



Copeland Local Plan 2021-2038: Potential Gypsy and Traveller Site Assessment

Copeland Borough Council
January 2022

Contents

Abbreviations	1
1 Introduction	2
GTAA assessment.....	2
Copeland Local Plan and the Outcome of the Initial Assessment	2
The rest of this report	3
2 Site Profiles	4

Abbreviations

FRZ: Flood Risk Zone

GI: Green Infrastructure

GTAA: Cumbria Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

NPPF: National Planning Policy Framework

OSA: Open Space Assessment

SLCA: Settlement Landscape Character Assessment

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Copeland Borough Council has a responsibility to meet the needs of all its residents, including those who identify as Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople under the Housing and Planning Act 2016. The requirement to provide suitable and high quality Gypsy and Traveller sites is set out in the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015, which should be read in conjunction with the NPPF. This report provides an analysis of sites considered for allocation as Gypsy and Traveller sites in Copeland.

GTAA assessment

- 1.2 In 2019, the Council commissioned a joint *Cumbria Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)* alongside the other Cumbrian Local Authorities of Allerdale, Barrow-in-Furness, Carlisle, Eden, South Lakeland and the Lake District National Park Authority. This was completed in January 2022. The purpose of the assessment was to understand the current and future needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community within Cumbria between 2021-2040.
- 1.3 The consultants identified the requirement for accommodation through a combination of desk-based research, stakeholder interviews and engagement with members of the Gypsy and Traveller community.
- 1.4 Following completion of the study in January 2022, it was identified that Copeland has a requirement for 12 pitches to meet the need of the Gypsy and Traveller community in the borough.

Copeland Local Plan and the Outcome of the Initial Assessment

- 1.5 The emerging Copeland Local Plan 2021-2038 is required to allocate appropriate land to accommodate the identified need. Policy H9PU within the Publication Draft will allocate a site to meet the identified need of 12 pitches. It is anticipated that to meet the need, any site selected should be over 0.5ha. Any potential allocation will be required to meet the criteria in Policy H10PU.
- 1.6 Council officers have been seeking to identify suitable land throughout the Local Plan's production. The Council issued a Call for Sites from landowners (for housing, employment, retail/town centre, gypsy and traveller uses) at the *Issues and Options* and *Preferred Options* consultation stages of the Local Plan production process. In addition to this a specific call for sites for land to be considered as a Gypsy and Traveller site was issued during April and May 2021. No sites were submitted for Gypsy and Traveller use during any of these calls for sites.
- 1.7 As a result of this, discussions took place in late 2021 to identify Council owned land which may be suitable to meet the identified need. 11 sites have been identified as being available: 6 sites in Whitehaven, 1 in Egremont, 2 in Cleator Moor and 2 in Distington. This report provides an assessment of these sites.

1.8 At this stage, two sites are considered to be potentially suitable for allocation:

- GTW3: Land north of Greenbank in Whitehaven
- GTW5: Land at Sneckyeat

1.9 Both sites will be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and additional assessments including Ecology and Heritage Impact Assessment. These assessments, together with feedback following a public consultation will be used to update this assessment report as appropriate.

The rest of this report

1.8 It is important that any site allocated for use as Gypsy and Traveller pitches undergoes rigorous site assessments, using the same methods as sites for traditional residential use. This report outlines the sites that have been considered for this purpose and any constraints that have been identified.

1.9 The constraints that have been considered through this site assessment are based on criteria in H10PU. These include the following:

- Whether the site is located within Flood Zone 2 or 3
- Impact on landscape character
- Impact on heritage assets
- Impacts on biodiversity
- Relationship with the existing settlement
- If there is safe and convenient access to the highway
- Proximity to facilities
- If development of the site raises likely amenity issues
- Whether the site is capable of suitable planting and landscaping

1.10 A total of 11 sites were initially identified by the Council, with four being ruled out due to being under 0.5ha and therefore too small to accommodate need, as shown in Table 1 below. The remaining sites have been assessed against the criteria listed above. Each site has been given an individual profile, with a conclusion from the Strategic Planning Team provided at the end of each.

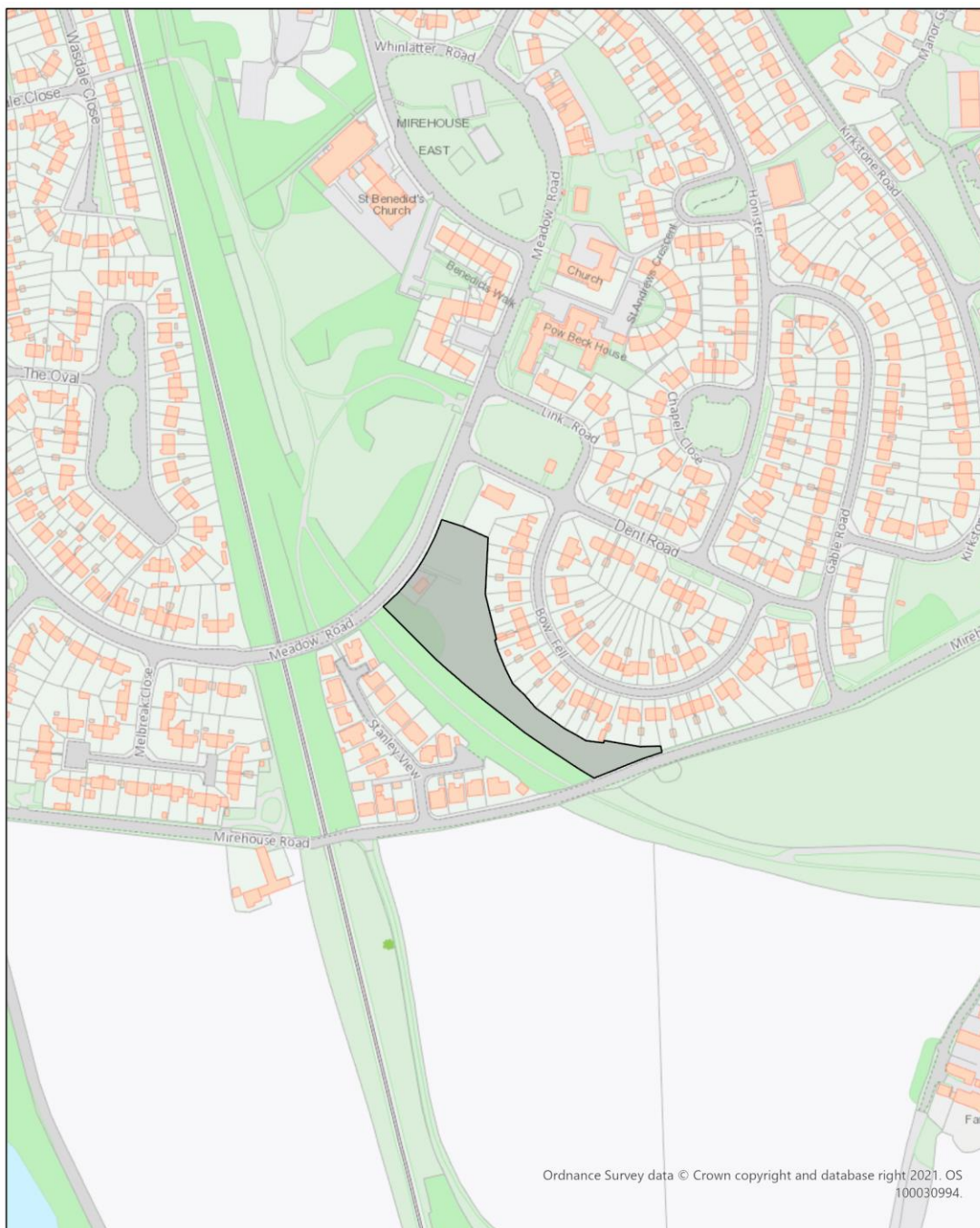
Table 1: Sites discounted due to size constraints

Settlement	Site ref	Site name	Site size
Whitehaven	GTW6	The former Skate park, Wagon Road	0.43ha
Cleator Moor	GTC1	CBC land to the rear of terraced properties to the east of Birks Road (old gas works site)	0.34ha
Distington	GTD1	Hinnings Road former Play area	0.21ha
Distington	GTD2	Car park rear Harriets Home	0.14ha

2 Site Profiles



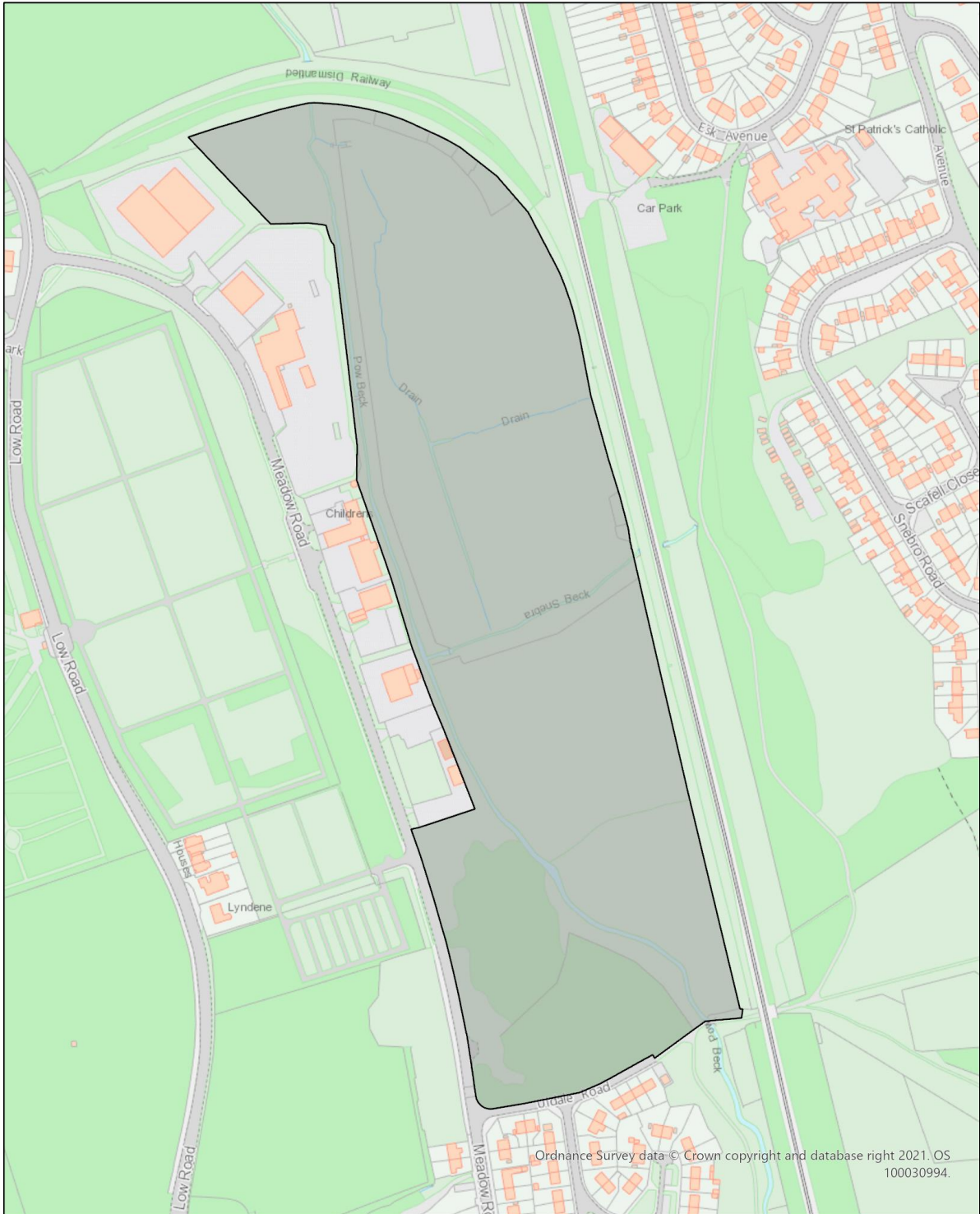
Site reference	GTW1	Site name	Land adjacent to the former Betting Shop, Rear Bowfell Rd
Settlement	Whitehaven	Site area	0.66ha
Flood zone	Flood zone 1		
Impact on Landscape Character	Protected open space (OSA - amenity greenspace). Identified as important GI linking Whitehaven to the undeveloped countryside		
Impact on Heritage assets	Unlikely - no assets in close proximity		
Impact on Biodiversity	Site appears to be managed with little evidence of potential habitats with the exception of a small number of trees along the northern boundary		
Relationship to existing settlement	Well connected		
Safe and convenient access to the highway	Potential for access from Meadow Rd. Footpath runs along western boundary		
Proximity to facilities	Close proximity		
Suitable amenity?	Narrow shape of site limits the space available between the pitches and dwellings on Bowfell Rd. Potential overlooking and impacts upon privacy		
Capable of appropriate landscaping and planting?	Shape of site may reduce the opportunities for this		
Strategic planning comments and conclusion	Do not allocate due to OSA protection and potential impacts on privacy. Also, the southern end of the site may be too narrow to develop and provide a suitable access.		



<p>Gypsy and Traveller - Considered Sites GTW1</p>	<p>Copeland Borough Council The Market Hall Market Place Whitehaven Cumbria, CA28 7JG</p>	<p>Copeland borough council <i>Proud of our past. Energised for our future.</i></p>
	<p>Date of Issue: 16/02/2022</p>	<p>Scale: 1:3,000</p>



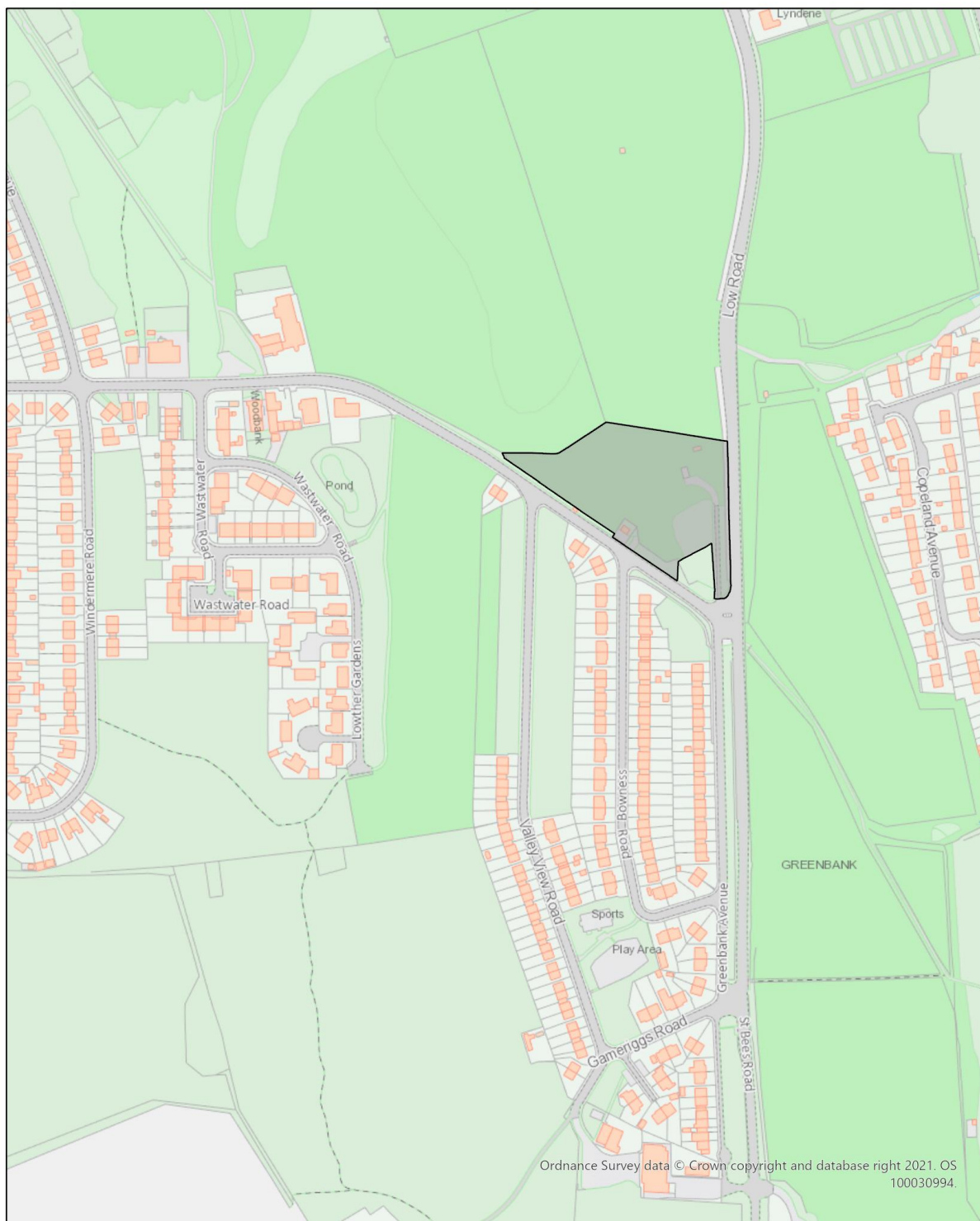
Site reference	GTW2	Site name	Land adjacent to Meadow Road units
Settlement	Whitehaven	Site area	9.73ha
Flood zone	Majority of site in FRZ2 and partially in FRZ3		
Impact on Landscape Character	Set within a valley identified in SLCA as landscape scale GI.		
Impact on Heritage assets	Unlikely - no assets in close proximity		
Impact on Biodiversity	Potential impact due to proximity of beck, presence of marsh land and tree/shrubs in south of site		
Relationship to existing settlement	Well connected		
Safe and convenient access to the highway	Potential for connection into highway to south and east. Existing footpaths to site from residential area to south		
Proximity to facilities	Close proximity		
Suitable amenity?	Yes - nearest residential dwellings are to the south and potential for existing group of trees to form buffer between the two		
Capable of appropriate landscaping and planting?	Scale of the site allows this, an appropriate buffer should be created along the railway line if the site is taken forward		
Strategic planning comments and conclusion	Do not allocate due to flood risk and landscape character		



<p>Gypsy and Traveller - Considered Sites GTW2</p>	<p>Copeland Borough Council The Market Hall Market Place Whitehaven Cumbria, CA28 7JG</p>	<p>Copeland borough council <i>Proud of our past. Energised for our future.</i></p>
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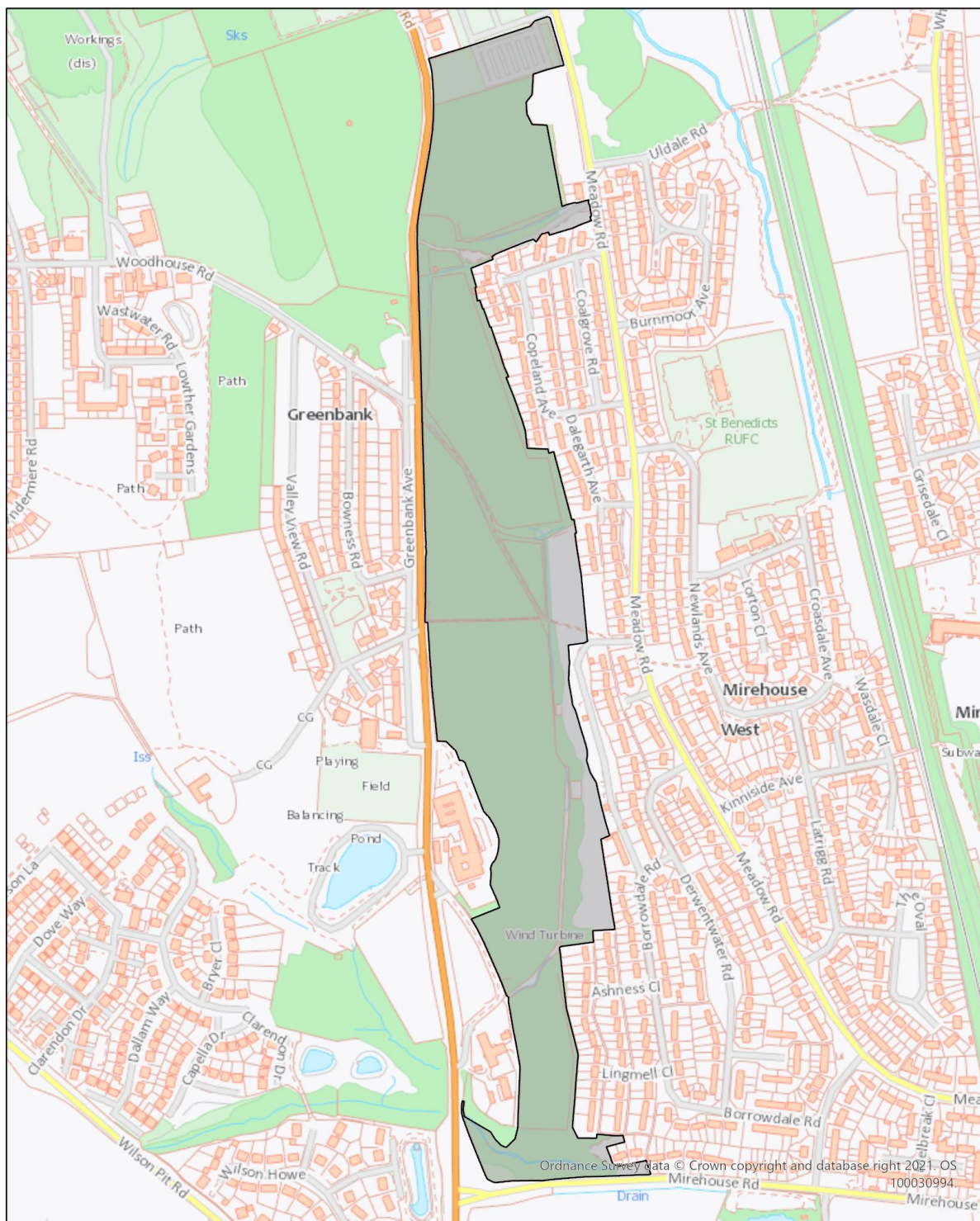
Site reference	GTW3	Site name	Land north of Greenbank, Whitehaven
Settlement	Whitehaven	Site area	0.83ha
Flood zone	Flood zone 1		
Impact on Landscape Character	Identified as part of a wider area of Strategic Green Infrastructure and located at the bottom of a Prominent Hillside in the SLCA.		
Impact on Heritage assets	Unlikely - no assets in close proximity		
Impact on Biodiversity	Site is wooded and self seeded which could result in the potential loss of biodiversity		
Relationship to existing settlement	Well connected		
Safe and convenient access to the highway	Existing access		
Proximity to facilities	Close proximity		
Suitable amenity?	No likely impacts - nearest residential dwellings are to south west		
Capable of appropriate landscaping and planting?	Potentially - buffer would be required along Low Road and potentially around existing on site utilities infrastructure		
Strategic planning comments and conclusion	Some utilities infrastructure on site which may require buffer retaining and reduce site size. Potential for allocation		



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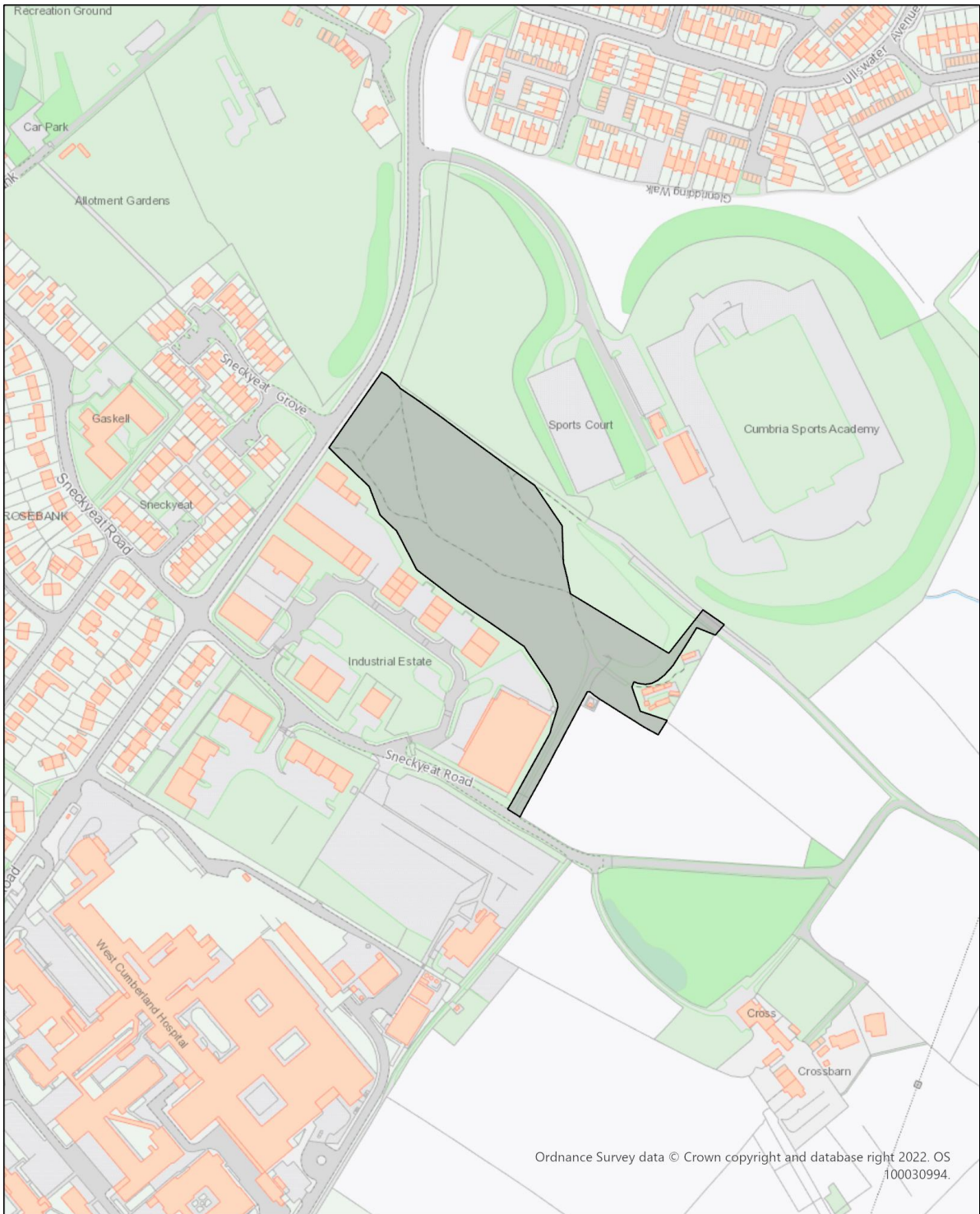
Site reference	GTW4	Site name	Land along road to St Bees between Greenbank and Mirehouse
Settlement	Whitehaven	Site area	14.1ha
Flood zone	Flood zone 1		
Impact on Landscape Character	SLCA identifies site as an important GI link that extends from the countryside into the settlement. Prominent site above housing estate due to topography. Protected Greenspace in OSA (natural and semi-natural)		
Impact on Heritage assets	Grade II listed Greenbank Hotel to West – development may affect the setting of this		
Impact on Biodiversity	Site heavily wooded - impact likely to be high		
Relationship to existing settlement	Well connected		
Safe and convenient access to the highway	Potential accesses from west, east and south, but may be difficult for most due to topography		
Proximity to facilities	Close proximity		
Suitable amenity?	Could be developed in a way that didn't harm amenities of nearby residents		
Capable of appropriate landscaping and planting?	Scale of the site allows for this		
Strategic planning comments and conclusion	Do not allocate site due to the impact on landscape character and biodiversity.		



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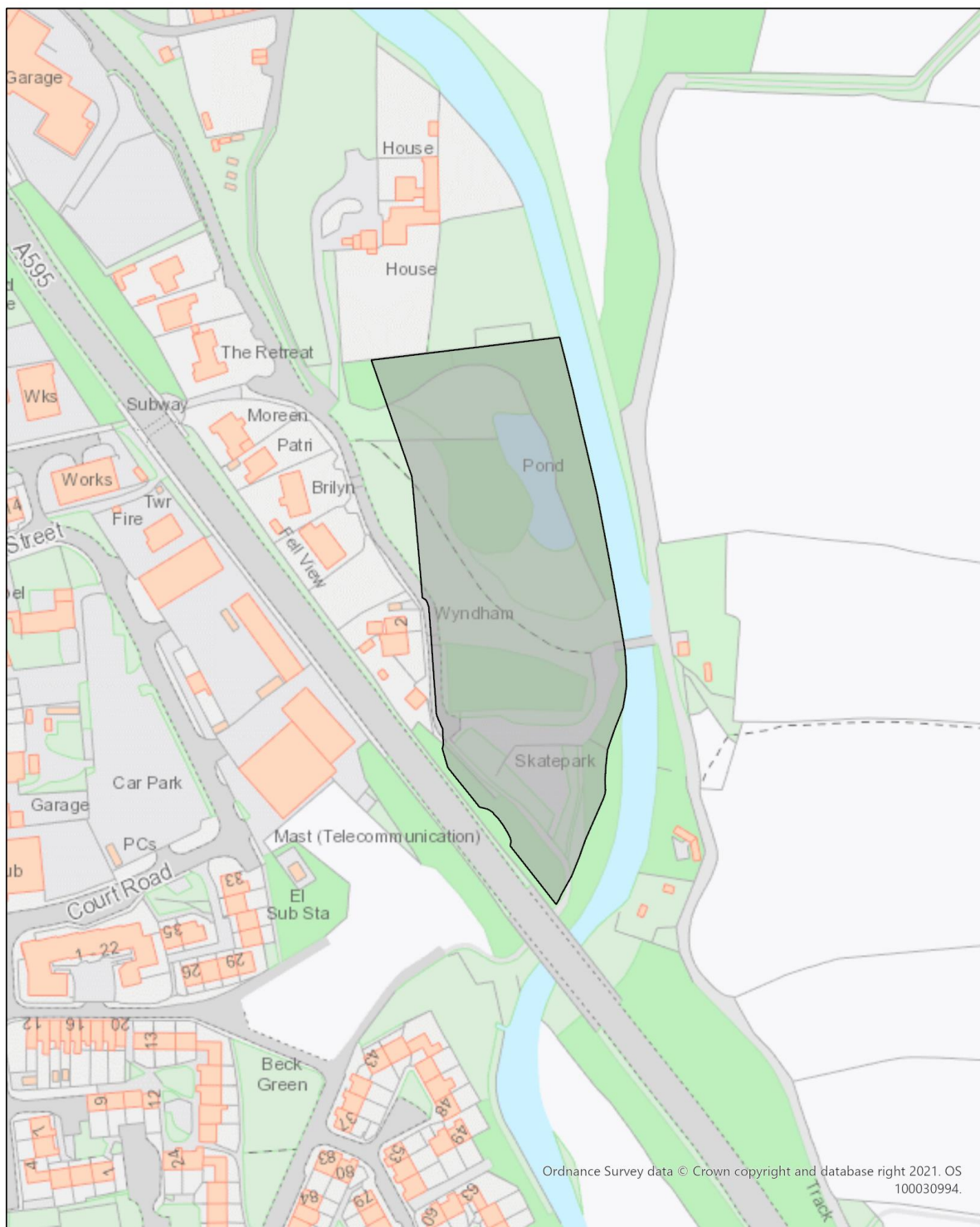
Site reference	GTW5	Site name	CBC Land at Sneckyeat
Settlement	Whitehaven	Site area	1.9ha
Flood zone	Flood zone 1		
Impact on Landscape Character	Identified as landscape scale GI in SLCA. Identified as protected open space (semi/natural greenspace) in OSA. Whitehaven has no under provision of open space in this typology		
Impact on Heritage assets	Unlikely as there are no heritage assets in close proximity		
Impact on Biodiversity	Some individual trees and scrub could provide potential habitat		
Relationship to existing settlement	Well connected		
Safe and convenient access to the highway	Potential access from Homewood Road or Sneckyeat Road		
Proximity to facilities	Close proximity		
Suitable amenity?	Yes, the nearest residential dwellings on opposite side of Homewood Rd		
Capable of appropriate landscaping and planting?	Yes, scale of site allows for this		
Strategic planning comments and conclusion	Potential for allocation due to oversupply of semi natural greenspace in Whitehaven identified through the OSA. The most suitable part of the site for this use is likely to be the eastern section, which is well set back from Homewood Road.		




<p>Gypsy and Traveller - Considered Sites GTW5</p>	<p>Copeland Borough Council The Market Hall Market Place Whitehaven Cumbria, CA28 7JG</p>	<p>Copeland borough council <i>Proud of our past. Energised for our future.</i></p>
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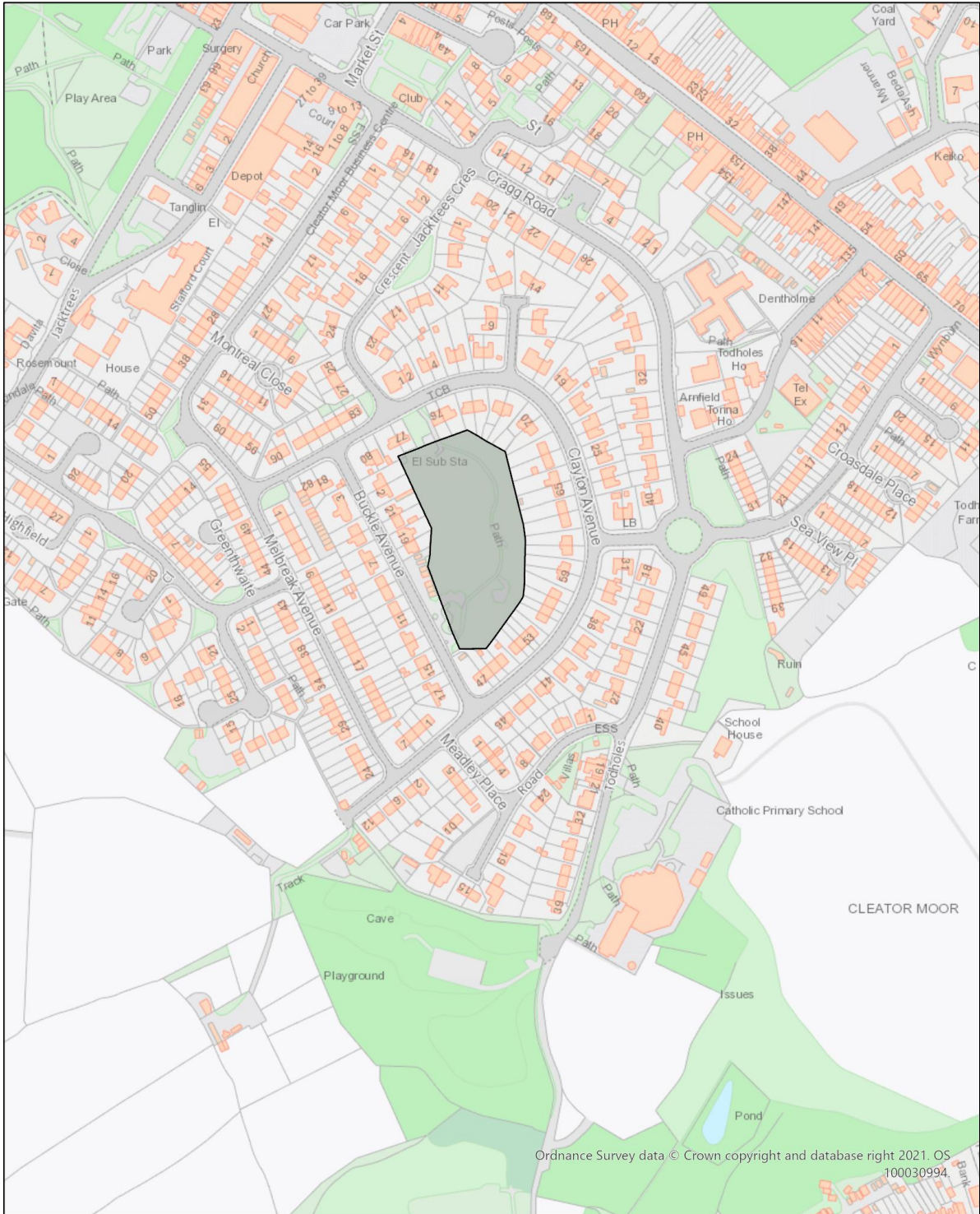


Site reference	GTE1	Site name	Down by skatepark below Highbank House and near river at Egremont
Settlement	Egremont	Site area	1.58ha
Flood zone	Flood zone 2 and 3		
Impact on Landscape Character	Site contains 2 protected open spaces (OSA - semi-natural open space and play area).		
Impact on Heritage assets	Unlikely - no assets in close proximity		
Impact on Biodiversity	Site is heavily wooded in parts		
Relationship to existing settlement	Site feels backland in character and pavement connections to the rest of the town are discontinuous		
Safe and convenient access to the highway	Existing access		
Proximity to facilities	In close proximity, but relatively poor connections to existing facilities		
Suitable amenity?	Unlikely given size of site and proximity of neighbouring dwellings		
Capable of appropriate landscaping and planting?	Yes, the scale of site allows for this		
Strategic planning comments and conclusion	Do not allocate due to flood risk and the Protected Open Greenspace designation		



<p>Gypsy and Traveller - Considered Sites GTE1</p>	<p>Copeland Borough Council The Market Hall Market Place Whitehaven Cumbria, CA28 7JG</p>	<p>Copeland borough council <i>Proud of our past. Energised for our future.</i></p>
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Site reference	GTC2	Site name	Green space at Buckle/ Clayton Avenue
Settlement	Cleator Moor	Site area	0.73ha
Flood zone	Flood zone 1		
Impact on Landscape Character	Protected open space (OSA - amenity greenspace). Cleator Moor currently has an under provision in this typology		
Impact on Heritage assets	Unlikely - no assets in close proximity		
Impact on Biodiversity	Individual trees and shrubs around boundary and small group of trees in centre could be retained - rest of site managed open space and unlikely to provide habitat		
Relationship to existing settlement	Well connected		
Safe and convenient access to the highway	Potential access from Buckle Avenue		
Proximity to facilities	Close proximity		
Suitable amenity?	Pitches would have to be located within the centre of the site to provide adequate distance from surrounding dwellings in order to prevent overlooking and protect privacy		
Capable of appropriate landscaping and planting?	Yes, although this is limited due to the size of the site		
Strategic planning comments and conclusion	Do not allocate due to the under provision of amenity greenspace in Cleator Moor, as well as potential privacy and amenity issues as a result of the site being surrounded by dwellings on all sides.		



<p>Gypsy and Traveller - Considered Sites GTC2</p>	<p>Copeland Borough Council The Market Hall Market Place Whitehaven Cumbria, CA28 7JG</p>	 <p><i>Proud of our past. Energised for our future.</i></p>
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