



August 2009

## The Fairfield Partnership – Vision for North-East Elsenham

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Who is The Fairfield Partnership?**

The Fairfield Partnership is a joint venture between Marchfield Developments Ltd and Fairview New Homes Ltd. The Fairfield Partnership is a specialist land promotion company, rather than a traditional developer or house builder.

#### **What are The Fairfield Partnership's proposals for Elsenham?**

The Partnership is promoting the growth of Elsenham into a new market town for Uttlesford. Our vision for land at Elsenham embraces two potential scales of growth:

- Either a thriving new community of 3,000 new homes – currently Uttlesford District Council's preferred option for housing growth – as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) process.
- Or a vibrant new Eco-town of up to 5,000 new homes under the Government's Eco-towns initiative.

Whether under plans for 3,000 or 5,000 new homes, future development at Elsenham would create the critical mass needed to support a comprehensive range of employment opportunities, primary and secondary schools, shops, health and other services.

#### **Where would the proposed settlement be located?**

The Fairfield Partnership controls over 250 hectares of land to the north and north-east of Elsenham in the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area in the parishes of Henham, Elsenham and Ugley Green. The land is set between the two villages of Elsenham and Henham, to the east of Elsenham railway station on the West Anglia Rail Line linking Cambridge to London.

#### **Why Elsenham? What makes Elsenham a sustainable site for new development?**

Elsenham is well located within the north / south corridor created by the M11 and the West Anglia Rail line. Land to the north-east of Elsenham enjoys easy access to Stansted Airport, a key economic driver within the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area and is in close proximity to the A120 trunk road and the M11 motorway.



The site also adjoins Elsenham station and has good rail links to London, Cambridge, Bishop's Stortford and Harlow. Good access to the rail network is key for sustainable development, offering a choice of travel modes and reducing the traffic impacts and carbon emissions associated with developments that are solely reliant on the private car.

The Fairfield Partnership is proposing a 'linked' new settlement, connecting Elsenham to employment opportunities at Stansted Airport, shops and services in Bishop's Stortford and cultural attractions in Stansted Mountfitchet by a high-frequency orbital bus route.

The Fairfield Partnership's bus proposals are based around a new service with frequent high-quality buses on a direct 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.

### **How does this fit into Uttlesford District Council's Local Development Framework Preferred Options?**

The Fairfield Partnership's land holding in Elsenham provides an unparalleled opportunity to meet Uttlesford District Council's housing needs. Under the East of England Plan, Uttlesford District Council is required to provide at least 8,000 new homes between 2001 and 2024 through its Local Development Framework and further housing beyond this period. The Council's current Preferred Option is for a new settlement of 3,000 homes north-east of Elsenham, with a further 750 homes at larger towns within Uttlesford District and 250 homes in local villages.

The Fairfield Partnership believes that Uttlesford District Council's Preferred Option (Option Four) offers the opportunity to create an attractive, vibrant and ecologically sustainable market town with a strong sense of community to reflect existing Essex towns. The settlement would provide comprehensive new infrastructure to support new homes, including new jobs, shops, and services such as healthcare and education facilities, transport infrastructure and open spaces.

In September and October 2009 the Council will consult further on housing distribution options. Publication of the pre-submission Core Strategy consultation is proposed in April/May 2010 and submission scheduled for November 2010. The latest Local Development Scheme indicates that the Core Strategy could be adopted by October 2011. The Fairfield Partnership is committed to working with Uttlesford District Council throughout the Core Strategy.



### **What kinds of homes are planned for the development?**

The Fairfield Partnership's landholding has the capacity to accommodate either 3,000 or 5,000 new homes at a range of densities. Both settlement options would include up to 40 per cent affordable housing in line with Uttlesford District Council's policy to meet the need for affordable housing in the District. There is likely to be a range of different densities depending on the location within the new settlement, with apartments situated towards the centre of the market town and detached homes with large gardens located in lower density areas. Overall it is envisaged that family homes with gardens will be the predominant housing type.

### **Why did the Fairfield Partnership also enter the Eco-town process?**

The Government's Eco-town programme offers an unrivalled opportunity to deliver a sustainable new community that offers a solution to 21<sup>st</sup> Century living and to Uttlesford's housing needs. The Fairfield Partnership's Eco-town bid was shortlisted by the Government in April 2008.

### **What is an Eco-town?**

An Eco-town is a new settlement or an extension to an existing settlement, which aims to be zero carbon.

According to the Department of Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement: Eco-towns, *'Eco-towns should have the functional characteristics of a new settlement; that is to be of sufficient size and have the necessary services to establish their own character and identity and so have the critical mass necessary to be capable of self containment whilst delivering much higher standards of sustainability'*. Suitable Eco-town locations should be able to make provision for a minimum of 5,000 homes.

The full list of criteria for potential Eco-towns is available [here](#). In July 2009 the Government chose four Eco-town locations in the 'first wave' of Eco-towns to be supported by Government funding and considered as development options by the respective local planning authorities. The Fairfield Partnership's Eco-town bid for north-east Elsenham was not chosen in this first wave but was one of two bids mentioned as potential 'second-wave' Eco-towns. The Government has said that these 'second-wave' Eco-towns could come forward by 2020. Government funding has been offered to Uttlesford District Council to assist further assessment and technical analysis of the Eco-town proposal. The decision on whether to include the proposed Eco-town for north-east Elsenham within the Core Strategy will be taken by Uttlesford District Council.



The Fairfield Partnership is committed to working with Uttlesford District Council throughout the Core Strategy and Eco-town process.

**What does ‘zero carbon’ mean?**

In the Department for Communities and Local Government’s Planning Policy Statement: Eco-towns, the definition of zero carbon is that over a year the net carbon dioxide emissions from all energy use within the buildings on the eco-town settlement as a whole are zero or below. This considers net reductions from energy efficiency as well as low - and zero-carbon generation technologies. The full definition of zero carbon in Eco-towns is available [here](#).

**Will plans to create a second runway at Stansted Airport affect the planned new settlement?**

Plans for a new community north-east of Elsenham do not rely upon the expansion of Stansted Airport for the provision of new jobs or infrastructure to support the proposals, nor will the expansion of Elsenham be a catalyst for the expansion of the Airport. Should the second runway proposals go ahead the operator would be obliged to provide alternative access arrangements to link local roads to Junction 8 of the M11. These new routes would also accommodate any traffic generated by a new community north-east of Elsenham.

**How will The Fairfield Partnership consult with local residents?**

The Fairfield Partnership held a series of public exhibitions on its proposals for north-east of Elsenham in October 2008, which were held on a number of days at Stansted Airport, Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Elsenham and Henham. A consultation questionnaire was available to all those who attended the exhibitions and was made available on the Save our Villages website. The Fairfield Partnership is incorporating constructive feedback received on the proposals into the evolving plans for north-east Elsenham.

Further consultations are proposed as the plans develop toward the submission of a planning application, the timing of which will be determined by the Local Development Framework/Eco-towns processes.

**How are decisions made about where new housing in Uttlesford should be located and what processes are involved?**

Uttlesford District Council, as outlined in the East of England Plan, must provide new homes in the District by 2024. The Council’s Core Strategy sets out how this housing allocation will be met and the Council has presently selected Option 4 as its Preferred Option, allocating land for a 3,000 home settlement to land to the north-east of Elsenham, between the villages of Elsenham



and Henham. The remaining 1,200 homes will be dispersed throughout the rest of the District as smaller, clustered developments.

Uttlesford District Council will also determine any planning application made for a new community of any scale on land north-east of Elsenham.

**Why focus development in one location in Uttlesford?**

Concentrating development in a single location is the most sustainable solution to Uttlesford's long term housing needs and will alleviate pressure on the District's historic settlements like Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet. Its size also makes the provision of significant infrastructure possible, which includes investment to deliver new schools, healthcare facilities and community buildings, as well as transport networks which will also benefit existing residents. A single new settlement, rather than a dispersed housing solution, also enables us to put resources into environmental initiatives, including nature conservation, locally grown food and landscape improvements and new energy, water supply and drainage infrastructure.

Concentrated development also allows for a balance of new homes with employment and retail uses in the new community, so that residents can live, work and shop in the same place, giving them a better quality of life, as well as reducing car dependence and the community's carbon footprint. Dispersed smaller developments in the District will not reap the same infrastructure investment and could overburden existing local education and health services.

**Why is the dispersal of housing around villages in the District unsustainable in the long term?**

Dispersal of housing in small settlements, as extensions to existing towns and villages, does not bring the infrastructure and investment benefit that larger, concentrated development brings. A series of smaller developments can, over a wider area, put a strain on hospitals, schools and local services that do not have to be financially offset by the developers involved. Dispersing development in this way will also increase road traffic and will not support the provision of high-quality new public transport services to offer a viable alternative to car use.

There is also less scope for road and core infrastructure improvements, such as water supply, and the impact on the risk of flooding can be cumulative and more difficult to manage than in a larger concentrated settlement.



**Will the development be built in phases?**

Yes. Whether as a 3,000 home LDF settlement or a 5,000 home Eco-town, the construction of the new development will be undertaken in phases. Services and infrastructure will be put in place at appropriate points during the build, to support both new and, in some cases, existing residents.

**What are your transport proposals?**

The Fairfield Partnership is committed to delivering adequate new transport infrastructure required to serve housing growth north-east of Elsenham. This includes a new high-quality bus route using low carbon vehicles with Real Time Passenger Information, as well as necessary road improvements to key links and junctions. The detailed design of any improvements of this kind would be subject to consultation with highways and planning authorities.

A Transport Assessment (TA) was submitted in August 2008 and is currently subject to negotiation with the Highways Authority, Network Rail, Arriva, First Group, Uttlesford District Council, Essex County Council and Hertfordshire County Council. The TA sets out proposals for walking, cycling, public transport and highway network improvements.

The Fairfield Partnership is proposing the redevelopment of Elsenham Station to provide a high-quality public transport interchange, improved bus services, high quality footpath and cycling networks, link roads to the new development, as well as improvements to local roads. In line with the Government's Eco-town criteria, The Fairfield Partnership has worked to ensure that public transport options and service and facility provision are dramatically improved to reduce the car dependency of both existing and future inhabitants of Elsenham and Henham.

A detailed Travel Plan for the new community is being designed to provide information to residents on public transport, car sharing, season tickets and reduced-rate cycle purchase schemes. The Travel Plan would help residents to plan their journeys and make sustainable choices about the way in which they travel.

**How will you ensure there is adequate water provision to the site?**

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. A full water cycle study is in progress, in consultation



with the Environment Agency and Three Valleys Water. This aims to identify the potential for water recycling within the site and sustainable drainage options.

**What benefits will there be for residents of Elsenham and Henham?**

The facilities, open spaces and services that the new development features will provide new amenities available to all existing residents of Elsenham and Henham. The 'Green Ring' which would surround the development will offer allotments, playing fields and open spaces, and there will also be a Town Park within the development itself. Former sandpits in the south part of the site will be retained and managed to form a local nature reserve, and habitat creation will be a key feature of the whole of the Green Ring. A GP surgery, primary schools and a new secondary school, as well as shops and restaurants will all be available to existing and future residents.

The improvements to transport infrastructure will see Elsenham Station redesigned as a high-quality integrated public transport interchange, along with footpaths, cycle routes, improvements to local roads and a high-frequency bus service to Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Mountfitchet and Stansted Airport. In addition, new infrastructure such as heat and power networks and fibre optic networks could have the potential to serve existing communities. The Elsenham Co-operative Limited (a community enterprise which will help run the new settlement) will be open to both existing and future residents and will provide many of the above high quality services for the new and existing communities. The Co-operative will also help generate local jobs and bring people together to help develop the new community.

**What measures are in place to safeguard wildlife and biodiversity?**

The Fairfield Partnership is undertaking a full Environmental Impact Assessment into the north-east Elsenham site. Currently baseline surveys indicate that intensively farmed arable land has relatively limited biodiversity interest. The only exception is the former sandpits area in the southern part of the site, which will be retained as an informal landscape and local nature reserve. The proposals for a 'Green Ring' around the new community as part of the Eco-town option – which will also serve as a buffer for the village of Henham – will provide opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of the site, with special areas designed to provide a network of new and enhanced wildlife habitats. The Green Ring will also be a feature of the 3,000 home settlement option for north-east Elsenham, and would be proportional to the development's size, providing all the key features of the Eco-town Green Ring proposal. The Green Ring will incorporate orchards, meadows and hedgerows which, together with environmentally-friendly growing practices in the allotments, will restore the richness of wildlife which once existed before the modern era of intensive farming.



### **What is the 'Green Ring'?**

Under the Eco-town option for north-east Elsenham, the Green Ring encircles the development and makes up around 45 per cent of the site area. It will comprise of a range of land uses and will include around 15 hectares of playing fields, 14 hectares of children's play areas and informal recreation space, wetland areas, footpaths and cycle routes, allotments and community orchards. Wetland areas will be designed as habitats for wildlife, but will also operate as sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) to manage water on the site and prevent storm water entering surrounding water courses. The traditional rural landscapes of the Green Ring will incorporate a network of footpaths and cycleways which would be accessible for existing as well as new residents.

The Green Ring will also help to maintain the separation between the new community and the nearby village of Henham. However, the footpaths and cycleways which form part of the Green Ring would also improve linkages between the two settlements for pedestrians and cyclists, making access to the facilities, jobs, schools and services located within the new community convenient for existing Henham residents.

### **What is the Elsenham Co-operative Limited?**

The Elsenham Co-operative Limited (ECL) would be a consumer-owned sustainable community enterprise. It is envisaged that ECL will run the Green Ring and manage areas such as allotments, playing fields and orchards on behalf of both the new and existing residents of Elsenham. ECL will also have a potential role in procuring and delivering heat and energy networks, fibre optic networks, transport services, travel planning and promoting economic activity through start-up units.

### **What proposals are in place to ensure separation for the village of Henham?**

The village of Henham will be separated from the new community by the 'Green Ring' to protect its distinct and separate character. Also, particular attention is being paid to maintaining the setting of the Conservation Area, Scheduled Ancient Monument and listed buildings in the north part of the village.



**What will the impact be on residents in Old Mead Lane?**

There are no proposals to alter Old Mead Lane in any way and the Lane's access from Old Mead Road will be retained as existing. It will therefore remain a private road with no additional vehicular traffic although it would link at its eastern end to the proposed footpath and cycle network serving the new community. If north-east Elsenham is chosen as an Eco-town location, the land to the north of Old Mead Lane will be developed as Elsenham Garden Suburb, a landscaped suburb area with its own neighbourhood centre with shops, playing fields and a primary school set around a village green.

**What will be the difference between the 3,000 home settlement option and the 5,000 home Eco-town proposal?**

Both scales of development promote a low carbon sustainable new community supported by new employment opportunities, schools, shops and comprehensive open space and new infrastructure and services. The precise detailed mix of land uses, low and zero carbon technologies and delivery mechanisms will vary to ensure a viable balance of activities in both schemes but the sustainable essence of proposals will remain the same.