

**Initial Engagement Meeting Between Aylesham Parish Council
and Axis Land Partnership Ltd regarding the Aylesham South Vision Document**

22nd January 2024 11:00am at Aylesham House

Prior to the meeting, Axis Land Partnerships Ltd were informed that any questions from Cllrs were their personal ones and not the formal view of Aylesham Parish Council, which have to be resolved at Council meetings.

Those present:

Aylesham Parish Cllrs: G. Armstrong; D. Miller; K. Sutcliffe; J. Flaig; S. Bott; D. Fleck;
D. Garrity. Assistant Clerk D. Jenkins; Administration Officer N. Purcell.

Representing Axis Land Partnerships Ltd: M. Hare; R. Wilbraham; J. Uko; J. McSweeney.

Introductions:

- Axis Land Partnerships Ltd representatives thanked everyone for the opportunity to meet, and introductions were made.
- Axis Land Partnerships Ltd are land promoters staffed by town planners. The land within the document has been in discussions for approximately 10 years. Originally it was promoted by the landowners (the Lord Fitzwalter Trust 1988) but Axis became involved around the stage of the new Dover District Draft Local Plan Regulation 19.
- Axis Land Partnerships Ltd ***stressed that this is not a high-level document yet***, and it is conceptual in nature, and this should be taken into consideration when discussing as they have not yet reached the stage where there is to be key local stakeholders' involvement.

Axis Land Partnerships Ltd then gave an idea of timeframes:

- Nothing will progress until the Planning Inspectorate has approved the soundness of the new Dover District Draft Local Plan. The Hearing Sessions are concluded so now it is a case of waiting.
- Some survey work has already been completed with some trial pits. If the new Local Plan goes ahead then further survey work will need to be completed, such as an archaeological investigation, which would possibly see some trial trenches in the upcoming months.
- This will also initiate further engagement with the local community.
- This is the first of hopefully many community engagement sessions, opening up a two-way communication.
- It is unlikely that the full adoption of the new Local Plan will be before the end of 2024, but ahead of this they will be active on site with all pre-plan investigations.
- Without prejudice, it would be great to gain an idea of key local desires and issues and be able to encompass this in the plans.

Cllr Question:

- Is the land to the left of the highlighted area to be left for farming? (left of Snowdown)

Axis Land Partnerships Ltd response: we are confident that there will be no physical development here for a few reasons: a high-pressure gas main runs under here, and there are landscape issues.

Cllr Question:

- There are issues in the current development with both lack of community facilities and the loss of green space. The infrastructure is not adequate to support the increasing population. For example, the nearest full supermarket is quite a distanced away, and the Co-Op Shop is more expensive, which may put people off shopping locally.
- Axis Land Partnerships Ltd response: the 'local centre' described in the document would include retail and a café etc. This is partly drawn by community requirements and partly by business data held. It is unlikely to be a superstore size, but something equivalent to or bigger than the Co-Op is likely.

Axis Land Partnerships Ltd Question to Aylesham Parish Council:

- It would be beneficial to know what infrastructure concerns the community have.

Discussions that followed:

- It was mentioned that the terminology used in the document is key phrases like a "destination pub" or "convenience store" do not paint a clear picture of what is on offer. The community are sacrificing a lot (such as views etc) so it should be balanced with something positive.
- A comment was also made that it is important to look to the future when drawing up plans. Is there to be older people accommodation?
- In the early 2000's there was an 'Enquiry by Design' where the Community stated their concerns about the height of some of the buildings and the lack of green space; but none of these concerns seem to have been taken forward, especially on Station Field, with three-storey blocks and little green space. It appears that all the wishes from the community were dismissed. Axis representatives were urged to go and look at the Station Field development themselves to gain an understanding of why the community are frustrated.

Axis Land Partnerships Ltd question:

- It would be beneficial to gain an understanding of what sort of green space the community would like. General use open space? Space for a specific purpose?

Discussions and Questions that followed:

- **Cllr Question:** It has been noted that Ackholt Wood is included in the plan, would this become open access to all?

Axis Land Partnerships Ltd response: This is unlikely as it's an Ancient Woodland, however it was pointed out that so is Spinney Wood, which is open to all. Axis Land Partnerships Ltd will investigate this.

- Axis Land Partnerships Ltd are likely to be involved up until the point that the developers take over the plans. There are no specific interested parties at present.
- **Cllr Question:** Could the details regarding walking/cycle access be more concrete so the community know what to expect?

Axis Land Partnerships Ltd response: This is something that would need working through with Kent County Council; the movement strategy will aim to focus on the most vulnerable road users first.

- The access road through the development was noted with supportive remarks.
- Direct email and telephone contacts will be shared with Aylesham Parish Council Officers’.

Aylesham Parish Council Chair thanked all those present for attending.

Meeting ended 12:25