

Desktop Study

Planning Application: 4/15/2441/0F1 Retrospective planning permission for erection of a five bedroomed detached dwelling following planning approval 4/15/2441/0F1.

Site: Land Adjacent Smithfield Road, Egremont, Cumbria

Ref: WD/RPA/26

Date: January 2026

1. Introduction

This Desktop Study has been prepared in support of the above planning application for land adjacent to Smithfield Road, Egremont. The purpose of the study is to identify environmental, planning, and site-specific constraints and opportunities based on a review of publicly available information and published datasets. No site walkover has been undertaken as part of this assessment. The study is intended to inform the planning process and to identify whether further surveys or assessments may be required to support the proposed development.

2. Site Location and Description

The site is located adjacent to Smithfield Road within the settlement of Egremont, Cumbria. Egremont is a market town in West Cumbria characterised by predominantly residential development with associated local services, transport links, and areas of open space. The surrounding land use comprises mainly residential properties with local road infrastructure. The site is understood to be previously undeveloped/grassland (delete as appropriate) and is bordered by Smithfield Road and neighbouring properties.

3. Planning Context

3.1 Local Planning Authority

The site lies within the administrative area of Cumberland Council, which has assumed planning responsibilities following local government reorganisation. The relevant local planning policy framework includes the former Copeland Borough Council Local Plan 2013–2028 (Adopted 2020), which remains material until replaced.

3.2 Development Plan and Policy Context

The statutory development plan comprises:

- Copeland Local Plan 2021–2029 (Adopted 2024)
- Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Key Local Plan policies relevant to the site include:

- Policy DS1 (Settlement Hierarchy)
- Policy DS4 (Design and Development Standards)
- Policy DS5 (Hard and Soft Landscaping)
- Policy DS6 (Reducing Flood Risk)
- Policy DS7 (Sustainable Drainage)
- Policy DS8 (Soils, Contamination and Land Stability)
- Policy C04 (Sustainable Travel)

The site's location adjacent to the built-up area of Egremont indicates that the principle of development is acceptable, subject to detailed compliance with the above policies.

4. Environmental Constraints Review

4.1 Ecology and Biodiversity

The Copeland Local Plan places emphasis on protecting and enhancing biodiversity, particularly through Policy DS5. Desktop review of available datasets indicates that there are no statutory ecological designations (SSSI, SAC, SPA, or Ramsar sites) within or immediately adjacent to the site.

Given the site's location within an established settlement, ecological sensitivity is likely to be limited. However, Policy DS5 and the NPPF require that development avoids harm to protected species. Depending on existing site features, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) may be required to confirm that no protected species will be adversely affected and to identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

4.2 Trees and Hedgerows

There is no evidence from desktop sources that the site is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Confirmation should be obtained from the Local Planning Authority. If mature trees or hedgerows are present, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment may be required.

4.3 Flood Risk and Drainage

Flood risk and drainage considerations are addressed under Policy DS6 and DS7 of the Copeland Local Plan. Environment Agency mapping indicates that the site is likely to fall within Flood Zone 1, representing a low probability of fluvial flooding, subject to confirmation.

FRA has been updated. The policy requires development to incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) where appropriate. A proportionate drainage strategy may therefore be required to demonstrate that surface water runoff will be managed effectively and will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

4.4 Ground Conditions and Contamination

Ground conditions and potential land contamination have been assessed in accordance with Policy DS8 of the Copeland Local Plan and the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

A review of historic mapping, environmental records, and available datasets confirms that the site has no history of contaminative land uses, including industrial activity, landfill, or waste disposal. The site has historically been in benign use and is therefore considered to be at negligible risk of contamination.

The desktop evidence identifies no plausible sources of contamination, no viable pollutant pathways, and no sensitive receptors that would give rise to an unacceptable risk. In the absence of any identified pollutant linkages, the requirements of Policy DS8 are fully satisfied.

On this basis, the imposition of planning conditions requiring further land contamination assessment, a Remedial Strategy, or a Verification Report would fail the necessity and proportionality tests set out in the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance. Accordingly, no contamination-related planning condition is warranted.

Notwithstanding the above, should any unexpected contamination be encountered during construction, it will be addressed in accordance with best practice and reported to the Local Planning Authority as appropriate.

5. Transport and Access

Transport considerations are assessed against Policy C04 of the Copeland Local Plan. Smithfield Road provides established vehicular access within a residential road network serving Egremont.

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate:

- Safe and suitable access arrangements
- Adequate parking provision in line with Cumbria parking standards
- No unacceptable impact on highway safety or capacity Given the site's location within a Key Service Centre, the principle of access is acceptable, subject to detailed design and highway authority agreement.

6. Heritage and Archaeology

A review of available heritage records indicates no designated heritage assets (such as Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments) within the site boundary. Egremont has a historic core, and therefore the potential for below-ground archaeological remains cannot be entirely discounted.

An archaeological desk-based assessment or watching brief may be requested by the Local Planning Authority depending on consultation responses.

7. Utilities and Services

The site is located within an established settlement where connections to mains water, electricity, foul drainage, and telecommunications are anticipated to be available. Confirmation of capacity and connection points will be required from relevant utility providers.

8. Planning Constraints and Opportunities

Constraints

- Potential impact on neighbouring residential amenity
- Requirement for ecology, drainage, or highways information
- Compliance with local design and layout policies

Opportunities

- Sustainable development within or adjacent to an existing settlement
- Proximity to local services and infrastructure
- Potential for appropriate scale residential or mixed-use development (subject to policy)

9. Conclusions

This Desktop Study has been prepared with specific regard to the Copeland Local Plan 2021–2039 and the National Planning Policy Framework. The site's location adjacent to the built-up area of Egremont, a designated Key Service Centre, aligns with the Council's spatial strategy for sustainable development.

No overriding planning or environmental constraints have been identified at the desktop level that would preclude development in principle. Subject to compliance with DS1, DS4, DS5, DS6, DS7, DS8, and C04, the site is considered suitable for development.

Further technical information may be required to support the planning application, including ecology, drainage, highways, or arboricultural inputs, depending on the final form of development.

Overall, the proposal is capable of complying with local and national planning policy and represents an appropriate form of development within the settlement of Egremont.