

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL DELEGATED PLANNING DECISION

1.	Reference No:	4/26/2167/0F1
2.	Proposed Development:	INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PANELS ON THE ROOF OF VILLAGE HALL
3.	Location:	KEEKLE VILLAGE HALL, CLEATOR MOOR
4.	Parish:	Weddicar
5.	Constraints:	ASC Adverts - ASC;Adverts, Coal - Standing Advice - Data Subject To Change
6.	Publicity Representations &Policy	See Report.
7.	Report: Site and Location: This application relates to the Keekle Village Hall, a detached community building which is located on the southern edge of Keel on the approach into Cleator Moor. The site is located at the junction between the B5295 and Padstow. A row of terraced properties called "Keekle Terrace" is located to the North, and the terrace of Keekle Cottages to the South. Open fields are located behind the Village Hall to the West. PROPOSAL This application seeks planning permission for the installation of solar panels on roof s.lopes of the southern rear elevation of the three roofs of Keekle Village Hall. There will be a total of 34 panels across all 3 roof slopes, in an 8, 14 and 12 arrangements. The first two roof slopes consisting of 8 and 14 panels (22 in total) will be Longi Himo6 Explorer 435W Black White mono solar panels. Each panel will measure 1.762m x 1.134m, with approx. 250mm slate visible. The remaining 12 panels on the third slope will be Longi Himo X6 530W black white mono	

solar panels. Each panel will measure 2.094m x 1.134m, with approx. 400mm slate visible.

RELEVANT PLANNING APPLICATION HISTORY

None Relevant.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Weddicar Parish Council

No response received to date.

Public Representations

The application has been advertised by way of a site notice and neighbour notification letters issued to 2 no. properties - No objections have been received as a result of this consultation process.

PLANNING POLICY

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

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 the 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.

Copeland Local Plan 2021 - 2039 (LP):

Cumberland Council continued the preparation of the LP as commenced by Copeland Borough Council. The LP was adopted by Cumberland Council on the 5th of November 2024 replacing the Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028 and the saved policies of the Copeland Local Plan 2021- 2016.

The following policies are relevant to this proposal:

Strategic Policy DS1: Settlement Hierarchy

Strategic Policy DS2: Settlement Boundary

Policy DS4: Design and Development Standards

Strategic Policy N3: Biodiversity Net Gain

Other Material Planning Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

ASSESSMENT

The key issues raised by this proposal are the principle of development, scale, design and potential impact on the area, and biodiversity net gain.

Principle of Development

Strategic Policy DS1 defines the settlement hierarchy. Keekle is designated as a rural village on the proposals map which are defined as smaller settlements which offer one or two key services which are physically separated from settlements within a higher tier. Public transport and pedestrian links are poor therefore reliance is likely to be on the private vehicle. Limited development would enable future housing needs to be met and support existing local services. Existing services will be retained, and development will be small scale, and primarily windfall and infill developments.

The proposal is for the installation of 34 Solar Panels on the roof of an existing Village Hall building in Keekle, to help improve the energy efficiency of this local facility.

On this basis, the principle of development is considered acceptable in the context of Policies DS1 and DS2.

Scale, Design and Visual Impact on the area

Policy DS4 of the Copeland Local Plan requires all new development to meet high-quality standards of design. This includes creating and enhancing locally distinctive places, the use of good quality materials that reflect the local character, including high quality and useful open spaces, providing high levels of residential amenity, adopting active travel principles, creating opportunities for social interaction, and effective use of land whilst maintaining amenity and maximising solar gain.

This application seeks planning permission for the installation of solar panels on all 3 roof slopes on the South (rear) elevation on an existing Village Hall within the rural village of Keekle, just outside of Cleator Moor. There will be a total of 34 panels across all 3 roof slopes, in an 8, 14 and 12 arrangements.

The first two roof slopes consisting of 8 and 14 panels (22 in total) will be Longi Himo6 Explorer 435W Black White mono solar panels which will measure 1.762m x 1.134m, with approx. 250mm slate visible.

The remaining 12 on the third slope will be Longi Himo X6 530W black white mono solar panels which will measure 2.094m x 1.134m, with approx. 400mm slate visible.

The proposed arrangement is considered to be acceptable to maximise solar gain for the site and the panels will be fitted to the rear roof slope of the existing buildings and are designed with a minimal projection above the roof covering.

Whilst the panels are likely to be seen from the Highway, there is a separation distance of approx. 16m from the boundary of the Village Hall to the nearest residential property 4 Keekle Cottages to the South, which is considered adequate enough to not cause unacceptable levels of harm.

Whilst some noise may be heard from the inverter of the panels, the Village Hall is located on the roadside which would typically be dominated by background road/ traffic noise.

Paragraph 167 of the NPPF also states that Local planning authorities should give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights).

On this basis, the proposal is considered to maintain acceptable levels of amenity whilst maximizing solar gain as per Policy DS4 of the Copeland Local Plan and guidance in the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Policy N1 seeks to ensure that new development will protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity and defines a mitigation hierarchy.

Policy N3 of the ELP requires that all development, with the exception of that listed in the Environment Act must provide a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain over and above existing site levels, following the application of the mitigation hierarchy set out in Policy N1 above. This is in addition to any compensatory habitat provided under Policy N1. It is stated net gain should be delivered on site where possible and where on-site provision is not appropriate, provision must be made elsewhere in accordance with a defined order of preference

In England, BNG is now mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Applications must now deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain of 10%, resulting in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before the development.

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 application is one which is exempt from BNG under



Cumberland Council

	the de minimis rule. Planning Balance & Conclusion On balance, the proposed scheme is considered to be of an appropriate scale and design and is unlikely to cause any material harm to the visual amenities of the locality or residential amenity given the separation distances from the Village Hall to the nearest residential dwelling. It will also have no significant effect on the design and appearance of the host building due to the proposed location on an existing roof slope. The proposal is also not subject to BNG. On this basis, the proposal complies with the policies in the Copeland Local Plan specified above, and the NPPF guidance.
8.	Recommendation: Approve (commence within 3 years)
9.	Conditions: 1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. Reason To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. 2. 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: - - Application Form, received 30th April 2026; - Location Plan, scale 1:1250 drawing 392/01, received 30th April 2026; - Block Plan, scale 1:200 drawing 392/01, received 30th April 2026; - Site Location Plan, scale 1:500, received 30th April 2026; - Love Solar Brochure, received 30th April 2026; - Proposed Roof Plan, received 30th April 2026;

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 Notes

Biodiversity Net Gain – Exemption Applies

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: De minimus development.

Development Low Risk Area – Standing Advice – Mining Remediation Authority

The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Mining Remediation Authority on 0345 762 6846 or if a hazard is encountered on site call the emergency line 0800 288 4242 Further information is also available on the Mining Remediation Authority website at: Mining Remediation Authority - GOV.UK

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 to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.



**Cumberland
Council**

Case Officer: Demi Crawford	Date : 23/07/2026
Authorising Officer: N.J. Hayhurst	Date : 27/07/2026
Dedicated responses to:- N/A	