

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**RPC SUB-GROUP – STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS**

Date: 30 October 2007

Subject: Planning application consultation ref A/07/101

Site Address:	Aylesham Village Expansion, Aylesham
Proposal:	Outline application for residential development of up to 1210 dwellings, associated infrastructure and works.  Full application for residential development for 191 dwellings, of which 20% will be affordable, and all associated works and infrastructure, together with new shops and apartments, alterations to existing shops and apartments, refurbishment of public open spaces, including Market Square, street furniture, landscaping, temporary works access, compounds and off-site highway improvements.
Local Planning Authority:	Dover District Council
Applicant:	Ward Homes Ltd / Hillreed Homes Ltd
Date consultation issued:	21 September 2007

Report of: **Regional Planner**

**Recommendation:**

The South East England Regional Assembly makes the following observations in relation to the outline application for the whole of the development proposal:-

- The district council should secure an appropriate level of affordable housing through a legal agreement, and should not grant planning permission unless satisfied that a higher level of affordable housing cannot be achieved on the site or is not required on the basis of a local housing needs assessment in accordance with Policy H4 of RPG9 and Policy EKA2 of the draft South East Plan.
- The district council should ensure that the density proposed is appropriate, having regard to Policies Q2 and Q3 of RPG9 and draft Policy H5 of the draft South East Plan.

If the district council is minded to grant permission it should secure the following through appropriately worded conditions and/or legal agreements:-

- An appropriate package of transport infrastructure and other measures including an agreed travel plan to promote alternatives to the car in accordance with Policies T1, T10 and T13 (RPG9 as altered) and T1, T5 and T8 of the draft South East Plan;
- The phasing and delivery of community and other infrastructure appropriate to the scale of the development and to meet the needs of residents in accordance with Policy INF2 of RPG9 and Policies CC5 and NRM1 of the draft South East Plan;
- An appropriate level of car and cycle parking to comply with Policy T12 of RPG9 (as altered) and Policy T7 of the draft South East Plan;
- The adoption of key development principles for each phase of development to make good use of land and to secure a high quality of environment consistent with Policy Q2 of RPG9 and Policies CC12 and H5 of the draft South East Plan.
- The incorporation of water and energy efficiency measures and the promotion of renewable energy and sustainable construction in accordance with Policies INF2 and INF4 of RPG9 and Policies CC2, CC3, CC4, NRM1, EN1, EN2, W2 and M1 of the draft South East Plan.
- Mitigation measures in relation to flood risk, noise, air quality and impacts on groundwater, and measures to enhance biodiversity of the site in accordance with the objectives of Policies E1, E2, E7, INF1 and INF2 of RPG9 and Policies NRM1, NRM3, NRM4, NRM7 and NRM8 of the draft South East Plan.

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the recommended consultation response to the above application for consideration and agreement.

## **2. Site Description and Background**

- 2.1 Aylesham lies within an open agricultural landscape between Canterbury (6 miles to the north west.) and Dover (10 miles to the south east). A railway and the A2 trunk road links the two larger towns through Aylesham.
- 2.2 The existing village is approximately 120 hectares (ha) in size and comprises mainly residential areas. Aylesham was originally planned in the 1920's with the intention of creating a town of 15,000 people. However, this was never realised and there are currently 1,760 dwellings housing a population of over 4,000 people.

- 2.3 The main part of the outline application site is 56.4ha in area and is located north of the existing village. The land is currently open farm land along with smaller areas of playing fields. It is also noted that the outline application also relates to parts of the existing village (see below).
- 2.4 A location map is included in Annex I.

### **3. Details of the proposal**

- 3.1 This report considers an outline application and a full application.
- 3.2 The outline application comprises:-
- 1210 dwellings represented an expansion to the existing village;
  - The reorganisation of Market Square (within the existing village) to provide 8 new shops, improvements to existing premises, 21 apartments and a new local play area;
  - Open space, involving new open space as part of the expansion of the village, improved existing open space within the existing village, and a green edge to the north of the new village boundary;
  - Improvements to access to the railway station;
  - Improvements to access and the grounds of local schools.
- 3.3 The full application comprises the first phase of delivering the outline application above. This includes 191 dwellings, changes to Market Square, and road and landscaping works.
- 3.3 This report mainly addresses the development overall (i.e. the outline application) as this sets the context for the full application and all subsequent applications.

### **4. Main Issues and Relevant Policy Considerations**

- 4.1 The following are the main regional issues associated with the application, along with the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy policies that need to be considered:-
- The location of the proposal, with the following policies being relevant:-
    - Policy Q1 of RPG9 and Policies CC8a, H3 and H5 of the draft South East Plan – urban focus and the location of housing;
    - Policy BE4 of the draft South East Plan – managing the urban rural fringe;

- Policy BE5 of the draft South East Plan – small rural towns.
- The amount of affordable housing, with the following policies being relevant:-
  - Policy H4 of RPG9 - provision of affordable housing to meet local needs;
  - Policy EKA2 of the draft South East Plan – affordable housing.
- The density of the proposed development, with the following policies being relevant:-
  - Policies Q2 and Q3 of RPG9 – form and design of urban development;
  - Policy H5 of the draft South East Plan – Housing density.

#### 4.2 Other material considerations include:-

- Dover Local Plan (2002) Policy AY1 which allocates the subject site for the expansion of Aylesham;
- Dover Local Plan (2002) Policy AY3 which seeks a net density of a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare and that at least 15% of all dwellings should be affordable;
- Dover Supplementary Planning Document (2005), which provides a detailed masterplan for the subject site.

## 5. Policy Assessment

### Location of Development

- 5.1 Both RPG9 and the draft South East Plan place a strong focus on directing new development to existing urban areas. However, Policy H3 of the draft South East Plan recognises that some new housing development will take place on greenfield land in order to meet district housing requirements and where this occurs, it should be in sustainable locations (including those which are well served by public transport). Policy H1 of the draft SEP sets a housing target for Dover district of 305 net additional dwellings per year.
- 5.2 Aylesham falls within the East Kent and Ashford Sub-Region of the Draft South East Plan. Draft Policy EKA4 sets out that new economic impetus will be encouraged in this area, including those which support the regeneration of former colliery sites. This policy further sets out that the mixed-use expansion of Aylesham should be completed.

- 5.3 Dover District Council have established a clear policy basis for the development of an urban extension to Aylesham. This includes Policy AY1 of the Dover Local Plan 2002 which allocates the application site for residential development of up to 1000 dwellings, and supplementary planning guidance adopted in 2005 (prepared jointly with SEEDA, Kent County Council, and English Partnerships) setting out a masterplan for the town and the expansion areas.
- 5.4 Given the strong regional and local policy support which has established the principle of the expansion of Aylesham, it is considered that residential development in this location is consistent with RPG9 and the draft South East Plan.

#### Affordable Housing

- 5.5 The proposal seeks to deliver 20% of all housing as affordable housing which is consistent with the minimum amount set out in the Aylesham Masterplan SPG (2005). Policy AY3 of the Dover Local Plan 2002 sets out a requirement that at least 15% of all housing as part of this proposal should be affordable housing. Policy EKA2 of the draft South East Plan sets out an indicative target for the East Kent and Ashford Sub-Region of 30% of all new housing.
- 5.6 The proposal appears to be providing less affordable than the indicative level set out in the draft South East Plan. It is also noted that the material submitted with the application does not include any detailed appraisal of why the amount of affordable housing to be provided is considered appropriate, particularly having regard to the fact that the levels of affordable housing set out in the local plan and the relevant SPG are minimum levels, not targets. However the proposal does involve a considerable amount of improvement to the existing part of Aylesham and this may limit the amount of available contribution towards affordable housing.
- 5.7 It will therefore be important that Dover District Council fully assesses the level of affordable housing proposed, and that the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing be provided, subject to market conditions, the circumstances of this particular major development site, and local housing needs assessments as set out in draft Policy EKA2 of the South East Plan.

## Density of the Proposal

- 5.8 The proposal provides for a residential density of approximately 30 dwellings / hectare which is consistent with the Aylesham SPG 2005. Policy H5 of the draft South East Plan sets an overall regional target of 40 dwellings per hectare, but recognises that local variations to this will be developed as part of Local Development Framework's.
- 5.9 It will be important that the use of the application site is maximised and makes an appropriate contribution to increasing housing densities. As such, Dover District Council should ensure that the density proposed is appropriate, having regard to Policies Q2 and Q3 of RPG9 and draft Policy H5 of the draft South East Plan.

## Other Matters

- 5.9 In addition to the above, there are a number of priorities arising out of RPG9 and the draft South East Plan which can be dealt with by way of condition or legal agreement if the district council is minded to grant planning permission. These relate to the following policy areas:
- Transport;
  - Infrastructure;
  - Water;
  - Air and Noise;
  - Natural Environment;
  - Sustainable Construction and Energy Efficiency;
  - Built Environment.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 The outline application subject to this report seeks approval for the residential extension of Aylesham, a proposal which has a strong level of policy support and substantial policy detail associated with. As such, the principal of the proposal is well established and its details are the result of a number of years work by the local authority and its partners.
- 6.2 This report has however highlighted a number of issues for the district council to further consider relating to emerging policy requirements in the draft South East Plan. This includes matters relating to the density of the proposal and the amount of affordable housing proposed.

## **7. Recommendation**

7.1 Members are requested to agree the following recommendation to the local authority:-

The South East England Regional Assembly makes the following observations in relation to the outline application for the whole of the development proposal:-

- The district council should secure an appropriate level of affordable housing through a legal agreement, and should not grant planning permission unless satisfied that a higher level of affordable housing cannot be achieved on the site or is not required on the basis of a local housing needs assessment in accordance with Policy H4 of RPG9 and Policy EKA2 of the draft South East Plan.
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- The incorporation of water and energy efficiency measures and the promotion of renewable energy and sustainable construction in accordance with Policies INF2 and INF4 of RPG9 and Policies CC2, CC3, CC4, NRM1, EN1, EN2, W2 and M1 of the draft South East Plan.

- Mitigation measures in relation to flood risk, noise, air quality and impacts on groundwater, and measures to enhance biodiversity of the site in accordance with the objectives of Policies E1, E2, E7, INF1 and INF2 of RPG9 and Policies NRM1, NRM3, NRM4, NRM7 and NRM8 of the draft South East Plan.

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Date: 30 October 2007

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