

Cumberland Council (Copeland) -
Development Management
Market Place, Whitehaven, CA28 7JG

Reference: PA-0008512/01
Customer reference: 4/26/2193/PIP
29 July 2026

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

BARF SYKE BARFS ROAD DISTINGTON CA14 5SW

Dear Chris Harrison,

Thank you for contacting us.

This is our response to your consultation 4/26/2193/PIP.

Environment Agency position

We have no objection to the Permission in Principle application but we wish to make the following comments:

Contaminated Land

The current or previous use(s) of the development site relating to garage / car repair suggest that the land may be affected by contamination. Land contamination can harm human health, soils, ecosystems, property, drinking waters supplies, groundwater and surface water.

Land contamination is a material planning consideration. The planning decision should ensure that the site is suitable for its proposed use, considering any risks from contamination and any proposed land remediation. The planning application should therefore be supported by adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person. After remediation is carried out, as a minimum, the land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under [Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990](#). This approach is supported by paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The current or previous use(s) of the site may present an unacceptable risk of contamination that could be mobilised during site works and construction, potentially leading to pollution of controlled waters. Controlled waters are particularly sensitive in this location because the proposed development site is located upon a secondary aquifer A.

The proposed development will be acceptable, if a planning condition is included requiring the submission and validation of a detailed land contamination management strategy for unsuspected contamination during the enabling, construction and/or development works. By cleaning up land contamination, it will be helping to protect and improve the groundwater quality that supports existing drinking water supply, future supply of drinking water and other environmental uses.

Without this condition we would object to the proposal in line with paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework because it cannot be guaranteed that the development will contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate or will not be put at unacceptable risk from, or be adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution.

Condition

If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the LPA) shall be carried out until further investigation and a remediation strategy detailing how this contamination will be dealt with has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the LPA. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.

Reason

To ensure that the development does not contribute to, and is not put at unacceptable risk from or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution from previously unidentified contamination sources at the development site. This is in line with paragraph 187 of the NPPF.

Flood risk standing advice – advice to applicant / LPA

Part of the proposed development site falls within Flood Zone 2, which is land defined in the planning practice guidance as being at risk of flooding.

We have produced a series of standard comments for LPAs and planning applicants to refer to on 'lower risk' development proposals. These comments replace direct case-by-case consultation with us. Your proposed development falls within this category.

These standard comments are known as Flood Risk Standing Advice (FRSA). They can be viewed at Flood risk assessments: [applying for planning permission - GOV.UK](#).

We recommend that you view our standing advice in full before submitting the required information as part of your planning application. The LPA will then determine whether flood risk has been considered in line with FRSA recommendations.

Sequential test - advice to LPA

What is the sequential test and does it apply to this application?

In accordance with the NPPF (paragraphs 175-177 (inc. footnote 62)), development in flood risk areas should not be permitted if there are reasonably available alternative sites, appropriate for the proposed development, in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The sequential test establishes if this is the case.

Development is in a flood risk area if it is in Flood Zone 2 or 3, or it is within Flood Zone 1 and your strategic flood risk assessment shows it to be at future flood risk or at risk from other sources of flooding such as surface water or groundwater.

The only developments exempt from the sequential test in flood risk areas are:

- Householder developments such as residential extensions, conservatories or loft conversions
- Small non-residential extensions with a footprint of less than 250sqm
- Changes of use (except changes of use to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park home site)
- Applications for development on sites allocated in the development plan through the sequential test and:
 - the proposed development is consistent with the use for which the site was allocated; and
 - there have been no significant changes to the known level of flood risk to the site, now or in the future, which would have affected the outcome of the test
- Developments where no built development within the site boundary, including access or escape routes, land raising or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future

Avoiding flood risk through the sequential test is the most effective way of addressing flood risk because it places the least reliance on measures such as flood defences, flood warnings and property level resilience.

Who undertakes the sequential test?

It is for you, as the LPA, to determine an appropriate area of search and to decide whether the sequential test has been passed, with reference to the information you hold on land availability. You may also ask the applicant to identify any other 'reasonably available' sites which are on the open market and to check on the current status of identified sites to determine if they can be considered 'reasonably available'. Further guidance on the area of search can be found in paragraphs 027-030 of the planning practice guidance [here](#).

What is our role in the sequential test?

We can advise on the relative flood risk between the proposed site and any alternative sites identified - although your strategic flood risk assessment should allow you to do this yourself in most cases. We won't advise on whether alternative sites are reasonably available or whether they would be suitable for the proposed development. We also won't advise on whether there are sustainable development objectives that mean steering the development to any alternative sites would be inappropriate. Further guidance on how to apply the sequential test to site specific applications can be found in the planning practice guidance [here](#).

Foul Drainage – advice to applicant

The Building Regulations 2010 and Government Guidance contained within the [PPG for Water Supply, Wastewater and Water Quality](#) (paragraph 020 ID: 34-020-20140306) sets out a hierarchy of drainage options that must be considered and discounted in the following order:

1. Connection to the public sewer
2. Connection to a private sewer that drains to a public sewer
3. Package sewage treatment plant or septic tank
4. Cesspool

Foul drainage should be connected to the main sewer whenever it is feasible to do so. Where this is not possible, under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 any discharge of sewage or trade effluent made to either surface water or groundwater will need to either comply with [General Binding Rules for Small Sewage Discharges](#) or comply with a permit issued by the Environment Agency, additional to any planning permission that may be required. This applies to any discharge to ground, inland freshwaters, coastal waters or relevant territorial

waters. Further information about the permitting process can be found at [Septic tanks and sewage treatment plants: what you need to do](#).

Further advice is available at: [Septic tanks and treatment plants: permits and general binding rules](#)

If you have any questions regarding our response, please contact clplanning@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Hui Zhang, Planning Advisor - Sustainable Places

National Contact Centre: 03708 506 506

clplanning@environment-agency.gov.uk

Ghyll Mount, 40 Business Park, Gillan Way, Penrith CA11 9BP