



Westmorland and Furness Call for Sites Housing & Employment

Guidance Note

Important Note: This document **must be read before submitting a site** through the call for sites exercise as it contains important information and guidance.

The submission of a site **does not mean that the site will be allocated**. Decisions on future allocations will be made through the Local Plan review process having regard to development needs and sustainable development principles and will be informed by detailed site assessment work and community and stakeholder engagement.

July 2024



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Contents

1. Background information	3
Brief background to Westmorland and Furness Council and the Local Plan	3
Purpose and scope of the Call for Sites	3
2. Guidance for submitting sites	4
Introduction.....	4
Guidance on completing the form.....	6
Ownership	6
Site size threshold	6
Location map.....	6
Character of the site	6
Sustainability benefits of the proposed site	6
Highways Access	7
Public Rights of Way and access rights	7
Access rights.....	7
Utilities Infrastructure	7
Landscape features.....	7
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	7
Accessibility	7
Site achievability	7
3. Next steps	8
4. Further information.....	8



1. Background information

Brief background to Westmorland and Furness Council and the Local Plan

- 1.1.1 Westmorland and Furness Council came into being in April 2023, replacing the former Barrow Borough, Eden and South Lakeland Districts and Cumbria County Council. The Local Plans from the 'legacy' councils and associated planning policy guidance (see [here](#)¹ for details) will remain in place until replaced by a single Local Plan for Westmorland and Furness for 2025-45, including for minerals and waste planning.
- 1.1.2 The proposed **Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)** study will form an important part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan for Westmorland and Furness. Please also refer to the draft SHELAA methodology, which is available for information and comment as part of the 'early conversation' on the Local Plan and accompanying Call for Sites exercise.
- 1.1.3 Westmorland and Furness Council is embarking on the preparation of a Local Plan for 2025-45 for the area of the new district for which it is the local planning authority, outside the areas of the **Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks** within the district, which have separate local planning authorities.
- 1.1.4 While the forthcoming Westmorland and Furness Local Plan will contain strategic policies applicable to the whole of the Local Plan area including the **Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape** (formerly an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - AONB) the Local Plan is not reviewing allocated sites in the Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape within the district or seeking to allocate additional sites for development. Sites will be reviewed as part of a future review of the Arnside and Silverdale AONB Development Plan Document. We are therefore not seeking nominations for land in the Arnside and Silverdale National Landscape as part of the Call for Sites exercise for housing and/or employment. For more information, please also see paragraph 1.1.13 of the draft SHELAA Methodology.

Purpose and scope of the Call for Sites

- 1.1.5 The Call for Sites exercise will inform a key piece of evidence for the Local Plan review - the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The purpose of the Call for Sites is to gain up to date information about land that has potential for housing, employment or mixed uses, so it can be included in the study and considered for potential allocation in the forthcoming Local Plan.

¹ <https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plans-0/westmorland-and-furness-local-plan>



- 1.1.6 The Council is inviting submissions for sites which may be suitable for **housing and employment**, which can also include sites suitable for:
- Specialist housing (e.g. homes for the elderly)
 - Nursing and care homes and residential institutions (use class C2)
 - Offices (use class E(g)(i) - former use class B1a)
 - Research and development (use class E(g)(ii) - former use class B1b)
 - Light industry (Use class E(g)(iii) – former use class B1c)
 - General industry (B2)
 - Storage and distribution (B8)
 - Mixed use sites containing an element of the above uses
- 1.1.7 The submission of a site through the Call for Sites exercise does not mean that the site will be allocated in the Local Plan. Once submitted, sites will be subject to assessment using a consistent methodology and criteria for the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The draft methodology for the SHELAA study is available for comment, as part of the Call for Sites exercise and early conversation on the Local Plan. This study will then inform the Local Plan process by providing information on sites' potential suitability and deliverability.
- 1.1.8 The sites in the SHELAA will then be subject to more detailed site assessment, including Sustainability Appraisal, forthcoming evidence on housing and employment land needs, the emerging spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy, and community and stakeholder consultation. These and other factors will inform which sites are ultimately recommended for allocation for development in the Local Plan. The Call for Sites is therefore just the start of the process!

2. Guidance for submitting sites

Introduction

- 2.1.1 Sites must be submitted using the standard form and have regard to the background information and guidance contained in this document and on the form. Please make a **separate submission for each site**.
- 2.1.2 The standard form will be made available electronically as an online form through our website and we would encourage as many people to use this method as possible to enable us to analyse and publish submissions more efficiently. The online form allows users to save their responses and complete them later and will provide a pdf



report of the form upon completion. Upon request we can provide a copy of the form to be filled in by hand.

2.1.3 The online form requests a range of information about sites to help us understand whether they are suitable and available for development. Overall guidance on the types of sites sought is summarised below.

- Sites **within or on the edge of sustainable settlements** and can demonstrate they are accessible to services and facilities and will make a meaningful contribution to maintaining and creating **sustainable communities**.
- Developable sites - on **brownfield land** are particularly welcome. National planning policy requires local authorities to make the most efficient use of land and the Local Plan will seek to make the most of brownfield opportunities for new development.
- Housing and/or employment, or mixed-use sites, that can contribute to the **vitality and viability** of **town centres**.
- Also some **smaller sites between 0.2 hectares and one hectare**, as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires 10% of housing requirements to be met on sites under one hectare.
- Site promoters should seek to submit sites that can be demonstrated to be **suitable** for development, are **available** for development and **achievable** - and perform well in terms of sustainability.

2.1.4 Please note the following **important points** relating to sites submitted in previous Calls for Sites, and also relating to sites allocated in the current Local Plan which have not yet been granted planning permission:

- Sites submitted in the 2020 and 2021 South Lakeland Local Plan Review Call for Sites, must be **re-submitted** on the new survey form below. This will ensure we have consistent and up to date information on sites, and site promoters' intentions. Any sites which are not submitted again will **not be taken forward** for consideration in the Westmorland and Furness Local Plan.
- **Housing and employment site allocations** in the Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland Local Plans, which do not yet have planning permission, will be reviewed to determine if they remain suitable, available and achievable for allocation in the new Local Plan to 2045. This will include sites or parts of sites, where permission has lapsed, or applications are pending or withdrawn. It will also include Broad Locations in the South Lakeland Local Plan. To ensure the review of these sites is based on up-to-date information, **they should be resubmitted** on the Call for Sites form below.



- 2.1.5 It is recommended that before starting to fill in the online form the range of information set out in this Guidance Note is researched. If anyone submitting a site for consideration would like further advice on how to complete the form they can contact the Planning Policy Team, using the contact details at the end of this report.

Guidance on completing the form

Ownership

- 2.1.6 Proof of ownership must be provided for all land marked on the site plan. Contact details for owners should be provided and if the site is being proposed by someone other than the owner, written confirmation must be provided by the owner that they are willing to make the site available for the proposed use.
- 2.1.7 Additionally, if any third party adjacent land is required to facilitate vehicular access or sustainable travel links such as cycling and walking routes, or to make infrastructure connections, evidence should be provided that this will not present a barrier to the development of the site and the submission should outline any actions that have been or will be undertaken to address the issue.

Site size threshold

- 2.1.8 Sites proposed for residential development should be **at least 0.2ha** or be able to accommodate **5 dwellings**.
- 2.1.9 Sites proposed for employment development should be **at least 0.25ha** or capable of accommodating **at least 500 square metres** of employment floor space.

Location map

- 2.1.10 The boundary of the site can be drawn within the online form, and this is the preferred method for submission of the site location. However, there is also the option to upload a site location plan in the online form.
- 2.1.11 If the upload option is chosen the map must clearly show the proposed site as a red line boundary on an Ordnance Survey base map at a clear scale.

Character of the site

- 2.1.12 Site promoters will need to describe the character of the site including any topographical constraints such as steeply sloping areas, and the type and quality of any agricultural land.

Sustainability benefits of the proposed site

- 2.1.13 Site promoters will be asked to explain how the site that they are promoting will help deliver social, economic and environmental benefits for communities in Westmorland and Furness. In particular promoters should consider carefully how the development of the site would respond to the climate emergency that has been declared by the Council, and how it will help mitigate and adapt to the changing climate.



Highways Access

2.1.14 Site promoters will need to state whether safe access to the road network can be achieved.

Public Rights of Way and access rights

2.1.15 Site promoters will need to record whether any public rights of way pass through or close to the site. An illustrative map of rights of way in the area can be viewed on Westmorland and Furness's [website](#)² and the legal definitive rights of way map can be viewed by appointment by contacting countryside.access@cumbria.gov.uk.

Access rights

2.1.16 Site promoters will need to record whether there are any legal access rights over the land, such as whether it is common land or open access land.

Utilities Infrastructure

2.1.17 Site promoters will need to describe any installations that may represent a constraint such as pylons or overhead wires, and also provide information on which utilities are available to the site or could be readily provided, for example mains sewerage, fibre broadband etc.

Landscape features

2.1.18 Site promoters will need to describe any landscape features on the site such as watercourses, drystone walls or hedgerows. This will help us understand the current landscape character of the site.

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

2.1.19 Site promoters will need to identify whether the site might provide habitats for protected species such as badgers and bats. Any ecological assessment or habitats survey undertaken for the site should be submitted if available.

Accessibility

2.1.20 Site promoters will need to describe how easily a range of services and facilities such as schools, shops, sports facilities etc. can be accessed by walking, cycling or public transport, so that we can understand whether sites are sustainably located and can help reduce the need to travel to meet daily needs.

Site achievability

2.1.21 Site promoters will need to provide information on when the site could realistically be developed and provide information on what steps have been undertaken to progress

² https://legacy.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/roads-transport/public-transport-road-safety/countryside-access/Rights_of_way/Map.asp



its development. Promoters will need to identify any issues that could impact on the deliverability of the site and outline how they would address them.

3. Next steps

- 3.1.1 This Call for Sites exercise will close on **Monday 30th September** 2024. All the sites received will then be assessed using a consistent methodology through the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).
- 3.1.2 Any sites proposed for allocation arising from the Call for Sites and SHELAA will be subject to full public consultation through future consultation stages of the Local Plan review.
- 3.1.3 **Please note that submitted sites will not be available for public view during the consultation, but the Council may later publish maps and information from site submissions, including in relation to the SHELAA study and at later stages of consultation on the Local Plan.**
- 3.1.4 If you wish to discuss this, please contact the Planning Policy Team below.

4. Further information

- 4.1.1 If you have a question about the Call for Sites or Local Plan, please contact the Council's Planning Policy Team by:
 - **Email:** localplan@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
 - **Telephone:** 01539 733333