

Aylesham Community Action

Statement on the revised design brief published by Berkeley Homes

16.05.2023

1. Aylesham Community Action welcomes the announcement by Berkeley Homes that it will develop revised proposals for the Aylesham Centre site. Whilst the community is in favour of this site being developed and the potential benefits in terms of jobs, local services, and particularly housing, the masterplan released in November was opposed by thousands of people who live and work in Peckham
2. Over 7,000 people signed the ACA's petition calling on Berkeley Homes to "go back to the drawing board". Comments received showed the community objected to overdevelopment, the fact at least 65% of the homes would be unaffordable, the lack of improvements to community services or accessible green space. The proposals were not seen as environmentally sustainable or fit for the future. People saw large buildings being dropped into Peckham, not a scheme that is designed to enhance the existing build environment and community
3. Community engagement on the most important aspects of the scheme – what is being built, and for whom – is needed. We ask the developers and the architects now bidding to work on the scheme to engage meaningfully with the community, before bringing back new proposals. We suggest this includes:
 - A fact-base on the housing needs of the local community
 - An overall vision for the town centre, not just the Aylesham site and its immediate surroundings, showing how redevelopment help grow local businesses across Peckham, and not displace them
 - A plan for public services, with improvements needed even more with thousands of new residents
 - Open discussions on building density, height, residential vs. commercial use of space, extent of open & green space, and environmental impacts
 - Comparisons to existing developments and places that have been a success
 - Public community discussion on what is meant by the "character of Peckham" and how development and reflect and enhance this
4. The community will start by providing feedback on the draft design brief published by Berkeley Homes on 11 May¹. Getting the design brief right is crucial and we welcome the opportunity to input before design work begins again. Prestigious international architects have not had their proposals opposed due to their proficiency, but more because of what is being asked of them in terms of amount of development, and by being remote from the community they are designing for
5. There are a number of areas the community would already like to discuss in the new Design Brief, given the feedback provided on previous schemes to both Berkeley Homes in its consultation and the ACA in its petition. These include:
 - The amount of social housing, with the brief currently calling for at least 65% of homes to be unaffordable
 - The aspiration to create a new "quarter", rather than an integrated part of the town centre, with "iconic" architecture, rather than good quality buildings that complement the existing townscape

¹ <https://s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/theayleshamcentre-assets/Aylesham%20Centre%20Design%20Brief%20Summary.pdf>

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- Limited commitments on carbon beyond homes being “energy efficient”, or on biodiversity
 - The sizes and amount of building across the site, which should be driven by design, usage, and the impact on the existing environment. This includes the ambition to build at least 850 homes, regardless of whether those homes will then be of a decent quality and sustainable, affordable to local people, or negatively impact those nearby
6. The local community is passionate about Peckham and wants the Aylesham scheme to proceed and be a success for the community. It stands ready to work with Berkeley Homes to improve the Design Brief, and help the new architects design a scheme that everyone will be proud to see and live in and alongside

About Aylesham Community Action

Aylesham Community Action is a group organised by local people for local people to learn and share views on the proposed development of the Aylesham Centre in Peckham. We are campaigning for

1. Local people to be properly consulted
2. A development that meets local needs
3. A plan that fits well with the character of Peckham

For enquiries or to join our mailing list email ayleshamcommunityaction@gmail.com

Visit our website <https://www.ayleshamcommunityaction.co.uk/>