

MEREHAM – APPEALS DISMISSED

The proposed development at Mereham will not go forward. Following the Public Inquiry held before a Planning Inspector in the spring, the Secretary of State has dismissed the appeals by Stannifer Developments. A decision on whether costs will be awarded to the three planning authorities involved (East Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council) who joined to fight the appeals has yet to be made.

The Appeals were A against ECDC's refusal of planning permission for the settlement, B against SCDC's refusal of permission for related highway improvements and C against CCC's failure to give notice within the prescribed period on an application for lawful use for highway works.

The Secretary of State's conclusions, supporting the Inspector's recommendations, are contained in a letter to the Appellants, copied to the Parish Council as a result of our representations at the Inquiry. The papers can be read in full at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/decisionsplanning/secretarystate/recentsecretary/merehamsettlement/>

A précis of the 249pp, kindly supplied by ECDC, is as follows:

Overall conclusions on Appeals A, B & C:

776. In the light of all the foregoing, I conclude that Appeal A should be dismissed, for the following reasons:

- the appellant's housing supply case is not so compelling as to justify major development in substantial conflict with relevant policies of the development plan such as ECDLP Policies 1(iii), 9 and 86 and with Policy CSR1 of emerging EEP;
 - * the harmful impact of the proposed settlement on the landscape and settlement pattern of the Wilburton-Stretham area would be contrary to LP Policies 82, 86 and 87 and unlikely to further the objectives of LP Policies 204 and 213, and
 - * the development would cause increased traffic congestion on the A10 which would not only be unsustainable in the life of existing communities and businesses in the area and proposed community at Mereham but also prejudicial to the effective operation of the public transport service the new settlement is intended to support, contrary to the objectives of RPG6 Policy 27.

777. I conclude that Appeal B should be dismissed for the following reasons:

- * the proposed alterations to the A10 would lead to increased traffic congestion detrimental to the life of existing communities in the A10 corridor and their ability to benefit fully from sustainable travel choices contrary to RPG6 Policy 27;
- * the A10 proposals would in any event be unjustified in their own right if the Mereham new settlement proposal did not proceed, and
- * the proposals would on the evidence provided harmfully impact on the landscape character of the A10 between Milton and the proposed new settlement, which would be contrary to the objectives of Policy NE/4 of the adopted South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies.

778. Appeal C should be dismissed for the reasons given in paragraphs 720 to 727 above.

779. If either Appeal A or Appeal B is allowed, then planning permission should be granted subject to consideration being given to the conditions set out in Appendix 3 to this report.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

780. I recommend:

- * that Appeal A be dismissed.
- * that Appeal B be dismissed.
- * that Appeal C be dismissed and a Certificate of Lawful Development be not issued.