

THE FAIRFIELD PARTNERSHIP

05 January 2009

Dear Mr Salvidge

Re: The Fairfield Partnership's proposals for land to the North East of Elsenham

Further to your letter of 17 October 2008, our development team has considered your questions regarding The Fairfield Partnership's proposals for land to the north east of Elsenham. In the following pages, your questions are each addressed in turn. Please accept our apologies for the delay in response.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Alice Hammond

For and on behalf of The Fairfield Partnership

Q1 - How many options are there. In the flyer for the meetings and in the questionnaire, you say that there are two 5,000 house eco town and 3,000 houses LDF. But in your draft transport assessment, you identify a third, 5,000 house "LDF+". I am puzzled by this discrepancy. What is the correct position?

The Fairfield Partnership is promoting two options - either an Eco-town of 5,000 homes or a smaller development of 3,000 homes that would meet all current standards and many Eco-town standards as well, through Uttlesford District Council (UDC's) Local Development Framework (LDF) process. While the Fairfield Partnership has no plans for a 5,000 home scheme to be progressed through the LDF process, the 3,000 home scheme could in theory grow to accommodate 5,000 homes should future generations decide that this is required in years to come. The Fairfield Partnership's transport consultants have taken as a 'worse case scenario' 5,000 homes LDF in order to robustly model transport outcomes and infrastructure requirements.

Q2 - The exhibition seems to focus on the eco-town option and presents all sorts of proposals to respond to the Government's challenges in this 'competition'. You know them better than me, green ring, the Co-operative, high quality bus transport, allotments, town park etc. What I do not find clear is what the other (one or two) options would involve. Would the 5,000 "LDF+" look exactly the same as the Eco-town? Would the 3,000 LDF option look like the eco-town minus the final 2,000 houses. Or would the development look different - if so, in what ways?

The main focus of our exhibitions was to put forward the Eco-town option for 5,000 homes. A masterplan for the 3,000 home LDF option is available to view on our exhibition boards and also in other material available on our website. In essence, the 3,000 home option would be built to all the current standards and many Eco-town standards, and would incorporate largely the same infrastructure (schools, employment, shops, healthcare facilities, green ring, town park, Co-operative etc) however these would be delivered to support 3,000 homes rather than 5,000.

Q3 - Who ends up owning all the non-built-up areas, from the town park and allotments unto the green ring and the buffer zone between the development and Henham?

It is envisaged that under the Eco-town proposal, the Elsenham Co-operative Limited (ECL) will take on ownership and responsibility for the open spaces and unbuilt areas including the Green Ring. These will be managed in accordance with objectives to promote new wildlife habitat, the production of local food, the provision of sustainable drainage, recreational access etc. ECL will be owned by the local community and have the scope of service beyond green space management into economic development and an 'enterprising communities' concept, as well as transport management. Membership of ECL would be open to residents

of Henham and Elsenham if they wish, which we hope would serve to further build good relations between existing and future residents. It is the Eco-town's ability to control its own destiny through ECL that will enable it to come up with more creative responses to the challenges typically facing communities.

Q4 - What is the scope for further development within the area being talked about in these plans or adjacent to it? What is the scope within the land that Fairfield controls of going beyond 5,000 houses.

If planning consent were to be granted for a 5,000 home Eco-town, there would be little or no scope for further development in the area. This is because the green ring, allotments and other features of the development would be safeguarded as part of any planning permission or conditions and would form an integral part of the planning permission. Land around the villages outside of the control of the Fairfield Partnership has been promoted for development in the past and if developed could lead to additional development over and above The Fairfield Partnership's proposals, however this would be outside of the control of The Fairfield Partnership.

Q5 - Housing. Compared with a "normal" house on a "normal estate" what are the extra costs of an Eco-town house, given that they are built to higher standards, with green ring, city park, allotments, and so on? (Will they in fact be built to a higher standard?) Will people be happy to pay the additional costs involved? What is the density planned in the housing areas. How many garage/parking spaces per house?

The cost of an Eco-town home would be borne by the land value, and all costs associated with providing a zero carbon development have been accounted for in our cost model. We are confident that such houses would be suitable for sale on the open market.

With regard to your final two questions, the average density of new homes under our current proposals is around 45 dwellings per hectare, and an appropriate number of parking spaces will be provided throughout the development.

Q6 - Social housing. What are the plans for the location of social housing? How will building standards compare with the other housing?

Government policy seeks the delivery of mixed communities whereby social housing, other affordable housing tenures such as shared ownership and open market housing are mixed together. Typically, groups of no more than 15-20 social housing units are permitted with the precise mix of house types and tenures and location being determined at more detailed planning stages. We envisage this mixed approach being promoted at Elsenham with an emphasis on shared ownership, however this is for further consultation and discussion with

Uttlesford District Council. In terms of appearance affordable housing tenures should be designed to appear the same as open market housing.

Building standards are constantly evolving and would be met by all housing on the development.

Q7 - Employment. Your aim is to create jobs equal to at least 50% of the economically active inhabitants of the new development. What is that as a number: at say 2 economically active per house, the target is say 3,000 jobs if 3,000 houses and 5,000 if 5,000 houses. Yet you plan for only two "industrial estates" that look fairly modest and one other commercial development. You also point to employment in schools, shops etc as going towards that target. I was told at Saffron Walden that you were looking for an Uttlesford-wide economic plan, which suggests an increased likelihood of that jobs would go to inward-commuters, rather than "locals". (You have based your transport assessment on 20% of Eco-town econ-active working there if 3,000 houses and 30% if 5,000 houses).

We are assuming for 5,000 homes that just under 6,000 of the population between 16 and 65 years old will be economically active. This suggests that around 3,000 jobs will be created on the site to provide for 50% of the economically active population. A proportion of these will work in shops, schools and services on the site and a proportion will work from home. We are therefore planning for new business and office uses in employment areas and within the town centre to cater for around 2,000 jobs.

We can only promote the opportunity for people to live and work locally, hence it may be that the jobs provided on the site are taken by people living outside of the area. This is why the Draft Transport Assessment makes different assumptions to ensure that it takes account of potential commuting into the area and also uses the 20/30% figures rather than the expected 50% employment opportunities on site therefore providing a robust assessment in terms of likely impacts outside of the development.

A local economic development strategy is also being undertaken to identify key business sectors that can be proactively attracted to the area.

Q8 - Vibrant market town. What are the plans for shops, pubs, restaurants, banks etc. I think that Walden has 6500 houses, which gives some sort of idea of what is needed. What does the new town get in comparison? Would you for example allow one supermarket to dominate, with higher prices as a result. How much scope for competition in all commercial areas?

Both the 3,000 home 'LDF option' and the 5,000 home 'Eco-town option' incorporate plans for a variety of retail units. Our proposal is to encourage varied and independent shops relating

to local need, pubs and restaurants as well as more well known high-street operators. A small supermarket is proposed, which is designed to serve the needs of the new community and inhabitants of Henham and Elsenham. Business start-up units and research and development facilities form part of the proposals for employment uses.

Q9 - If it is a good shopping centre, it will attract people from outside the development. The shop owners will obviously want as much business as possible. But what about parking places etc for these people? Competition between commercial centres seems to turn on parking facilities in some significant degree.

A parking strategy has been developed in the Draft Transport Assessment in line with the likely number of car trips visiting the various facilities on the site assessed within the Draft Transport Assessment whilst also taking account of measures to encourage use of public transport where possible. With this in mind the parking strategy proposes a reduction over the parking standards set by Uttlesford District Council to encourage sustainable travel options whilst providing sufficient number of spaces to cater for the likely car trips.

Q10 - Do you intent to have a traditional market like Thaxted, Saffron Walden and Bishop's Stortford? If so, would it be too close to other markets to get permission under the statutory provisions which govern this? Or has this been de-regulated?

This is a matter raised during consultation and is subject to ongoing discussions and consultation.

Q11 - What will the relationship be between the exiting village and the new development? You stress that it will be separated from Henham but will it be integrated with the existing village? If so, how? Will you have the ability to put in access between the new development and Park Road and Hailes Wood? If so, what sort of access? I cannot see what other scope there is for improving access between the village and the new development, given the railway line.

The railway line provides a natural and existing boundary between Elsenham and the proposed new development. However, The Fairfield Partnership is keen to promote integration between the existing settlement and the new development through a variety of measures both physical and social, particularly to ensure that existing residents of Elsenham are able to benefit from the new facilities, open spaces and transport options being proposed. Currently, we are exploring options to close the level crossing at Elsenham station to improve safety and decrease car trips through the centre of Elsenham. This would also involve retaining a level crossing facility for pedestrians and cyclists only (with improvements) or either a new underpass or overpass in order to encourage pedestrians, riders and cycles and safe access between the existing and new developments. We are keen to hear

residents' views on how we can best integrate the existing and new communities to the benefit of all.

There are no plans to link into Hailes Wood and Park Road at present.

Q12 - What about churches, burial grounds?

Provision has been made within the master plan for places of worship to be provided within the development. The issue of the need for burial grounds is under investigation and no firm proposals exist at this point.

Q13 - What is the justification for closing the level crossing to road traffic? Will buses be allowed across? Will horses and riders be allowed across?

See above regarding integration and traffic patterns. We are currently considering options for buses, pedestrians, cyclists and riders and would be pleased to hear community views on these matters. So far, the views of local residents seem to diverge on this issue. The detail of the proposals for the level crossing will also be subject to ongoing discussions with Network Rail.

Q14 - You keep referring to plans to reduce car journeys, and to funnel those journeys that are made along Hall Road to Takeley. What precedents are there elsewhere for influencing people in this fashion? If they are not successful, what are the consequences?

The principles of reducing car use from source through a combination of effective masterplanning (to include a range of carefully selective facilities) and also including measures to encourage reduced car ownership (local railway station, facilities nearby and reduced car parking) supported through alternative travel options, such as public transport, and Travel Plan techniques (including car sharing/clubs, links/promotions to public transport use, mode share targets etc) are well established. These have been included within the Draft Transport Assessment and the principles are very much central to local, regional and national government policies. We are also proposing to widen and improve Hall Road and provide a direct connection into the new town from Hall Road. This will make it the route of driver choice when heading south towards the M11 and A120. To further encourage drivers to use Hall Road and not the B1051 towards Stansted Mountfitchet, unless they have a destination in Stansted Mountfitchet, we are also including measures to reduce vehicle speeds through Elsenham along the B1051.

Naturally drivers will make their own decisions about route choice and this is usually based on the road standard and layout, time taken and its variability due to delay from traffic conditions. On this basis, with the improvements to Hall Road combined with the measures proposed

along the B1051 together with the journey time variability through Stansted Mountfitchet we consider Hall Road will carry a significant amount of traffic to and from the new town.

Q15 - You propose traffic calming measures on the road between Elsenham and Stansted; what is the justification? Will there be a need to ban parking on Grove Hill and Chapel Hill to cope with the extra traffic?

We do not intend to encourage traffic to use the route via Stansted Mountfitchet, as outlined above; therefore we are seeking to discourage traffic travelling this way unless drivers have a true destination. The measures through Elsenham will also serve to improve and provide safer cycling and walking facilities to encourage use of these modes of travel. The current intention is not to ban parking on Grove Hill and Chapel Hill as it is not considered necessary due to the expected routing of traffic and flows.

Q16 - Will the traffic assessment when it is available detail all the road traffic measure that you have in mind?

Yes, however the Transport Assessment will be subject to ongoing consultation with a number of statutory bodies, whose input will be important in shaping the final proposals and infrastructure improvements.

Q17 - How financially robust are the plans for the bus service? It may look attractive but if the estimates of usage are over optimistic, how to cope with revenue shortfall, apart from cutting services?

The bus service proposals are based on a robust assessment of the likely passenger numbers and it is anticipated that the developer The Fairfield Partnership would fund the service in the early years to ensure a high quality bus service is available whilst passenger revenues build up as the amount of housing increases. In addition, the assessment does not include for any additional passenger revenue generated by those not living in the new town who would use the improved bus service and therefore the assessment is considered robust.

We have also discussed the bus service with local bus operators who have been very helpful and supportive of the proposed bus service and consider it viable after the early years of financial support.

A key aspect will be the provision of the bus service for use by the early occupants of the new town to serve both within the new town and to key destinations further afield, such as Bishop's Stortford, and this is the intention. This ensures that those wishing to make journeys establish travel habits that are not centred on using their cars. Together with the opportunities for interchange with railway services we consider the bus will be effective and passenger numbers sufficient to make it profitable to bus operators as the development increases in size.