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Dear Alan

1 0 NOV 2014

Thank you for your letter of 17 September about two appeals that have been recovered for decision by the Secretary of State. The appeals concern large-scale housing proposals at Little Easton near Great Dunmow and at Eisenham.

I understand that the inquiry into the appeals is currently adjourned, and that it will resume on 24 November 2014 for one day, so that closing submissions can be presented to the Inspector by the appeal parties. The Inspector then intends to close the inquiry and commence the preparation of his report. Once the inquiry has formally closed, the Planning Inspectorate will write to all parties to announce the date by when the Secretary of State's decisions on the appeals will be issued.

I have noted your thoughts on how the proposals sit with the Local Plan, and your views on this will be taken into account by the Secretary of State in due course. In the meantime I hope you will understand that I cannot comment on either scheme as I must not prejudice the Inspector's consideration of the evidence, or the preparation of his report.

The Secretary of State has wide discretion to recover appeals, and he decided to recover both appeals on the grounds that they involve housing proposals of more than 150 units, or are on sites of over 5ha (the Fairfield proposal at Eisenham involves 800 dwellings and the Land Securities proposal at Little Easton involves 600-700 dwellings). It would not be appropriate for me to comment further, but I can assure you that they will be determined in light of all the facts.

A copy of your letter and this reply will be sent to the appeal parties, and to the Inspector, so that the views expressed can be taken into account.

BRANDON LEWIS MP