

News Release: 25 October 2024

Rochford could become sustainable development hub

A site north of Ashingdon, near Rochford in Essex, is being considered as the location for a new revolutionary factory to produce innovative ‘climate positive’ housing.

HEMSPAN®, a Cambridge-based construction technology business, has identified three areas in the UK for its new 1,000-home per year manufacturing facility: Cambridgeshire, the South West and Rochford in Essex.



HEMSPAN® has developed its ground-breaking BIOHAUS® building system which enables ‘climate positive’ homes to be delivered at scale. These homes will go beyond achieving net-zero carbon emissions, removing additional carbon dioxide from the atmosphere at completion, and provide all the energy required in operation.



“This will be a significant investment and the first of its kind in the UK, helping set a new standard for sustainable development”, said Matthew Belcher, HEMSPAN® founder and CEO. “Wherever we locate, the factory will create around 350 direct jobs and then some 175 indirect jobs in the supply chain”.

BIOHAUS® is an offsite building system with components made in the factory, shipped to site and then erected. It is a whole house bio-based panel system, using hemp as the main material.

Belcher continued: “This innovative factory is a significant inward investment. It will not only make Rochford a centre of excellence for sustainable development, but the impact of the investment on the local economy will be immense: it will provide employment for local people and will offer valuable skills and apprenticeship opportunities for young people from the local area”.



HEMSPAN® will be working with local schools and colleges to provide skills training opportunities for younger generations. The factory will require a combination of semi-skilled and skilled employees most of which will come from the local area.

Rochford is one of the locations being considered by HEMSPAN® due to local materials being available and nearby Baltic Wharf, Wallasea Island, for import and export.

“Our chosen location would have to include the potential for significant local catalyst housing development,” continued Belcher, “Economies of scale will be achieved with volume which will mean higher performing sustainable homes will cost no more to build than conventional homes do today.”

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