

PLANNING & DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Outline Application with Access Location and Structure Landscaping Approved

Land at Summergrove, Whitehaven, Cumbria

1.1 This planning statement is submitted in support of an outline application for residential development on land between Summergrove Park and the Westlakes Science and Technology Park, Whitehaven, Cumbria.

2.0 Site and Planning History

2.1 The site is currently agricultural land located to the south of Summergrove Park, Whitehaven. Summergrove Park was effectively developed in two phases as a self-build development. The initial phase was developed in the late 1980's early 1990's accessed from the Galemire to Summergrove Road. A further phase of development was undertaken in the late 1990's early 2000's. This formed a self-build development extending Summergrove Park and creating Pooles Close extending development to the boundary of the application site. The Summergrove Halls Hostel and Functions Event Centre is located to the west of Summergrove Park.

2.2 The Westlakes Science and Technology Park is located immediately to the south and this predominantly takes the form of high-quality employment and office-based development in individually landscaped plots or plateaus on the site of the former Ingwell Hall. The Science Park extends south to its boundary with the A595.

2.3 The site measures approximately 2.5 hectares and comprises approximately half of the proposed housing allocation HSU1 shown in the draft Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035.

2.4 In April 2019 a full application for the erection of 194 dwellings with associated landscaping and infrastructure (4/19/2126/0F1) was submitted in respect of the whole of the

land which now comprises the proposed housing land allocation HSU1. This application was submitted by a volume housebuilder and withdrawn prior to determination.

3.0 The Proposal

3.1 This outline application has been formulated to create a high-quality landscaped site for tailored self-build development. The landscape infrastructure plan submitted with the proposal shows the access point from the public highway, indicative road layout, developable areas and indicative structure landscaping. The access to the public highway will be formed and an entrance feature to the site created. The proposed access road is laid out as a formal driveway with gentle curves following the northern boundary of the site.

3.2 The areas around the access road will be fully landscaped with structure planting to the north of the access road and specimen trees to the south. The main area of the site would incorporate structure planting predominantly to the site boundaries to screen the development from external views and to provide a natural break in development from existing development at Pooles Close. The indicative structure planting demonstrates how discrete developable areas will be created within the site. The developable areas are indicated in white on the Landscape Infrastructure Plan.

3.3 A scheme of surface water attenuation will be required. Whilst there are likely to be various possible solutions, the use of surface water attenuation ponds is considered to be the most sustainable. Two surface water attenuation ponds are shown for illustrative purposes on the adjoining land. This reflects the surface water drainage strategy. The ponds are shown fully landscaped on the illustration. The first attenuation pond is shown at the front boundary of the site which will establish structure planting in the event that the remainder of the land within HSU1 is developed.

3.4 The application is submitted in outline with an indicative capacity of 30 self-build dwellings. The intention is to create a form of tailored self-build. The site developer will install the site infrastructure including the estate roads, services, drainage and surface water infrastructure. The site developer will also plant the structure planting and undertake the hard and soft landscaping works. The landscaped areas will be placed in a management company to secure its maintenance in perpetuity.

3.5 The Applicant is willing to accept a planning condition requiring the submission of a design code. Notwithstanding, it is the Applicants intention to limit development of the site to approximately six house types which will be chosen from the portfolio of indicative house types. These house types range from two story family housing to smaller bungalows to meet a variety of housing needs. The house types will be allocated to suitable plots to ensure a cogent form of development to create a high-quality environment.

3.6 The Applicant intends to restrict house designs and materials contractually. The development will follow a self-build developer led group project approach. The developer will divide the site into individual plots and provide the service infrastructure and landscaping. Design advice will be provided which will to an extent restrict the house designs, particularly in relation to front and visible elevations.

3.7 The self-builders will be given the chance to tailor the house designs to their individual needs; particularly in relation to internal layouts and rear non-visible elevations. The self-builder will provide their own building contractors and manage the build personally. The site developer will impose controls in relation to the timescale of builds (this is likely to be limited to 12 months) and site management to avoid unsociable working.

3.7 The overall effect should be to create a high-quality development whilst meeting the demand for people who wish to build or commission their own homes.

4.0 Access and Highways

4.1 The application is accompanied by an Access Appraisal which details matters in relation to the proposed access. A new junction will be created onto the C4003. The Highway Appraisal recommends visibility splays of 120m in each direction which are capable of being achieved with a 2.4m setback distance and includes a drawing to demonstrate how this can be achieved. The proposed access will create a safe and convenient means of access to the site.

4.2 Internally an indicative site layout has been provided which compliments the landscaping scheme. Details of the site layout and landscaping are reserved for subsequent approval. Individual applications for dwellings will be required to meet the Development Plan and Cumbria Design Guide standards in relation to layout and on site parking.

4.3 It is understood that planning application 4/19/2126/0F1 was subject to a holding objection from the Highways Agency in relation to increased use of the Scalegill Road junction onto to the A595 trunk road. Traffic accessing the site will either pass through Moor Row village to the Scalegill junction or north through Padstow to the Whitehaven – Cleator Moor road. The Access Appraisal estimates that the proposed development of 30 homes will generate around 16am peak vehicle movements and 15pm peak vehicle movements. This is a minimal increase which can be accommodated within the local highway network. The vehicle movements are substantially below those estimated in connection with the 194 dwellings proposed under planning application 4/19/2126/0F1.

5.0 Planning Policy

5.1 The planning policies relevant to the proposed development are contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (NPPF) and the Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028 (CLP). It should also be noted that the emerging Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035 has completed its Preferred Options consultation.

5.2 Policy ST1 of the CLP 2013-2028 sets the development principles which underpin the Borough's planning policies. The principles reflect the need to promote economic, social and environmental sustainability. The principle of promoting economic and social sustainability includes the need for development to create a residential offer which meets the needs and aspirations of the Borough's housing markets. Policy ST1 also encourages environmental sustainability and the creation and retention of quality places. This includes applying design standards, improving build quality and ensuring good standards of residential amenity.

5.3 Policy ST2 of the CLP 2013-2028 provided settlement boundaries and a settlement hierarchy. The development strategy broadly focuses the larger scale development on the settlement of Whitehaven with more moderate levels of development towards the smaller towns of Cleator Moor, Egremont and Millom and appropriately scaled development in local centres. This site is located outside the settlement boundaries defined by the spatial development strategy and occupies a relatively unique location adjoining development which relates to Hensingham and the northeast Whitehaven areas of Summergrove. Notwithstanding its relationship to Whitehaven the location is equidistant between the principal settlement of Whitehaven and the town of Cleator Moor with relationships to satellite villages such as Keekle and Moor Row. It also immediately adjoins the Borough's major employment locations in the form of the Westlakes Science and Technology Park.

5.4 It is understood that the Council accepts that those parts of Policy ST3 referring the settlement boundaries are out of date and can be given limited weight in decision making. This is reflected in the emerging local plan which has highlighted that extensions to boundaries will be required to meet identified housing needs.

5.5 The draft Local Plan 2017-2035 has completed its preferred options consultation. The application site together with the adjoining land has been shown as proposed housing allocation HSU1.

5.6 The emerging Local Plan includes Summergrove within the settlement hierarchy as a rural village. Policy PD 2021 applies a settlement boundary which includes the application site. This reflects the character of Summergrove including its population and services. The inclusion of Summergrove within the settlement hierarchy reflects the fact that the location is suitable for appropriately scaled sustainable development. The inclusion of the proposed HSU1 allocation reflects the Local Plan Evidence Base and Sustainability Appraisal.

5.7 The NPPF provides a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 (d) provides that where there are no development plan policies, or the development plan policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, local authorities should grant planning permission unless:

- (i) the application of the policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or
- (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed the policies in this framework is taken as a whole.

5.8 The site does not form part of a protected area, neither is it an asset of particular importance in the manner considered by the NPPF. Accordingly, paragraph 11 (d) (1) does not apply. It is therefore necessary to consider whether any adverse impacts of development would significantly outweigh the benefits.

5.9 Policy SS3 of the CLP 2013-2028 requires applications for housing development to demonstrate how the proposal helps to deliver a range of choice of good quality and affordable homes for everyone. Proposals are assessed on their individual needs and requirements of

individual housing markets as set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 1. This includes promoting a balanced mix of house types and tenures within that market area consistent with the evidence based on the SHMA. It is anticipated that this site will deliver a mix of approximately six house types which will meet needs identified in the local housing market including high quality family housing and bungalows.

5.11 Paragraph 62 of the NPPF makes particular reference for Local Planning Authority's to make provision for people wishing to commission or build their own homes. This proposal will provide an opportunity for individuals to build their own home. The structure of the proposal has been formulated to ensure that the opportunity for self-build and custom housing can be incorporated in such a way that allows a high-quality finish development. This includes continuity of design, landscaping and services, post completion site maintenance and management and the opportunity to access expert developer guidance and advice. It is the developer's aspiration that the site will become the model for self-build sites within the borough. The site will give an opportunity for persons on the Council's self-build register an opportunity to purchase plots.

5.12 Paragraph 65 of the NPPF expects major development (defined as more than 10 homes or a site area of more than 0.5 hectares) to provide at least 10% of the homes to be made available for affordable home ownership subject to exceptions. Para 65(c) provides an exception for developments to developed by people who wish to build or commission their own homes. It is therefore not appropriate for the proposal to include provision for affordable housing.

5.13 New housing brings economic benefits particularly during the construction period. Furthermore, due to the self-build element there is an opportunity for individuals to gain experience and skills. The site has potential to attract families living and working within the

borough who may otherwise choose to live outside the borough and commute. This is particularly relevant for high wage earners at the Westlakes Science and Technology Park or Sellafield plant. The proposed dwellings will provide a level of support and improve the vitality of the local community, services and businesses.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 In the context of both national and local planning policy this site represents a sustainable and appropriate location for new homes. The presumption in favour of granting planning permission for sustainable development contained in para 11 is met. The site is suitable for housing development and has been assessed as part of the development plan making process. Following these assessments and consultation the site is allocated for housing in the emerging Development Plan.

6.2 The comprehensive landscaping scheme, design controls and site access help mitigate any adverse effects. Furthermore, the proposal creates an opportunity to allow people to build their own home to reflect a housing need identified both nationally and locally. The developers intention to provide infrastructure, landscaping and long term site management will secure a high quality development.