

Planning Statement – 6 Market Street, Millom

Proposal: Change of use of car showroom to a gym



W Milligan & Sons

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PFK Rural - Planning and Development Consultancy

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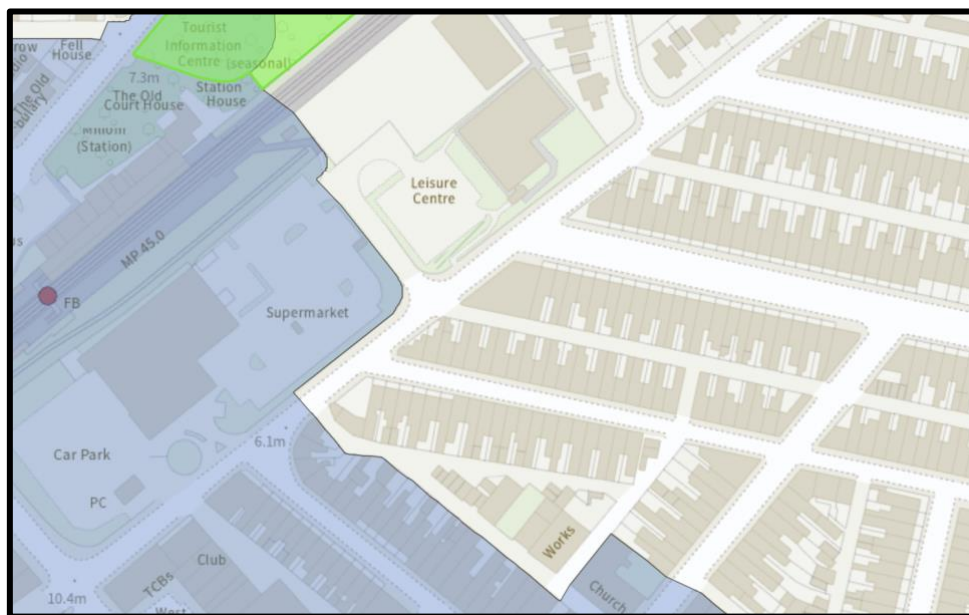
 **RTPI**
Chartered Town Planner

1.0 Introduction

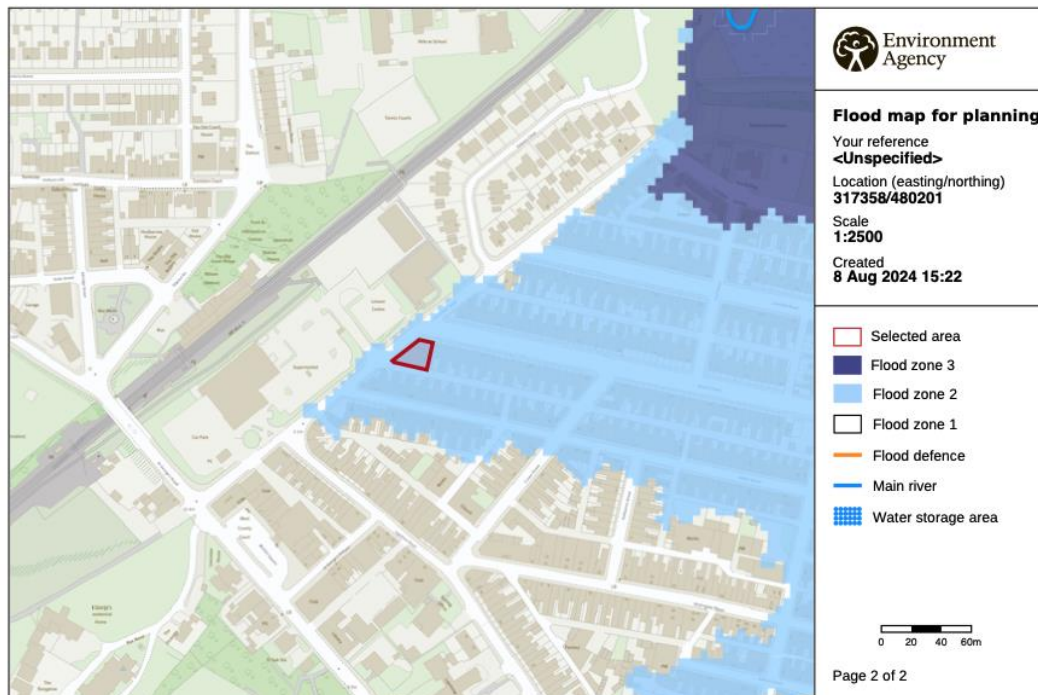
- 1.1 This planning statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant in support of a planning application for a change of use from a car showroom to a gym.
- 1.2 The application is submitted in full as a change of use. The purpose of this statement is to set out the planning case in support of the development of the site, and it should be read in conjunction with the plans submitted.
- 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, section 6 covers Flood Risk, and section 7 will draw together the conclusions.

2.0 The Site

- 2.1 The site is within the town centre of Millom on the corner of Lancashire Road and Market Street.
- 2.2 The site is flat across the whole area. The existing building on the site covers the majority of the entire site, up to the pavement, with a small concrete area to the frontage onto Market Street. Access is gained into the existing building via both Lancashire Road and Market Street. It adjoins a residential dwelling to the eastern elevation.
- 2.3 The site is not within the Millom Conservation Area, nor are there any Tree Preservation Order's on or adjacent to the site.
- 2.4 There are also no nearby Listed Buildings to the site, as detailed below on the Copeland GIS Map.



- 2.5 The site is located in an area that the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning has noted as Flood Zone 2, as detailed on the Environment Agency map below.



3.0 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The proposed consists of a change of use of the entire building to a gym.
- 3.2 The existing use of the site as a car showroom will cease in the near future, at which point the building will become vacant.
- 3.3 No external alternations would be proposed in the application. The building as existing is finished in a cream render, with a grey/blue box profile metal sheet roof.
- 3.4 Internally, the unit would be refitted with gym equipment, and the internal existing office space would be rearranged to be utilised as changing rooms and a physio room, as detailed on the submitted plans. The internal kitchen and toilets will remain as existing.
- 3.5 The proposed opening hours are from 04:00am in the morning to 23:00pm, in order to cater to Sellafield shift workers, a number of which live within Millom due to the proximity of the Sellafield site.

4.0 Planning history

- 4.1 The following is the planning history of the site:
- 4.2 4/18/2475/0A1 - Advertisement consent for a replacement wall mounted sign - Approved

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 **Policy ST2** is the Copeland Local Plan Policy regarding Spatial Development Strategy. This states as follows:

'Development in the Borough should be distributed in accordance with the following principles:

A Growth: providing for and facilitating growth in the local economy, particularly in the energy sector, accompanied by net growth in jobs and an associated increase in demand for housing and services

B Concentration: development will be located in the Borough's settlements at an appropriate scale, within defined settlement boundaries, in accordance with the Borough's settlement hierarchy as set out in Figure 3.2:

5) Focussing the largest scale development and regeneration on Whitehaven and the important development opportunities there.

ii) Supporting moderate levels of development reflecting the respective scale and functions of the smaller towns (Cleator Moor, Egremont and Millom), and contributing to the regeneration of the town centres.....'

- 5.5 **Policy ER4** regarding Land and Premises for Economic Development states:

'The Council will maintain an adequate supply of land and floorspace for economic development by:

A Allocating land for economic development over the plan period at a rate ahead of that implied by projecting past take up rates, to allow a flexible response to emerging demand

B Safeguarding employment areas which are considered to be essential for meeting future strategic economic development requirements and assessing development proposals against criteria in Policy DM3

C Identifying sites which are better suited to alternative uses'.

5.6 **Policy ER6** – Location of Employment

‘A Employment development will be supported in Whitehaven and Key Service Centres...’

5.7 With regards to the above policies, the site is a proposed employment use, located within the town centre of a Key Service Centre, in a vacant unit. It is therefore considered appropriate.

5.8 **Policy ER7** relates to Principal Town Centre, Key Service Centres, Local Centres and other service areas: Roles and Functions.

‘Development will be required to meet the needs of the area, to be of a scale appropriate to the centre, and to not adversely impact on the vitality or viability of other nearby centres. The purpose of each centre will differ according to its role and function. Development objectives are to:

A Reinforce the role of Whitehaven as the Principal Town through the promotion of a flexible, mixed-use approach, the improvement of strategic and local accessibility, and supporting its continued growth.

B Support Whitehaven’s role as a tourist and visitor destination linked to its unique heritage and independent and specialist retailers

C Protect and where possible enhance the services and facilities provided in the Key Service Centres of Cleator Moor, Egremont and Millom

D Seek to ensure that the Local Centres and neighbourhood centres maintain essential shops and services to meet the needs of local communities

E Encourage evening and night-time uses that contribute to the vibrancy, inclusiveness and economic vitality of centres. Such uses should accord with Policies DM6 and DM7.’

5.9 **Policy ER9** is regarding the Key Service Centres, Local Centres and other smaller centres. This states:

‘Retail and service development which promotes the vitality and viability of Key Service Centres, Local Centres and other smaller centres, and is consistent with the spatial development strategy as defined in Policy ST2 and Figure 3.2, will be supported.

A In Key Service Centres Cleator Moor, Egremont and Millom:

i) Appropriate retail and service sector provision will be actively encouraged within the defined boundaries of each Key Service Centre to serve local communities and to facilitate small scale tourism. Evening entertainment and leisure uses will also be acceptable if they meet the criteria as set out in ER7 E above.....’

5.10 The above policies are relevant as the proposed site is located within the Key Service of Millom, which is the one of the largest settlements within the Borough. Therefore, as stated above leisure uses are encouraged, and it increases the vitality and viability of Millom by the introduction of a new gym facility.

5.11 **Policy SS4** – Community and Cultural Facilities and Services

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‘The range of services and facilities serving the Borough’s communities will be protected by:

A Encouraging the provision and retention of good quality services and facilities which meet the needs of local communities and are accessible by public transport, cycling or on foot. Services and facilities which benefit the less mobile or more deprived members of the community, and which maximise opportunities for people to improve their health and well-being, will be given particular support.

B Ensuring that needs are met in the most appropriate, effective and accessible way, by:

i) locating widely used services and facilities in Whitehaven and the three smaller towns

ii) increasing provision of local community facilities, such as community centres and public open space, in Local Centres and villages identified as needing them

iii) improving the number and quality of facilities in areas of the Borough which exhibit higher than average levels of socio-economic deprivation – especially as regards health care, sports and fitness facilities where healthy living is an issue.’

5.12 **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.

5.13 The proposed development is located within Flood Zone 2 as defined by the Environment Agency mapping. It is however already a building in use as a ‘less vulnerable’ use and will continue to be a ‘less vulnerable’ use as a gym. As it does not increase the vulnerability classification, no Flood Risk Assessment is required.

Access and Transport

5.14 **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 all development types.

5.15 No parking is proposed or is indeed available within the existing site. It is noted that the current business on site relates to a motoring business but has no existing parking. For the proposed use, it is not considered that this is required on site. The use is located within the Town Centre of Millom in a highly sustainable location. It is within walking and cycling distance of the vast majority of housing within Millom where the gym clients are expected to be from. In addition, it is adjacent to large public car parks and has excellent wider transport links in relation to bus stops and the town train station.

Principle – National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) (as revised December 2023)

5.16 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.

5.17 The social and economic are as follows:

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*"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.

- 5.18 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."

- 5.19 Paragraph 90 states that '*Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should:*

a) define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters...'

- 5.20 The above policy is replicated by the aims of Policy ER9 above in paragraph 5.9. The use is appropriate for this location within the Millom settlement, and also in terms of Millom's situation in terms of the hierarchy of settlements in Copeland as a Borough.

- 5.21 Paragraph 96 states: '*Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:*

a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;

b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and

c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.'

- 5.22 The above paragraph is important in relation to the proposed use. The facility to be provided is a new start up business, as they feel that there is space in the leisure and fitness market for the type of gym facility that they will provide. It is aimed at a different market to the other facilities within both the settlement and wider Borough and aims to bring more users into the leisure sector and enable additional healthy living and lifestyles.
- 5.23 Ultimately when assessing the proposal there is a need to balance any harm caused by the proposed development with the positives of this particular instance. The vacant unit is considered an appropriate location for such a use in the town centre, with good transport links for sustainable travel to the site. The use as a gym promotes healthy living and lifestyles. The case put forward demonstrates how the proposal meets the policies of the Local Plan, and in particular the aims and text of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.0 Flood Risk

- 6.1 The site is located in an area that the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning has noted as Flood Zone 2, as detailed on the Environment Agency map in section 2.5.
- 6.2 Annex 3 of the National Planning Policy Framework covers the Flood Risk vulnerability classification of proposed uses. Within this, it is noted that the proposed use as a gym is a Less Vulnerable use, and the existing use of the site as a car showroom is also a Less Vulnerable use. Therefore, given that there is no proposed change to the flood risk classification for the uses, Flood Risk is not considered to be an issue, and no Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is provided.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposed development provides the opportunity for a new business in a suitable location within Millom.
- 7.2 The proposed use will provide a suitable reuse for a vacant unit within a Key Service centre.
- 7.3 The proposed development will provide a positive leisure and health related use, which will also provide employment, on an existing employment site.
- 7.4 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.

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