

Broke Hill Golf Club – appeal dismissed

Update from the Resident's Association

The Inspector's report on the appeal against the decision of Sevenoaks Council to refuse permission for the development at Broke Hill was issued on 31 January.

The Inspector comprehensively dismissed the appeal. He noted that the scheme would have many benefits, such as the provision of market and affordable housing, educational and sports facilities, jobs and increased spending in existing local services and shops, arising from the new residents. However, set against these benefits would be harms to the Green Belt including harm to its essential purposes and harm to openness arising from the proposed scheme. These would result in conflict with local and national planning policy which aim to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas and assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The Inspector was particularly concerned that the development would effectively close the gap between Halstead and Pratt's Bottom.

He went on to say that the scheme would result in a significant rise in traffic movements by cars which would be counter to Government policy. This requires that new development is focussed on locations which are or can be made sustainable through reducing the need to travel.

Overall, the Inspector concluded that the harm caused by the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against Government policy.

There is now a six-week period during which the developers, Quinn Estates, could challenge the decision by way of judicial review in the courts. However, this could only succeed if the developer could show the Inspector had made an error in some way. The decision looks to be well thought out and carefully considered so the chances of any challenge being launched seem slim. The developers will no doubt be considering their options and the Residents Association will provide further updates as and when further details emerge.