

THE FAIRFIELD PARTNERSHIP

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Councillor Nick Baker
Chairman
Henham Parish Council

Dear Councillor Baker,

21 July 2010

RE: POTENTIAL OF LAND TO THE NORTH EAST OF ELSENHAM IN MEETING UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL'S HOUSING NEEDS

I wanted to write to update you on our latest proposals for land to the north east of Elsenham, particularly following the recent announcements by the coalition Government. I believe our last direct communication was via our community newsletter last autumn and I thought it would be helpful to write to you again at this point.

You will no doubt be aware that the Government has made the decision to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS). However, it has also made clear that the requirement remains for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to plan for - and meet - the future need for housing within their areas.

Interim guidance from Government also confirms that local authorities should continue preparing their Local Development Frameworks and, in the absence of RSS targets, LPAs should establish the right level of local housing provision in their area. It also states that LPAs need to maintain a five year supply of developable housing land and identify sufficient sites and broad areas for development to deliver their housing ambitions for at least 15 years. The guidance goes on to note that any review of housing provision should be justified against reliable information and will be defended through an examination process, subject to the tests of soundness and to sustainability appraisal.

You may be aware of the recently published London Commuter Belt (East) / M11 Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008, which forms a key element of the evidence base for Uttlesford District Council's (UDC) Core Strategy. This is an independent study that confirms that the requirement for levels of housing in Uttlesford marginally exceeds housing targets within the East of England Plan. The need for the Core Strategy to maintain a healthy supply of new housing within Uttlesford is therefore clear.

Equally, the suitability of land to the north east of Elsenham in helping UDC to deliver sustainable housing growth (together with new community infrastructure) is widely accepted and has been underlined on numerous occasions, including within the Council's emerging Core Strategy and in its supporting Sustainability Appraisals. One of the key merits of our landholding is the versatility of Elsenham to provide for a range of scales of development and its ability to provide for a phased development over time.

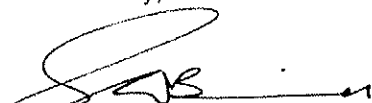
The Core Strategy options presented at the initial Preferred Options consultation in November 2007 included Elsenham in three out of the four options, and our landholding has the potential to contribute towards each of these options in a sustainable manner. We are happy to work in partnership with the Council to review the optimal form and scale of development to meet local housing needs.

Any new community at Elsenham would promote best practice principles of sustainable design, energy conservation and generation, and habitat conservation. Regardless of the scale of any future growth at Elsenham, our proposals would make provision for a 'Green Ring' to surround the development and maintain separation for Henham. We would also make provision for new and enhanced transport services, extensive open green space for leisure and recreation, new shops, schools and services, enhanced wildlife habitats, new and improved infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems.

The Fairfield Partnership is fully committed to a partnership approach, working closely with UDC's officers and members, Essex County Council and the local community through the Local Development Framework (LDF) and subsequent planning processes. We envisage further engagement with local communities in Elsenham and Henham regarding the options for sustainable growth in the future, as well as the community benefits and additional infrastructure that would be delivered as part of any options for growth.

We hope to further our dialogue with you, officers, members of UDC and other local residents over the coming months. I hope that you find this information useful and should you have any questions regarding this letter or wish to meet, please do not hesitate to contact me, or Paul Teverson at Camargue on 020 7636 7366.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Biart

Director of Strategic Land, The Fairfield Partnership

Cc Phillip Dondi, Clerk, Henham Parish Council

Roger Harborough, Planning Policy & Conservation Manager, Uttlesford District Council