



■ Artists' impressions of the planned eco-friendly ZED Homes development off Victoria Road, South Ashford

Eco-homes powered by wind and sun

■ A proposal for flats powered by biofuels, wind and solar energy in South Ashford is being considered.

by Sarah Linney

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PLANS for around 1,000 eco-friendly homes which would use only renewable energy were revealed in Ashford's council chamber last Wednesday.

A biofuel plant, solar panels and wind turbines would power the shops and flats proposed for land in South Ashford between Gasworks Lane, Victoria Road and Leacon Road.

Plants would grow on rooftops and cascade down the sides of buildings up to 13 storeys high being planned by ZED Homes.

Giles Downes, from architects Sidell Gibson, said: "The intention is to have zero fossil energy and make it as green as possible."

All the water used in the buildings would be recycled and re-used to flush toilets or water plants.

The developers also aim to encourage people to use their cars less by promoting car-sharing and providing cool boxes where food ordered on the internet can be delivered and stored until it is collected.

However, 70 per cent of homes would have parking spaces and there would be a public car park.

A planning application for the development has been submitted to the council.

Renewable

ZED managing director Michael Schwartz told councillors that Ashford was being given the opportunity to lead the way in the use of renewable energy.

"This is the only way to keep low-cost housing and allow first-time buyers to move in," he added.

"The big house builders are building boxes and boxes and it is time to stop."

Mr Downes said the plans had been changed to make development less dense and reduce the height of the buildings, most of which would have no more than six storeys.

He said the 13-storey building had been included to reduce the density and avoid a solid wall of buildings along the railway line.

Cllr Bruce Claridge asked if letting the development go right up to the riverbank would affect wildlife, but Mr Downes said a reed bed would be planted so habitats would not be destroyed.

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