local Plan as an 'A' village in which 'general development' will be allowed.

NS1 is proposed to come within less than half a mile from the nearest points of our conservation area.



Map 1 – The village of Graveley as envisaged by North Herts District Council and Stevenage Borough Council

Looking to the future, I propose to deter Stevenage from swamping our community, NS1 should be reduced in size as shown on map two.



Map 2 - Proposed reduction of NS1, the real settlement boundary of the village marked. But, by using this real boundary, though pointing out the coalescence with Stevenage, it puts the village in danger of massive infilling with houses.

There is a lot in the Main Modifications about the Green Belt, and one of the reasons that Graveley has been downgraded is that it is considered to be of 'limited' historic interest. The 'Great North Road' runs through the village. This road is hundreds of years old, and many books have been written about it. Graveley is in the Domesday book, its history goes back so far. We need to complain about the 'false facts' about the village.

Main Modification 23 discusses the fact that the Green Belt no longer 'washes' over the village, and the creation of the 'settlement boundaries'. This means that any land within the settlement boundary can be crammed full with houses.

These are facts to confront Her Majesty's Planning Inspector and our MP Bim Afolami.

Biodiversity is another fact based argument. I have heard people living in the village saying that there is no wildlife around Graveley. Granted, herds of wildebeest do not migrate down Church Lane, nor lions sun themselves at the side of the High Street, but the area is full of wild animals and plants appropriate to Hertfordshire countryside. The most highly protected of these found in the proposed building sites are:

1. Cuckoo
2. Yellowhammer
3. Reed Bunting
4. Hedgehog
5. European Hare
6. Grasshopper Warbler
7. Spotted Flycatcher
8. House Sparrow
9. Grey Partridge
10. Lapwing

All of these are with the highest level of protection by being on the Biodiversity Action Plan UK list of Priority Species.

11. Skylark, protected under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 - Species of Principal Importance in England (section 41)
12. Monkshood (a plant)
13. *Candidula gigaxii* (a snail)
14. Rolph's Door Snail

These three protected by being 'Nationally Scarce' in *The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain* - 2006 Cheffings, C. and Farrell, L. (Editors) A tool for assessing the current conservation status of vascular plants on SSSIs in England, ENRR 690 (Leach & Rusbridge) or *A Review of the Non-Marine Mollusca of Great Britain: Species Status No. 17*, (March 2014) M.B. Seddon, I.J. Killeen & A.P. Fowles, Evidence Report No. 14.

These species have been logged as present on the National Biodiversity Network online Atlas, as recommended for use by 'Gov.UK (2016) Protected species; how to review planning application.'

Please use these data for complaints. It is solidly fact based. Only fact based complaints will have any effect.

The developers have a duty to provide social amenities, but they have already been put forward for the new communities, our 140 houses are insignificant in comparison to the 1,700 due to be built. Do not believe in the future building of a Sports Centres and a luxury Community Centre, we will get almost nothing as well as having our community destroyed. The money will not be available for us, it is for NS1 and 'north of Stevenage'.