

Letter to Planning Inspectorate on Peckham's Aylesham Centre

Skyline from Peckham Levels

Key information

Publication type: General

Publication date: Tuesday 21 October 2025

Letter to Planning Inspectorate on appalling proposals for Peckham's Aylesham Centre

Dear Planning Inspectorate,

Representation on Case APP/A5840/W/25/3366760

I am writing in my position as an elected member of the London Assembly to urge you to uphold Southwark Council's decision to reject this planning application.

We are in desperate need of social housing. As a London-wide Assembly Member, I see day in and day out the impact of our shortage of social housing on individuals and communities. In Southwark, over 18,000 people are on the waiting list for a social home. At the nearest school to the proposed development, over 300 children are homeless and living in temporary accommodation. The need is for social housing – not 'market' housing, which is unaffordable to most local people.

Despite this, the proposed social housing offer is pitiful. **The 77 'affordable' units (not even all social homes) would not even come close to meeting the housing need at the nearest school.** The proportion of affordable housing is far below the 35% benchmark set by the London Plan, and even further adrift of the 50% target. The proposed development would be a huge waste of an invaluable site, a massive plot of land in an ideal location near schools and the heart of Peckham. If the developer cannot make their development 'viable' with sufficient social housing, they are clearly not the right candidate to take forward redevelopment of the Aylesham Centre.

The proposed development is not just a wasted opportunity to meet local housing need, it also risks causing substantial harm to the community and worsening gentrification. A huge, high-end development may worsen wider local housing pressures and heighten the risk of displacement and community disintegration. The long-standing shops along neighbouring Rye Lane, which are a lifeline for low-income families and provide much-needed local employment, would likely come under intensifying rent pressures. And the future of the shops,

market stalls and community spaces within the shopping centre are also at huge risk without a development plan that's genuinely led by the community. This will jeopardise the diversity and character of this multicultural area, and risks worsening existing inequalities in the borough. I share the community's concerns that these very real risks have not been accounted for.

It is also not just the people of Peckham, or even Southwark more widely, who will be affected by your decision. It will have ramifications across London. It will set a precedent around the implementation of the Southwark Local Plan and the London Plan. If developers are able to dodge vital affordable housing commitments and bypass local scrutiny, this could have huge implications for London's housing market and communities around the capital in desperate need of social housing.

I have focused here on affordable housing, but for a more substantive criticism of the plans I'd urge you to read in detail the evidence provided by Aylesham Community Action and other local campaigners.

Kind regards,

Zoë Garbett

Green Party Member of the London Assembly