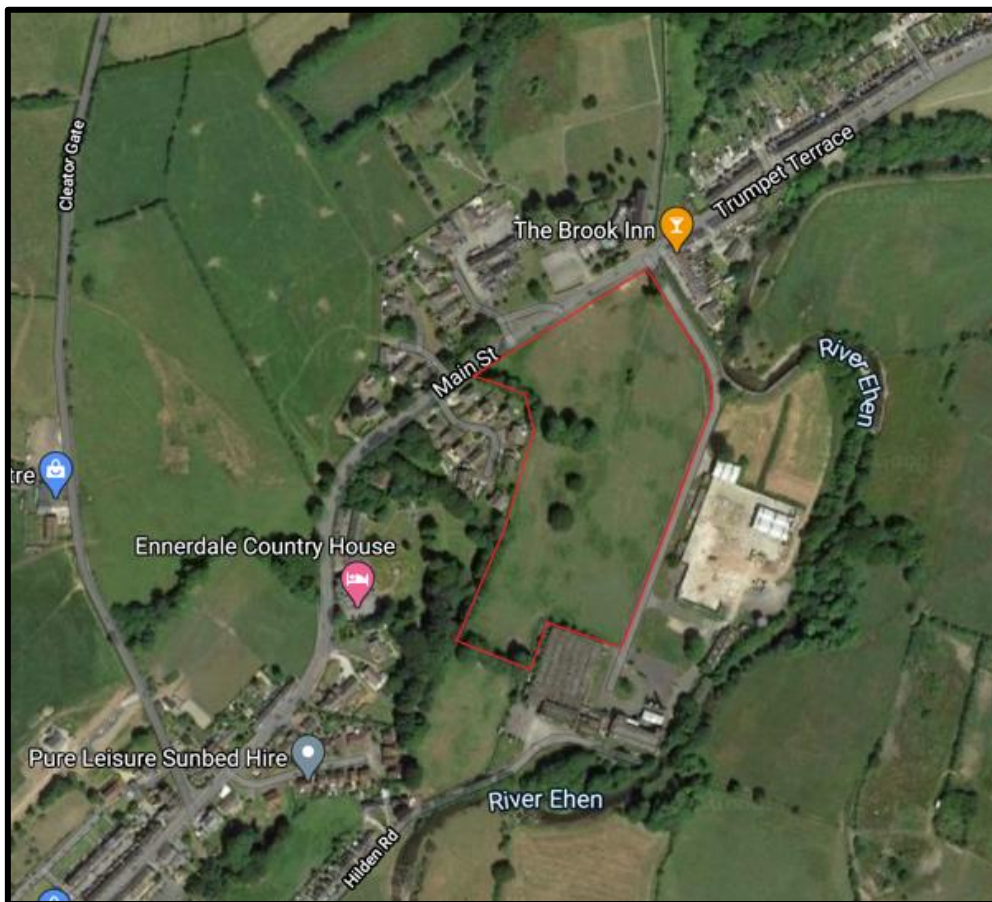


Planning Statement – Land to the North of Cleator Mills, Cleator, Cumbria

Proposal: Full Planning Application for residential development consisting of 115 dwellings



Applicant:



October 2020

SRE Associates - Planning and Development Consultancy



1.0 Introduction

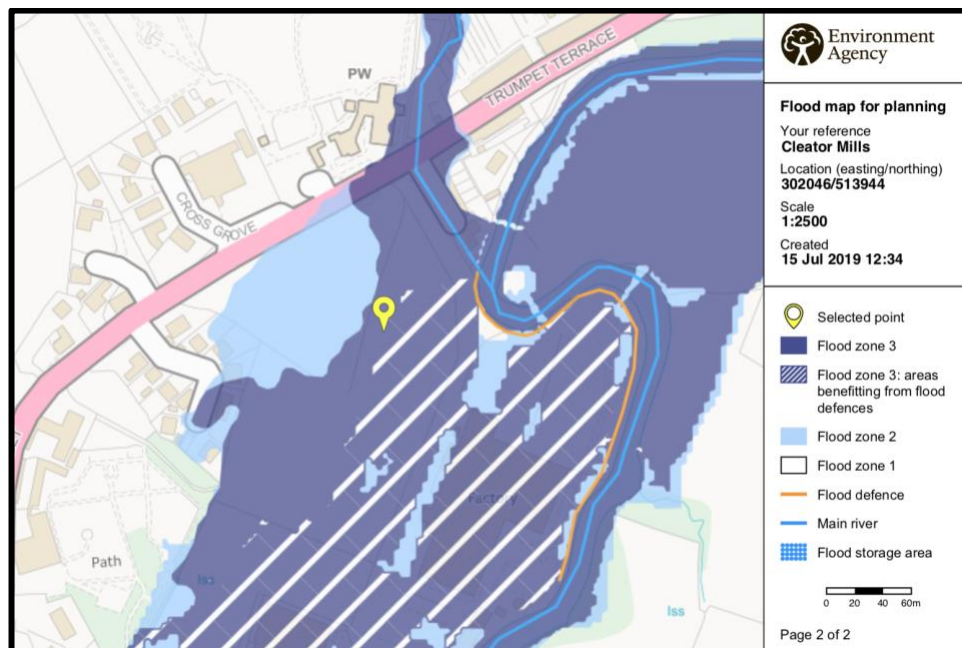
- 1.1 This planning statement has been prepared on behalf of Gleeson Homes Ltd in support of a planning application for residential development on land adjacent to Cleator Mills, Cleator.
- 1.2 The application is submitted in full and therefore seeking approval for all matters - access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. The principle of development was previously approved by way of Outline planning application 4/14/2190/001, which has now expired. The purpose of this statement is to set out the full planning case in support of the development of the site, and it should be read in conjunction with the plans and other supporting documentation listed below:
- A suite of architectural drawings;
 - Design and Access Statement;
 - Detailed landscape Layout;
 - Ecology Appraisal;
 - Ground Investigation Report;
 - Economic Benefits Appraisal;
 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy;
 - Transport Assessment.
- 1.3 Section 2 of this Statement will set out the site's context, Section 3 covers the proposed development, Section 4 relates to the planning history of the site and surroundings, Section 5 will set out the planning policy context against which the application must be considered and undertakes a planning assessment of the proposed development, and Section 6 will draw together the conclusions.

2.0 The Site

- 2.1 The application related to an area of agricultural land extending to 4.39 hectares which lies to the south of the Cleator settlement. It is located to the south of Trumpet Terrace and The Grove Hotel, to the east of the residential development of Hawthorn Fields, to the north of the vacant Cleator Mills development and to the west of the Cleator Mills access road and the dwellings at Brookside.
- 2.2 The site is currently vacant in the current ownership. The topography of the land raised gently towards to the north of this site, falling away to the south towards the boundaries. The field is generally open land, with 2 significant trees within the central area of the land. There is a significant tree line along the site to the west boundary, and also a further near to the rear of Hawthorn Fields.
- 2.3 The application site is situated within an established residential area and is close to local amenities including a pub, churches, a shop and a cricket club within Cleator.
- 2.4 The village of Cleator is situated 0.7 miles from the town centre of Cleator Moor. Cleator Moor is a town with a population of circa 7,500 people and is the 3rd largest settlement in the Borough. It is also in fairly close proximity to Sellafield, the County's largest employer where 10,000 highly paid jobs are located. The town has a range of shops and amenities,

including a post office, library, dentist, doctors, pharmacies, butchers, supermarkets, schools, various convenience stores etc.

- 2.5 The A595 which runs through Copeland can be joined 1.5 miles from the site and provides easy access to both Sellafield and Whitehaven and continues north towards Carlisle, and Egremont and Sellafield to the south. The A595 links to the A66, 13 miles north of the site which connects to Penrith and Junction 40 of the M6 to the east.
- 2.6 In summary therefore, the site is situated within a long-established residential area that is within reach of a broad range of community facilities and which is also easily accessible both by public and private modes of transport.
- 2.7 There are no Conservation Areas or Listed Buildings on or directly adjacent to the site. The Ennerdale Hotel to the west of the site, is the nearest Listed Building. This is however some 200m to the west of the application site and separated by the property's large grounds and significant tree cover.
- 2.8 The site is located in an area that the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning has noted as Flood Zone 1, and as such have a low probability of flooding. A copy of the Environment Agency's Flood Map is included below.



- 2.9 In 2016, outline planning application was granted for the residential development of the site for an unspecified number of dwellings (Application Reference 4/14/2190/001). No reserved matters application however was made following this and it has now lapsed.

3.0 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The application is a full planning application covering matters relating to access, scale, layout, landscaping and appearance of the residential development proposed on the area of land covered by the red line boundary.

- 3.2 In terms of access, the proposed dwellings on the site will be served via a single roadway access from the North off Main Street. The size, shape and scale of the site lend itself to a simple yet logical highway hierarchy. A 5.5m wide road with a 2m wide footpath to both sides brings you into the site, once entering the private cul-de-sacs and driveways on the development, one side reduces in size to a 600mm margin and the other side remains at 2m.
- 3.3 An emergency access and pedestrian link is proposed in the western corner of the site, connecting to the main Cleator Mills access road.
- 3.4 The design of the proposed development has been explained in the supporting Design and Access Statement and this statement should be read in conjunction with that document. However, the specific design ethos for the application site is as follows:
- Create a high-quality residential development;
 - Create a legible and attractive place with a sense of identity;
 - Create a sustainable and high-quality living environment;
 - Make efficient use of land in terms of ecological enhancement and density.
- 3.5 The proposed scale of the development is 115 dwellings comprising:
- 14 x 2-bedroom dwellings;
 - 66 x 3-bedroom dwellings; and,
 - 35 x 4-bedroom dwellings.
- 3.6 All of the proposed dwellings will be 2 storey in height, existing properties adjacent to site are predominantly 2 storey.
- 3.7 The proposed dwellings will be of a traditional brick and tiled roof construction. They will utilise dormers and gables within the roof pattern to create a varied roofscape and be articulated with good quality detailing. A robust material palette is proposed consisting of Forterra Abbey Red multi facing brick with Forterra Ashwell Yellow multi feature brick. The roof tile will be flat Concrete Tile in Dark Grey. White UPVC French windows, white UPVC fascia/barge boards, black rainwater goods and White Composite or Steel Faced for both Front and Rear Doors.
- 3.8 Detailed landscape proposals are submitted in support of this application. Existing trees along the boundaries are to be retained where possible. Individual residential units are to receive landscaping treatment to soften edges of residential areas and public highway. Rear gardens and private amenity spaces will be enclosed with a 1.8m high timber fence, as shown on the site layout plan. Two significant area of public open space are located centrally within the site, connecting to each other.
- 3.9 Each proposed residential dwelling will provide off-street car parking provision on private driveways with a minimum of two parking spaces per dwelling. 20 visitor spaces are provided within the site layout.

- 3.10 The proposed configuration of the development is shown on the site layout plan. The proposed layout has been informed by the site's constraints and opportunities as detailed in the design and access statement.
- 3.11 The area of land is considered well related to the existing residential developments to the north and east, the road network and it is considered that the development of the site in the proposed form is possible without having any adverse impact on residential amenity to the surrounding properties.

4.0 Planning history

- 4.1 A previous planning application for residential development on the site was approved in 2016 by Copeland Borough Council, as mentioned above:
- 4/14/2190/001 – Outline application for the erection of 79 dwellings and associated infrastructure – Land to the north of Cleator Mills, Cleator – Approved
- 4.2 No other recent relevant planning applications have previously been submitted on the application site.

5.0 Planning Policy and its application to the proposed development

- 5.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The Local Development Plan consists of policies within the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (December 2013). The policies in the following paragraphs are considered relevant to the proposed development.
- 5.3 The Local Plan sets out a long-term spatial vision and strategic objectives to support Copeland's vision which is "Working to improve lives, communities and the prosperity of Copeland". Although it was adopted before the updated NPPF (2019) it was adopted after the first NPPF that was published in March 2012 and therefore closely follows the principles of sustainable development, as defined by national policy and delivering sustainable housing in accordance with that policy.
- 5.4 As of the 9th May 2017, Copeland Borough Council announced that it cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing sites, with a supply of 2.3 years. Policies for the supply of housing set out within the Copeland Local Plan 2013 – 2028 (Core Strategy and Development Management Policies) will no longer be deemed up-to-date; and these policies carry less than full weight in decision-making. As an update to this, in a recent Planning Appeal decision, the Planning Inspector stated that Copeland could at this point demonstrate a 3.2 year supply of housing sites, and therefore there is still not a five-year land supply in place and as such the Local Plan Policies continue to carry less weight. For reasons of clarity however, the Planning Policy section of this document included Policy text from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF as amended 2019), Copeland Local Plan, and the Copeland

Borough Council Interim Housing Policy, which was created following the May 2017 statement regarding land supply.

Strategic Policies

- 5.5 **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.
- 5.6 **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.
- 5.7 The above are the strategic policies with particular relevance to residential housing sites, and the principle of this development fits with the strategic aims of the Local Plan. The site is within a settlement boundary and has previously been considered suitable for residential development by Copeland within the current Local Plan period (2013 – 2028).
- 5.8 **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.
- 5.9 With regards to the above, it is noted that the site is within the vicinity of a number of residential properties. The proposed residential development will have minimal impact on local amenity and improve the borough's housing stock in this location.

The Council abandoned progress on the above housing allocation document to commence from the start again, with the lack of housing land supply being acknowledged, but this was intended to build on the Local Plan and Policy SS1 to identify sites that: -

- Met the needs of the Local Plan and the NPPF (2012);
- Provided sustainable development;
- Help to meet the needs of Copeland and provide a sound basis for economic growth.

While never reaching allocation status, it is considered that that site meets the above, especially given the previous approval.

Furthermore, residential development is directed towards Cleator as one of Copeland's Local Service Centres. The site is within the town's settlement boundary and therefore, the principle of residential development is supported by both the NPPF and the Local Plan.

- 5.10 **Policy SS2** seeks to achieve sustainable housing growth by focusing new housing development within accessible location to meet the needs of the community. It will allocate sufficient land for new housing development; it will allocate this at a baseline of 230 dwellings per year and will seek densities of over 30 dwellings per hectare.
- 5.11 The preamble to Policy SS2 explains the purpose of the policy by stating: -
- 'The sustainable approach is to allocate sites for housing development in accessible locations, to set realistic annual housing supply targets and to optimise development densities (para 5.3.1 Local Plan).'*

- 5.12 The proposed development in this application in terms of both areas of land is considered compliant with the above. The land is in an accessible location given the location within the settlement boundary and reaches an appropriate density in the context of the adjacent housing and the site constraints.
- 5.13 **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 aim of the policy is therefore to: -
- Create a more balanced mix of housing types and tenure within that market area, in line with the evidence provided in the SHMA
 - Include a proportion of affordable housing which makes the maximum contribution (consistent with maintaining the viability of the development) to meeting identified needs in that market area.
- 5.14 The development proposes a varied and complementary mix of the different house types from the Gleeson Homes range, in the form of 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom dwellings with variations in number of bedrooms and plot sizes. Private amenity space within each residential curtilage is commensurate to the size of each dwelling and the character of the area. The development will therefore meet a range of housing needs and aspirations.
- 5.15 Therefore, it is evident that the proposed housing mix wholly accords with the policies set out in the Copeland Local Plan.
- 5.16 **Policy SS5** sets out the Council's position in relation to the provision and access to open space and green infrastructure. This aims to protect against the loss of designated open space, set the minimum open space standards for new development and promote the establishment, improvement and protection of green infrastructure.
- 5.17 The proposed development has been designed with this in mind and in accordance with the Policy provides significant areas of open space including the Suds areas within the site and retaining the two prominent trees central in the site, and also specifies additional tree planting within the site.
- 5.18 **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.
- 5.19 The application as submitted is accompanied by Flood Risk Assessment documents, specific to the land within the application site, which provides the basis for the development with regards to flood risk and the justification regarding meeting the above policy. It should be noted that there is a Suds basin located to the west of the proposed site layout.
- 5.20 **Policy ENV3** seek to ensure that new development will protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity.

- 5.21 A preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site was carried out to assess the potential for species and habitats of note or importance, and to recommend mitigation measures where appropriate as part of the planning application. No further surveys are required following this initial appraisal given the retention of the trees located centrally within the site.

Development Management Policies

Design

- 5.22 **Policy DM10** states the Council will expect high standard of design and the fostering of 'quality places' and development proposals will be required to: -
- Respond positively to the character of the site and the immediate and wider setting and enhance local distinctiveness through an appropriate size and arrangement of development plots, the appropriate scale and massing of houses;
 - Incorporate existing features of interest including local vernacular styles and building materials;
 - Address vulnerability to and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour by ensuring that the design, location and layout of all new development creates clear distinctions between public and private spaces, overlooked routes and spaces within and on the edges of development;
 - Create and maintain reasonable standards of general amenity.
- 5.23 The landscape design for the development has been led by the following objectives:
- To create an attractive and safe environment for the users of this development.
 - To satisfy circulation requirements without allowing vehicles to dominate the character of the site.
 - To develop a bold planting scheme that compliments the building form.
 - To retain the existing boundary vegetation were possible.
 - To develop a valuable area for local wildlife.
 - A stone feature wall and piers with planting front and rear will define the entry into the development.
 - Planting to both sides of the entrance road and visitor parking spaces.

- 5.24 It is considered that the above principles have been taken into account in the design and layout of the proposed development, and meet the criteria listed in Policy DM10.

Residential Amenity

- 5.25 **Policy DM12** requires new build residential properties to have: -
- a separation distance of at least 21 metres between directly facing elevations of dwellings containing windows of habitable rooms
 - a separation of at least 12 metres between directly facing elevations of dwellings containing windows of habitable rooms and a gable or windowless elevation
- 5.26 The site has been designed to comply with the above separation distance between both proposed and existing properties.

SRE Associates - Planning and Development Consultancy



- 5.27 A comprehensive Design and Access Statement has been produced that suitably explains the proposed design of the development in greater detail, and the design stages and process the final site layout has been through.

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 5.28 **Policy DM24** states where a proposed development is likely to be at risk from flooding or increases risk of flooding elsewhere, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required to be submitted as part of the planning application. Development will not be permitted where it is found that there is an unacceptable risk of flooding; or the development would increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 5.29 As mentioned above, the application as submitted is accompanied by Flood Risk Assessment documents, which provides the basis for the development with regards to flood risk and the justification regarding meeting the above policy.

Access and Transport

- 5.30 **Policy DM12** requires housing development to provide a car parking provision in accordance with adopted residential parking standards. Cumbria Highways have provided a Cumbria Development Design Guide but there are no adopted parking standards. The guidance provides a suggested level of parking for housing development.
- 5.31 The proposed layout details each proposed residential dwelling will provide off-street car parking provision on private driveways with a minimum of two parking spaces per dwelling. It is therefore considered that the proposed layout meets this criterion of Policy DM12.
- 5.32 **Policy DM22** requires development proposals to be accessible to all users by providing convenient access into and through the site for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people, access for emergency and service vehicles, meeting adopted car parking standards which reflect the needs of the Borough in its rural context. Where necessary the potential transport implications of development will be required to be supported by a Transport Assessment and a Travel Plan to manage any significant transport implications.
- 5.33 The proposed development provides a safe, functional, permeable and inclusive access that does not give dominance to car use. The internal road network has been designed to encourage low vehicle speeds, thus creating a pedestrian and cycle friendly environment. A 5.5m wide road with a 2m wide footpath to both sides brings you into the site, once entering the private cul-de-sacs and driveways on the development, one side reduces in size to a 600mm margin and the other side remains at 2m.

Ecology and Trees

- 5.34 **Policy DM25** states that all development proposals should protect the biodiversity value of land and buildings minimise fragmentation of habitats. A preliminary Ecological Appraisal was carried out to assess the impact of the proposed development on biodiversity and it was found that no further survey work was required in relation to the areas of land in the application.

- 5.35 **Policy DM28** requires development proposals which are likely to affect any trees within the Borough will be required to include an arboricultural assessment as to whether any of those trees are worthy of retention and protection by means of a Tree Preservation Order. The only two prominent trees, and a smaller cluster of trees, within the site will be retained within the development and proposed layout, so it is therefore concluded that DM28 has been complied with.

Principle – National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) (as revised February 2019)

- 5.36 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF states that sustainable development has three objectives social, economic and environmental.

- 5.37 The social and economic are as follows:

*“a) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

*b) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being. “*

It is noted in the above that a central aim of the NPPF is to ensure that the right type of land is available in the right areas, to ensure that the correct housing is available to meet the needs of present generations. As mentioned elsewhere in this document, this area has been previously approved for residential development.

- 5.38 Paragraph 11 covers the issue of the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

*“For **decision-taking** this means:*

Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

- 5.39 Paragraph 49 in the revised NPPF now states “in the context of the Framework – and in particular the presumption in favour of sustainable development – arguments that an application is premature are unlikely to justify a refusal of planning permission.”

- 5.40 Paragraph 61 states that “*Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies*

(including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes)."

5.41 At present, Copeland Borough Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land. Paragraph 67 of the NPPF states that Strategic policy-making authorities should have a clear understanding of the land available in their area through the preparation of a strategic housing land availability assessment. From this, planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability. Planning policies should identify a supply of:

a) specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period; and b) specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15 of the plan.

Therefore, housing applications should be considered in the context of sustainable development and relevant policies for the supply of housing are considered to be out-of-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

5.42 Paragraph 102 is regarding promoting sustainable transport, which is relevant to this proposal. *"Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued."* This continues in paragraph 103 stating *"The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making."* As previously noted, this site is located within the Cleator settlement boundary, and this position is supported by the previously proposed approval for residential development. The village could also be considered part of the wider Cleator Moor settlement (because of the close proximity), and the site will benefit from the town's full range of services and the location also provides the homeowners with a sustainable method of travelling to Whitehaven/Cleator Moor/Sellafield via public transport, which are the other large settlements in the borough, and the main employment site.

5.43 Ultimately when assessing the proposal there is a need to balance any harm caused by the proposed development with the contribution to the supply of housing, and the provision of housing which will meet the needs of the local demographic. The contribution to the supply of housing would be relatively significant in terms of overall numbers, especially measured against the identified need and significant shortfall in housing supply, which Copeland currently has. The sustainability of the site is not in question given the settlement boundary location and previous approval. It is therefore considered that the principle of development is in accordance with national policy on the supply of housing.

Copeland Borough Council's Interim Housing Policy (2017)

5.44 Copeland Borough Council's Interim Housing Policy (2017) sets out the Council's current approach to determining planning applications for residential development in the absence of a 5-year supply of housing and up-to-date policies relating to housing in a Local Plan. This states that:

"The Council will continue to support applications that are in accordance with the development plan. However, in order to encourage sustainable development and boost housing delivery, a decision-making framework for planning applications that may not be fully in accordance with the development plan has been set out.

The Council will (in addition to the development plan and other material considerations) consider residential development proposals contiguous to the development boundary, or the existing built form of a settlement, against each of the following criteria:

A. The scale of proposed development must be appropriate to the size, character and role of the settlement. In deciding whether the scale is appropriate, account will be taken of the cumulative impact of completions and permissions for the settlement concerned;

B. The level of services and facilities in the settlement, as defined in the Village Services Survey (2017). To encourage sustainable development, preference will be given to schemes which are contiguous to settlements that have the greatest concentration of facilities and services. Information provided by applicants which seeks to update the survey will be a material consideration;

C. Proposed development should not have a significant adverse impact on the capacity and safety of the highway network;

D. Proposed development should create safe and accessible environments that offer good access via a range of transport modes. Sites where it is possible to walk easily to a range of facilities will be considered more sustainable than sites that are further away and which would make car journeys more likely;

E. Proposed development sites that fall within Flood Risk Zone 3a and 3b, as defined by Environment Agency's latest data, will be discounted unless robust evidence can prove that the flood zoning for the site is incorrect, or that there is a robust mitigation plan signed off by the Environment Agency;

F. Proposed development should not have an adverse impact on the Lake District National Park, and should demonstrate how they conserve or enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Lake District National Park, or its setting;

G. Proposed development should, subject to viability, include a proportion of affordable housing which makes the maximum contribution to meeting identified needs in that market area;

H. Proposed development for Executive Housing will be supported where it delivers significant and demonstrable economic, social, and environmental benefits;

I. Proposed development should be of a high-quality design, enhancing local distinctiveness; and, where relevant, respecting the rural character of the settlement;

J. Proposed development should not result in significant intrusion into the open countryside, or result in any settlements merging;

K. Proposed development should not result in significant and demonstrable harm to the landscape character of Copeland, and applicants should have regard to those landscape areas as defined in the Cumbria Landscape Guidance and Toolkit (2011), or any subsequent update;

L. Major developments should be supported by a masterplan (to include a phasing scheme), which will demonstrate what proportion of development will be deliverable within the five-year supply period relevant to the date of determination of the planning application.

5.45 It is considered that the Interim Housing Policy has been met by the proposal, and this is covered below.

5.46 Criteria A and B of the Interim Housing Policy (2017) refer to the scale of proposed development must be appropriate to the size, character and role of the settlement, and in order to encourage sustainable development, preference will be given to schemes which are contiguous to settlements that have the greatest concentration of facilities and services.

5.47 In this context it is considered that the scale and character of the proposal is appropriate and would enhance the housing market of Cleator Moor. Cleator is classed within the current Local Plan as a Local Service Centre, being a town which benefits from some facilities, including a shop, pub, Sellafield Park and Ride, and a Church. It is also attached to the settlement boundary of the third largest settlement in the Borough.

The proposal therefore complies with criteria A and B.

5.48 In terms of criteria C and D of the Interim Housing Policy (2017), the submitted application will not cause any significant traffic issues within the locality from the development, as confirmed in the transport assessment. As stated above the proposed development site is located within walking distance of the town centre facilities and services found in Cleator Moor. Therefore, it is concluded that the application meets the criteria of points C & D.

5.49 In terms of criterion E of the Interim Housing Policy (2017), the application is accompanied by a comprehensive Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy covering the land in the application, both of which have been produced in consultation with the Environment Agency.

5.50 Criterion F is not of significant relevance to the proposal given the distance from the site to the Lake District National Park, and the surrounding development at Cleator Mills ensure that there is very little long-range visibility of the site.

5.51 Criterion G is considered to be met by the planning application, which proposed a 10% affordable housing contribution of the development, which is in accordance with the requirement of the affordable housing policy in the Copeland Borough Council Preferred Options Draft of September 2020.

SRE Associates - Planning and Development Consultancy



- 5.52 Additional dwellings are required in the Copeland area in order to provide a choice for employees, especially those working at Sellafield and other high value employment locations, mainly relating to the nuclear industry. The proposed development would help to support delivery of these types of dwellings and would reduce the pressure for housing outside of the Borough, and the consequential need for potential occupiers to travel long distances. There would also be other economic benefits arising from the new occupiers purchasing goods and services locally in the Cleator Moor town centre rather than also being lost to other areas. The application site is a suitable location for housing in Copeland and the housebuilder intends to utilise a variety of house units. The proposal would therefore satisfy criterion H as it would deliver significant and demonstrable economic, social and environmental benefits. This is evidenced in the economic benefits report with the application.
- 5.53 With regards to Criterion I, as previously detailed, this is a well-designed site with a density appropriate to a housing site in an urban location in Copeland. It is therefore considered to comply with Criterion I.
- 5.54 In terms of criterion J the proposed development is partly situated adjacent to existing residential developments on two sides, forming a natural location for additional residential development, and it also adjoins commercial sites on the remaining boundaries. The proposed development will therefore not result in an intrusion into the open countryside, and is in accordance with Criterion J.
- 5.55 In considering the scale of the scheme and its impact upon the landscape, consideration has been given to the Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit (CLCGT) which provides the most up-to-date landscape character assessment. The application is accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which demonstrates how the development fits into its surroundings. Therefore, the application meets the text of Criterion K.
- 5.56 Gleeson Homes are currently developing a number of sites within the Cumbrian region are entirely committed to delivering new homes in the area. Their first development in Copeland is nearly underway, and it is hoped that they will be bringing more sites forward in the Borough in the near future. Given their ambitious housebuilding targets, it is expected that all of the proposed dwellings will be built and occupied within a five-year period, therefore meeting the aims of Criterion L.

In the context of the above matters, it is clear that the proposed development entirely conforms with the requirements of the Copeland Interim Housing Policy.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The proposed development provides the opportunity to deliver a housing scheme on a site that the Council has previously considered as suitable for residential use.
- 6.2 It is clear that the development accords with the relevant Local Plan and National Planning policies regarding housing delivery.
- 6.3 The proposed development has been sensitively designed to take into account the site characteristics, surroundings, wider location and density.
- 6.4 It is considered that any impact on the adjacent dwellings outside of the site has been minimised by the proposed layout.
- 6.5 It is contended therefore that the proposed development is acceptable and is in accordance with both national and local planning policy, and therefore should be approved.

Simon Blacker MRTPI