

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE 30 OCTOBER 2007 ITEM NO 4
STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

(i) **John Segar**

You all know the details of the UDC Policy Choices and Options for Growth dated January 2007 giving 9 options of which one is the development of a single new settlement.

The Elsenham/Henham Option was **not** on the Agenda of your Committee Meeting held in early September, BUT we are informed that Councillor Ketteridge slid in this option without due notice, or, it seems, adequate detailed analysis or research. By the Chairman's casting vote, this is not the 'Preferred Option'.

It was reported in the press that Councillor Ketteridge said "NO FINAL decision had been taken and the opportunity for the public to participate in consultation was there". May I emphasise **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**.

There has been public consultation at various village meetings in this area but only since late September and most of them driven by public demand. So much interest has been engendered that in Elsenham the Village Hall had to be closed and many villagers left outside listening through open windows or having to go home!

At an earlier Elsenham Parish Council meeting in September, Councillor Mrs Dean advised that the developers (not yet appointed or even granted outline planning permission) stated that **no more road infrastructure would be necessary**.

Having sent over 60 letters to the Councillors and Planning Officers, my wife and I have had only **four written replies and two telephone calls**. Our MP has copies of all these letters and he has acknowledged or answered all.

Councillor Sadler was more explicit in an e-mail to one villager (not us) that the criteria were:-

- 1 How best to match populations growth to job opportunities; and
- 2 The best way of providing appropriate amenities in ensuring transport capacity, schools, shops, services and others.

The Airport, if expanded (and the UDC against this), would only cater for 25% of residents. To date very few jobs at the Airport are recruits from its mediate neighbouring villages. This area is almost 100% employed.

Elsenham/Henham does not meet any of the Criteria, with the reasons why set out in most of the correspondence.

Councillor Sadler goes on to say "Consultation continues and expands and no decision will be made well into 2008"

Only this week, Councillor Howell wrote and emphasise that no decision has been taken on **ANY** of the options and they will be the subject of a full, democratic and consultative process.

May I add that the Fairfield Partnership has been quoted in the Press as follows “.....the Elsenham/Henham area could well expand from 3,000 houses to **4,200 OR MORE**”.

We are told that from tonight a 6-8 week review will be undertaken and a recommendation be made as to a preferred option. As I understood it the Council can put one or more preferred options to comply with Government Directives.

I'm afraid that this Conservative led Council has already been discredited by an arrogant and dictatorial attitude. You must listen to the electorate and apply some common sense. The A120 corridor is a much better location for a single “new town” which, planned correctly, need not infringe on any already established settlements.

On a personal note, I do not want to inflict any further development on any village or town within the District.

(ii) **Nicholas Baker**

Nicholas Baker was the Vice-Chairman of Henham Parish Council. He said that before this matter had arisen, he had assumed that Council officials and elected representatives were doing a good job. However, during the consideration of this item he had witnessed flawed processes and felt that the Council had got itself into a box that it couldn't get out of. He said that at the Environment Committee on 4 September, a fourth option had been put forward which Councillor Ketteridge said was an extension of option 3; but this was a flawed argument. The fourth option was a verbal proposal with no written evidence or support. The decision was undemocratic. That meeting was followed by the sham at the Scrutiny Committee and chaos at the Council meeting. The people of Henham wanted justice and for the Council to act fairly and openly. The planning decision should be made with full facts and proper procedures and should not be developer lead. He said the developer had recently outlined a possible new road layout for the development and it was no coincidence that an intersection would link the site of the proposed second runway.

(iii) **Martin Herbert**

Martin Herbert from Scott Wilson, was concerned at the haste in which the settlement at this location had been decided. There had been no robust consideration and did the decision did not comply with guidance in the LGF. He said the Council should demonstrate the rigour of choice and demonstrate that it had considered all alternative sites. If there was not this depth of analysis, the LGF would fail the test of soundness and there would be a delay in the planned progress. He said that the Council should also consider the site at Boxted Wood – east of Stebbing.

(iv) Richard Cheetham – Takeley Parish Council

Richard Cheetham said that Takeley Parish Council had not yet made representations in relation to the growth options. He said that many strange and exaggerated statements had been made by Elsenham and Henham Councils in relation to this development. He said that Takeley would not wish to accept any additional development and would issue a robust statement on the planning reasons as to why it would not meet the guidance for growth.

(v) Don Sturgeon

Don Sturgeon was a Member of Henham Parish Council. He represented the joint parish council group which had been formed to ensure that the elected representatives from the District Council followed due process and treated the public with dignity and respect. He said the people of Henham and Elsenham had been ignored, patronised and misled and this had led him to question the competency of the leadership of the Council. There had been a lack of consultation and avoidance of proper procedures. He said that unless there was a change in tact, the Members of Uttlesford would be drawing the Council into time consuming and expensive processes. The Group had appointed Pevam Breton, Solicitors to act on their behalf and also Jill Gardiner who was Essex County Council's lead planning consultant. He asked the Council to do what was right and to rectify the mistakes of the last few weeks. If the Council did not conduct itself in a fair manner, it would prolong the financial problems and continue to antagonise the local residents.

(vi) Jeremy Fulcher

Jeremy Fulcher was a member of Little Canfield Parish Council. He said that Little Canfield was affected by one of the Council's options for development with a proposal for 250 extra houses. This would swamp the small village which was already accommodating the development of 800 plus houses in Priors Green. There was also a proposed extension to Canfield pit and the old A120 was becoming busier every day. He thought that other areas of the District should take more development and asked for a policy change that promoted a number of smaller developments with good infrastructure.