



Partnership for Urban South Hampshire

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Hazel Blears MP
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Elland House
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Dear Secretary of State

Proposed Ecotown at Micheldever

I am aware that proposals have been submitted to you for Micheldever Station to be designated as an Ecotown, so I am writing to you to inform you of our concerns that this would prejudice the successful realisation of the South Hampshire New Growth Point.

I chair the Joint Committee of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) which comprises the eleven authorities whose area, or part thereof, is within South Hampshire. PUSH has set itself a target of raising the rate of economic growth in South Hampshire from around 2.75% per annum now to 3.5% by 2026. PUSH is committed to delivering the new business development and housebuilding which is needed to achieve that economic growth target. This means 80,000 new homes during 2006-2026 which is around 20% above the current RPG housebuilding rate. Reflecting this, PUSH was selected in 2005 as a New Growth Point.

Achievement of this growth aspiration will require significant public and private investment. An Ecotown at Micheldever Station could be a competing magnet for such investment. Consequently PUSH advised the Examination-in-Public of the draft South East Plan that substantial development at Micheldever or elsewhere in the rural central area of Hampshire would undermine the growth and regeneration of South Hampshire. The EiP Panel concurred with PUSH's assessment and judged that a new settlement at Micheldever would "have a significant impact on the South Hampshire sub-regional strategy by diverting resources away from the sub-region and undermining the regeneration aims for South Hampshire" (Panel report paragraph 26.33). As you probably know, the Panel concluded that for a host of reasons there was insufficient justification for a new settlement at Micheldever and the most likely scenario is that it would become a focus for long distance commuting, not a sustainable community.



I would ask you to take into account PUSH's opposition to this Ecotown proposal and its potentially prejudicial impact on the South Hampshire Growth Point when you decide on the locations in which Ecotowns will be designated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean Woodward". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Séan Woodward
Chairman
Partnership for Urban South Hampshire