

# Aylesham Parish Council Response to Dover District Local Plan



## Part 1 – Initial response

### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Dover District Council has provided a draft plan that outlines development within the district up until 2040. In order for residents to make an informed decision about the Draft Local Plan, Aylesham Parish Council has provided a comprehensive and coherent response.

1.2 The draft local plan has set out 4 key objectives:

- Prosperous economy
- Vibrant communities
- Spectacular and sustainable environment
- Addressing Cross cutting issues

### 2.0 New Site Locations

2.1 Development in Aylesham is designated to 2 primary sites. In the north of the village, site AYL004 which runs from the current new build site towards the train station with Ratling Road to the East. The site has a proposed development of **500 homes**.

This relates to Strategic Policy 5 North Aylesham.

2.2 In the south, site AYL003 runs from Spinney Lane (with Aylesham Road to the East and Ackholt Wood to the West) all the way to housing in the village of Snowdown. This site has a proposed development of **640 homes**.

This relates to Strategic Policy 6 South Aylesham.

2.3 The lack of access to AYL004 in the North is concerning. Any connection to the B2046 (Adisham Road) will cause a knock-on effect to other local villages in terms of traffic.

2.4 In addition, there are 2 smaller sites: AYL001 (land off Dorman Avenue North) with a proposal for **9 homes** and AYL002 (Land by Boulevard Courrieres) which has a proposal for **17 homes** which is currently going through the planning process.

2.5 Therefore, the new housing provision proposed for Aylesham is **1166 new homes**.

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Aylesham Parish Council believes this level of development is over-bearing on the village and risks altering the character of the community. This is far beyond the original master-plan.

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### 3.0 Potential improvements to amenities and infrastructure

3.1 Over the past few years, Aylesham has seen a vast amount of development. However, this has put considerable strain on local amenities such as local shops and medical services.

3.2 Any possible future developments, whatever size, must provide Aylesham with additional facilities, in particular for **young people, local shopping facilities and the infrastructure** that will allow more people to move freely around the village.

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Aylesham Parish Council believes that any future development must improve amenities and provisions for young people.

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3.3 In terms of transport, all future developments must focus on pedestrian and cycle traffic, with emphasis on the improvement of train and bus services appropriate to the size of the village rather than road users to both combat road traffic and assist with the **climate emergency**.

3.4 However, there is considerable strain on local roads and any future development must be accompanied with a plan to make significant upgrades to key routes such as Spinney Lane and B2046 (Adisham Road).

3.5 Any chances of alleviating road traffic are severely hampered in Aylesham. Both the **bus services and train service** to Aylesham is completely substandard. The failure to address this in this draft local plan is wilfully letting down the residents of Aylesham.

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Aylesham Parish Council believes that any further development can only happen after improvements to both the bus and train service to and from Aylesham, ensuring provisions are sustainable and appropriate for the villages' size.

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3.6 Aylesham village is significantly lacking in local amenities, even more so with the proposed expansion to the village. There is a clear need for amenities such as a pub-restaurant; dentist; supermarket and community facility such as a village hall.

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Aylesham Parish Council believes that any future development must improve amenities by providing a pub-restaurant; dentist; supermarket and community facility (such as a village hall)

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### 4.0 Gypsy & Traveller Sites

4.1 The draft local plan has allocated land North of the current Snowdown caravan site as a new gypsy and traveller site, with **10 additional pitches**.

4.2 The draft local plan suggests that the assessment drew on "feedback from key stakeholders". Aylesham Parish Council was not consulted prior to the draft local plan publication.

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Aylesham Parish Council believes that the village already provides sufficient pitches for the Gypsy & Traveller community and sites should be sought elsewhere in the district

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## 5.0 Aylesham in the Dover District Settlement Hierarchy

5.1 Aylesham is designated as a “**Rural Service centre**” on par with the town of Sandwich. Although Sandwich and Aylesham have equal weighting in the settlement hierarchy, they are not getting an equal weighting in housing development or in terms of investment.

5.2 Aylesham is receiving approximately **1100 new homes**, whilst Sandwich has a proposed development of approximately **300 homes**.

5.3 The draft local plan proposes investment in Sandwich to improve the town and protect its historic environment. In addition, it will see investment in culture. This is not the same for Aylesham.

This relates to Strategic Policy 2: Housing growth.

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Aylesham Parish Council believes that Aylesham is being left behind. Aylesham must receive equal investment in comparison to other Rural Service centres to help the village thrive.

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## 6.0 Climate Change

6.1 As the district is extremely water scarce, all possible measures should be implemented to help mitigate water scarcity. The use of Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SUDs) is required to be prominent in all future developments. This will help to deal with surface water flooding.

This relates to DM Policy 7 Surface Water Management.

6.2 There are a number of options to ensure new homes produce the least possible carbon emissions. Aylesham Parish Council would like to see DDC require the full **2025 Future Homes Standard** to be delivered **now** (this will reduce emissions by between 75-80% compared to current standards).

This relates to DM Policy 1 Reducing Carbon Emissions.

6.3 We welcome the commitment to planting trees within new developments. This will help to keep the rural feel of Aylesham alive. Currently we often see newly planted **trees** dying within the first few year of their lives. There must be a comprehensive plan to ensure that these **trees** reach maturity.

This relates to Strategic Policy 1 Planning for Climate Change and DM Policy 9 Tree Planting and Protection.

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Aylesham Parish Council welcomes the commitment to planting larger numbers of trees but feels this must come with a long-term solution to maintaining the trees. DDC must also commit to the full 2025 Future Homes Standard now.

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## 7.0 New Homes

7.1 The Parish Council agrees that there is a need to increase housing stock both nationally and within the Dover district.

7.2 Over recent years, Aylesham has greatly assisted in helping to increase the numbers of homes within the local community. However, it is felt that any **future development should be kept to a minimum**. This relates to Strategic Policy 2: Housing Growth.

7.3 Both Strategic Policy 5 and 6 (North and South Aylesham) include a large number of positives (such as inclusion of play parks, open spaces, cycle links and protecting and enhancing wildlife) there is a lack of firm commitments to facilities. Each development makes reference to “a new small convenience shop” which is **wholly insufficient** for the proposed number of new homes.

7.4 DDC is looking at updating its parking policy for future developments. Currently the Kent Design Guide and the Kent Design Guide Review: Interim Guidance Note 3 to apply planning constraints. It is important that future developments allow for **independently accessible parking spaces** (as opposed to tandem spaces) and that car ports or garages are not included as parking. This will greatly improve parking, especially in rural developments.

7.5 More considerate parking will greatly improve access for pedestrians as well as safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

7.6 It has been noted on previous planning applications that the **sewerage pipes** in the village may be at their capacity, and any further developments could push them past their breaking point. This should be addressed before any further development can be considered.

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Aylesham Parish Council believes that a new small convenience shop in each of the primary developments would be wholly insufficient. DDC should also look to adopt more stringent parking policy reform.

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## 8.0 Employment

8.1 There is a welcome addition to employment within Aylesham proposed in the draft local plan. The proposed site is next to the existing employment area along Ackholt Road/Aylesham Road.

8.2 This could support mixed use development, B1 and B2 retail units.

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Aylesham Parish Council welcomes the additional employment opportunities within the village.

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## 9.0 Maintaining Aylesham's Heritage

9.1 The draft local plan suggests that DDC wishes to enhance “heritage assets, in order to protect their significance and to ensure that they can be best appreciated and enjoyed”.

9.2 The colliery site in Snowdown has been identified during the call for sites in 2017 but deemed unsuitable (red on the map) in this draft local plan. The Parish Council feels that in order to maintain the coal-mining heritage of the local area, the **colliery must be included in a long term plan**.

This relates to Strategic Policy 18 Protecting the District's Heritage Environment

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Aylesham Parish Council requests that the Snowdown colliery site is included in a long-term, future plan to ensure the heritage is not lost and can be enjoyed by generations to come.

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## Part 2 - Additional Response

### 10.0 Responses from local people

10.1 After approving an initial response to DDC's Draft Local Plan, the Parish Council started a social media campaign (via Facebook) with the aim to promote the draft local plan and to get as many residents as possible to give a response.

10 posts were shared (one for each of the key points in Appendix 1). A number of the posts received a large reach, meaning a large number of people saw the posts on their timeline, as well as posts receiving a large number of comments and discussions.

10.2 It is important for the Parish Council to represent the wider public and to remain transparent, so additional responses have been added to the report (approved February 2021) in order to better represent Aylesham.

### 11.0 Road and Transport Infrastructure

11.1 The draft local plan emphasises the importance of walking and cycling. 3.4 highlights the need to upgrade key routes (such as Spinney Lane and B2046 and additionally Aylesham Rd) but these key roads must also be made **desirable to cyclists and pedestrians alike**.

This relates to paragraph 5.14 of the draft local plan (and NPPF 2019) and Strategic Policy 1 - Planning for Climate Change and DM Policy 4 Sustainable Travel.

11.2 In addition, the National Cycle Route 16 passes alongside the village on Ratling Road. Currently, there is only one cycle path in the village which does not connect directly onto this national route.

11.3 Much like the roundabout upgrade at the junction between B2046 and A260 (by the A2 slip road), such highways upgrades (eg roundabouts and improved lighting) should be included on **Cooting Rd/Spinney Lane** and **Cooting Rd/B2046** as well as further away at the **B2046 junction in Wingham**. The plan states that highways upgrades should be considered on a case by case basis – these must be upgraded.

This relates to paragraph 9.7 and 9.11 of the draft local plan and Strategic Policy 13 Infrastructure and Developer Contributions.

11.4 Due to the large number of cars in a remote, rural village, it would be sensible to investigate the inclusion of a **20 mph speed limit** throughout the village. This will help to encourage cycling and walking and promote a shared responsibility for roads.

11.5 For clarity, there is **no** bus service at present linking Aylesham and Dover.

This relates to paragraph 6.103 which states there is “a bus service to Dover and Canterbury” which is false.

11.6 Allocations should be made for people with mobility needs.

## 12.0 Benefits for the people of Aylesham

12.1 It is widely believed that Aylesham has missed out in the past when it comes to funding and amenities. We believe that it would be beneficial to allow the Parish Council to have a greater say in how s106 money is spent in Aylesham. This will ensure **funding can be spent quickly and on projects that matter to local people.**

12.2 Any new development should come with a parcel of land designated to be used for any amenities that will be of benefit to the village to create an additional village centre type space.

12.3 Allocations of affordable housing are welcomed, but local people would like to see those applying with links to Aylesham (current or previous residents of the village who have had to move out for housing needs) **getting priority.** This will help to keep the community feel of the village – families knowing other families.

12.4 Whilst the draft local plan references the protection of Ackholt Wood, there are a number of wooded areas within the parish that do not have the same protection. These must be **safeguarded against removal** and added to whenever possible.

This relates to Strategic Policy 6 South Aylesham.

## 13.0 Design

13.1 To accommodate people with a variety of needs, any new development must ensure a good proportion of housing **built with future adaptations in mind.** In addition, an ageing population means housing that is able to accommodate wheelchairs etc must be included.

This relates to DM Policy 36 Achieving High Quality Design and paragraph 10.30 of the draft local plan.

13.2 The recent pandemic has shown that outside space is vital to both physical and mental health. All new development must **go above and beyond the minimum requirements of land allocated to formal and informal outside spaces,** including play parks, community gardens and sports fields.

## 14.0 Contamination

14.1 A number of areas within the parish have significant amounts of contamination from a variety of historical sources, which is often well documented. However, housing developments **fail to mitigate** against this issue. This must be address and enforced.

## Appendix 1

Below is a summary of the points raised by Aylesham Parish Council in response to the Draft District Local plan.

1. Aylesham Parish Council believes this level of development is over-bearing on the village and risks altering the character of the community. This is far beyond the original master-plan.
2. Aylesham Parish Council believes that any future development must improve amenities and provisions for young people.
3. Aylesham Parish Council believes that any future development can only happen after improvements to both the bus and train service to and from Aylesham, ensuring provisions are sustainable and appropriate for the villages' size.
4. Aylesham Parish Council believes that any future development must improve amenities by providing a pub restaurant; dentist; supermarket and community facility (such as a village hall).
5. Aylesham Parish Council believes that the village already provides sufficient pitches for the Gypsy & Traveller community and sites should be sought elsewhere in the district.
6. Aylesham Parish Council believes that Aylesham is being left behind. Aylesham must receive equal investment in comparison to other Rural Service centres to help the village thrive.
7. Aylesham Parish Council welcomes the commitment to planting larger numbers of trees but feels this must come with a long-term solution to maintaining the trees. DDC must also commit to the full 2025 Future Homes Standard now.
8. Aylesham Parish Council believes that a new small convenience shop in each of the primary developments would be wholly insufficient. DDC should also look to adopt more stringent parking policy reform
9. Aylesham Parish Council welcomes the additional employment opportunities within the village
10. Aylesham Parish Council requests that the Snowdown Colliery site is included in a long-term, future plan to ensure the heritage is not lost and can be enjoyed by generations to come.