



# **Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035**

## **Issues and Options**

**October 2017**

## Issues and Options

The consultation document is available for comment until **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017**.

To view and download an electronic copy of this *Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035: Issues and Options* document, visit the Copeland Borough Council Website: [www.copeland.gov.uk](http://www.copeland.gov.uk)  
You can also view the document at all libraries in the Borough and Copeland Borough Council offices.

**Please make any comments you have on the accompanying questionnaire and send it to:**

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It would greatly aid the process if you could use the Questionnaire that accompanies this document. Additional forms are available from the Council's Strategic Planning team or from the website.

We will generally not acknowledge representations made, however email correspondence should receive an automated receipt. If you do not receive an automated receipt please contact Strategic Planning on 01946 598435.

**If you require a copy of this document in an alternative format, for example, large print, Braille, audio cassette or an alternative language, please call 01946 598300.**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

1.1.1 The *Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028: Core Strategy and Development Management Policies* document was adopted in December 2013. This forms the development plan for the borough outside the Lake District National Park and identifies the level of growth, location and distribution of future development.

1.1.2 The *Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028: Site Allocations and Policies Plan* was intended to complete the Local Plan, identifying the land as well as a detailed policy framework to deliver the scale of development proposed in the Core Strategy. Preferred Options for the *Site Allocations and Policies Plan*, which outlined some draft proposed policies and possible allocations for housing, employment, town centres as well as protected areas, were subject to public consultation in January 2015.

1.1.3 Since the Core Strategy was adopted in December 2013 the number of homes built each year has been considerably below the target of 230 homes it set, with a shortfall of 377 homes in the first four years.

1.1.4 In November 2016 the Council commissioned a Housing Market Intelligence study to help understand the reasons for these low build rates, the potential to increase this from both existing and potential new developers to Copeland, and gain a better understanding of the sites that were being proposed through the planning system and critically their deliverability. It helped us understand how the industry has changed since the recession and also sought to independently establish the Council's position regarding the five year supply of housing sites.

1.1.5 The Housing Market Intelligence Study identified that:

- There is a limited number of housebuilders that are currently developing in Copeland which limits the capacity to build homes
- Copeland is a place that both existing and a number of potential new housebuilders want to invest and build homes
- New entrants would like to start building houses in the borough if they could find viable and deliverable sites that were large enough to provide sufficient certainty and economies of scale and give them the confidence to invest
- Generally, the settlements promoted in the Local Plan are the places developers want to build, with Whitehaven being favoured by all
- However, some developers suggested that settlement boundaries, which identify where development is acceptable within towns and villages, are acting as an inhibitor to growth. This is especially the case as they have not changed since 2006 due to delays in producing the *Site Allocations and Policies Plan*.
- A number of sites, both proposed for allocation and some with planning permission, have significant issues affecting viability and are unlikely to be developed within the next five years, if at all during the Local Plan period.

- When scrutinised in detail it was found that the sites that currently have planning approval and/or are allocated (as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017) would only meet around half of the Local Plan's five year land supply needs
  - The remaining sites that are proposed in the Site Allocations and Policies Plan may not be sufficient to meet the number of homes identified in the Core Strategy as a number are very challenging and may not be viable or deliverable
- 1.1.6 We are now building on the work in the Housing Market Intelligence Study by proactively engaging with housebuilders to improve our understanding around developer's interest in Copeland, how their business operates, what their capacity might be and where they would like to build to ensure that the Local Plan will be deliverable and the supply of housing land supports growth.
- 1.1.7 As a result of this study on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017 the Council announced that it could no longer demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. This means that the housing related policies have less weight when considering planning applications.
- 1.1.8 As a consequence, on 9<sup>th</sup> May the Council also adopted an Interim Housing Policy to help guide development until such time as the five year supply is addressed.
- 1.1.9 This position is likely to become worse, as the housing target is due to increase from 230 per annum to 300 per annum in April 2018 for the last ten years of the Plan period. This increase in target will make it more difficult to 'catch up' delivery and means the Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028 is unlikely to be successfully delivered.
- 1.1.10 The Housing White Paper *Fixing Our Broken Housing Market* (February 2017) sets out the Government's plans to boost the supply of new homes in England to meet the country's needs and support growth, and states that every local planning authority must play its part. As a borough, Copeland is very focussed on delivering growth and knows that housebuilding is critical to attract and retain both population and wealth. As such the Council is aiming to exceed the Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN) requirement and provide additional housing to meet the borough's growth ambitions.
- 1.1.11 These factors suggested that the overarching development strategy in the *Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028: Core Strategy and Development Management Policies* need to be reviewed to ensure they provide the most effective strategy for delivering the growth Copeland needs. The case for a review at this time was further strengthened by the Government's Housing White Paper which will require Local Plans to be reviewed every five years.
- 1.1.12 It was therefore agreed at Full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> May to review the *Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028* to ensure that the Local Plan is up to date, fit for purpose and can support the growth aspirations of the borough.

## **1.2 Review of the Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028**

1.2.1 The whole of the Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028 will be reviewed to ensure it is up to date and reflects national policy and up to date local evidence. A number of evidence base studies are being produced or updated to support the review. These include:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (including Objectively Assessed Need for housing)
- Economic Development Needs Assessment
- Economic Viability Assessment
- Employment Land Review
- Retail Study
- Infrastructure Strategy
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Villages Services Survey
- Copeland Borough Council Assessment of Potential Additional Site Allocations
- Copeland Landscape Character Assessment

1.2.2 This will allow the whole Local Plan to be informed by the same up to date evidence base, rather than potentially different updates of evidence as would have been the case if the Council had continued producing the *Site Allocations and Policies Plan* without reviewing the *Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028*.

1.2.3 As the evidence base is being updated, with projections and forecasts starting from 2017 the new Local Plan will cover the period 2017-2035, with 2035 being 15 years from the expected date of adoption.

1.2.4 Even though the whole of the Local Plan will be reviewed, the main focus for this Issues and Options consultation is the overarching development strategy, parts of which currently carry less due to the lack of five year housing supply. This is to consider whether any fundamental changes to the current Local Plan strategy are needed to deliver the housing and growth identified for the borough, and if so what changes would unlock our housing market.

## **1.3 Scope of this Issues and Options Consultation**

1.3.1 The Council feels that most of the Local Plan is working effectively and will not require a comprehensive change. The purpose of this Issues and Options consultation is to:

- Highlight the key areas that may require significant change and ask for feedback to ensure the scope of the review is sufficient
- Gather feedback on the key issues and options to inform the next stage of the Local Plan production process – the Preferred Options

- Reflect Government aspirations and expectations within Copeland’s context
    - Identify any new issues that will need to be addressed in the new Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035
  - 1.3.2 The main focus for this consultation is the strategic development policy (ST2) and the housing policies (SS1, SS2 and SS3), as the trigger for the review has been the low housebuilding rate when compared to the target set in the Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028: Core Strategy.
  - 1.3.3 In addition to this, two other issues have emerged that will be considered in this Issues and Options consultation. They are:
    - The strategy for allocating employment land
    - Identifying suitable areas for wind energy developments
  - 1.3.4 The *Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028: Site Allocations and Policies Plan Preferred Options* (January 2015) identified a number of new and housing related matters and it is not proposed to repeat any issues that were part of that consultation at this time. The feedback we received will be brought together with responses to this Issues and Options consultation to form the Preferred Options for the *Local Plan 2017-2035*.
  - 1.3.5 Other issues requiring minor policy additions or changes will be considered in the next stage of producing the *Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035*: the Preferred Options.
- 1.4 Process and Timescales for Producing the Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035**
- 1.4.1 Work on allocating land for development in the *Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028: Site Allocations and Policies Plan* has been paused while the Issues and Options consultation takes place. This is to enable the Council to improve its understanding about which sites will be viable and deliverable in Copeland and ensure that the sites proposed will align with the locations and distribution proposed in the new development strategy and overarching policy framework.
  - 1.4.2 Once this Issues and Options has been completed the findings will be brought together with the site allocations work to produce a full new Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035 with up to date policies and site allocations to provide the confidence and certainty for development to enable growth in Copeland.
  - 1.4.3 As the review is largely focussed around one specific issue (i.e. housing delivery) it is hoped and is important that the review can be undertaken relatively quickly. The process and timescales for reviewing the Local Plan is as follows:

Autumn 2017 **Issues and Options Consultation:** This will review the overarching strategy and identifying the key issues that the new Local Plan will need to address

- Spring 2018 **Preferred Options Consultation for the *Local Plan 2017-2035*:**  
This will consider the updated evidence base together with responses to this Issues and Options consultation and responses to *Site Allocations and Policies Plan Preferred Options* consultation from 2015. It will contain updated strategic policies, development management policies and site allocations.
- Autumn 2018 **Pre-Submission Consultation for the *Local Plan 2017-2035*:**  
This will represent the Council's final draft of the new Local Plan
- Winter 2018 to Summer 2019 **Submission and Examination:** The Pre-Submission document will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, together with all responses received, so that the appointed Planning Inspector can examine the soundness of the Local Plan 2017-2035. This will include public hearing sessions where the main objections can be discussed.
- Autumn 2019 **Adoption:** Once the Planning Inspector has finished examining the document they will write a report outlining any changes the Council needs to make. Once the Council makes these changes the *Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035* will be adopted

1.4.4 The outcome from this will be a new *Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035* with up to date policies and site allocations and a deliverable housing target that will provide the confidence and certainty for development to support the growth ambitions in Copeland.

1.4.5 The full process for producing the *Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035*, together with the resources available and the timescales involved can be found in the Copeland Local Development Scheme 2017.

## 1.5 Responding to the Consultation

1.5.1 The Issues and Options within this document have been produced on a questionnaire for you to complete. Please send completed questionnaires to:

Strategic Planning  
Copeland Borough Council  
The Copeland Centre  
Catherine Street  
Whitehaven  
Cumbria  
CA28 7SJ

Email: [ldf@copeland.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@copeland.gov.uk)

## 2 The Issues and Options

2.1.1 This chapter highlights the main issues that have been identified as needing to be reviewed before completing the Local Plan.

2.1.2 Each issue will be introduced in turn together with a number of potential options to address it. A question will then outline the issue and possible options, and it is answers to these questions that the Council wishes to understand through this consultation.

2.1.3 The Council will use this feedback, together with information from the evidence base studies that are being produced, to bring them together as a 'package' which represents the most sustainable strategy that will deliver the growth and prosperity we want to see in the borough. This work will come together in the *Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035 Preferred Options*.

2.1.4 The main issues that have been identified are:

- The number of homes the borough should be planning for (meeting the Objectively Assessed Need for housing and supporting growth)
- How the Council can support additional housing development above any target set, if required, to support the Council's growth aspirations and major projects in the borough (noting that targets are 'floors' and not 'ceilings')
- The settlement hierarchy/identifying where development should take place
- The distribution of development (i.e. how much development should take place in each kind of settlement)
- Whether to continue using settlement boundaries
- Strategy for allocating Employment sites in Copeland
- Areas suitable for wind energy developments

### 2.2 Vision for the Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035

2.2.1 Before looking at the detail of the strategic policy framework it is important to be sure that the overarching Vision for the Local Plan is still relevant and up to date. The Council considers that the current Vision for the Local Plan remains relevant and appropriate to be taken forward into the new *Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035*, subject to minor updates. The Council would welcome views on this and any changes that might be needed to update the Vision for the Local Plan.

2.2.2 The Vision for the *Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028* is reproduced below:

**By 2028, Copeland will be an economically and socially sustainable, well-connected and environmentally responsible place of choice.**

***Economically sustainable:*** a place that boasts prosperous towns and vibrant villages, a highly-skilled workforce and a varied and sustainable economic base that builds on opportunities, including those presented by the low-carbon and renewable energy sectors, knowledge-based industries and tourist attractions;

***Socially sustainable:*** a place that meets the needs of the whole community, where geography is not a barrier to achievement, and where housing quality and availability, social infrastructure, health and well-being, equality and social mobility are improved;

***Well-connected:*** a place that has enhanced transport networks providing improved access to sustainable modes of transport, both within and between its key settlements and out towards neighbouring areas;

***Environmentally responsible:*** a place that adapts to climate change and minimises its carbon footprint, makes the most of its unique coastal location and abundant natural resources whilst protecting and enhancing its green infrastructure, landscapes, heritage and biodiversity.

### **Question 1: Do you support the Vision for the Copeland Local Plan?**

Please provide details of any changes you would like to see made to the Vision.

## **2.3 Planning for the Right Number of Homes**

2.3.1 The first thing that the Council needs to ensure is that it is planning for the right amount of development so that it can put an effective plan in place to provide the certainty and confidence to deliver the growth the borough needs to flourish. This figure should meet the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing that is identified within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and also allow for growth and opportunities from the development of a new nuclear power station at Moorside and other major projects to be maximised.

### **The Current Housing Target**

2.3.2 The current adopted Core Strategy contains a very ambitious target for housing growth, with a target of 230 homes per annum in the first five years which rises to 300 per annum for the remainder of the Plan.

2.3.3 The target of 230 per annum was a continuation of Copeland's target within the North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which was ambitious and represented a significant uplift when compared to house building rates at the time. It should be noted that when targets were first established in the RSS they were considered to be 'ceilings' (i.e. maximum figures), whereas now housing targets are something to be achieved and hopefully exceeded. The Council's appetite for new housing has not diminished, but we hope now to be more robust and ensure our Vision is met.

- 2.3.4 The uplift figure to 300 per annum, which is currently factored into the Local Plan’s target, was predicated upon construction of a new nuclear power station at Moorside beginning in 2018 and lasting until towards the end of the Plan period when the power station is due to be operational and employing 1,000 staff. NuGeneration Ltd, the developer of Moorside power station, has paused their project while they carry out a strategic review of the business, and any implications of this on the timescales of the project are not yet clear. Once the strategic review is completed, anticipated to be early in 2018, the Council will have a better understanding of Nugeneration Ltd’s future plans and timescales.
- 2.3.5 The additional growth associated with Moorside is currently difficult to quantify and it may be better for the Local Plan to make allowance for any such additional development rather than build it into the housing requirement, especially for uplift related to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects that are outside the control of the Local Plan. That said, it should be noted that it is the Council’s intention that working accommodation will have a permanent legacy.

#### Housebuilding Rates in Copeland

- 2.3.6 Over the past twenty five years the average number of homes that has been built is 150 per annum. Table 1 below shows the average number of homes built each year for 5 year tranches since 1992. It shows that whilst generally 150 homes have been built each year during times when the borough’s population has been static or falling it can also support house building rates of almost 200 per annum when major projects are taking place in the borough (the high rate between 1992 and 1997 broadly corresponds to the development of the THORP plant at Sellafield).

**Table 1: Number of Homes Built in Copeland**

Date	Average Number of Homes Built Per Annum
1992-1997	196
1997-2002	142
2002-2007	159
2007-2012	121
2012-2017	133
<b>1992-2017</b>	<b>150</b>

The full table showing net additional completions for each year can be found in Appendix 1

- 2.3.7 Table 1 also highlights the fall in house building that was seen following the recession in 2008 and that the rate of house building is now growing again as confidence returns to the market and the borough. Those developers that are active in Copeland are developing at or close to their capacity and new entrants are required to build in the borough to meet the additional demand that exists.

#### Housing Needs

- 2.3.8 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) assesses the full housing needs of the borough and seeks to establish the Objectively Assessed Need

(OAN). The initial findings from this work suggest that the baseline requirement OAN is 125 homes per annum, when considering long term migration trends and the baseline jobs scenario.

- 2.3.9 As the number of homes built in Copeland each year regularly exceeds the Objectively Assessed Need figure of 125 homes and the Council expects opportunities for economic growth via Moorside and supply chain supported by the Centre of Nuclear Excellence (CoNE) a higher figure should be sought. This is especially the case as the OAN considers known trends and opportunities and the extent of the opportunities from Moorside are not yet fully understood.
- 2.3.10 To help reflect this the SHMA also identifies a housing need figure of 187 homes per annum to meet the proposed long terms jobs growth. This is based on an initial working assumption for jobs growth of 2,000, to take account of the long term jobs once Moorside is operational, together with West Cumbria Mining and changes to operations at Sellafield. However, this figure may be subject to change once the jobs growth forecast is identified in the Economic Development Needs Assessment (EDNA).

***Question 2: What is the most appropriate target for the Local Plan to ensure that the borough's Objectively Assessed Need is met, whilst also supporting the growth aspirations for the borough?***

1. **Continue with the Core Strategy Target: 4,840** (i.e. 230 per annum with an uplift to 300 per annum for ten years during the Plan period to support opportunities from Moorside construction)
2. **Continue with the Core Strategy Target but without uplift: 4,140** (i.e. 230 per annum)
3. **SHMA 2017 Jobs Growth Target\*: 3,336** (i.e. 187 per annum – to be confirmed)
4. **25 Year Average Number of Homes Built: 2,700 (i.e. 150 per annum)**
5. **SHMA Baseline of Objectively Assessed Need\*\*:** 2,250 (i.e. 125 per annum – to be confirmed)
6. **Other** (Please specify)

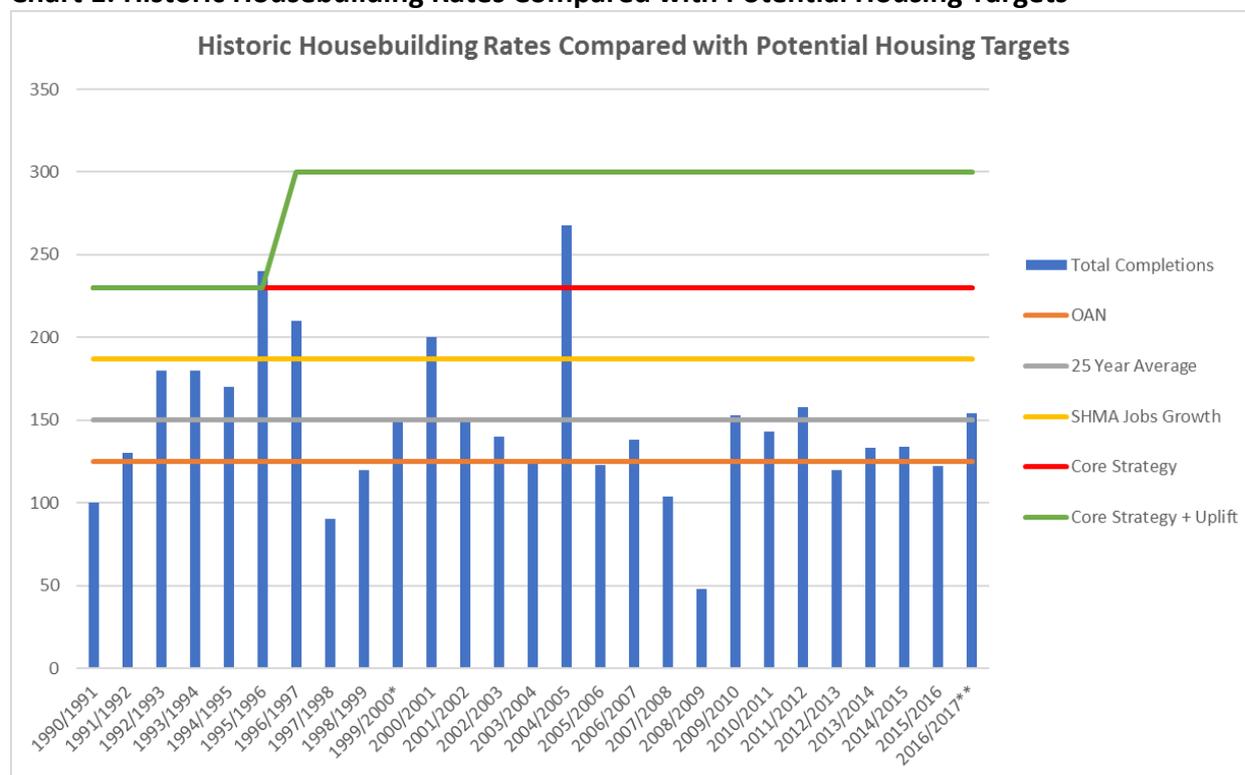
\* The SHMA Jobs Growth target is still to be confirmed and will be finalised once the jobs forecasting has been completed for the Economic Development Needs Assessment.

\*\* On 14<sup>th</sup> September, the Government launched a consultation *Planning for the right homes in the right places* which includes a proposed standard methodology for calculating Objectively Assessed Need (OAN). This methodology suggests an OAN figure of 32 homes per annum for Copeland, which they stress is not a target. This figure is not proposed as an option in the Issues and Options because it was published after Full Council approved the consultation document and does not represent a credible target as it is only one fifth of the average number of homes that have been built in Copeland since 1990.

- 2.3.11 The figures above present a range of options when considering the housing target that should be included in the Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035. These range from continuing with the target in the current Core Strategy at the maximum to meeting the Objectively Assessed Need as a minimum. The

different targets are considered against past house building rates in Chart 1 below.

**Chart 1: Historic Housebuilding Rates Compared with Potential Housing Targets**



2.3.12 A significant step change from the long term average rate of housebuilding is unlikely to be achieved in the short term, but the market is changing and the Council has the aspiration to support growth and provide opportunities. The balance when establishing a housing target is between meeting the Objectively Assessed Need, which would be deliverable in Copeland, whilst also encouraging investment and allowing for further growth and development from opportunities that are not yet known.

2.3.13 It should also be remembered that targets within Local Plans are no longer maximum figures but we need to ensure that the housing target that we set is deliverable.

## 2.4 Accounting for Additional Growth

2.4.1 The Local Plan needs to ensure that it meets the Objectively Assessed Needs for the borough, but also must support additional growth over and above this level to benefit from opportunities around the new nuclear power station at Moorside and other major projects such as the West Cumbria Mining project.

2.4.2 There are a number of options to do this including allocating additional land, either as an oversupply of land or 'reserve' sites, or providing more larger sites that developers can increase build rates to meet increases in demand.

- 2.4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Local Planning Authorities to provide a buffer of additional sites to support the short term delivery through the 5 year supply of housing sites (Paragraph 47). This buffer can range from 5% to 20% depending upon the rate of housebuilding in the borough. This concept could be extended to the Local Plan as a whole and the Council could allocate additional housing sites to provide a range and choice for developers.
- 2.4.4 An alternative could be to provide a number of 'reserve sites' that do not form part of the formal Local Plan allocations, as they are not expected to be developed during this Plan period, that could be brought forward to meet additional demand as it arises. This could also help ensure development can take place to meet identified needs if unforeseen issues arise on any of the allocated sites.
- 2.4.5 Feedback from developers has identified a preference for larger, strategic sites to act as an 'anchor' site that provides a steady supply of housing while they look for other opportunities within the borough. Whitehaven is the preferred location for developers wishing to start building in Copeland. Allowing accelerated development rates on these larger sites could also provide the flexibility to meet changes in demand and need, although this cannot be the only place for development.
- 2.4.6 Another approach can be to establish a policy framework to support additional development in certain settlements as windfalls/extensions once the allocations have been developed.

***Question 3: How should the Local Plan allow for additional growth over and above that which is currently planned/known?***

(Please tick all that apply)

1. **Allocate more larger sites that would provide delivery for the whole Plan period which could be developed more quickly if demand increases**
2. **Identify additional 'reserve sites' within the Plan can be brought forward if growth and demand for housing exceeds that proposed in the SHMA**
3. **Allocate sufficient land to provide the homes required plus an additional buffer (e.g. 20%) to allow sufficient range and choice in all settlements**
4. **Allow flexibility so that additional development can take place, so long as it is within the identified settlement hierarchy/distribution for development**
5. **Other (Please specify)**

- 2.4.7 It should be noted that if housebuilding consistently exceeds the target for a number of years it may be necessary to review the Local Plan again to reflect the change in market conditions and borough wide growth.

## 2.5 Settlement Hierarchy/Location of Development

- 2.5.1 The Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028 currently has a defined settlement hierarchy to direct development, based on individual settlements and their roles. This hierarchy is as follows:
- Principal Town (Whitehaven)
  - Key Service Centres (Cleator Moor, Egremont, Millom)
  - Local Centres (Arlecdon/Rowrah, Beckermest, Bigrigg, Cleator, Distington, Ennerdale Bridge/Kirkland, Frizington, Haverigg, Lowca/Parton, Moor Row, Moresby Parks, Seascale St Bees, Thornhill)
- 2.5.2 Anywhere outside of these settlements is classified as open countryside, where there is a presumption against development.
- 2.5.3 The Local Centres represent the villages in the borough with the greatest number and range of services. This means that a number of villages that have some services are currently not part of the settlement hierarchy and development of housing is resisted. This is even more pronounced if closely related villages, or clusters of villages, which can share service provision are considered.
- 2.5.4 We would like to hear views about whether this settlement hierarchy needs to be changed to meet the needs of rural communities and help support rural services. This could be done in a number of ways, such as including additional villages as Local Centres and/or creating a new tier in the settlement hierarchy for smaller Sustainable Villages.
- 2.5.5 The Council is also considering how any settlement hierarchy might work, and gain a better understanding of how places function and communities provide and use services. An example of this could be supporting development in clusters of villages and/or villages around key settlements, or identifying functional areas using evidence from the Village Service Survey and parishes. Examples of clusters of villages could be Arlecdon/Rowrah/Frizington, Drigg/Holmrook and The Hill/The Green/Hallthwaites.

### ***Question 4: What is the most appropriate way of deciding where development should take place?***

1. **Continue to use the existing Settlement Hierarchy** (i.e. Whitehaven, Key Service Centres and Local Centres as currently defined)
2. **Continue to use the existing Settlement Hierarchy, but with an increased number of Local Centres**
3. **Expand the Settlement Hierarchy with an additional new category of 'Sustainable Villages'**
4. **Cluster development around Key Settlements** (this could allow development in small villages close to the main towns and service centres)
5. **Identify Functional Areas** (the approach for this is still to be determined, but it could cover villages/communities that share services over a number of settlements)
6. **Other** (Please specify)

### **Establishing Criteria for Identifying Local Centres/Sustainable Villages/Clusters**

- 2.5.6 Whichever option is taken forward from Question 4 there needs to be clear criteria for the identification of Local Centres and Sustainable Villages.
- 2.5.7 The Council produced a Village Services Survey in 2010, which mapped the level of services within villages, and this was used as the basis for identifying Local Centres in the *Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028: Core Strategy*.
- 2.5.8 The Village Services Survey has been updated in 2017 and has sought to look beyond existing settlement boundaries as well as within them to help identify a more accurate level of service provision across the borough

### **Question 5: How should the Local Plan identify Local Centres and/or other Sustainable Villages that can support small scale housing development?**

(Please tick all that apply)

1. **Have a threshold number of services that must be provided (e.g. 7 services) regardless of what the services are**
2. **Prioritise villages with a school, shop and community building**
3. **Prioritise villages with a school**
4. **Other (Please specify)**

- 2.5.9 We do recognise that many villages work on a cluster basis with facilities and services supporting a number of villages. We would welcome feedback on such clusters so that this option can be fully considered through the Local Plan.

### **Questions 6: Please provide examples of villages that share services and facilities and the relationship between them**

## **2.6 Distribution of Development**

- 2.6.1 The next thing to consider is the amount of development that should take place in the different locations identified in the development strategy above. This will need to consider a number of factors which include:
- The level of services, and role and function that a particular type of settlement performs
  - The capacity of the place to accommodate development (this can include infrastructure capacity, and landscape or environmental capacity)
  - The level of housing demand and need in that location
  - The availability of suitable, viable and deliverable sites in each settlement
- 2.6.2 Currently the *Copeland Local Plan: Core Strategy* directs the greatest proportion of development (45%) to Whitehaven as the Principal Town, with the other three

towns each receiving 10%. The Local Centre villages as a group are planned to provide 20% of development, although the amount will vary between individual Local Centres, with the remainder of development expected to come from windfalls.

- 2.6.3 This directs development to the settlements with the greater number of services and infrastructure provision and likely future investment in infrastructure. However, this does not fully reflect the rural nature of the borough and needs of all communities and has not been representative of housebuilding over the years, although Whitehaven and Cleator Moor have seen the largest amount of development in recent years.
- 2.6.4 When speaking to developers the preference from the larger housebuilders is for larger sites in Whitehaven, which emphasises the role the town plays. There is also some interest in Cleator Moor and Egremont, but limited interest in Millom. A small number of Local Centre villages are also seen as more desirable and high demand, while others have very little demand. This suggests Whitehaven should remain the main focus for development, as the most sustainable location, to attract these new entrants to the local house building market and increase the number of homes provided.
- 2.6.5 In addition to the larger housebuilders, small local builders are active across the whole of the borough. They can meet the needs of smaller communities, self-build and community housebuilders, providing modest levels of housebuilding on smaller sites, which is very important to those communities and provide the full range and choice that the market needs to support growth and attract inward migration.
- 2.6.6 If limited growth were to be allowed in smaller villages, this could be achieved for example by allowing existing small villages to grow by say 1% per annum.

***Question 7: What is the most appropriate way to distribute development in Copeland?***

1. **As in the Core Strategy** (i.e. Whitehaven 45%, Key Service Centres 10% each, Local Centres 20%, 5% windfall)
2. **Whitehaven Focussed** (e.g. Whitehaven 60%, Key Service Centres 20%, Local Centres 20%)
3. **Equal Distribution** (i.e. Whitehaven 34%, Key Service Centres 33%, Local Centres 33%)
4. **Dispersed** (e.g. Whitehaven 40%, Key Service Centres 20%, Local Centres 40%)
5. **Linked to SHMA/Demand** (if the information is available at a sufficiently low geography)
6. **Pro Rata Based on Existing Population** (i.e. 40% Whitehaven, 30% Key Service Centres, 25% Local Centres, 5% rural)
7. **Other** (Please specify)

Note: The actual figures would change slightly if a new tier of Sustainable Villages is added to the settlement hierarchy, but the principles for each option would still apply.

## 2.7 Settlement Boundaries

- 2.7.1 A number of developers suggested removing settlement boundaries as a way to increase house building in response to the Housing Market Intelligence study. This could provide more flexibility and opportunities for growth that might not be anticipated when the Plan is being produced and present a more positive image to developers about potential opportunities. However, it could also provide less certainty for decision making than might be the case with clear settlement boundaries and positive, deliverable allocations.
- 2.7.2 The Council has listened to this feedback and would now like to further understand wider views on the role settlement boundaries, or their removal, can play in supporting growth and sustainable development in Copeland.
- 2.7.3 If settlement boundaries are removed they will be replaced with clear criteria based policies to manage development proposals on the edge of settlements that are not allocated sites.

### ***Question 8: Which is the most appropriate way of considering development and growth opportunities on the edge of settlements?***

- 1. Maintain 'tight' settlement boundaries that keeps close to the existing built form and incorporating housing and employment allocations for the Local Plan**
- 2. Identify 'looser' settlement boundaries that can include 'white land' which is not formally allocated but may be developed for housing during the Plan period**
- 3. Remove settlement boundaries from the towns/larger settlements to allow more flexibility to support increased growth while retaining settlement boundaries for smaller villages where development should be limited**
- 4. Remove settlement boundaries and adopt a criteria-based approach to assessing proposals on the edge of settlements for all settlements**
- 5. Other (Please specify)**

## 2.8 Employment Sites in Copeland

- 2.8.1 The Council wants to ensure that there is sufficient land of the right quality and in the right locations to support construction of Moorside, supply chain opportunities from both Moorside and Sellafield and also attract inward investment. This may require a different way of providing employment sites in the borough
- 2.8.2 At present there are two large, strategic employment allocations; Westlakes Science and Technology Park and Whitehaven Commercial Park located at Moresby Parks. The remainder of the allocations are generally small, extensions to existing employment sites and often relatively poor quality.
- 2.8.3 The potential demand that the new nuclear power station at Moorside and Sellafield's decommissioning work could create for larger high quality, well connected employment sites suggest that an alternative approach may be

required to attract these larger companies as inward investors, allow existing businesses to grow and retain businesses working at and relocating from Sellafield site.

**Question 9: What approach should the Council take when allocating employment land in Copeland?**

- 1. Continue with existing allocations and priorities**
- 2. Focus upon Westlakes Science and Technology Park, Whitehaven Commercial Park and Leconfield Industrial Estate**
- 3. Focus on Westlakes Science and Technology Park and Identify new strategic site(s) well related to the A595 to direct inward investment/Sellafield relocation**
- 4. Identify further Opportunity Sites within Whitehaven and other Key Service Centres for regeneration**
- 5. Other (Please specify)**

**2.9 Suitable Areas for Wind Energy Development**

- 2.9.1 The Government's Written Ministerial Statement of 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015 outlined that Local Plans should identify areas that may be suitable for wind energy as a way of supporting renewable energy production and directing wind energy developments to the most appropriate locations.
- 2.9.2 The Local Plan already has policies to consider renewable energy developments, including wind turbines and wind farms, and has outlined a number of ways of potentially identifying areas suitable for wind energy developments.

**Question 10: What criteria should the Council use to identify the areas that are most suitable for wind energy developments in Copeland?**

(Tick all that apply)

- 1. Identify all of the Local Plan area as potentially being suitable, subject to meeting the criteria in Policies ER2 and DM2**
- 2. Focus on areas that have the most favourable wind speeds**
- 3. Exclude St Bees Head Heritage Coast and settlements**
- 4. Provide a buffer around the Lake District National Park, St Bees Head Heritage Coast and settlements**
- 5. Other (Please specify)**

**2.10 Other issues:**

- 2.10.1 Most other issues for the *Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035* are anticipated to be relatively small amendments to update policy to reflect current and emerging best practice rather than wholesale review.

2.10.2 As such they are not covered in this Issues and Options consultation, and will instead be considered in the *Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035: Preferred Options*.

2.10.3 These cover issues such as:

- Ensuring a positive legacy from nuclear developments and particularly the construction of Moorside
- The change of focus in operations at Sellafield
- Renewable energy storage, as well as production on a domestic and community scale
- Renewable/low carbon transport infrastructure (e.g. electric charge points, hydrogen refuelling points)
- Flood risk/coastal management
- Changing role of town centres
- Parking
- Housing density
- The target for development on Brownfield land
- Design
- Infrastructure requirements to support development and growth

***Question 11: Are there any other strategic issues that the Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035 should be considering?***

Please provide details.

### Appendix 1: Copeland Housing Delivery Against Target (1990/1991 to 2016/2017)

Year	Total Completions	Target	Difference
1990/1991	100	190	-90
1991/1992	130	190	-60
1992/1993	180	190	-10
1993/1994	180	190	-10
1994/1995	170	190	-20
1995/1996	240	190	+50
1996/1997	210	190	+20
1997/1998	90	190	-100
1998/1999	120	190	-70
1999/2000*	150*	190	-40
2000/2001	200	190	+10
2001/2002	150	190	-30
2002/2003	140	190	-50
2003/2004	124	230	-106
2004/2005	268	230	38
2005/2006	123	230	-107
2006/2007	138	230	-92
2007/2008	104	230	-126
2008/2009	48	230	-182
2009/2010	153	230	-77
2010/2011	143	230	-87
2011/2012	158	230	-72
2012/2013	120	230	-110
2013/2014	133	230	-97
2014/2015	134	230	-96
2015/2016	122	230	-108
2016/2017	154	230	-76

Source: DCLG Live Tables 253. Arup Analysis

**N.B. \*1998/1999 is data only for private sector completions. No affordable housing data recorded.**