

ELSENHAM UPDATE

A VIBRANT NEW TOWN FOR UTTLESFORD

Summer / Autumn 2009



Introduction

This newsletter provides an update on The Fairfield Partnership's vision to create an exemplar sustainable development at Elsenham.

It contains feedback on the public consultation events held across the district in October 2008 and explains how the plans have since moved forward.

In addition, new documents have been uploaded onto the scheme website, www.elsenham-info.co.uk, which we hope you will find informative.

Our vision

The Fairfield Partnership is proposing a vibrant new small market town in the south-west of Uttlesford, which will include a full range of services and infrastructure to help meet present and future needs. This includes primary and secondary school provision, shops, health services, offices and other employment uses, and a comprehensive network of open spaces.

The land has been selected by Uttlesford District Council as part of its Core Strategy Preferred Option 4, for a sustainable new community of up to 3,000 homes.

The Government's Eco-town process has also identified north east Elsenham as a potential new Eco-town location for 5,000 homes, which would replace the 3,000 home option. In July 2009, the Government noted that Elsenham could be part of a 'second wave' of Eco-towns to be underway by 2020.

A decision on any planning application submitted for either the Core Strategy or Eco-town options will be taken by Uttlesford District Council, and an outline of the possible progress of the plans is provided in the timeline opposite.

The Fairfield Partnership is committed to keeping local people fully informed about the proposals as they develop. Consultation is an ongoing process, and we know it is fundamental to the development of a successful masterplan for Elsenham.

Timeline

Initial consultation and concept work by The Fairfield Partnership	2004 to 2008
Public exhibition road shows and consultation	October 2008
The Government's Eco-town announcement	July 2009
Progress of Uttlesford's 'Core Strategy'	2009 to 2011
Further consultation by The Fairfield Partnership	2009 to 2010
Progression to the submission of a planning application	2010 to 2011



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Update on consultation

October 2008 saw a series of public exhibitions take place across Uttlesford, including events at both Henham and Elsenham. 30,000 leaflets were delivered to every household in the District publicising the exhibitions, and prominent notices were placed in the local press.

A total of 757 people attended the five events.

The exhibitions gave local residents the opportunity to find out more about the plans. A total of 187 questionnaires were returned, and other feedback mechanisms were made available, including a postage-paid reply form, a visitors' book and an online response form.

The key points raised by local residents related to transport, services and the general requirement for a new settlement at Elsenham. A number of constructive points were made, and The Fairfield Partnership has spent the time since the events analysing this feedback.

Why Uttlesford needs new homes

A number of comments raised at the exhibitions related to the need for development at Elsenham and why Elsenham had been chosen as the location.

Despite the current economic downturn, the requirement for more homes in Uttlesford and across the country remains strong. Housing charity Shelter has projected that by 2021 there will be a need for 36 per cent more households in Uttlesford than there were in 1991, mainly due to the rise in life expectancy and the increase in people choosing to live alone, reflecting national

trends. There is a very real local need in the area for more homes – development at Elsenham, which will also deliver much-needed infrastructure investment, will provide these homes.

Following years of rising house prices, it remains difficult in the current economic downturn for people to secure a mortgage to allow them to move to a new home, or even to purchase their first home. The provision of new homes at Elsenham will increase the supply of housing in the District. By providing a range of house types and tenures, including shared ownership, this will help make housing more affordable for local people.

The future development of Elsenham – whether 3,000 or 5,000 homes – will contribute towards Uttlesford District Council's requirement to provide 8,000 new homes in the district by 2021, and to provide for further housing beyond this date. Most would be for private sale but up to 1,500 homes would be affordable homes, including low-cost home-ownership schemes. Many of these could be designated for local people.

By focusing development in one place, a new community at Elsenham would create the critical mass needed to deliver and support the provision of much-needed associated infrastructure, such as new schools and health care, without placing a strain on existing local services. Dispersed development does not offer this investment in infrastructure for both existing and future communities. Elsenham is also a sustainable location for growth in the District because of its position between Stansted, Cambridge and London, where it benefits from excellent rail and highways networks.

Schools

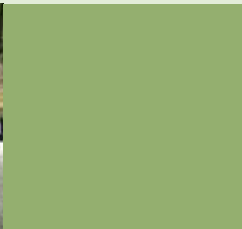
The exhibitions highlighted that a full range of education facilities should be a key part of the proposed development at Elsenham. People also noted that any new facilities should be available for use by the wider community.

A new secondary school would be provided as part of the development, which would also include a community sports hub, making sports facilities available to the wider community outside of school hours.

A maximum of three new primary schools would also be provided.

Further discussions will now take place with the local education authority and other stakeholders to decide the best way forward, where the new schools could be located and at what point in the phasing of the development they would be in place to ensure they complement existing education facilities in Uttlesford.

In addition to schools, a GP health centre will also be delivered as part of the new community.



Ensuring adequate transport provision

Access to and from Elsenham was one of the key topics raised by local residents during October's public exhibitions. Many respondents requested more detailed information on the transport and access plans, and The Fairfield Partnership and its project team have been continuing to undertake detailed transport studies following the exhibitions, in consultation with Essex County Council and the Highways Agency.

In the feedback received from residents, the importance of a frequent bus service to surrounding towns and villages was widely noted. The Fairfield Partnership's proposals are based around a new service with frequent buses on a circular route linking the new community with Elsenham station, Stansted airport, Stansted Mountfitchet and Bishop's Stortford. The bus service would include Real Time Passenger Information to allow users to plan their journeys. The Fairfield Partnership is currently negotiating with operators of the existing bus service regarding the provision of this service. Improved cycle and pedestrian networks are also proposed.

The need to improve the rail service was also apparent during the consultation. Network Rail is due to increase the number of carriages on the Cambridge to London line from 8 carriages to 12, which will involve extensions to the platforms of the stations along the line. This is due for completion in 2011.

As part of The Fairfield Partnership's proposals, Elsenham station would be upgraded to include a new transport interchange with high quality bus links, a taxi rank and drop-off point, cycle parking and improved car parking.

Green spaces

Detailed feedback was received from residents at the public exhibitions on proposals for the 'Elsenham Green Ring' which would surround the new community and would feature around 104 hectares of open green space.

People told us that they welcomed the Green Ring - which would be provided in addition to the planned open spaces and parks within the new community, including the new Town Park. Residents noted that it could be used by the existing community and would ensure separation from the historic village of Henham.

The Fairfield Partnership believes there is tremendous potential to improve the biodiversity value across the site through the Green Ring and other proposals.

The plans will include areas for nature conservation, places for informal recreation and wetland and water areas for sustainable drainage and flood alleviation. The Green Ring would also feature play areas, orchards and meadows, sports pitches, and allotments.

With such a large number of open areas proposed as part of the plans, approximately 45 per cent of the development's area would remain open green space. This figure increases further when you include private gardens.

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Website updates

We hope you are able to visit our website, www.elsenham-info.co.uk, and please do let us know your thoughts via the online feedback facility.

Frequently Asked Questions

A Frequently Asked Questions document has been uploaded onto the Elsenham website along with other new documents. We hope this responds to the most common questions asked during the exhibitions. A selection is provided below.

Who is The Fairfield Partnership and is the land yours to build on?

The Fairfield Partnership is a partnership between Fairview Strategic Land Ltd, a subsidiary of Fairview New Homes, and Marchfield Developments Ltd, an established, family-owned development company. The land proposed for development is under The Fairfield Partnership's control, and the company has a long term option on the site.

Why are you proposing to build these homes in a recession?

The timescales involved in the proposals are lengthy, and the need for new homes is not negated by the economic downturn – it remains. Development would take place over a twenty-year period, over which time we are likely to witness variations in the housing market.

How will you ensure there is adequate water provision when water is already in short supply?

Our proposal would employ high standards of water efficiency to manage and minimise the demand placed on any new supplies. Initial consultation with water companies confirms the ability to provide new supplies to the site.

You are proposing areas of employment on the site. Where will the new jobs come from?

Proposed new employment opportunities are planned around the railway station to promote access by train and bus as well as car. The number of jobs created across the site are proposed to provide employment opportunities for at least half the economically active population of the development. We will be offering a range of employment facilities such as office and research and development facilities to light industrial facilities. The range of activities is the subject of study in the form of a Local Economic Development Strategy to ensure that jobs are delivered alongside new homes.

What is the 'Elsenham Co-Operative Limited' (ECL)?

The day-to-day delivery and maintenance of services and infrastructure is proposed to be via a consumer owned sustainable community enterprise, the ECL. The portfolio of services operated by ECL is not fixed, but could cover a range of areas including bundled utility services (including ICT and energy networks), transport and travel planning, health and children's services, promoting enterprise and maintenance of the urban fabric and the Elsenham Green Ring. Control of ECL will increasingly pass from The Fairfield Partnership to new and existing residents as the development progresses.

Next steps

The Fairfield Partnership is continuing to work up its masterplan for delivering sustainable growth at Elsenham. Uttlesford District Council's Core Strategy is expected to progress further over the coming months as are the Government's plans for a second wave of Eco-towns. Whichever option is chosen to deliver much-needed new homes and facilities at Elsenham, The Fairfield Partnership is committed to involving the local community at every stage, and further consultation is expected in 2010.

Contact details

For further information, please call **020 7323 3544**, e-mail us at consultation@elsenham-info.co.uk or write to us at:

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