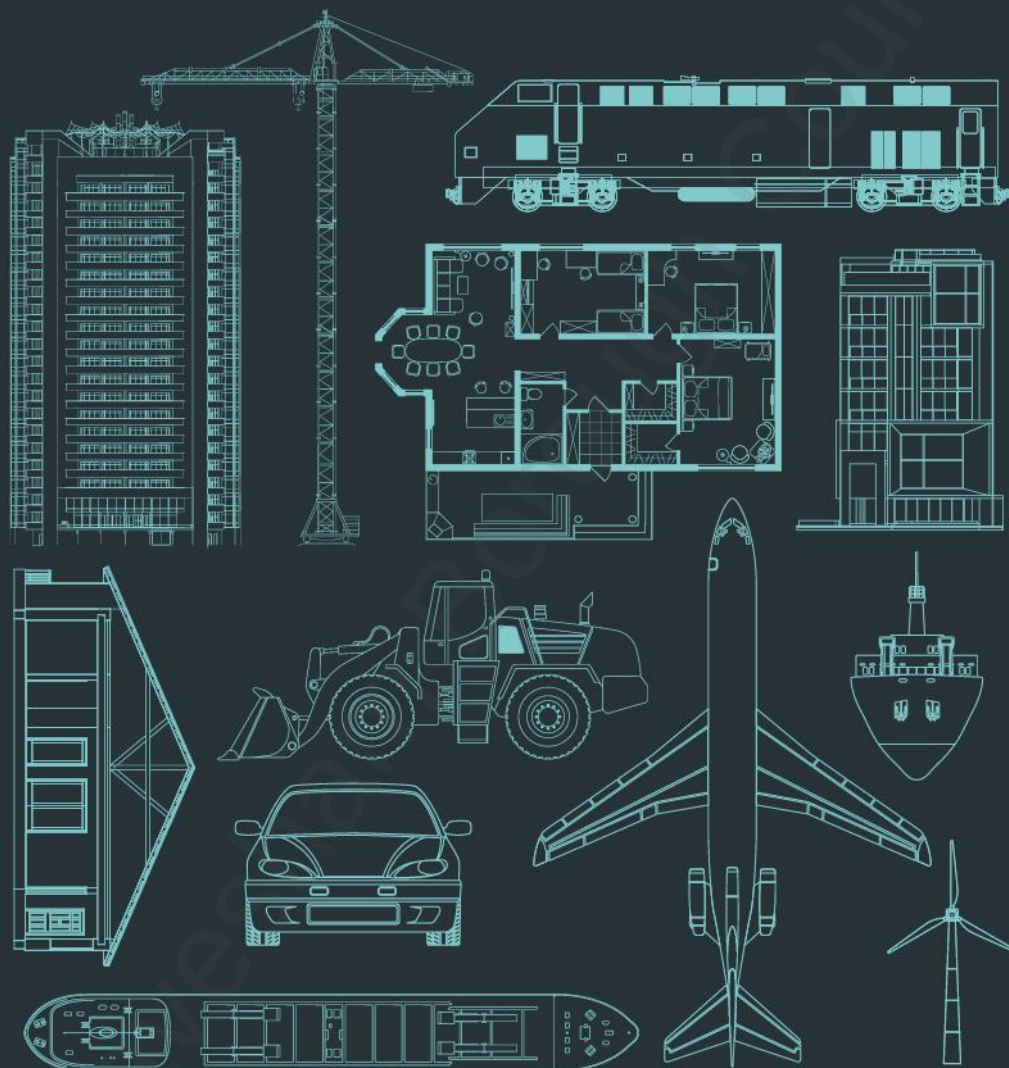




Statement of Community Involvement

Redevelopment of the Ascot Arms, Central Avenue, Gravesend, Kent

Prepared for Avery Healthcare

March 2021

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Executive summary

Avery Healthcare (Avery) is committed to consulting stakeholders and the local community regarding its proposed redevelopment at the Ascot Arms PH (now closed), Central Avenue, Gravesend.

The consultation on the proposals was undertaken during the third national lockdown in response to the Covid-19 outbreak, which made face-to-face engagement impractical during this period. The team therefore developed alternative, robust methods of consulting the community regarding its plans for the site.

Residents and stakeholders were given the opportunity to give feedback regarding the proposals via a host of different channels. A freephone information line was made available throughout the process along with a project email address for interested parties to request further details and to provide feedback.

Pre-application consultation included an introductory letter that was emailed to all identified stakeholders on **28th January 2021**, which outlined the proposals for the site, and invited them to attend a virtual meeting with the project team. Subsequently, virtual meetings were requested by two elected members of Gravesham Borough Council. These meetings were arranged on **18th February 2021** and are covered in more detail later in this document.

Avery developed alternative methods to consult the community regarding the plans for land at the Ascot Arms, which negated the need for face-to-face contact, whilst still ensuring a robust engagement. In place of a traditional public exhibition, a virtual exhibition was held between **Thursday 4th March – Thursday 18th March 2021**.

A community update newsletter was prepared and issued to around **760 residents and businesses** surrounding the site, inviting them to view the proposals through the virtual exhibition and provide their comments. This newsletter was issued on **3rd March 2021** and also included the project's freephone information line and email address to enable residents and businesses to get in touch with the project team, and to provide any comments on the proposals. This newsletter update was also emailed to all identified stakeholders, with a further invite to meet virtually with the project team to discuss the proposals in greater detail.

Avery is committed to consulting residents and other important local stakeholders regarding its development proposals. To assist with the community engagement, Avery appointed BECG, a specialist communications consultancy, to form part of its wider project team for the proposed redevelopment.

This document provides a chronological account of the pre-application consultation undertaken and a review of all the feedback received, which is accounted for and represented within this document.

1. Site background

- 1.1 The site stands at the corner of Central Avenue and Ascot Road in Gravesend. The area is suburban by nature and dominated by residential dwellings.
- 1.2 The site is currently occupied by the Ascot Arms PH. It has been closed permanently since July 2019, several months before the Covid-19 pandemic struck.
- 1.3 Over the course of a four-year period ahead of its closure, the pub had been managed by six tenants, each of whom were unable to continue trading. Following the pub's closure, a comprehensive marketing strategy commenced, which resulted in no public house operators coming forward.
- 1.4 With the onset of the pandemic, the property has become even less viable as a pub, and marketing suggests that there is no prospect that it will reopen. As a result, the building could face a bleak future of lying empty and becoming increasingly derelict unless an alternative use for the land comes forward.
- 1.5 However, Avery recognises there is a rising need for care homes, and the Ascot Arms plot would be well suited for delivering such a scheme. In the longer term, this could enable the site to be brought back into community use, as some of the care home's facilities could be made publicly available once the pandemic has passed.

2. Community Engagement

2.1 Statement of community involvement

2.1.1 The Localism Act 2011

Section 122 of the Localism Act 2011 outlines that a person proposing to make a planning application on land in England should carry out consultation on the proposed application. This should include publicity considered likely to bring the application to the attention of a majority of the persons who live at, or otherwise occupy, premises in the vicinity of the land.

2.1.2 National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's policies for England and outlines how these policies should be applied.

2.1.3 Avery has had regard for the NPPF at Paragraph 39 when it states that *“early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties.”*

2.1.4 The NPPF goes on to highlight at Paragraph 40 that *“Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.”*

2.1.5 Paragraph 41 outlines that the Local Planning Authority should encourage other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage, noting that *“the more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, including the need to deliver improvements in infrastructure and affordable housing, the greater the benefits.”*

2.1.6 Gravesham Borough Council

Gravesham Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement provides the following advice to developers, landowners, and applicants on the approach they should take to pre-application consultation with the community:

“11.17 The Council strongly encourages applicants to undertake public pre-application consultation with potentially interested / affected parties to identify and resolve issues in advance of submission. Such front-loading should be seen as an opportunity to overcome delays within the planning process, reducing the risk of refusal or the need to deal with such issues at the application stage.”

“11.18 For householder and minor applications, this may simply mean discussing proposals with owners of adjoining properties and properly identifying any potential constraints that need to be addressed and dealing with these at the pre-application stage.

“11.19 For major planning application proposals, the Council will seek to discuss the form of any such developer consultation with the applicant as part of its pre-application advice service.

“11.20 Such early consultation should be as open as possible and provide a genuine opportunity for the local community to influence the design and form of the development proposed. The extent of consultation will depend on the nature of the proposal itself and its likely impact – including impact on the local highway network and demands that may be placed on local services. Factors such as scale, location, prominence, proximity, and sensitivity of adjoining development are all likely to be relevant.

“11.21 Under certain circumstances, the Council will also encourage developers to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement. Such agreements provide a project plan and bespoke timetable for the determination of any associated application. It also makes sure that the Council has the necessary resources to make a timely and informed decision on any application whilst ensuring that Councillors, stakeholders and local communities are involved in any proposals. Such agreements should also help with the submission of higher quality applications that are capable of delivering the sustainable forms of development needed in our area.

“11.22 For all proposals, sharing information can help overcome potential objections and may provide an opportunity for improvements to the design and layout of schemes. Applicants are therefore advised to show what consultation has taken place during the preparation of their schemes.”

- 2.1.7** Throughout the planning process, Avery has sought to respond to and comply with Gravesham Borough Council’s Statement of Community Involvement to ensure a sound and robust community engagement process.

2.2 Engagement with statutory bodies

- 2.2.1** Before the indicative plans were shared with the community, appropriate steps were taken to discuss the principle of development with statutory bodies and experts. As part of this, Avery held meetings with Gravesham Borough Council’s Planning Officers regarding the proposed plans and how the consultation would be conducted.

2.3 Stakeholder meetings

2.3.1 Avery felt it was important to meet with key stakeholders ahead of submission to introduce Avery and its project team, discuss the background to the proposal site and explain Avery's plans for this site.

2.3.2 An introductory letter was emailed to all identified stakeholders on **Thursday 28th January 2021** to offer a virtual meeting with the project team. A copy of this has been included within the Appendices and was emailed to:

- Relevant members of Gravesham Borough Council's Cabinet
- Ward members for Woodlands at Gravesham Borough Council
- Neighbouring ward members for Whitehill at Gravesham Borough Council
- Members of the Planning Committee at Gravesham Borough Council
- Members for Northfleet and Gravesend West Electoral Division on Kent County Council
- Relevant third party and community groups
- MP for Gravesham

2.3.3 After the introductory letter was emailed, follow up telephone calls were made, in which the subsequent meetings were arranged:

- **Thursday 18th February 2021 with Councillor Leslie Hoskins (Whitehall ward member)**
- **Thursday 18th February 2021 with Councillor Tony Rana (Whitehall ward member)**

2.3.4 The key issues raised during the meetings included:

DESIGN

- An indication that the community would be more likely to support a development with architecture in keeping with the surrounding residential area
- Clarification was requested on the height of the building (2.5 storeys – 12 metres)
- Assurances were sought that existing fencing will be retained – this will be the case and new hedgerows will also be planted
- Comments that the existing derelict pub had become an eyesore and it would be good to replace it with something that provided greater community benefit

HIGHWAYS / PARKING

- Concerns whether 20 on-site parking spaces would be enough for the development and a keenness to avoid overspill parking

HEALTH / CARE

- Support for additional care home capacity to meet rising local demand

- Assurances were sought that local GP surgeries would be able to cope with extra patients being registered – the project team responded that as most residents will come from the local area, many will remain with their existing GP surgery

GENERAL

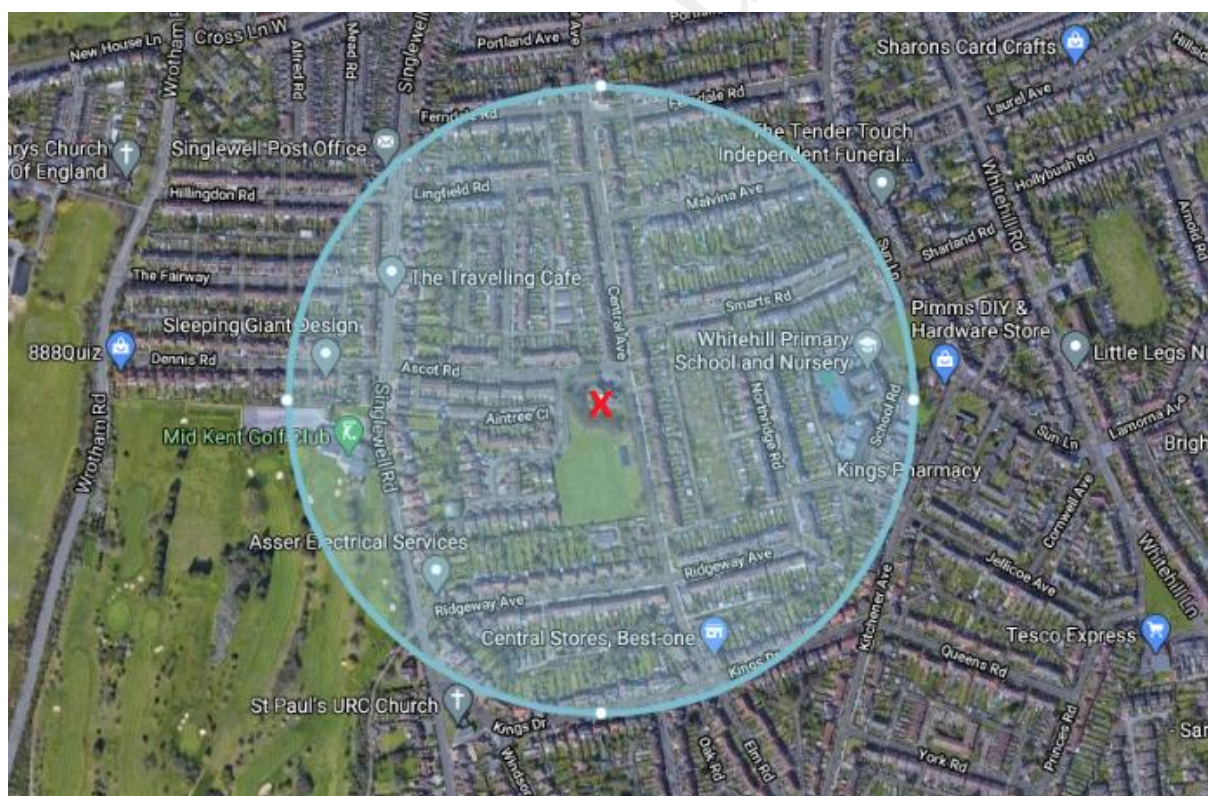
- Support for the schemes and the local jobs it will create
- Timescales / next steps

2.4 Community newsletter

2.4.1 Avery also felt it was important to engage residents and businesses near the site and to seek their views on the proposals.

2.4.2 To inform residents and businesses of these plans, a newsletter advising them of the proposals and how to respond to them was distributed to **760** neighbouring residential and business addresses in the vicinity of the site. These newsletter invitations were issued on **Wednesday 3rd March 2021**.

2.4.3 The selected distribution area for the newsletter is shown below.



Distribution area for the community newsletter with the Ascot Arms marked with a red 'x'

2.4.4 Details of the project's freephone information line and an email address were included on the newsletter to enable residents and businesses to get in touch with the project team to provide any comments.

2.4.5 The following stakeholders were emailed a copy of the newsletter, together with an updated stakeholder letter, which was sent to the following:

- Relevant members of Gravesham Borough Council's Cabinet
- Ward members for Woodlands at Gravesham Borough Council
- Neighbouring ward members for Whitehill at Gravesham Borough Council
- Members of the Planning Committee at Gravesham Borough Council
- Members for Northfleet and Gravesend West Electoral Division on Kent County Council
- Relevant third party and community groups
- MP for Gravesham

2.4.6 A copy of the community newsletter can be found in the Appendices.

2.4.7 The community update newsletter contained the following:

- An overview of the proposals
- A computer-generated image of the proposed development
- The site's background including the long-term closure of the pub
- Information about Avery
- Key benefits of the scheme
- Contact details for Avery's project team

2.4.8 The newsletter was designed to signpost residents to the project's virtual consultation website, which is covered in more detail in section 2.5.

2.4.9 Residents and businesses could provide feedback in response to the proposals by emailing the project team via the address provided – **feedback@consultation-online.co.uk** or calling our freephone information line on **0800 298 7040**.

2.5 Dedicated project email address

2.5.1 Avery's scheme at the Ascot Arms was issued with a dedicated email address which was **feedback@consultation-online.co.uk**. Residents and other stakeholders were able to contact the project team via this address throughout the course of the planning process and the feedback is summarised later in this report.

2.6 0800 comment facility

2.6.1 During and after the consultation, access to a freephone telephone information line was offered to those who wished to find out more about the proposals, or to register their comments via the telephone.

2.6.2 The telephone number used (**0800 298 7040**) provided a messaging facility that allowed voicemails to be left and responded to at the earliest opportunity to ensure information was readily available and that queries or concerns were addressed.

2.7 Consultation website

2.7.1 To ensure that Avery could provide a safe and inclusive consultation within the social distancing restrictions, a virtual public exhibition of the draft plans was held, hosted on the project website, that allowed the local community to both explore the initial proposals in detail and respond to them with their views, comments, and suggestions.

2.7.2 The virtual public exhibition was open for comments on the project's website between **Thursday 4th March 2021 – Thursday 18th March 2021**.

2.7.3 The virtual consultation contained all the relevant details about the proposal, which included information about:

- Avery's history and vision
- Background to the site coming forward
- Avery's plans for the site including design, access, parking, and sustainability
- The need for more care homes in Gravesend
- Key benefits of the scheme
- Timescales and next steps

2.7.4 The image below provides an indicative image of the virtual consultation where visitors were encouraged to click the individual boards to find out more about the proposals.



An indicative virtual consultation image

2.7.5 The website also included a feedback section where visitors were able to complete surveys to leave comments. Contact details to provide feedback by phone, email, and post were also provided.

- 2.7.6 To ensure that as many members of the community could provide feedback as possible, the project team also offered for the exhibition materials and a feedback form to be posted alongside a pre-paid envelope to provide comments on the plans. These were then collated, and the feedback analysed.
- 2.7.7 A copy of boards displayed at the virtual exhibition, which were also available in paper format on request, is attached as part of the Appendices.
- 2.7.8 Furthermore, a copy of the feedback form, which was available on the project website, and in hard copy if requested, is also provided in the Appendices.

2.8 Feedback received

- 2.8.1 During the consultation, the project team received 21 completed feedback forms from residents living near the Ascot Arms which were submitted via the project website or by post.
- 2.8.2 Additionally, the project team received emails from seven respondents which included questions and comments relating to the scheme. Two of these respondents were amongst the 21 who also completed feedback forms, as a result, their submissions have been treated as one reply to ensure an accurate picture is presented. Taking this into account, the project team received a total of 26 responses related to the proposal at the Ascot Arms site.
- 2.8.3 A summary of the responses received is contained in the table below:

Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Against	No view
11 (42%)	5 (19%)	6 (23%)	3 (12%)	1 (4%)

- 2.8.4 **As such, 61% of respondents to the consultation agreed with the principle of development, of which 42% agreed strongly. By contrast, just 12% who objected to the scheme.**
- 2.8.5 Regarding the issues raised by respondents, the project team carried out an analysis, and the table below contains a list of the issues that were highlighted and the number of times they were raised:

Comment	Frequency of being raised
Site being suitable / general support for the proposals	8
Not enough parking proposed	7
Pleased to see pub being replaced	6
Concerns about potential building noise	4
Queries over which site access will be used	3
Proposed building will be too large	3

Concerns over loss of greenspace south of the site	2
New local care homes are needed	2
New local care homes are not needed	1
Query over retention of trees	1
Query if boundary will be fenced	1
Comment that consultation period is too short	1
Concerns over cooking odours / ventilation noise	1

2.8.6 In addition to the general points raised by residents and stakeholders, the project team carried out thorough analysis of all issues and comments, including a breakdown of response to the following questions that were included on the feedback form.

2.8.7 **Question 1: Do you agree Gravesend will need more care homes in the future?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	No	No view
8 (40%)	9 (45%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)

As can be seen from the table above, a total of 85% of respondents (20 answered this question) agreed or strongly agreed that Gravesend will need more care homes in the future.

N.B. Only five respondents provided an additional comment to this question.

Positive comments	Frequency
Respondents expressed support for the provision of more care homes. Comments included: <i>E.g. "People are living longer and therefore having the need for care, increase in dementia and need for end of life care. When my mother-in-law had to go into a care home last year (due to dementia) we only had one choice of care home in Gravesend!"</i>	3
Constructive comments and reservations	Frequency
Respondents commented that there is sufficient provision locally. Comments included: <i>E.g. "We have numerous care homes, including Wombwell hall."</i>	1
General	Frequency
Respondents commented that they had other issues relating to the provision of care homes. Comments included: <i>E.g. "Will there be a minimum age? What about residents who drive, where will they park?"</i>	1

2.8.8 **Question 2: Do you agree the Ascot Arms site is a suitable location for a new care home?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	No	No view
7 (35%)	6 (30%)	4 (20%)	2 (10%)	1 (5%)

As can be seen from the table above, when combining the feedback of those who agreed or strongly agreed with the suitability of the site, 65% of respondents were supportive. In contrast, only 10 per cent were against the principle.

Positive comments	Frequency
Respondents expressed support for the suitability of the Ascot Arms site: <i>E.g. "Having lived in our current address on Central Avenue for 16 years we have seen the site of the Ascot Arms go from bad to worse over the years and the current state it has been left in, with no practical use I believe the Ascot Arms site is a perfect location for a new care home."</i> <i>"I live very close to the site and would prefer the site to be a care home than a pub or shop or flats."</i>	3
Constructive comments and reservations	Frequency
Respondents also raised issues regarding the suitability of the site, which included: <i>E.g. "20 parking spaces will not be enough. Parking is atrocious already with restricted zones from Devonshire Road and into Gravesend town centre, which pushes car parking onto Central Avenue and surrounding areas."</i> <i>"There has not been any consideration of the construction impact in a residential area. Also, the care home is not in an area suitable for the elderly community as there is no access to local amenities."</i>	5
General	Frequency
Respondents provided additional comments about the site: <i>E.g. "Would prefer this to a Tesco metro, pub or restaurant. However, concerned that you will only have 20 parking spaces!"</i>	2

2.8.9 **Question 3: Do you agree that a new care home will complement the local area?**

Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	No	No view
8 (40%)	3 (15%)	5 (25%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)

As can be seen from the figures in the table above, those who agreed or strongly agreed that the new care home would compliment the local area were in the majority with a total of 55%. In comparison, those who felt it would have a negative impact made up 15% of the responses.

Positive comments	Frequency
Respondents expressed that the local area would be complemented by a new care home: <i>E.g. "Plans look amazing and I fully back the proposal and it will only enhance the area."</i> <i>"From seeing the plans and artists impression of the care home, I can see a lot of care and attention has been paid to keep the buildings aesthetics in keeping with the rest of our road."</i>	4
Constructive comments and reservations	Frequency
Respondents also commented that the area would not be improved with the proposed scheme: <i>E.g. "It's a residential area, the addition of a care home will not serve the area."</i> <i>"Not the way it is currently shown in your plan. To re-iterate - this is a three-storey construction. The surroundings are 1930s two-storey terraced homes overlooking green space. This is not an acceptable size."</i>	3
General	Frequency
Some respondents provided general comments about the scheme: <i>E.g. "Whilst I would not object to a care home here I think your proposed building is too big".</i>	2

2.8.10 **Question 4: Is there anything more you would like to say about the proposals?**

Of those who supported the plans, several expressed praise for the redevelopment, and a sample of their comments is included in the table below:

Comment	Location
<i>"As a local resident living with the Ascot Arms in the state that it is in, I strongly believe this is a fantastic use of the site."</i>	Aintree Close
<i>"I can see a lot of care and attention has been paid to keep the building's aesthetics in keeping with the rest of our road. In my opinion it looks as though there has been an excellent use of the space on the site."</i>	Central Avenue

<i>"I live very close to the site and would prefer the site to be a care home than a pub or shop or flats."</i>	Smarts Road
<i>"Plans look amazing and I fully back the proposal and it will only enhance the area."</i>	Ascot Road
<i>"I commented only the other day to my daughter that I thought the site could be used for a care home. I think in essence it is a fantastic idea."</i>	Ridgeway Avenue
<i>"I support the use of existing brownfield sites for suitable redevelopment and your proposal is an excellent example of a sustainable and socially beneficial care home complex. It clearly meets a pressing community need for more provision of supported care for the over 65s in Gravesend."</i> <i>"The site itself appears proportionate in size and the build design complements the surrounding mix of suburban housing. The site and surrounding grounds are attractive and will vastly improve the aesthetic appearance of the site and adjacent neighbourhood. The economic benefits in terms of both long, and short term, jobs are self-evident in a town that has high levels of relative socio-economic deprivation. We both wish you every success with the planning application and if there is anything further we can contribute please let us know."</i>	Address not provided

Some concerns were also raised with the project team, a sample of the comments is listed in the table below:

Comment	Location
<i>"I am concerned about how few parking spaces you are proposing for 62 bedrooms. I would prefer to see fewer bedrooms and more parking."</i>	Ascot Road
<i>"When building work commences it needs to be sensitive to local people. Too often we are disturbed by noise at the weekends that locals do not appreciate."</i>	Ridgeway Avenue
<i>"I find it hard to see how a 3-storey structure in the currently planned location will not dwarf existing properties and lead to a drop in house price value in this area."</i>	Northridge Road
<i>"Living at number (address removed) Aintree Close I am concerned about the level of noise from the access for rubbish collection/deliveries. The road at the rear of the properties in Ascot Road from Aintree Close is private and cannot be used for turning by lorries/deliveries."</i>	Aintree Close
<i>"It's a residential area. The addition of a care home will not serve the area."</i>	Kings Drive

2.9 Response to comments

- 2.9.1 All comments received during the process have been reviewed and the project team has attempted to respond to the most recurring themes that have been raised. Where possible Avery will amend the proposals to address the feedback received during the planning process.
- 2.9.2 During the consultation feedback review period, Avery's project team responded directly to a number of specific enquiries and questions relating to the proposals and individual responses were drafted and issued.
- 2.9.3 Regarding the general issues raised by respondents, the below contains a list of issues that were highlighted along with the project team's response.

Comments about the level of on-site parking proposed: The car parking area has been designed with sufficient space to cater for the needs of staff and visitors at peak times without resulting in any need for on-street parking. Staff will be encouraged to use sustainable transport as far as possible. From Avery's experience of other similar schemes, many staff walk or cycle or use public transport and do not drive to work. Additionally, as the staff work in shifts, it is unlikely that they will be on site at the same time, further reducing demand for on-site staff parking.

Comments around the proposed access point: The vehicle access will be off Ascot Road as existing; pedestrian and cycle access will either be from Aintree Close or the junction of Ascot Road and Central Avenue.

Comments about the loss of trees / greenspace: The existing trees along Central Avenue, Ascot Road and facing towards the park will be retained. By way of further detail, there will be some small tree loss adjacent to Aintree Close. The landscape plan includes a comprehensive scheme of new planting, including new specimen trees, to compensate for any loss and to enhance the overall character of the area. Additionally, a portion of land towards the southwest of the site which is in private ownership will be used to create a residents' garden for the care home. The council-owned recreation land to the south of the development area will be unaffected.

Comments about the proposed scale and mass of the building: The proposal is for a 2.5 storey development. For comparison, the eaves line will be the same as the pub and there will be a slight increase on the ridge line, making it relatively similar to what is already there.

Comments about the impact of noise during construction: In the event that planning permission is granted, which is yet to be determined, a construction management plan would be agreed with Gravesham Borough Council with enforceable conditions to minimise disruption and restrict working hours.

3. Next steps

3.1.1 Avery will seek to ensure that information continues to flow through existing channels to interested parties. These are likely to include:

- Relevant members of Gravesham Borough Council's Cabinet
- Ward members for Woodlands at Gravesham Borough Council
- Neighbouring ward members for Whitehill at Gravesham Borough Council
- Members of the Planning Committee at Gravesham Borough Council
- Members for Northfleet and Gravesend West Electoral Division on Kent County Council
- Relevant third party and community groups
- MP for Gravesham
- All those who registered an interest in the plans during consultation

3.1.2 Those who requested further information by telephone, letter, or email will be responded to in the most appropriate manner.

4. Appendices

- Copy of the introductory stakeholder letter
- Copy of the newsletter sent to residents near the site and other local stakeholders
- Copy of the virtual exhibition boards
- Copy of the feedback form

COPY OF LETTER TO STAKEHOLDERS, EMAILED 28/01/21

From: Ben Farnes

Sent: 28 January 2021 17:37

To: -----

Subject: Proposals for a Care Home at the former Ascot Arms Public House, Gravesend, Kent

Re: Proposals for a Care Home at the former Ascot Arms Public House, Gravesend, Kent

Dear Councillor -----,

I am writing to introduce you to **Avery Healthcare Group**, which is a premium care provider in the senior living sector in the UK, with a current portfolio of 56 care homes with several new developments in the pipeline.

For its latest project, Avery has acquired an interest in the site currently occupied by the former **Ascot Arms Public House, Gravesend**.

The initial proposal would be to deliver a 62-bedroom care home on the site, which was formerly occupied by the Ascot Arms Public House, that closed in July 2019 and has remained boarded up ever since. The site is located at the junction of Central Avenue and Ascot Road in a suburban residential area of Gravesend.

Avery wishes to bring forward a state-of-the-art care home on this site that would help to meet the **significant local need** for such facilities. In the latest Gravesend Borough Strategic Housing Market Assessment, it was identified that *"The most significant growth is forecast in the age bands over 65. Growth is particularly marked in the 85+ household age band, which is projected to increase by 2,030 householders (144%) over the 25 years from 2012 to 2037."*

The same document predicts that demand for older persons' specialist accommodation will rise by 63% over the same period, which means the borough will face a significant shortfall unless new care homes are provided.

To tackle this urgent issue, Avery wishes to redevelop the site of the former Ascot Arms Public House, which is in a sustainable location and would be classed as a brownfield development.

Avery prides itself on working collaboratively with local authorities and communities in advance of taking schemes forward. As you are an important local stakeholder, we would be delighted to have the opportunity to introduce you to Avery and discuss the initial proposals.

It is our view that a care home at this site will complement the local area, and address community needs by offering services to the elderly population. This will also reduce demand on existing services through the provision of specialist on-site care.

I hope you will be able to discuss these plans with us; a member of the development team will be in touch shortly to discuss a mutually convenient date.

If you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the project team directly on **0800 298 7040**.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Farnes

For and on behalf of Avery Healthcare

Working to deliver a new care home at the Ascot Arms site, Central Avenue, Gravesend



The proposed new care home viewed from Central Avenue

Market-leading care home provider Avery Healthcare is bringing forward proposals to redevelop the Ascot Arms pub site in Central Avenue, Gravesend.

We have circulated this leaflet to encourage you to take part in our community consultation on our draft proposals prior to the submission of a planning application.

What is proposed

As one of the leading names in the care home sector, Avery Healthcare (Avery) has sought to bring its proven track record and expertise to the Ascot Arms site in Central Avenue, Gravesend.

Time, consideration, and attention to detail has been channelled into the proposals to deliver a purpose-built care home with 62 bedrooms and first-class facilities.

Avery has adopted the following principles and elements to create a high-quality scheme:

- Safe and secure environment
- Design, style, place, and quality
- Communal areas with a sense of light and space
- Attractive outdoor areas
- Provision of care services

Architects have looked closely at the site and its surroundings and are seeking to bring forward a scheme that complements the neighbourhood and provides much-needed care home places.



The Ascot Arms PH closed in July 2019 before the coronavirus pandemic began

Bringing the Ascot Arms site back into use

A pub has stood on the site of the Ascot Arms for many years, and the venue was previously known as the Central Hotel.

Whilst some pubs have thrived in recent years, even before the Covid-19 outbreak struck, the Ascot Arms had been closed since July 2019.

With the onset of the pandemic, the property has become even less viable as a pub, and marketing suggests that there is no prospect that it will reopen. As a result, the building could face a bleak future of lying empty and becoming increasingly derelict.

However, Avery recognises there is a rising need for high quality care homes, and the Ascot Arms plot would be well suited for delivering such a scheme.

In the longer term, this could enable the site to be brought back into community use, as some of the care home's facilities could be made publicly available once the pandemic has passed.

Benefits for the community

Avery's proposals at the Ascot Arms site will deliver several key benefits and improvements to the local neighbourhood and its economy, which include:



The care home will provide much-needed accommodation to address a growing need in Gravesend



The scheme will be in a sustainable location, and would be classed as a brownfield development, easing the pressure to develop greenfield sites



The development will create new jobs, firstly in the construction industry while the new care home is built, and secondly, by providing long-term jobs in the care sector



The care home will deliver the highest standards of care: it will be registered with the Care Quality Commission, providing 24-hour support and care for the frail elderly and meeting a full range of residential, nursing and dementia care needs, including end of life and palliative services



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Savings to the taxpayer – having dedicated care reduces bed blocking and reliance on hospital services

About Avery Healthcare

Avery Healthcare is a premium care provider in the senior living sector with around 60 care homes and several new ones in the pipeline.

Avery is also in the independent living retirement sector, with four high-end properties already in operation and more planned.

It was founded by John Strowbridge and Ian Matthews, who between them have over 50 years' sector experience.

We have a longstanding reputation for innovation in the design of care homes, and an established reputation for delivering market-leading developments with high-quality interiors.

Each care home has restaurant-standard dining rooms on each floor, with table service by uniformed staff and meals created by professionally trained chefs.

Wellbeing is a priority, and Avery has a comprehensive programme that covers physical, psychological, social, and nutritional needs.

Avery also ensure technology is right up to date, with free Wi-Fi for all residents and visitors, and systems for the residents to keep in touch with friends and family via social media.

Avery now wants to bring its proven track record to the Ascot Arms PH in Gravesend to deliver a much-needed care home.

How to get involved in our consultation

Avery is committed to consulting the local community on our proposals for the Ascot Arms site.

To ensure we provide a safe and inclusive consultation within the current Covid-19 restrictions, we are undertaking a virtual public exhibition on our project website. It will allow you to view our plans in more detail and respond with your comments and suggestions.

The virtual public exhibition will be open for comments at:
avery-gravesend.consultationonline.co.uk

Between: **Thursday 4th March - Thursday 18th March 2021**

You can also leave feedback by:

- Submitting the feedback form on our project website
- Emailing our project team via **feedback@consultation-online.co.uk**
- Calling our freephone information line on **0800 298 7040** and leave a message, and a member of our team will call you back

What if I do not have internet access?

Avery is keen to ensure as many members of the community as possible can engage with our public consultation.

If you do not have internet access, please contact us via our freephone information line – **0800 298 7040** – and a member of our project team will post the exhibition materials and a feedback form to you, enabling you to view and comment on our proposals.

OUR EXHIBITION



Welcome and thank you for taking the time to visit our virtual exhibition to unveil proposals for a new care home on the site of the Ascot Arms PH, Central Avenue, Gravesend.

This exhibition has been arranged to provide you with an opportunity to review and provide feedback on Avery Healthcare's proposals ahead of the submission of a planning application to Gravesham Borough Council.

Once you have had a chance to view our plans, we would be grateful if you could fill out one of our online feedback forms. Alternatively, you can email any comments to feedback@consultation-online.co.uk

We hope you will find this virtual exhibition informative and helpful. We look forward to receiving your comments.

AT OUR EXHIBITION

- About Avery Healthcare Group
- Planning policy and the rising need for care homes
- Our proposals for the site
- Quality design and facilities
- Parking, access, landscaping, and drainage
- Key benefits of the scheme
- Have your say and next steps

COVID-19 UPDATE

In line with Government advice relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, we are not holding face to face consultation meetings. However, to ensure the views of residents and stakeholders are still heard, we have provided full details about our scheme on this website (also available in paper format), along with the opportunity to comment and provide feedback in a safe manner.

ABOUT AVERY HEALTHCARE



Miramar in Herne Bay



Inside Miramar care home



Rivermere in Sevenoaks



Inside Rivermere care home

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CASE STUDIES – OUR PROVEN TRACK RECORD IN KENT

Avery is already an experienced and established care home operator in Kent.

Our locations include Adelaide Care Home close to Bexleyheath High Street, Elvy Court Care Home in Sittingbourne, Miramar Care Home in Herne Bay, and our most recent addition, Rivermere Care Home on the outskirts of Sevenoaks.

We have a further care home in development at Edenbridge that will open later this year (2021), underlining our commitment to providing premium care in Kent.

PLANNING POLICY AND THE RISING NEED FOR CARE HOMES



Gravesend is facing a significant rise in the number of over-65s and over-85s living in the area in the coming years

Britain is faced with an ageing population and Gravesend is no exception.

In the latest Gravesham Borough Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the report stated:

“The most significant growth is forecast in the age bands over 65. Growth is particularly marked in the 85+ household age band, which is projected to increase by 2,030 householders (144%) over the 25 years from 2012 to 2037.”

As a result, the borough has an increased need for care homes, and Avery is keen to address that need.

Avery believes the Ascot Arms site would be well suited to such a scheme. It is in a sustainable location and would be classed as a brownfield development.

It is our view that a care home at this site will complement the local area, and address healthcare needs by offering vital services to the elderly population. This will also **reduce demand on existing services** through the provision of specialist on-site care.



The Ascot Arms was closed in July 2019, several months before the coronavirus outbreak

SITE BACKGROUND

A pub has been located on the site of the Ascot Arms for many years, and the venue was previously known as the Central Hotel.

Whilst some pubs have thrived in recent years, even before the Covid-19 outbreak, the Ascot Arms had been closed since July 2019.

Over the course of a four year period ahead of its closure, the pub had been managed by six tenants, each of whom were unable to continue trading.

Following the pub's closure, a comprehensive marketing strategy commenced, which resulted in no public house operators coming forward.

With the onset of the pandemic, the property has become even less viable as a pub, and marketing suggests that there is no prospect that it will reopen. As a result, the building could face a bleak future of lying empty and becoming increasingly derelict unless an alternative use for the land comes forward.

However, Avery recognises there is a rising need for care homes, and the Ascot Arms plot would be well suited for delivering such a scheme.

In the longer term, this could enable the site to be brought back into community use, as some of the care home's facilities could be made publicly available once the pandemic has passed.

OUR PROPOSALS, ASCOT ARMS SITE

As one of the leading names in the care home sector, Avery has sought to bring its proven track record and expertise to the Ascot Arms site.

Time, consideration, and attention to detail has been channelled into the proposals to deliver a purpose-built care home with 62 bedrooms and first-class facilities.

Avery has adopted the following principles and elements to create a high-quality scheme in Gravesend:

- Safe and secure environment
- Design, style, place, and quality
- Communal areas with a sense of light and space
- Attractive outdoor areas
- Provision of care services

Architects have looked closely at the site and its surroundings and are seeking to bring forward a scheme that complements the neighbourhood and provides much-needed care home places.

MAKING BEST USE OF THE SITE

The size and orientation of the new building has been designed to make best use of the site.

It features a traditional design that aims to provide an attractive frontage along Central Avenue and Ascot Road that complements the suburban residential setting.

The proposed care home will be three storeys high, with the scale and mass of the building being broken up with varied roof lines and a carefully chosen mixture of materials.



DELIVERING QUALITY DESIGN

The proposed new care home viewed from Central Avenue



Avery prides itself on being a market leader in the care home sector and will be seeking to bring that quality to its new scheme at the Ascot Arms site.

Our vision is to provide outstanding care to the residents living in our homes, and our values set out how we do this:

- Caring
- Supportive
- Honest
- Credible
- Innovative

In terms of delivering new care homes, we work with top designers and we recognise the value of listening to local stakeholders throughout the development process.

OUR SCHEME AT A GLANCE

The new care home will include:

- A total of 62 en-suite bedrooms
- Communal spaces including activity rooms
- Café and dining spaces
- Hairdressers / salon / therapy rooms
- Lounges and quiet rooms
- On-site kitchen and laundry
- Staff facilities including lounge, training areas and changing rooms
- Landscaped amenity areas and sensory gardens

PARKING, ACCESS, AND LANDSCAPING



The proposed layout of the new care home on the site of the Ascot Arms, including parking and high-quality landscaping

Avery has given careful consideration regarding pedestrian, cycle, and vehicular access to the site.

The main entrance for vehicles will be towards the northeast of the site, leading into Ascot Road.

The access route will lead to **20 parking spaces** to meet the needs of duty staff and visitors. One of the spaces will be specifically allocated for dropping off and picking up, including ambulance calls.

There will also be a separate gated access in Aintree Close for deliveries and refuse collections only.

Access for pedestrians and cyclists will be via the main entrance.

Landscaping

High quality landscaping will be provided throughout the scheme, providing important amenity space for residents, and complementing the setting of the building.

Much of the amenity space will be created towards the southwest of the site on a patch of open space beside the existing pub. The land is currently privately owned.

The council-owned open space to the south of the site, including the children's play area, will be unaffected.

SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

It is now compulsory that all significant developments must demonstrate they can safely deal with the issue of drainage without placing neighbouring properties or the wider area at risk.

Avery's proposals for the Ascot Arms site will seek to address all the current legislation in terms of providing Sustainable Drainage Systems (also known as SuDS).

It is anticipated that a drainage strategy for the site will be submitted to Gravesham Borough Council as part of the planning application process.

KEY BENEFITS OF THE SCHEME

Avery’s proposals at the Ascot Arms site will deliver several key benefits and improvements to the local neighbourhood and its economy.

The key benefits are as follows:



The care home will provide much-needed accommodation to address a growing need in Gravesend that is predicted to rise significantly



The development will create new jobs, firstly in the construction industry while the new care home is built, and secondly, by providing long-term jobs in the care sector



The scheme will be in a sustainable location, and would be classed as a brownfield development, easing the pressure to develop greenfield sites



The care home will deliver the highest standards of care: it will be registered with the Care Quality Commission, providing 24-hour support and care for the frail elderly and meeting a full range of residential, nursing and dementia care needs, including end of life and palliative services



We aim to achieve best practice standards for care accommodation and deliver state-of-the-art facilities, resulting in a long-term enhancement to the provision of care within the local area



The development will stimulate the local property market by releasing much-needed family homes when residents moving to the care home ‘downsize’, as well as smaller homes for first-time buyers further down the housing chain



Savings to the taxpayer – having dedicated care reduces bed blocking and reliance on hospital services

HAVE YOUR SAY



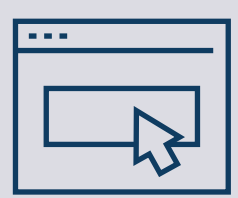
The proposed new care home viewed from Central Avenue



FEEDBACK

Please ensure that you leave feedback by midnight on **18th March 2021**.

You can do this by:



- Submitting the virtual feedback form on our project website: **avery-gravesend.consultationonline.co.uk**



- Emailing our project team via **feedback@consultation-online.co.uk** with comments or questions



- Calling our freephone information line on **0800 298 7040** and leaving a message, and a member of our team will call you back

NEXT STEPS

Thank you for viewing our exhibition regarding the delivery of a high-quality care home at the Ascot Arms site, Central Avenue, Gravesend.

Once the consultation period has closed on **18th March 2021**, Avery and its project team will go through the valuable feedback received from residents and other important stakeholders and take this into consideration before we submit a planning application to Gravesham Borough Council.

If you provide us with your details, you will be kept up to date on our progress as the plans for the site move forward.

Thank you for your time.

FOR THOSE WITHOUT INTERNET ACCESS

If you have requested to receive these consultation materials by post and you are viewing these exhibition boards in paper form, please return your comments on the feedback form provided and by using the enclosed freepost envelope.

Feedback Form

Plans for a new care home – Ascot Arms PH site, Central Avenue, Gravesend



Privacy Statement

By completing this form, you are agreeing that Avery Healthcare along with its project partner BECG, can hold and process your personal data in relation to this public consultation exercise.

Your personal data will only be used in relation to the Ascot Arms project for planning evaluation purposes only.

Your identifiable, personal data will not be used for any other purposes without your consent.

Avery Healthcare & BECG will use your data to:

- Send you updates about the project (where you provide us with your contact details)
- Develop a Statement of Community Involvement (or similar document) about this consultation that will be submitted to Gravesham Borough Council; this will be a publicly available document, but your comments will be anonymous, and we will only identify you in these reports with your permission. If you provide us with your contact details, we might also approach you to ask you more about the comments you have made. BECG is acting on behalf of Avery Healthcare to run consultation activities.

About the Consultation

We welcome feedback from residents and stakeholders on the proposals for a new care home at the Ascot Arms site. Avery Healthcare believes that the views of the local community are vitally important. Please return your comments by INSERT DATE.

Your Details

If you choose not to fill in all parts of this section, then due to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements, we will be unable to include your comments in the consultation process.

Your Contact Details

We will use these details to contact you and update you on the proposals. You do not have to fill in this section if you would rather not be contacted.

Title (Miss/Mrs/Ms/Mr/Other):

Address:

First Name or Initial:

Surname:

Postcode:

Age Group (please circle):

Under 13	13-17	18-24	25-34
35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74
75-84	85+		

Telephone:

Email:

***PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS IN BLOCK CAPITALS**

Data Protection

We hold all personal data in accordance with the retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) (the "UK GDPR"), as it forms part of the law of England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland by virtue of section 3 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003 as amended, and any successor legislation. Your personal data will not be transferred outside of the EU. You can see our full Privacy Statement, Data Protection Policy, Data Retention Policy and find out how to make a Subject Access Request at the following website address becg.com/dp or by contacting us on 01962 893 893 / dataprotection@becg.com

1. Do you agree Gravesend will need more care homes in the future?

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Unsure ☐ No

Please explain your answer

2. Do you agree the Ascot Arms site is a suitable location for a new care home?

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Unsure ☐ No

Please explain your answer

3. Do you agree the new care home will complement the local area?

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Unsure ☐ No

Please explain your answer

4. Is there anything more you would like to say about the proposals?

Please add any comments below

Thank you for your feedback.