

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER WHITE SCHOOL SITE AT KELLS, WHITEHAVEN

Lead Officer: Tony Pomfret – Development Control Manager

To seek Members view on a development brief which has been submitted for the development of the former White School site at Kells

Recommendation: That the development brief be approved.

Resource Implications: Nil

1.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1.1 An outline planning application has been submitted for the redevelopment of the former White School site at Kells for housing. This application is included on the schedule of planning applications on the main agenda.
- 1.2 The White School site is allocated for housing development under Policy HSG 2 of the adopted Copeland Local Plan 2001-2016. Paragraph 3.4.4 of the Local Plan sets out that a development brief should be prepared for all housing sites in excess of 1 hectare (or 25 houses) as a means of clarifying policy issues and guiding the nature and form of development on specific sites.
- 1.3 The applicant's agent has submitted a development brief as part of the current outline planning application. The brief considers the sites character and setting and issues relating to design, housing mix, infrastructure, access, phasing and timing of development, landscaping and sustainability. The content of the brief has been amended to take into account the comments made by various consultees within the Council.
- 1.4 The contents and scope of the brief are considered to be acceptable and will provide a useful framework to guide the development of this site.
- 1.5 A copy of the brief is attached.

Contact Officer: Nick Hayhurst – Senior Planning Officer

Background Papers: Planning application file ref 4/10/2127/001

REDEVELOPMENT OF THE WHITE SCHOOL, KELLS, WHITEHAVEN

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

1. Introduction

This Brief is written in accordance with the guidance contained in para 3.4.4 of the Adopted Copeland Local Plan 2001-2016. The submission of this brief for approval is running on a contemporary basis with an outline planning application for residential development on the site. As the site is over 1 ha in total area it is necessary in terms of compliance to approve a Development Brief prior to any application being determined. This Brief follows the format in Para 3.4.4 of the Local Plan. However the Brief does not deal in detail with transport and traffic issues which are subject to separate consideration and documentation in a Traffic Assessment and Green Travel Plan which have been subject to consultation with the Highway Authority. Reference is made however to the principles of access below.

2. Site character and setting

2.1 The White School site comprises some 2.6 ha of land allocated for housing purposes in the Adopted Local Plan (site HA5) and constitutes development on brownfield land being the site of a former school. The land has been cleared of structures and only some floor slabs and access gates remain in respect of the school complex.

2.2 The brownfield land is bounded to the east by development fronting White School Close and Kells High Road, to the north by the terraced street called South Row, to the west by the small terrace known as Old Kells and to the south by an open aspect overlooking the site of the former Marchon Works. Due to the elevated nature of the topography the site has open views to the south towards St Bees Head and over the Irish Sea to the west. Generally speaking the site slopes from east to west and this provides a distinctive character which can support the design principles to be used.

2.3 The site is thus one with an edge of town location offering an attractive aspect albeit somewhat exposed to winds being close to the coast. The site is viewable from open countryside to the south but generally, from this direction, is seen as part of the general built up area of Kells.

3. Design concepts

3.1 Any proposals must respect the setting of the site as detailed above. There are few site features which require protection from development on site, including features of landscape, heritage or habitat importance. However, a sandstone boundary wall on the west side which separates the site from Old Kells is worthy of retention. The contours of the site suggest that development should principally be parallel to the general fall in land from east to west.

3.2 Design concepts must however respect the nature of adjacent development including the use of consistent roofing materials; elements of west Cumbrian vernacular architecture including use of brick and render together with a distinctive fenestration with a vertical emphasis as opposed to horizontal. Two storey development should be the norm (although dormer windows in roof spaces may be acceptable where roof levels are no more than two storeys in height). In this context it is important that dwellings at the lower level (west) of the site do not have an adverse impact on plots at the east end of the site

3.3 It is proposed that materials of construction should comprise:

- a) Roofing materials- dark grey or grey concrete flat roofing tiles or slates.
- b) Walls- either quality facing brick, smooth cast render or a mix of the two. Brick colour will be agreed with the LPA at the time of submission of detailed application for each plot but generally should be within a range of buff to red shades. Sandstone features such as quoins or window surrounds will be permitted.
- c) Paths and driveways- pavours or hard surfaces with permeability to aid soakaway of surface water.

3.4 Road side development.

Generally an open aspect to front elevations should be maintained. Enclosure, if appropriate, should comprise solid walls, either facing brick to match elevations, or rendered block work with coping stones to no more than 1 m in height. Wooden fencing is not appropriate due to maintenance issues and the use of hedging is likely to be unsuitable due to the exposed location.

3.5 Extensions and conservatories

Any new structures not approved at the time of detailed approval for each plot will be on the rear elevation only and should respect neighbour amenity and the materials of construction of the original dwelling. All additional structures must respect separation distances as defined in Policy HSG8 of the Adopted Local Plan. To ensure acceptable design of extensions and conservatories it is important that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) has an element of control over such additions and therefore a condition on any planning permission granted will remove permitted development rights for the dwellings.

3.6 It is required that all the self build plots be fully serviced, i.e. with foul surface water drains, roads and pavements. Public area landscaping, street lighting and utilities (gas, water, electricity and telecoms) should all be taken to the boundaries of the self build plots for final connection with no additional charges for provision other than standard connection charges where applicable.

4. Housing mix

The site here is currently owned by Copeland Borough Council and as part of the sale to the applicant infrastructure works must be provided to 14 self build plots on the site and outline planning permission will be sought for these plots as part of any application.

The remainder of the development will comprise an additional 17 proposed plots for further self build as identified by the applicant through local survey, 21 plots for sale and 22 plots for "affordable" housing (11 rented and 11 shared equity) as agreed with a Registered Social Landlord (RSL).

The definition of "affordable" homes will be as indicated in Planning Policy (PPS) 3 – Housing and specifically Annex B (Definitions). In this case the mix proposed will include social rented housing; 11 units, and the remaining 11 units shared equity with a maximum purchase percentage of 90% ownership to prevent staircasing out.

Total number of dwellings will thus be 74, comprising 31 detached properties, 24 semi detached and 19 terraced units.

A density of 28 dwellings per ha will result.

5. Infrastructure

5.1 Some new local infrastructure is required to develop the site. A revised access to South Row will be required and roads, footways and lighting will be to County Council adoptable standards.

5.2 Foul drainage only should be connected to the public sewerage system and it is known that connections are available on the west side of the site.

5.3 Surface water runoff should be minimised by use of permeable surfaces in gardens, patios and driveways. Water harvesting should be considered in the detailed design and construction of dwellings. Residual surface water from the site should be connected to an appropriate off site culvert, drain, watercourse or stream as agreed with the relevant statutory bodies and riparian owners.

It would be normal practice for a standard condition to be imposed on any outline planning permission requiring a detailed scheme for dealing with surface water to be approved by the LPA prior to any development commencing. It is known here that two options appear to exist; involving drainage to the south west of the site either via an existing culvert or via a new drain to an existing sea outfall over the Barrowmouth Cliffs. A condition as proposed above will enable further technical investigations regarding options and negotiations with riparian owners and statutory undertakers to proceed before development takes place. Any agreed solution shall include inspection chambers at the seaward end together with a properly constructed sea outfall to avoid interference with the coastal footpath and any surface water scheme shall comply with PPS25 Annex F paragraph 10.

5.4 Additional evidence, as agreed with the LPA regarding development constraints and issues requiring mitigation will be provided via reports in respect of:

- a) Flood Risk
- b) Land contamination
- c) Traffic and Green Travel

6. Access

6.1 The site is currently served by an access on the South Row frontage. This is to be replaced with a new access slightly to the west.

6.2 All internal roads should be designed to adoptable standards and based upon Cumbria County Councils design guide. At the detailed stage measures will be proposed for traffic calming on internal estate roads with provision being made for turning vehicles at culs-de sac heads, in particular for refuse vehicles.

6.3 Linkages to the local footpath network should be provided and this should include a link to the south west to the former Croft Pit incline footpath.

7. Phasing and timing

Any development proposals must indicate phasing for development and provisional timescales in terms of intent. Although it is accepted that the timing of development will be determined partially by market influences it is important for the local community to know when development is likely to take place.

Major roads works and key service connections should be completed by September 2011 with roads constructed to at least the wearing course. Final completion of the road system will be undertaken via adoption procedures with the Highway Authority carried out under the Highways Act.

Full adoption of roads, lighting and footpaths should be sought within 12 months of the development being completed. Full site development should be sought by 2016 although it is understood that market conditions will partially dictate completion.

8. Landscaping requirements, assimilation and open space

8.1 Given the semi derelict and exposed nature of the current environment on the site a landscaping scheme will be required even though with harsh environmental conditions for several months of the year a full "greening" of the site will be difficult to achieve. With an outline application the submission of such a scheme will be reserved for future approval.

Any landscaping proposals should include planting of site sensitive native species which are salt and wind tolerant. Parking and access ways, as mentioned above should use differing permeable materials. Such requirements are normally conditioned on any outline planning consent(s).

Any plants/shrubs etc dying and/or diseased should be replaced via a replacement programme during the first 5 years after a landscape scheme is implemented.

8.2 No provision of formal open space provision is required. This is due to the location of the land where within 200m of the site there is a comprehensive Council play area on Kells High Road to the east. This play area is on land which includes the Kells ARLFC grounds where there is space available for informal games. The site is also adjacent to the Coastal footpath, the Croft Pit incline footpath and provides access to St Bees Head and the town centre via recently completed Coastal Fringe works. The site is thus well provided with formal and informal play and recreation areas both adjacent and within a reasonable distance.

9. Re use of materials and waste

Any development of the brownfield land here will require demolition of some minimal existing structures. Materials arising from demolition and breaking up of floor slabs should be re used on site for new construction wherever possible to eliminate removal from site.

Adequate provision must be made for the recycling of waste materials arising from housing areas where units are in blocks in the form of discrete waste skip areas and adequate access for refuse vehicles.

10. Sustainability

Detailed proposals should address issues of sustainability in design and construction and should follow the principles as contained in relevant best practice documents including:

- Building for Life. Lifetime homes standards will be incorporated into detailed applications for individual dwellings and the highest standard possible should be sought although it is known that issues of levels may prevent achievement of the highest standard.
- Code for Sustainable Homes. Level 3 of the Code will be sought as a minimum and as time progresses level 6 will be sought up to 2016
- Secure by Design. Any proposals and suggestions from Cumbria Constabulary will be incorporated into overall design and individual plot detail.