



16 JULY 2009

**GOVERNMENT BACKS VISION FOR ELSENHAM AS POSSIBLE
SECOND-WAVE ECO-TOWN**

The Fairfield Partnership has welcomed the announcement by the Rt Hon John Healey MP, Minister for Housing, that land to the north east of Elsenham may still be considered as a potential new Eco-town.

Steve Biart, Director of Strategic Land at The Fairfield Partnership said:

“We are pleased that proposals for Elsenham may still be considered by the Government as part of its second wave of the Eco-town programme. We will need to look closely at the timescales involved with this second wave of development, and we remain fully committed to delivering sustainable development at Elsenham either as part of the Eco-town process or as part of Uttlesford’s Core Strategy. Development at Elsenham represents an unrivalled opportunity to provide a new community in Essex. It is one of the most sustainable locations for new development in the country and it has the capacity to help address the region’s severe housing shortage.”

Eco-towns are the Government’s programme for delivering new settlements in England to the highest standards of design and sustainability. The decision by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) endorses the strategic merits of expanding Elsenham into a vibrant new market town in the south-west of Uttlesford.

In addition to the Eco-town’s programme, The Fairfield Partnership remains fully committed to progressing the plans through Uttlesford District Council’s (UDC) Local Development Framework. A new community of 3,000 new homes has been backed by the authority as its Preferred Option within its emerging Core Strategy, and possibility that Elsenham may still be considered as a potential Eco-town further endorses the strategic merits of the area as a highly sustainable location for future growth within UDC’s Local Development Framework.

Steve Biart added:

“We will continue to work closely with Uttlesford District Council to progress its Core Strategy, which states that development at Elsenham is the most sustainable solution to Uttlesford’s housing needs. We are committed to this process and to engaging with the local authority and the community to take these plans forward. We believe that development at Elsenham

would bring significant benefits in terms of low carbon development and comprehensive infrastructure, all designed to the highest standards.”

Uttlesford District Council has stated in its Core Strategy that concentrating new homes in a single location will help to alleviate pressure on historic settlements in the district, which include Great Dunmow, Stansted Mountfitchet and Saffron Walden. Piecemeal development across the district would also not bring with it any obligation to provide facilities like schools and healthcare – unlike a new community at Elsenham, which would include new schools and other community facilities, as well as jobs, and public transport improvements.

Extensive consultation on the proposals was undertaken by The Fairfield Partnership in October 2008, and the plans have been developed and refined as a result of this process. Further studies will be undertaken in summer and autumn 2009.

Further information is available at www.elsenham-info.co.uk

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For further information please contact Paul Teverson or Alice Hammond at Camargue: 020 7636 7366 or email ahammond@camarguepr.com

Notes to editors:

The plans for a new market town at Elsenham include:

- A new transport interchange, station square and significant improvements to Elsenham railway station
- A vibrant town centre to include a market square suitable for concerts, public events and farmers’ markets and surrounded by cafes, bars and restaurants
- New employment uses, recreation facilities and shops
- A town park at the heart of the new community, set to include an ‘Elsenham Discovery Centre’ a community building that will provide an educational resource about low-carbon living and the environment and tell the story of the new community
- The ‘Elsenham Green Ring’ – set to surround the new community and provide opportunities for leisure and recreation, nature and conservation, sustainable drainage systems, allotments and orchards, as well as the growth of food locally
- 45% of the development (excluding private gardens) is set to be green space – comprising the Elsenham Green Ring, town park and other open green space
- A secondary school and two primary schools together with healthcare facilities and a community sports hub
- A wide variety of new homes, including up to 40% affordable housing for families and young people – for social rent, key workers or made available through ‘shared equity schemes’

- 'Walkable neighbourhoods' where walking and cycling is encouraged through provision of safe cycle routes and other features to promote healthy living and low car use
- Transport services including a fully-funded, new and frequent bus route linking the new community with Stansted Mountfitchet, Bishop's Stortford and Stansted Airport
- Measures to improve the existing road network and local road junctions
- An innovative Energy Strategy centred around a 'community energy network' to include renewable energy sources.