

## CUMBERLAND COUNCIL DELEGATED PLANNING DECISION

1.	<b>Reference No:</b>	4/25/2111/0F1
2.	<b>Proposed Development:</b>	PERMANENT RETENTION OF A THREE STOREY MODULAR BUILDING
3.	<b>Location:</b>	SELLAFIELD, SEASCALE
4.	<b>Parish:</b>	Ponsonby, Beckermest with Thornhill
5.	<b>Constraints:</b>	<p>ASC;Adverts - ASC;Adverts,</p> <p>Flood Area - Flood Zone 2, Flood Area - Flood Zone 3,</p> <p>Safeguard Zone - Safeguard Zone,</p> <p>Coal - Off Coalfield - Data Subject To Change,</p> <p>Key Species - Potential areas for Natterjack Toads,</p> <p>DEPZ Zone - DEPZ Zone,</p> <p>Outer Consultation Zone - Sellafield 10KM</p>
6.	<b>Publicity Representations &amp; Policy</b>	See Report
7.	<p><b>Report:</b></p> <p><b>Site and Location</b></p> <p>The proposed development is located to the northeast quadrant of the Sellafield Site.</p> <p><b>Proposal</b></p> <p>Permission is sought to retain a modular three-storey building which has recently been used as a welfare accommodation facility. It is of substantial build providing an external gross floor area of 2,090 square over three floors having the capacity to accommodate 340 employees. Comprising 30 modules it has a total height of 11.7m (excluding roof handrail).</p>	

In terms of external appearance, it is finished in a combination of light and dark grey cladding.

### **Relevant Planning History**

The existing building was constructed as contractor cabins under permitted development rights in 2022 to support the construction of the Replacement Analytical Project (RAP). However, in 2024, the RAP project was placed on a strategic pause by Sellafield Ltd and following the recent spending review it has now been cancelled. Rather than remove the contractor cabins Sellafield Ltd wish to retain them permanently for future use and seek to regularise the position by applying for permission. This is endorsed by the fact there is a current need across the site to provide refurbished or new welfare accommodation to support existing projects as part of the site decommissioning mission as many of the existing buildings are in poor condition.

The facility, given its design life, will be used by a variety of different personnel on the Sellafield site as predominately welfare accommodation with some office facilities.

### **Consultation Responses**

#### Seascale PC

No comments

#### Beckermeth with Thornhill PC

No objections.

#### Gosforth PC

No objections

#### Environmental Health

No objections.

#### Environment Agency

No objections.

#### Public Representation

The application has been advertised by way of a site notice. No representations have been received as a result of this consultation.

### **Planning Policy**

On 1st April 2023, Copeland Borough Council ceased to exist and was replaced by Cumberland Council as part of the Local Government Reorganisation of Cumbria. Cumberland Council inherited the Local Development Plan documents of each of the sovereign Councils including Copeland Borough Council, which combine to form a Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Cumberland.

The inherited Local Development Plan documents continue to apply to the geographic area of their sovereign Councils only. The Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Cumberland comprises the Development Plan for Cumberland Council until replaced by a new Cumberland Local Plan.

The newly adopted Copeland Local Plan 2021 – 2039, (herein after referred to as the Local Plan) was adopted on 5 November 2024 and is the development plan for the former Copeland area.

The following policies of the local plan are relevant to this proposal:

Policy DS4 Design and Development Standards

Strategic Policy DS6 Reducing Flood Risk

Policy DS7 Sustainable Drainage

Strategic Policy N1 Conserving and enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

Strategic Policy N3 Biodiversity Net Gain

Policy NU4 Nuclear and associated development at Sellafield

### **Other Material Planning Considerations**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

### **Assessment**

#### Principle and Policy Context

The site is situated within an existing and well established industrial nuclear facility. As such the principle of retaining an existing welfare and office building to serve nuclear projects within it is accepted.

In terms of policy the proposal is considered to satisfactorily comply with the key nuclear policy NU4 which supports associated nuclear development at Sellafield.

#### Appearance, Landscape & Visual Impact

The colour scheme and design of the building, in particular the light grey and the modular form, is commonplace on the Sellafield site and reflects its industrial nature. As expected, the immediate and wider landscape is predominantly hard, comprising mainly of compacted hard surfaces. There is no soft landscaping.

Although relatively substantial in size, given the building's location and setting especially against a backdrop of many larger scale buildings, it is not anticipated that it will have any negative landscape or visual impact.

### Access and Transport

No traffic impact is envisaged. As the development is complete there will be no associated construction transport. In terms of operation, the personnel using the building are already located on the Sellafield site and as a result there will be no increase in the number of vehicle movements to and from the site. All users of the building will travel to and from the Sellafield site in accordance with the Sellafield Travel Plan, which was approved in January 2022.

### Ecology

The accompanying ecological assessment informs that no phase 1 classified habitat has been displaced by the development – it was erected on hardstanding / former car park. There are some adjacent areas of amenity grassland which have given rise to occasional use by ground nesting birds such as oyster catchers, but this is not considered significant. There is also dense scrub nearby but this is rated as poor and has very poor connectivity to the development site.

In summary, potential ecological impacts from the three-storey modular building are limited to the disturbance of nesting birds. This is a transient impact and one that is managed by employing standard construction management approaches, which are routine on Sellafield site.

### Biodiversity Net Gain

It is not anticipated that there will be any significant ecological impacts from retaining this building.

The application is accompanied by a BNG statement which affirms that on the basis that the development has already been completed, and all this application does is to seek to regularise the situation under planning law and there will be no impact to onsite priority habitats, and as such BNG does not apply.

### Flood risk and Drainage

There are no issues in respect of flood risk and drainage.

The existing building is located in flood zone 1 and is not at risk of fluvial or pluvial flooding. And the developed area is less than 1ha with sufficient elevation difference not to be affected by existing waterways. As such a Flood Risk Assessment is not required.

The site will drain to the existing Sellafield site sewer system.

### Contamination

There is no evidence of a significant risk of land contamination on site or nearby impacting either groundwater or human health.

Records for the area do not identify any contamination or contaminative events considering that the previous land use was car parking and a construction compound. The North Tip extension located to the north of the site and the groundwater samples from the nearby borehole and soil samples do not show any unusual levels of radiological contamination and

	<p>the chemical analysis does not show elevated levels of metals or organic compounds in the shallow made ground.</p> <p><b>Planning Balance and Conclusion</b></p> <p>Taking into account the above, it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that the proposal to permanently retain the former contractors building for use as a welfare and office facility on the Sellafield site is acceptable from a planning point of view.</p> <p>It does not raise any material issues that need to be addressed or cause any undue environmental harm in terms of principle, appearance, landscape and visual impact, access and transport, ecology, BNG, flood risk and drainage and contamination. It also accords with all the relevant local and national planning policies.</p> <p>As such the planning balance is tipped firmly in favour of the development.</p>
8.	<p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <p>Approve</p>
9.	<p><b>Conditions:</b></p> <p>1. Permission shall relate to the following plans and documents as received on the respective dates and development shall be carried out in accordance with them: -</p> <p><u>Documents</u></p> <p>Covering Letter, by Euan Hutton, CEO, Sellafield Ltd. Dated 27 February 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Planning, Design and Access Statement, by Sellafield Ltd. Ref. PLC_BCC_2275, Revision 2, dated 19/03/2025.</li> <li>• Ecology Report by Sellafield Ltd. Ref. PLC_BCC_2275, dated 28/02/2025.</li> <li>• Biodiversity Net Gain Small Sites Metric by Sellafield Ltd.</li> <li>• Contaminated Land Risk Assessment, by Sellafield Ltd Contaminated Land Specialist, dated 15 February 2025.</li> <li>• Accommodation Photographs by Sellafield Ltd, Ref. PLC_BCC_2275, dated 28/02/2025.</li> </ul> <p><u>Drawings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site Location Plan. UNMARKED, ref. BE 3032309 Mod A. scale 1:5000.</li> <li>• Site Location Plan – OFFICIAL CONFIDENTIAL, ref. BE 3032309, scale 1:5000</li> <li>• Amended Site Plan as Existing, ref. BE 3111102 Revision B, scale 1:200.</li> <li>• Amended Site Plan as Proposed, ref. BE 3111103 Revision B, scale 1:200.</li> </ul>

- Ground floor plan, S210042 – 101N
- First floor plan, S210042 – 102L
- Second floor plan, S210042 – 103M
- Roof Plan, S210042 – 104A
- Elevations S210042 – 301C
- Section details – eaves, S210042 – 401C, Sht 1
- Section details - gable, S210042 – 401C, Sht 2

#### Reason

To conform with the requirement of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

#### **Informative Note**

##### **Biodiversity Net Gain – Exemption**

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition “(the biodiversity gain condition”) that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the local planning authority, and
- (b) the local planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of the Biodiversity Gain Plan is Cumberland Council.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one or more of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements is/are considered to apply.

Applicable exemption: Retrospective development.

#### **Statement**

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, and subsequently determining



**Cumberland  
Council**

	to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.	
<b>Case Officer: H. Morrison</b>		<b>Date :15/07/2025</b>
<b>Authorising Officer: N.J. Hayhurst</b>		<b>Date : 16/07/2025</b>
<b>Dedicated responses to:- N/A</b>		