

**Planning Statement
2245-D004**

**2245 Proposed Residential Development,
Land at Coach Road, Whitehaven.**

Client: Prima Homes Group Limited.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BASIS OF THE PROPOSAL

This document is submitted in support of a full planning application for the proposed residential development of a 0.96 Hectare (2.36 Acre) site, located at Coach Road, Whitehaven.

The development of this brownfield site will provide 41 number two, three and four bedroom properties of varying size and design, being linked and semi-detached and across the site.

Vehicular and pedestrian access will be provided from Coach Road with links to National Cycle Path No.72 which runs along the Eastern and Northern boundaries.

The proposal will achieve significant environmental improvements, through the demolition of redundant industrial buildings, the remediation of a brownfield site and the development of new family dwellings close to Whitehaven town centre.

Forming the application, the following documents are provided separately,

- Application forms & Certificates (submitted via Planning Portal)
- Site Location Plan
- Block Plan
- Existing Topographical Survey
- Design & Access Statement prepared by Manning Elliott Partnership
- Proposed Housing Layout
- Boundary Treatments & Fences.
- Plans & Elevations of the Proposed new dwellings.

And from our Sub-Consultants;

- Phase 1 Site Condition Report
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Ecological Appraisal
- Sequential Test Report

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is 0.96 hectares (2.36 acres), located south of Whitehaven town centre in the Pow Beck / Corkickle area, situated on the north side of Coach Road. The greater area is a mix of old and new residential properties with nearby commercial and leisure facilities. There is the Corkickle Railway station and a junior school a short walk away.

The site lies currently vacant with many of the previous buildings and structures demolished, leaving behind a concrete slab and hardstanding with an area of scrub vegetation to the east and northern areas. The site has been vacant for several years, with no interest for an industrial or commercial use. An application was previously

submitted a number of years ago to provide a new care home, which was subsequently approved, subject to conditions, and which defined the precedent for residential uptake.

3. LOCAL DEMOGRAPHIC.

Copeland Borough's Strategic Market Assessment October 2021 (update) highlights the following

- Copeland's population is circa 68,000 with 36% living in the Whitehaven area
- Whitehaven itself has a population of circa 24,500 (36% of the total)
- Copeland's age profile is expected to shift dramatically between 2021 and 2038 with the proportion of older people aged 65+ increasing by 25%. The number of residents aged 75+ is projected to increase from 10% to 14% over the same period.
- The number of people with dementia and mobility problems will also dramatically increase as a result.
- The number of households with children aged 0-17 (or 18-24 if not working and living at home) is expected to rise by 8% which is equivalent to 650 additional households.

Whilst addressing the accommodation requirements of older people is going to become a major strategic challenge for Copeland Borough over the next few decades, a growing older population that moves less often, especially when considered against present market conditions, will restrict housing availability for young families and dependent children.

4. PLANNING POLICY.

The determination of planning applications should be in accordance with the policies of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant development plan policies are the saved policies of the Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028: Core Strategy and Development Management Policies adopted in December 2013. Other material documents referred to below are the National Planning Policy Framework and the Whitehaven Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document.

Policy ST1 of the core strategy sets out the fundamental principles that will achieve sustainable development. Amongst other things it seeks to ensure that development created a residential offer which meets the needs and aspirations of the Boroughs housing markets.

Policy ST2 sets a spatial development strategy whereby development should be guided to the principal settlement and other centres and sustain rural services and facilities.

Policy ST3- Strategic Development Priorities identifies sites in "south and central Whitehaven" as "priorities for development". Furthermore, *"The sites in south and central Whitehaven are carried forward from the 2006 Local Plan. Their retention as priorities is consistent with the objectives of the West Cumbria Economic Blueprint. These are taken forward in more detail in the Whitehaven Town Centre and Harbourside SPD"*

Policy SS1 seeks to improve the housing offer of the borough by, amongst other things, by allocating housing sites to meet local needs in locations attractive to house builders and enhancing the general surrounding residential environment of the borough. The application site is located in close proximity to other residential properties. The proposed development will have limited impact on local amenities and increase housing stock.

Policy SS2 seeks to achieve sustainable housing growth by focusing new housing development within accessible location to meet the needs of the community.

Policy SS3 requires housing development proposals to demonstrate how the proposal helps to deliver a range and choice of good quality and affordable homes for everyone. This is assessed by how well a proposal meets the identified needs and aspirations of the Borough's individual Housing Market Areas as set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) The development proposes a mix of 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom houses creating a balanced mix of house-types.

Policy SS5 sets out the Council's position in relation to the provision and access to open space and green infrastructure. With the application site located on brownfield land this development protects against the loss of designated open space and promotes protection of green infrastructure.

Policy ENV1 sets out an approach to ensure that new build development is not prejudiced by flood risk, by permitting new build on sites outside areas at risk of flooding and ensuring that new development does not contribute to increased surface water run-off through measures such as Sustainable Drainage Systems. A flood risk assessment (FRA) is appended to this application, along with a site Sequential Assessment.

Policy ENV3 seek to ensure that new development will protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. An ecological appraisal has been submitted as part of this application which is for land on a brownfield site with limited ecological importance.

Separately in the Local Plan, reference to the SPD is emphasised again, with specific reference to the Coach Road site, stating *"Development of these sites will be guided by a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which has been prepared alongside the Core Strategy"*

The SPD recommends that the *"Former Council Depot and adjoining land"* be revitalised and refers to :

- *"... the site presents a negative visual image at the current time."*
- *"The site could accommodate a significant mixed-use development..."*
- *"Standard suburban layouts and low densities should be avoided. Instead, the Council would welcome an "urban village" approach of high density, mixed uses."*

It is evident that a mixed use of the wider area, including the former Council depot and adjoining land is acceptable in planning policy terms, and that a housing development is acceptable as part of such a mixed use

development for Coach Road, complementing the nearby school, Social Clubs, Retail outlets, Gym and Sports Grounds.

5. FLOOD RISK



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The Environment Agency has confirmed that the site lies within Flood Zone 2 (sites at risk of flooding). The flood risk vulnerability classification (table 2) in the Technical Guidance to the NPPF, indicates that residential dwellings are in the “More Vulnerable” category and Table 3: Flood risk vulnerability and flood zone “compatibility” indicates that such uses are appropriate in such locations.

The guidance states “... Where there are no reasonably available sites in Flood Zone 1, local planning authorities ... determining applications for development at any particular location should take into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses and consider reasonably available site in Flood Zone 2...”

To reduce flood risk of the development, remedial groundworks will need to take place to increase ground levels to deliver the necessary remedial actions and all properties will have a stepped approach to lift the properties further. so that ground floor accommodation within the dwellings will be at least the 8.3 AOD level as recommended by the EA to mitigate against an extreme flood event.

The sequential test of all sites of a suitable area indicates that there are no reasonably available sites within Flood Zone 1.

6. SITE INVESTIGATIONS

A *Phase 1 Site Investigation Report* has identified potential hazards in the area of the site including fly tipping, low level ground contamination, ground gas and fuel tanks which have remained in situ. The former depot buildings were identified as containing asbestos materials which have since been removed. These hazards are not unusual for a former industrial site and can / will be resolved as the remediation scheme is determined. The land will be clean validated thereafter.

An intrusive ground investigation report is to be completed prior to any commencement of works to establish an appropriate remediation strategy and foundation design. It is anticipated that the buildings will be required to be piled or vibro-piled foundations.

7. HIGHWAYS.

The vehicular access to the site will be in the same location as the former depot, positioned to maximise the visibility splays on Coach Road, as well as existing traffic calming measures. This location was previously approved under the earlier consent.

Car parking will be provided for each dwelling, with a minimum of 2no. per dwelling, plus visitor parking scattered throughout the development.

As the site is near Whitehaven town centre, Corkickle Railway station, Bus stops, nearby office buildings and with direct access to a national cycle path – dependency upon a car for travel is at an absolute minimum with schools, shops, bus routes and the town centre within close proximity.

8. ECOLOGY.

A full ecological survey has taken place as part of a previous proposal for the site, and its findings were:

- Vegetation has low ecological significance,
- Trees are outside the site boundary and are of low quality,
- No bat roosts were found, although there was evidence of some low-level use of a building and mitigation was required (the building has now been demolished following the mitigation)
- A landscaping scheme to include native and wildlife friendly plants to promote structural diversity and encourage greater wildlife use.

9. DESIGN & LAYOUT

Manning Elliott Partnership have produced a Design & Access Statement which accompanies this application which goes into further detail relating to the design process of the proposals.

The dwellings aim to provide high quality, environmentally friendly and energy efficient housing with generous internal layouts and external amenity. The mix and size / scale of the housing proposed is directed towards the first / second time buyer demographic.

Provides the appropriate vehicular and pedestrian access, with excellent links into existing footpaths and cycle ways.

A green corridor along the front of the properties facing Coach Road.

10. COMMUNITY BENEFITS.

- Regeneration of a brownfield site.
- Removal of a negative visual image of the area.
- Provision of town centre housing
- An improvement to the visual amenity of the local area
- Provision of high-quality affordable homes
- Encouragement to increase wildlife levels
- Reduce “car dependency” for residents.
- Deliver first and second time buyer and low-cost starter homes

11. CONCLUSIONS.

- Planning policy seeks to encourage the provision of housing development that meets the need of the community.
- The proposed development of 41 new homes will meet a significant housing need within Copeland and Whitehaven town centre.
- The redevelopment of a brownfield site with little to no ecological value, having a detrimental effect to the visual image of the local area, encouraging future regeneration.
- The Local Plan recognises the suitability of the wider area of the application site for a range of uses, and the Whitehaven Town Centre and Harbourside Supplementary Planning Document refers to high density mixed uses as acceptable.
- The site context has been carefully considered to develop a scheme appropriate to the local environment.

N BAILEY

Director

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