

# Aylesham Community Action

## Statement on the new Berkeley Homes masterplan

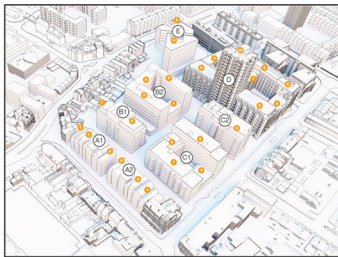
09.Feb.2024

Berkeley Homes have published another masterplan for the Aylesham Centre site in Peckham, compromising a major part of the Town Centre. Members of Aylesham Community Action attended a drop-in session where the plans were on display and have listened to responses from other local people who have been in contact.

### Summary messages

- The ACA continues to question if this is the right type of development for Peckham. The new proposals are essentially the same as those rejected by thousands of local people over the last 10-years: the insertion of very large buildings into low-rise, historic Peckham, to create flats that will be unaffordable to most local people, with minimal green or open space
- The scheme takes Peckham back to high-rise development that has failed it in the past and the London Assembly has stated has problems with diversity of accommodation, lack of family housing, maintenance costs, embodied carbon, and community cohesion
- The site allocation in the Southwark Plan of 850 units, which was contested by local people and considered to be an unjust process, is shown to be unsuitable. The new scheme indeed exceeds the indicative allocation given it was based on the bus station also being developed
- There is still no coherent plan for the development showing the scheme can work, including traffic flows, the vision for the town centre economy, local public services and more
- Concerns about the impact on adjacent businesses and services provided to both low income and ethnic minority communities have not been addressed
- Public opposition to this approach goes back to 2013 and it is unclear what has substantially changed to try and gain Peckham's support

2020 – Tiger Developments



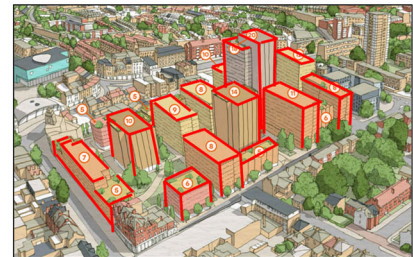
Tiger Developments & Blackrock scheme withdrawn after 5,000 local people and Southwark Council say scheme not right for Peckham

2023 – Berkeley Homes



Berkeley Homes first scheme withdrawn after 7,000 local people protest and Southwark Council say the scheme "requires reconsideration"

2024 – Berkeley Homes



New Berkeley Homes proposals: what has substantially changed to gain Peckham's support?

### We call on Berkeley Homes and Southwark Council to

- Rethink the site allocation, amount of towers and density of the new masterplan and bring forward proposals more suitable to Peckham and this site
- Conduct more public, open discussions on the plans for the site, well before the planning application is submitted, with all of Peckham's communities involved

## 1. True community engagement is still missing

- Berkeley's "drop-in sessions" are not designed for open debate, and avoid the design team being held to account. Given importance of the scheme to Peckham, real public community meetings are needed, with Southwark Council also involved
- The website was unavailable at points ahead of consultations, is hard to navigate when it is available, does not support any debate or sharing of views, and was for instance missing any information and materials about the November consultations
- Events, such as in November 2023, have been poorly publicised, with limited notice, relying on existing mailing lists. Signage on the high street is non-existent and attendance is low
- Responses to BH surveys are extremely low (<100)
- Berkeley claim to be engaging with our diverse communities, but there is no record of what feedback is being given and how this is being incorporated into the design brief beyond some cosmetic considerations
- No Early Engagement Strategy has been produced as required under the Development Consultation Charter. This needs to include a fact-based audit of the users of the site and surrounding residents/businesses, including consideration of equalities impacts.

## 2. Issues that led the community to oppose previous schemes remain

- This type of development, level of density and massing has been rejected by thousands of people in the community at least four times over the last nine years
- At least 65% of the flats will be unaffordable
- The scheme takes Peckham back to high-rise development that failed it in the past. The London Assembly Planning & Regeneration Committee found<sup>1</sup> *"tall buildings... whilst delivering higher densities and therefore seemingly making more effective use of land, will not produce the high quality homes and neighbourhoods that London needs."* The issues raised are clearly relevant for Peckham:
  - *Tend to contain a majority of mainly studios and one- beds, and a proportion of two-bedroom flats, therefore resulting in a lack of family sized housing*
  - *Tend to result in large monocultures of a single tenure or particular demographic, and that the creation of mixed sustainable communities is more challenging*
  - *Have high management costs and service charges often preclude affordable tenures, and well-designed family homes are harder to achieve as they are remote from shared amenity space*
  - *A larger proportion of small units and single aspect homes.*
  - *Higher embodied carbon due to their construction, primarily because of the stresses on the steel frame and the foundations. Height also means more exposure to stronger winds and colder climates, and therefore increased energy consumption*

## 3. Some ideas now being discussed are welcome

- Inclusion of commercial workspace, if it will be affordable for small businesses, complements what exists, and supports Peckham's creative and light industrial activity
- The principle of opening up the back of historic buildings on Peckham High St
- Multiple access points into the site – critical is access from the bus stand

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<sup>1</sup> Planning & Regeneration Committee, Consultation Response, Good Quality Homes for All Londoners London Plan Guidance. 14 January 2021

**4. A full analysis and discussion about the site is still required, despite years of architects producing plans. Southwark Council and Berkeley Homes need to work together to produce:**

- An assessment of the impact on local communities and the businesses and services they rely upon – with a focus on those for lower income groups and for ethnic goods and services
- An overall vision for the town centre, not just the Aylesham site, to help grow local businesses and services, including the protection of views from Peckham Levels
- A plan for traffic flow in and around the site, given the already crowded streets with pedestrians, cyclists and buses competing for the same space
- A fact-base on the housing needs of the local community and how this development will help meet those needs
- A plan for health, social and other public services, given thousands of new residents
- An ambitious set of environmental targets, including health and wellbeing of all town centre residents, businesses and users, and the recovery of ecosystems (e.g. water supply & reuse; flood prevention; nature corridors for habitat, cooling and recreation; building standards for energy efficiency, zero carbon, natural cooling; quality of play and communal space)
- An impact analysis for residents covering sunlight, shade, wind, pollution, and impact of construction
- Support the community to define what the “character of Peckham” means and how this development can support and enhance the area
- Recommendations for how the site will be managed so that the area is safe, well-maintained, but also affordable longterm for leaseholders and tenants

Note much of all the above would normally form part of a town centre plan, but is missing from the Southwark Plan

The local community is passionate about Peckham and wants the Aylesham scheme to be a success for the community. It stands ready to work with Berkeley Homes and the Council to agree a scheme everyone will be proud to live alongside.

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**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](mailto:ayleshamcommunityaction@gmail.com)

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