

Planning Statement (including Meeting Housing Needs Assessment)

Land at Jack Lawson Terrace, Wheatley Hill

On behalf of Gleeson Regeneration Ltd.

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1. Introduction.

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Gleeson Regeneration Limited (the Applicant) and accompanies a full planning application submitted to Durham County Council (the Council) for the erection of 78 dwellings on land at Jack Lawson Terrace, Wheatley Hill.
- 1.2. The purpose of the Planning Statement is to present an assessment of the proposed development against relevant planning policy and other material considerations.
- 1.3. As demonstrated throughout this Statement, the proposals represent a high-quality design which would deliver a wide range of homes in a sustainable location. The proposal sensitively integrates into the local environment, including the existing built form, ensuring it is appropriate to the character and appearance of the area.
- 1.4. The remainder of the Planning Statement is structured as follows:
 - Section 2.0 provides a summary of the Site, surrounding area and planning history;
 - Section 3.0 describes the proposed development;
 - Section 4.0 outlines the planning policy context;
 - Section 5.0 provides a planning assessment of the proposals based on the planning policy context;
 - Section 6.0 details how the development will meet the housing needs outlined in the development plan; and
 - Section 7.0 then summarises and draws conclusions.
- 1.5. This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the plans and reports submitted with the application.



2. Site and Context.

Application Site

- 2.1. The Application Site measures approximately 2.65 hectares and is split over two separate sites.
- 2.2. The eastern parcel is located to the south of Wordsworth Avenue and to the east of Peter Lee Cottages/Wheatley Terrace. Within the site, there are some roads on the existing adopted highway network. These comprise of Byron Street/Shakespeare Street/Burns Street. Existing residential development is located to the east, south and west of this parcel. Wheatley Hill primary school is located to the north.
- 2.3. The eastern parcel is located to the south of Wordsworth Avenue/Luke Terrace and to the east of Jack Lawson Terrace. An existing access road forms part of the east boundary as well as existing residential development which is located to the east and south. The site is surrounded by existing residential development.
- 2.4. Both parcels of land have been previously developed for housing and as a maintenance depot, however, such development has been cleared and landscaped over.
- 2.5. There are no listed buildings within or adjacent to the site boundaries. The site is not located within a Conservation Area. The closest listed buildings are located approximately 170m to the east of the site (as the crow flies). These comprise of the Grade II listed Wheatley Hill War Memorial Cross and the Grade II listed Headstone to Peter Lee, 50m south of the Former Chapel. Existing residential development sits in between this site and the listed building. There would be no views from the heritage assets to the site and therefore the development would have no impact on the setting of these listed buildings.
- 2.6. The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 which is considered to have the lowest probability of flooding from rivers and seas. The site is also at low risk of surface water flooding.

Surrounding Area

- 2.7. The site is located in a sustainable location which is well related to the existing services and facilities within the settlement. The site is located within the heart of the settlement of Wheatley Hill, meaning there are a range of services and facilities within walking distance of the site.
- 2.8. Wheatley Hill Local Centre (as identified in the CDP) is located c.500m (a 9-minute walk) from the site. This local centre has numerous local shops and services to meet local residents' daily shopping needs. This includes a convenience store, takeaways, and a barber. Wheatley Hill Primary School is located opposite the larger parcel of this site. There are other services and facilities within the settlement which are not located in the town centre, including dentists, doctors, social club, community centre, cafes, and a nursery which are also in walking distance of the site.
- 2.9. There are bus stops located Jack Lawson Terrace, which forms the western boundary of one of the parcels. The bus stops provide hourly services to Durham and Sunderland. The site is

considered to be in a sustainable location with good access to services, facilities, and sustainable modes of transport.

- 2.10. As shown in Figure 1 below, there are no public footpaths, bridleways, or byways within the site boundary. There is a public footpath which runs along the eastern edge of the eastern parcel however this does not sit within the site boundary and would not be affected by the development proposals.

Figure 1 – Public Rights of Way Map



Planning History

- 2.11. We have reviewed the Council’s online public access system, and the only planning application that can be found is application 5/HIST/2002/2155. There are no further details on the Council’s website relating to this application other than it was approved. As noted in the earlier paragraph, there are no public footpaths through the site.
- 2.12. Having said that, as confirmed within the pre-application response, part of the eastern parcel previously accommodated housing which was cleared some time between 2016 and 2019. Part of the site also consisted of a maintenance depot and the western parcel previously accommodated some hardstanding.
- 2.13. Figure 2 below is taken from Google Earth from December 2001 and shows where there was previously housing, commercial buildings and hard standing on site.

Figure 2 – Google Earth Image to show the site in 2001



- 2.14. As such, the planning history for the site confirms that the site was until relatively recently previously developed for housing.
- 2.15. Adjacent to the northeastern corner of the eastern parcel is a small parcel of land which recently received planning permission in August 2022 (Reference: DM/22/01924/FPA) to change its use from vacant open space to a 28 space car park to serve the primary school.

Pre-Application Discussions

- 2.16. This application submission has been preceded by a formal pre-application enquiry (reference PRE42/23/02431). Formal written pre-application advice was provided by Steve France on the 19th December 2023.
- 2.17. The pre-application response confirmed that the proposals could be supported in principle subject to a number of amendments to the scheme submitted to the Council as part of the pre-application request.
- 2.18. The comments provided by the Council have been reviewed and amendments made where necessary.

3. The Proposal.

- 3.1. The proposals seek full planning permission for residential development, with associated access and all relevant supporting infrastructure.
- 3.2. The proposed development would deliver 78no. high quality dwellings which have been designed to be sensitively integrated into the local environment and ensure the development is appropriate to the character and appearance of the area.
- 3.3. The proposal will provide a mixture of 2–4-bedroom properties, including affordable homes, which will include bungalows, semi-detached and detached properties. Table 1 below sets out the proposed housing mix.

Table 1 – Proposed Housing Mix

Housetype	Bedrooms	Amount
Moy	2-bed bungalow	8
Greystones	2-bed semi-detached	9
Glin	3-bed semi-detached	15
Neale	3-bed semi-detached	4
Limerick	3-bed detached	3
Strade	3-bed detached	3
Clifden	3-bed corner detached	8
Milford	3-bed detached	11
Dalkey	4-bed detached	8
Blessington	4-bed detached	9
Total		78

- 3.4. All dwellings have been designed to be compliant with Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).
- 3.5. 67% of the proposed dwellings meet the enhanced accessibility and adaptability housing standards, in compliance with requirement M4(2) of Building Regulations. 10% of which are M4(2) compliant bungalows, which will meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities.
- 3.6. 8 dwellings will be affordable housing, which comprises 10% of all the dwellings on site.
- 3.7. The layout presents a legible scheme with attractive street scenes which achieves the necessary spacing distances between the proposed units as well as with existing neighbouring properties.
- 3.8. To create an attractive and well-designed setting for the development, this is complemented by a high-quality, robust landscaping scheme which seeks to soften the visual effect of the development as well as providing an attractive setting.



- 3.9. Given the site is split over two parcels, a number of access points are proposed. Two access points are off Wordsworth Avenue which forms the northern boundary of both parcels.
- 3.10. In terms of the parcel to the east of Peter Lee Cottages, the access point off Wordsworth Avenue makes use of an existing access road into the site. This access is already an established and suitable access point into the site and will be enhanced and upgraded as part of this development. The remaining dwellings will have private drives which are accessed off the existing highways of Shakespeare Street/Burns Street/Byron Street. These roads are already adopted highways and therefore suitable to accommodate the proposed development.
- 3.11. Similar to the eastern parcel, the parcel to the east of Jack Lawon Terrace will make use of an existing access road into the site, from Wordsworth Avenue/Luke Terrace. This access is established and suitable access road into the site and will be enhanced and upgraded as part of the development. The dwellings fronting onto Jack Lawson Terrace will be accessed via this road.

4. Planning Policy

- 4.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2. On 26 October 2023 the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) received Royal Assent. This makes a number of key changes to the planning system in England, although the primacy of the development plan remains. Much of the LURA will be subject to further technical consultations and secondary legislation which is to be confirmed in due course.

Local Planning Policy

- 4.3. The development plan for County Durham consists of the County Durham Plan (CDP), adopted in October 2020, alongside saved policies from the Minerals Local Plan, adopted in December 2000 and the Waste Local Plan, adopted in April 2005.
- 4.4. The CDP is relevant to the application and seeks to guide the future development of the area to improve the lives of its existing and future residents up to 2035. As set out in Policy 1, this includes delivering a net minimum of 24,852 new homes of mixed type, size, and tenure over the period 2016 to 2035 (1,308 new homes per year). To meet this demand, the delivery of housing will come from a variety of sources, including from windfall sites, allocations, and existing commitments.
- 4.5. The Site is not allocated for any use within the CDP and is not subject to any land use designations. Having said that, the site is included within the Council's Open Space Needs Assessment, which we will provide more details on this, later on in this section.
- 4.6. There are also a number of development management policies which are set out in Table 2.

Table 2 – Summary of Relevant Policies of the County Durham Plan

Policy	Summary
<p>Policy 6 – Development on Unallocated Sites</p>	<p>This Policy recognises that in addition to the development of specifically allocated sites, there will be situations where future opportunities arise for additional new development over and above that identified in the development plan for the area. It states that the development of sites which are not allocated in the Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan which are either (i) within the built-up area; or (ii) outside the built-up area (except where a settlement boundary has been defined in a neighbourhood plan) but well-related to a settlement, will be permitted provided the proposal accords with all relevant development plan policies and several criteria listed in the Policy.</p>
<p>Policy 15 –</p>	<p>Sets out affordable housing requirements for each part of the</p>

Addressing Housing Need	<p>county according to viability alongside matters relating to housing tenure.</p> <p>Also outlines the requirement for adaptable and accessible homes which are required as part of residential proposals.</p>
Policy 19 – Type and Mix of Housing	On all new housing developments, the Council will seek an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes and types.
Policy 21 – Delivering Sustainable Transport	Transport implications of development must be addressed as part of any planning application, using relevant Transport Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans. Abiding by the County Durham Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan, and the Parking and Accessibility Supplementary Planning Document.
Policy 25 – Developer Contributions	New development will be approved where any mitigation necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms is secured through appropriate planning conditions or planning obligations
Policy 26 – Green Infrastructure	This Policy highlights how new development will be expected to maintain and protect, and where appropriate improve, the county's green infrastructure network.
Policy 27 – Utilities, Telecommunications and Other Broadcast Infrastructure	This Policy highlights how new development will need to facilitate high speed broadband connections.
Policy 29 – Sustainable Design	Outlines the criteria for new buildings, ensuring sustainable design includes amenity space, Nationally Described Space Standards, and the efficient use of land, alongside sustainable targets and rates.
Policy 31 – Amenity and Pollution	This Policy seeks to put in place measures which ensures acceptable living conditions are created for new residential development.
Policy 32 – Despoiled, Degraded, Derelict, Contaminated and Unstable Land	Development proposals will, where necessary, explore ground conditions and put in place relevant and appropriate measures prior to the construction or occupation of the proposed development.
Policy 35 – Water Management	This Policy seeks to ensure that all development proposals will consider the effects of flood risk, both on and off-site, relative to the scale and impact of the development. This is carried out

	through a Flood Risk Assessment where appropriate.
Policy 36 – Water Infrastructure	Development proposals will need to consider the disposal of foul water, sewage, and wastewater infrastructure, where appropriate.
Policy 39 – Landscape	This Policy outlines how proposals for new development will be permitted where they will not cause unacceptable harm to the character, quality or distinctiveness of the landscape, or to important features or views.
Policy 40 – Trees, Woodlands, and Hedges	New development proposals will need to preserve and retain trees/hedges where possible. Where there is loss, suitable replacement planting or restoration is required within the site or the locality.
Policy 41 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity	This Policy outlines that proposals for new development will not be permitted if significant harm to biodiversity or geodiversity resulting from the development cannot be avoided, or appropriately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for.
Policy 44 – Historic Environment	Development will be expected to sustain the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets. In determining applications which would affect a known or suspected non-designated heritage asset with an archaeological interest, particular regard will be given to ensuring archaeological features are generally preserved in situ.
Policy 56 – Safeguarding Mineral Resources	This Policy outlines that planning permission will not be granted for non-mineral development that would lead to the sterilisation of mineral resources with a Mineral Safeguarding Area unless it is not economically viable, or would result in unacceptable impacts on the environment, amenity, or human health.

4.7. Alongside the development plan, the Council has produced a series of supplementary documents to guide decision making on planning applications. This includes:

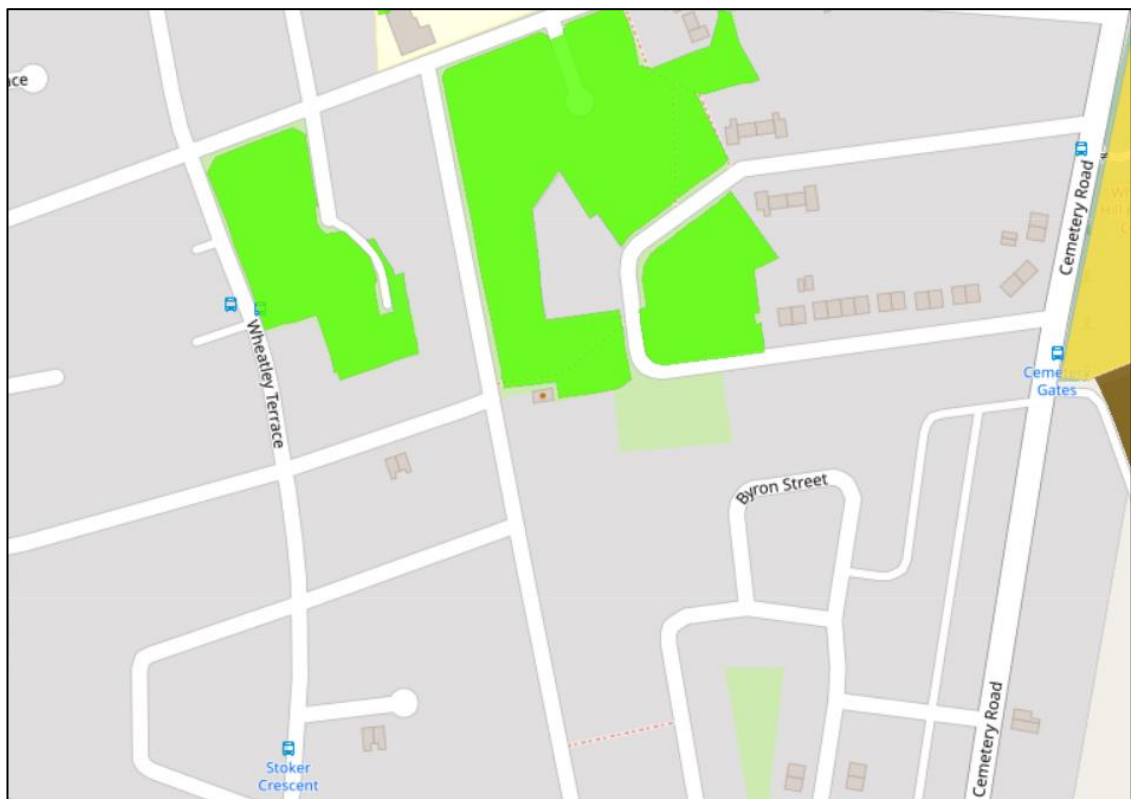
- County Durham Building for Life SPD (June 2019) – Sets out design standards for major new residential development based on the Building for Life principles.
- Residential Amenity Standards SPD (January 2023) – Provides guidance on how best to design extensions and undertake other domestic development, it also includes guidance on space/amenity standards that are expected where new dwellings are proposed.

- Parking and Accessibility Standards SPD (October 2023) – This seeks to provide an appropriate level of parking on all new developments, ensuring they are designed for a variety of modes of transport.

4.8. Alongside SPD's, the Council published an Open Space Needs Assessment (OSNA) which identifies open space across the county. It shows what the open space is (for example allotments, parks or play areas) and how much space is available.

4.9. As shown in Figure 3 below, the majority of the site is included within the Council's Open Space Needs Assessment and is classified as Amenity Green Space. The parcels are identified under references OSNA1554 and OSNA2631.

Figure 3 – Extract from the OSNA



National Planning Policy and Guidance

4.10. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in December 2023 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

4.11. The NPPF highlights that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay. The following sections are also relevant to this application:

Section 4 – Decision Making

4.12. Paragraph 47 confirms that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.



Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible, and within statutory timescales unless a longer period has been agreed by the applicant in writing.

Section 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

- 4.13. Paragraph 60 confirms that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. Paragraph 74 of the NPPF states that extensions to existing villages and towns is an appropriate way to supply a large number of homes, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes).
- 4.14. Paragraph 76 confirms that local planning authorities are no required to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing for decision making purposes if the following criteria are met. The first is that the adopted plan is less than five years old and the second, that adopted plan identified at least a five-year supply of specific, deliverable sites at the time its examination concluded.

Section 6 – Building a Strong, Competitive Economy

- 4.15. Paragraph 89 confirms that previously development land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

Section 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

- 4.16. Paragraph 96 confirms that's planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive, and safe places which:
- Promote social interaction;
 - Are safe and accessible; and
 - Enable and support healthy lifestyles.

Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport

- 4.17. Paragraph 115 confirms that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residential cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land

- 4.18. Paragraph 123 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 4.19. Paragraph 128 confirms that planning decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land.

Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places

- 4.20. Paragraph 131 states that the creation of high-quality beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 4.21. Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout, and appropriate and effective landscaping;
 - are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
 - establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming, and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
 - optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
 - create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Section 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

- 4.22. Protecting the natural environment is detailed in Section 15 of the NPPF. Paragraph 186 in particular highlights the need to avoid ecological impact where possible and if this is not feasible, to undertake mitigation or seek relevant compensation. Paragraph 189 seeks to ensure that planning decisions establish that ground conditions are suitable for development proposals in terms of land contamination and stability and where issues are identified, land is made safe through appropriate measures.
- 4.23. Similarly, the NPPF in paragraph 191 outlines that planning decisions need to ensure new development is appropriate for its location taking into account factors such as noise and air quality impacts which would give rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.

Accompanying Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.24. To accompany the NPPF, Central Government has also published guidance on how to interpret and apply national planning policy. This is contained in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which is a live document that Central Government updates periodically. In relation to this application specifically, it provides information in relation to design with an



emphasis on the need to achieve good quality design which responds in a practical and creative way to site specific issues to create a sense of place.

- 4.25. It is also recognised that the updated NPPF sets a greater emphasis on design in applications. Section 12 of the NPPF sets out how to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, all local planning authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences. These national documents should be used to guide decisions on applications in the absence of locally produced design guides or design codes.

5. Planning Assessment.

5.1. This section provides an assessment of the proposal against the relevant planning policy and material considerations.

Principle of Development

5.2. As set out above, the site is not allocated for any uses within the CDP and is not subject to any land use designation. Policy 1 of the CDP sets out how the plan will deliver a net minimum of 24,852 new homes over the period 2016 to 2035 (1,308 new homes per year) and to meet this demand, the delivery of housing will come from a variety of sources, including from windfall sites which aren't allocated in the CDP.

5.3. Policy 6 of the CDP sets out that the development of sites which are not allocated in the Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan which are either (i) within the built-up area; or (ii) outside the built-up area but well-related to a settlement, will be permitted provided the proposal accords with all relevant development plan policies and criteria set out below.

5.4. The site is located within the centre of Wheatley Hill, with existing built development located to the north, east, south, and west of both parcels and in close proximity to the settlement's services.

5.5. The Site is therefore considered to be within the existing built development in accordance with Policy 6, and Table 2 below provides an assessment against the other criteria of the policy.

Table 2 – Policy 6 Assessment

Policy 6 Criteria	Policy Appraisal
a) The proposed development is compatible with, and is not prejudicial to, any existing, allocated or permitted use of adjacent land.	Both parcels sit within the existing built-up area of Wheatley Hill which is residential in character. There is residential development located to the north, south, east, and west of both parcels, with existing access roads also located in and around the site. The site was previously occupied by residential dwellings until relatively recently. The proposal is therefore compatible with the neighbouring uses.
b) The proposed development does not contribute to coalescence with neighbouring settlements, would not result in ribbon development, or inappropriate backland development.	The proposed development is located within the heart of the built-up area of Wheatley Hill and therefore would not contribute towards the coalescence with neighbouring settlements. The proposal is in fact infill development between existing built form and would see the redevelopment of previously developed land, some of which previously was used for housing.

	<p>It would also not result in ribbon or inappropriate backland development.</p>
<p>c) The proposed development does not result in the loss of open land that has recreational, ecological or heritage value, or contributes to the character of the locality which cannot be adequately mitigated or compensated for.</p>	<p>As noted in the earlier sections of the statement, the site is not allocated within the Local Plan and is not designated for any recreational, ecological or heritage value within the Local Plan.</p> <p>The site however is within the Council’s Open Space Needs Assessment (OSNA) and is categorised as amenity greenspace. Although the site is characterised as open space, this is not a formal designation within the Local Plan.</p> <p>The Applicants have prepared and submitted an Open Space Assessment as part of this application which concludes how the existing open space is of limited value and its loss would be outweighed by the benefits of the proposal. This is in line with the requirements of Policy 26.</p> <p>Furthermore, the site comprises previously developed land which although has landscaped over, was previously used for housing. This demonstrates that the site is suitable residential development, and the site has no ecological or heritage value which would be affected as a result of the redevelopment of the site.</p>
<p>d) The proposed development is appropriate in terms of scale, design, layout, and location to the character, function, form and setting of the settlement.</p>	<p>The Layout Plan demonstrates how a high quality, sensitively designed and attractive development is capable of being accommodated on both parcels of land, in a way that responds to the relevant opportunities and constraints.</p> <p>The development will reflect the form, scale, density, and layout of the existing residential development and has been designed to be in keeping with the character of the area.</p> <p>The proposal to develop 78 dwellings will be of a suitable scale when compared to the existing settlement of Wheatly Hill. The development would also result in ‘infill’ development so would not physically extend the settlement.</p> <p>The development proposes a mixture of bungalows, semi-detached and detached properties which is reflective of the existing development in this location and the housing needs of the county.</p>

	<p>The houses located along the existing roads will front onto the roads to reflect the existing street scene.</p>
<p>e) The proposed development will not be prejudicial to highway safety or have a severe residual cumulative impact on network capacity</p>	<p>It is considered that the dwellings and site can be safely access from the existing highway with the required visibility splays.</p> <p>Given the scale of the development, there would be no significant residual cumulative impact on the highway network.</p> <p>Through the pre-application enquiry, the Local Highway Authority confirmed that the principle of the proposal may be agreeable from a highways perspective, subject to comply with the necessary design standards.</p>
<p>f) The proposed development has good access by sustainable modes of transport to relevant services and facilities and reflects the size of the settlement and the level of service provision within that settlement</p>	<p>The site is located within the heart of the settlement of Wheatley Hill. The Wheatley Hill Local Centre (as identified in the CDP) is located c.500m (a 9-minute walk) from the site. This local centre has numerous local shops and services to meet local residents' daily shopping needs. This includes a convenience store, takeaways, and a barber. Wheatley Hill Primary School is located opposite the larger parcel of this site. There are other services and facilities within the settlement which are not located in the town centre, including dentists, doctors, social club, community centre, cafes, and a nursery, which are within walking distance of the site.</p> <p>There are bus stops located Jack Lawson Terrace, which forms the western boundary of one of the parcels. The bus stops provide hourly services to Durham and Sunderland.</p> <p>The Site is therefore considered to have good access to sustainable modes of transport and to a variety of shops, services, and areas of employment.</p>
<p>g) The proposed development does not result in the loss of a settlements or neighbourhood's valued facilities or services unless it has been demonstrated that they are no longer viable</p>	<p>The proposal would not result in the loss of any services or facilities in Wheatley Hill. In fact, the proposal will have the opposite effect. The introduction of new residents will help support the existing facilities and services and help underpin the settlement's vitality and viability.</p>

<p>h) The proposed development minimises vulnerability and provides resilience to impacts arising from climate change, including but not limited to, flooding</p>	<p>The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1, having a low probability of flooding from rivers and seas.</p> <p>The site is also at low risk of surface water flooding.</p> <p>The planning application will be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy to demonstrate that this proposal will not increase the likelihood of flooding elsewhere.</p> <p>The Site’s sustainable location will also contribute to tackling climate change as will the provision of housing built to a modern specification which will deliver energy efficiency measures in line with new Building Regulations.</p>
<p>i) Where relevant, makes as much use as possible of previously developed (brownfield) land</p>	<p>As noted in the earlier sections of this report, although the site is currently open space, the majority of the site was previously developed and contained residential development. As such, the proposal would make the most of developing land which has previously been developed.</p>
<p>j) Where appropriate, it reflects priorities for urban regeneration</p>	<p>The proposals will help to regenerate the two parcels of land which have previously been cleared from housing and development. This will be achieved by reinstating high quality dwellings back to underutilised area of Wheatley Hill in a coherent manner.</p> <p>The development will also provide economic benefits to Wheatley Hill helping to increase the village’s vibrancy and vitality by residents supporting local services.</p>

5.6. In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed development fully accords with Policy 6 of the CDP. As confirmed within the pre-application response, the application can be supported in principle subject to some minor amendments to the scheme which have been considered as part of this submission.

5.7. In addition to the requirements of Policy 6, the site is identified as Amenity Green Space in the Council’s OSNA so Policy 26 of the CDP will also apply. Policy 26 states that development proposals will not be permitted that would result in the loss of open space unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh that loss and an assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows the open space would be surplus to requirements.

5.8. An Open Space Assessment has been prepared in support of the application and demonstrates that the site’s value as open space is limited and there are other accessible areas of open space in the surrounding area. This loss will be outweighed by the benefits

associated with the delivery of a high-quality development which includes 8no. much needed affordable homes, and 8no. bungalows suitable for older people and people with disabilities.

- 5.9. The loss will also be outweighed by the delivery of much needed market dwellings which will contribute to the housing need for the area. As set out above, Policy 1 of the CDP sets out how the plan will deliver a net minimum of 24,852 new homes over the period 2016 to 2035, however, since the adoption of the CDP the Council's housing land supply position has been declining year on year. Whilst the Council has a 5.47-year supply, as noted in the 2021-22 Annual Monitoring Report, there is a clear trend being established in terms of a shrinking land supply. Furthermore, this report is now somewhat outdated, and an updated report is expected, which will likely confirm that the Council have less than a 5-year supply of housing. The delivery of this site would help contribute towards reversing that trend and would contribute to adding further flexibility in the county's housing supply, which was highlighted as a requirement at the CDP examination.
- 5.10. With the above in mind, the proposed development complies with Policies 6 and 26 of the CDP and the principle of development is therefore acceptable.

Design

- 5.11. Policy 19 of the CDP sets out the requirements of all new housing developments in relation to the type and mix of housing. The Policy notes that the existing imbalance within the housing stock in relation to type and mix of housing needs to be addressed, and that the County's housing need goes beyond just increasing the supply of housing.
- 5.12. Policy 29 relates to sustainable design as set out by the LPA. This Policy requires all development proposals to achieve well designed buildings and places, by contributing positively to an area's character, identity, heritage, townscape, and landscape features.
- 5.13. The NPPF also refers to design principles within Section 12, requiring applicants and local authorities to create well-designed, high quality and sustainable places, enabling sustainable development. The NPPF reaffirms that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will 'function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development' and are 'sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting'.

Layout

- 5.14. The proposal comprises 78 residential units laid out in a logical pattern, which is sensitive to the surrounding character and landscape of the area. There will be a number of access points, given the site is spread over two parcels, which will include two access points to the north of the site off Wordsworth Avenue and access of the existing roads (Shakespeare Street/Burns Street/ Byron Street). These roads will lead to secondary roads and private drives creating a coherent street hierarchy.
- 5.15. The existing trees and in and around the site will be retained where possible and have been incorporated into the design of the scheme. The retention of the existing trees and the provision of a high quality landscape design will make a positive contribution to conserving and enhancing the ecological value of the site.



- 5.16. The existing Public Right of Way, which forms the eastern boundary of the eastern parcel has been retained for the use of existing and future residents of this area.
- 5.17. The layout has been designed to ensure that the built form fronts onto the existing road network in and around the site to ensure that it is in keeping with the existing street scene.
- 5.18. The Council's Building for Life SPD (2019) has been followed ensuring that the layout and design of the proposed development meets its standards. The Council's Residential Amenity SPD (2020) has also been used to inform the minimum privacy distances between residential dwellings with the proposed development and to buildings outside of it. This ensure that reasonable privacy and light is provided for residents and occupants, in relation to residential use and the enjoyment of the dwelling and of the private gardens. Finally, the Parking and Accessibility SPD (2023) has also been used to inform the layout and parking provision.

Scale

- 5.19. The scheme proposes 78 residential units, representing a density of 30 dwellings per hectare, which is considered to reflect the existing residential development in this location and strike an appropriate balance by ensuring the land is used efficiently (as per the NPPF's requirements in Section 11) and providing an appropriate level of amenity space for future residents. The supporting text, associated with Policy 29 Sustainable Design confirms that development should make effective use of land and resources by achieving higher densities (30 dwellings per hectare) in locations with good access to public transport and facilities. As noted in the earlier paragraphs and sections of this statement, the site has good accessibility to bus services and is within walking distance of the services and facilities within Wheatley Hill.
- 5.20. The scheme proposes a mix of 2, 3 and 4-bedroom dwellings, which is made up of bungalows, semi-detached and detached properties of various sizes in order to provide choice of affordable and market housing to seek to create a mixed and balanced community in accordance with Policy 19 of the CDP.
- 5.21. Therefore, the proposed development is of a scale which is in keeping with the existing character of the area. The proposed development will also not result in any overbearing impact to the amenity of any existing or future residents. Accordingly, the scale of development is in line with Policies 15, 19 and 29 of the CDP, the Council's Residential Amenity SPD (2020) and Sections 11 and 12 of the NPPF.

Appearance

- 5.22. The submitted housing type drawing provide elevational details of the proposed dwellings. This has resulted in proposals which incorporate a mix of detached and semi-detached dwellings and bungalows of varying styles.
- 5.23. The chosen materials seek to ensure a degree of consistency with nearby development but will include features to seek to create a visually distinctive development.
- 5.24. All dwelling types are well-proportioned with fenestration which is well balanced with the elevation. This variation in appearance helps to create character and attractive street scenes, meeting the requirements contained within the Council's Building for Life SPD as well as Policy 29 of the CDP and Section 12 of the NPPF.



Design Summary

- 5.25. Considering the above, it is demonstrated that the proposals follow the principles of good design set out in Policy 29 of the CDP as well as the approach in Section 12 of the NPPF and the accompanying guidance found in the PPG.

Highways and Transport

- 5.26. Policy 21 of the CDP outlines the LPA's policy requirements in relation to highways and transport. The Policy encourages the inclusion of Transport Assessments, Statements and Travel Plans alongside planning applications.
- 5.27. The Policy also requires development to ensure it does not cause an unacceptable increase in congestion, and to follow the implementation of sustainable transport measures. Additionally, the Policy encourages proposals to be integrated and well linked to existing services and facilities.
- 5.28. This application is accompanied by a Transport Statement which has assessed the additional vehicle movements which would be generated as a result of this development. This confirms that there will be no adverse impacts on highway safety as a result of the proposal.
- 5.29. The proposed development is well connected to the services and facilities within Wheatley Hill, including those within the defined Local Centre. There are bus stops which are accessible to the site, along Jack Lawson Terrace, which provide regular services to Sunderland, Durham, and other settlements along these routes. The site will therefore strongly promote the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 5.30. The submitted Proposed Access Arrangement also sets out how safe vehicular access into the site would be achieved without having an impact on highway safety. With the above in mind, the proposed development complies with Policy 21 of the CDP and paragraph 115 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk, Drainage and Water Management

- 5.31. Policy 35 of CDP seeks to ensure that all development proposals consider the effects of flood risk, both on and off-site and provide suitable drainage to manage surface and foul water.
- 5.32. A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been submitted as part of this application and this confirms that the site is Flood Zone 1 which is at the lowest risk of flooding. This also sets out how the surface water will be attenuated on site before being discharged to the agreed connection. The drainage scheme on site has been designed to ensure that the flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
- 5.33. With the above in mind, the proposed drainage design ensures that the proposals accord with Policy 35 of the CDP and Section 14 of the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

- 5.34. In accordance with Policy 31 of the CDP, development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impact, individually or cumulatively on health, living, working conditions or the natural environment. As such, proposals which will



have an unacceptable impact such as through overlooking, visual intrusion, visual dominance or loss of light, noise or privacy will not be permitted.

- 5.35. In this regard, the development is designed in line with Policy 29 of the CDP and the minimum privacy distances contained in the Residential Amenity SPD. This ensures that acceptable privacy and light is provided for residents and occupiers, in relation to residential use and enjoyment of the dwelling and of private gardens.
- 5.36. The proposals have been informed by a Noise Assessment which has been undertaken and submitted as part of this planning application. This assesses the potential noise emissions from noise sources such as local road traffic noise and other sources to ensure that the amenity of future residents is protected. This concludes that noise levels at the site will be acceptable without any further mitigation and that the amenity of future occupiers will be protected.
- 5.37. An Air Quality Assessment has also been prepared and submitted as part of this application. This concludes that both the construction phase and the operational phase can be considered as having an insignificant effect on local air quality.
- 5.38. For the construction phase, a Construction Management Plan will be secured to include measures to protect the residential amenity of existing and future residents at and adjacent to the site.
- 5.39. With the above in mind, it is considered that the proposed development protects the amenity of existing and future residents and communities at the site and complies with Policy 31 of the CDP.

Ecology and Trees

- 5.40. Policy 40 outlines the Council's requirements in relation Trees, Woodlands, and Hedgerows. Proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of trees of high landscape, heritage, amenity, or biodiversity value. Moreover, proposals are expected to retain existing trees and hedgerows, integrating them fully into the design.
- 5.41. The proposed development will retain some of the existing trees on site where this is possible, and they will be incorporated into the design of the scheme. A small number of trees will need to be removed however to mitigate this loss, there will be additional tree planting on site.
- 5.42. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been prepared in support of the proposals which demonstrates that there will be no unacceptable adverse impact upon existing trees as a result of the proposed development. The Assessment outlines how existing trees and vegetation will be protected during construction.
- 5.43. Policy 41 of the CDP states that proposals for new development will not be permitted if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from the development cannot be avoided, or appropriately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for.
- 5.44. An Ecological Appraisal has been submitted alongside this application. This outlines that the existing habitat onsite is considered to be of no more than local ecological value, and how



the impacts of the development can be avoided, mitigated, or compensated through measures such as design, construction methods, bat and bird boxes and additional planting.

- 5.45. Moreover, Policy 41 also states that a development should provide net gains in biodiversity, which aligns with Paragraph 179(b) of the NPPF and Environment Act 2021. A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been completed and establishes the baseline biodiversity value of the site, compared with the post development scenario. It is important to note that only a form of net gain (i.e. 1% as a minimum) is required through the current policy and legislative position, with a mandatory 10% net gain requirement applying to new submissions from 12th February 2024 onwards. As such, the 10% requirement would not apply to this proposal. Given the nature of the proposals, the BNG Assessment concludes that there will be a loss on site, so the Applicant would welcome discussion with the LPA on how to achieve a gain off site.
- 5.46. Through the submitted Ecological Appraisal and BNG Assessment, the proposed development is considered to accord with Policy 41 of the CDP and Paragraph 179(b) of the NPPF.

Ground Conditions

- 5.47. Policy 32 of the CDP sets out that development will not be permitted unless the developer is able to demonstrate that land issues can be satisfactorily addressed and that the site is suitable for the proposed use.
- 5.48. The site is previously developed land with a large proportion of site having previously accommodated residential development. A Site Investigation is submitted alongside this planning application which confirms that the site would be suitable to accommodate the proposed use, with any ground condition issues being suitably remediated.
- 5.49. The site would therefore comply with Policy 32.

Heritage

- 5.50. Policy 44 of the CPD sets out that development sites containing designated or non-designated heritage assets are required to ensure the presentation of such assets.
- 5.51. As noted in the earlier sections of this report, there are no designated or non-designated heritage assets within or in close proximity to the site which would be impacted by the proposed development. As such, the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy 44.

6. Meeting Housing Need Statement.

Affordable Housing

- 6.1. As outlined within Section 4.0 of this report, Policy 15 (Addressing Housing Need) in the CPD requires that a proportion of residential development sites (of 10 dwellings or more) should provide an on-site contribution to affordable housing. The level is to be determined based on the Viability Area. The proposed development will provide 10% affordable housing as it is located within a 'Low Value Area' which requires this amount.
- 6.2. Policy 15 states that on sites with 10 or more units, 10% of the homes provided should be for affordable home ownership (starter homes, discount market sale housing, and other affordable routes to home ownership). In accordance with Policy 15, 10% of homes are for affordable home ownership, with 6% being discounted market sales and 4% being First Homes. As such this proposed mix complies with Policy 15.

Accessible Dwellings

- 6.3. To meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities, Policy 15 requires:

"On sites of 5 units or more, 66% of dwellings must be built to Building Regulations M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) standard.

On sites of 10 units or more a minimum of 10% of the total number of dwellings on the site to be of a design and type that will increase the housing options of older people. These properties should be built to M4(2) standard and would contribute to meeting the 66% requirement set out above. They should be situated in the most appropriate location within the site for older people. Appropriate house types considered to meet this requirement include:

- *level access flats;*
- *level access bungalows; or*
- *housing products that can be shown to meet the specific needs of a multi-generational family.*

Where it can be demonstrated that site specific factors such as vulnerability to flooding, site topography, other circumstances which may make a site less suitable for older persons house types or properties built to M4(2) (accessible and adaptable standards) or where step free access cannot be achieved or is not viable, then the requirements will not be applied on all or part of the site as appropriate."

- 6.4. 67% of the dwellings proposed are provided to M4(2) standards, 10% of which are designed to provide options for older persons, and this includes the provision of 8 bungalows in accordance with Policy 15.

Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)

- 6.5. Policy 29 in the CDP and Building for Life SPD require all residential units to meet the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). 100% of the proposed dwellings would comply with such standards.

Appropriate Mix

- 6.6. Policy 19 (Type and Mix of Housing) of the CDP also requires that *“on all new housing developments the council will seek to secure an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes, taking account of existing imbalances in the housing stock, site characteristics, viability, economic and market considerations and the opportunity to facilitate self-build or custom build schemes.”*
- 6.7. The proposals incorporate a wide mix of 2 – 4 bed dwellings, consisting of a variety of bungalows, semi-detached and detached units. This will create a diverse development which will be able to provide housing in a number of sizes and house types to meet the needs of a wide variety of the local population. Table 1 of this document and the submitted Proposed Site Layout provides a list of the house types and it is considered that this meets the requirements set out in Policy 19 of the CDP.

Meeting Housing Needs Summary

- 6.8. It is considered on the basis of the overall requirements of Policies 15, 19 and 29 of the CDP, the scheme would contribute of addressing the affordable and market housing needs in the area by providing a range of housing which complies with the relevant requirements.



7. Conclusion.

- 7.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Gleeson Regeneration Limited and accompanies an application submitted to Durham County Council for the approval for full planning permission for 78no. dwellings and associated infrastructure on the land at Jack Lawson Terrace.
- 7.2. As demonstrated throughout this Statement, the proposals represent a strong and high-quality design which would deliver a wide range of homes in a sustainable location. The proposal sensitively integrates with the local environment, including existing built form, and ensures it is appropriate to the character and appearance of the area.
- 7.3. This Statement and submitted documents have demonstrated that the principle of the development is acceptable, and the proposal is acceptable given the context of the site, taking into account matters including highways, drainage, ecology, and residential amenity.
- 7.4. The proposals provide a wide mix of housing in a variety of sizes and styles to meet the needs of area. This will ensure the proposals will create a mixed and balanced community.
- 7.5. It is therefore considered that the proposed development complies with Policy 6 of CDP and represents a highly sustainable form of development in accordance with all relevant national and local plan policies. As a result, the planning application complies with the adopted development plan and should be approved.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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