

Windermere Gateway - Frequently Asked Questions

The following Frequently Asked Questions seek to provide further details following the questions raised by the community. FAQ responses have been provided by Lake District National Park Authority, Urban Splash, National Trust and Westmorland and Furness Council, as indicated below. These FAQ responses are also provided on the webpage of the relevant partner (links to these are also shared below).

The following responses have been provided by the Lake District National Park Authority

Webpage: www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/windermeregateway

1. Will this development lead to further development into other field areas?

The development is specific to the Windermere Gateway area and land allocation CSE01M (<https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/planning/planningpolicies/local-plan/allocations-of-land/cse01m>). Neighbouring fields are not identified as allocated land in the local plan.

2. How will the homes be prevented from becoming holiday lets or second homes?

Our planning policies require that all homes be permanently occupied through occupancy planning conditions. If there is found to be a breach of these conditions the planning enforcement team will take action, and this could lead to prosecution.

3. What is the local need for homes in the Lake District National Park?

The Local Plan indicates a level of identified need of 1,200 new permanent homes between 2020-2035 to meet local community need. We are working closely with Westmorland and Furness council on the collective ambition to bring forward these homes for the community. Supporting evidence can be found within the Council's Strategic Housing Needs Assessment (SHENA) and Strategic House Market Area Assessment (SHMAA).

4. How many houses will be affordable?

The developer is working on a scheme for the site, but a planning application has not yet been submitted for the housing. In line with policy, all homes will be secured for permanent occupancy, supporting the delivery of new local homes for local people. i.e., not second homes or holiday lets).

More information can be found on Urban Splash's webpage:

www.urbansplash.co.uk/windermere-infrastructure-planning-consultation

5. What happened to the tourism element of the site allocation?

The developer is working on a scheme for the site, but a planning application has not yet been submitted.

More information can be found on Urban Splash's webpage:

www.urbansplash.co.uk/windermere-infrastructure-planning-consultation

6. What is the employment space going to be?

National Trust are working on proposals for a new National Trust Lake District Office for the site, where they will relocate to from their existing premises in Grasmere. A planning application has not yet been submitted but more information can be found on their webpage.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/windermere-gateway

7. Will there be an increase in traffic resulting from the development, and is will there be sufficient parking provision within the site?

The developer is working on a scheme for the site, but a planning application has not yet been submitted. There will be more pre-application consultation events to find out more information about parking and site layout. A transport assessment will accompany this planning application for highway improvements which will outline and consider the impact of the anticipated traffic movements from the housing and employment schemes.

More information can be found on Westmorland and Furness Council's webpage:

<https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/business-support/town-and-village-projects/windermere-gateway>

8. What evidence do you have that there is a demand for increased pedestrian and cycle routes? Particularly along the A591 From Windermere towards Ings?

The A591 is currently a Sustrans route and thereby part of the national walking and cycle network. The proposals will seek to align with the aspirations set out in the Supplementary Planning Document i.e., Improve cycling and walking connections linking the site allocation to the station as well as the existing onward travel network.

More information can be found on Westmorland and Furness Council's webpage:

<https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/business-support/town-and-village-projects/windermere-gateway>

9. What has happened to the roundabouts originally put forward?

When the Windermere Gateway Transport Infrastructure SPD was adopted in 2021, solutions were explored by Cumbria County Council and their design consultant to address the existing highways and traffic challenges within the area. High level concept options, including roundabouts, were put forward but remained subject to further review.

Further engineering and safety assessments determined that these options were not deliverable or feasible due to insufficient area within the highways, in addition to challenging gradients which would be unsuitable for the range of different vehicles using it.

Since this time, numerous options looking at how the ambitions in the SPD to address highways have been explored.

Urban Splash are working on proposals to deliver some of the highways interventions identified within the SPD. These proposals, which are subject to a planning application, will be essential enabling works to help bring forward future homes.

Solutions at the top of high street and onward pedestrian/cycle connections through Windermere remain a priority of the programme and will be explored as part of future studies.

More information can be found on Westmorland and Furness Council's webpage:
<https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/business-support/town-and-village-projects/windermere-gateway>

10. Why are there no proposals for the station interchange?

Ambitions to create a new transport interchange at the station continue to be central to the vision for the Windermere Gateway. An initial feasibility study to explore options in this area was commissioned by Westmorland and Furness Council in 2023. The Vision Group are working to secure funding to develop options further and bring these works forward.

More information can be found on Westmorland and Furness Council's webpage:
<https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/business-support/town-and-village-projects/windermere-gateway>

11. Will there be more consultation events?

Yes. The proposals for housing are at an early stage and are subject to further design development. There will be opportunities for the public to engage with the plans for the housing at a future consultation date.

The following responses have been provided by Urban Splash

Webpage: www.urbansplash.co.uk/windermere-infrastructure-planning-consultation

Highways FAQs

1. What highways improvements are you proposing?

The Proposed Development entails:

- Improvements to A591 to introduce an extension to the Windermere Gateway
- Introduction of new junction off the A591 into the Orrest Head Farm site
- Introduction of an improved junction between A591 and Thwaites Lane
- Addition of Shared Path between Orrest Head Farm and Windermere Station

- Introduction of new junction off Thwaites lane into Orrest Head Farm site
- Implementation of sustainable drainage to improve surface water run-off quality and improve flooding issues related to Thwaites Lane

2. What about vehicles accessing the site?

Two new vehicular access points are proposed:

- From the A591 to the north of the site; and
- From Thwaites Lane

In addition, the existing access to the A591 will be retained to access the farmhouses. New pedestrian and cycle links will also be provided linking to the A591, Thwaites Lane, Windermere town centre and the Droomer Estate.

3. What about parking?

No parking is proposed as part of this application.

The employment and housing application will be brought to consultation in the near future and will include further details on parking for those elements of the development.

4. When will the highways planning application be submitted?

We are targeting a submission in April 2024.

5. When will the highways work start?

Subject to planning, we hope to start onsite by the end of 2024.

6. How long will the highways project take?

Subject to securing planning permission, work on access improvements are planned to start at the end of 2024 and scheduled to take around one year to complete.

Housing FAQ's

7. How many new homes will the site provide?

While the housing proposals are still at an early stage, the plans for the site are expected to deliver between 200 and 250 new homes for Windermere.

8. What percentage is the affordable housing provision?

The future employment and housing application will include further details on affordable housing and will be subject to viability. We will present details of these at a community consultation in the coming months before submitting an application. We are aware of the Lake District's Planning Policy requirements to deliver affordable housing and will seek to maximise the number and range of affordable houses.

9. Will the homes be for local people?

Yes. In line with policy, all homes will be secured for permanent occupancy, supporting the delivery of new local homes for local people i.e., not second homes or holiday lets.

10. What will the houses look like?

Proctor and Matthews Architects are developing plans for the sensitive development of the site, responding to the outstanding character of the local topography and cultural heritage, the project will create a contemporary interpretation of Lakeland townscape finding inspiration from vernacular forms and materials as set out in the Lake District Design Code.

The following responses have been provided by the National Trust

Webpage: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/windermere-gateway

1. Why is the National Trust involved in these plans?

Alongside its tenant farmers, the National Trust looks after 20% of the Lake District National Park, working to restore habitats for nature and to conserve the cultural heritage of buildings in its care.

The land at Orrest Head Farm was given to us in 1987, held as alienable – meaning it can be sold and used for investment purposes. In the last year we have invested in conservation work across the Lake District, including footpath repair work, river restoration and supporting our farm tenants. The inclusion of our land in this development means that we can continue investing in our work looking after Lakes for benefit of people and nature.

2. A new National Trust office in the Lakes

As part of the plans (which are subject to a future planning application), the National Trust will move from its current Grasmere office to a new, purpose-built office at the Orrest Head farm site. This new office will create a sustainable working space that is fit for the future and meets the changing needs of the charity's staff and partners.

The opportunity for a new office will provide a central point for our staff to deliver our work, creating collaborative working space next to transport links for sustainable travel and supporting accessible working for our teams.

3. What does 'employment' on the Local Plan refer to for Windermere Gateway?

For planning purposes, the terms 'housing' and 'employment' have been used to zone areas of the site for the development. No other office space will be created on the site. There will be no retail outlets on the site. Where plans refer to 'employment' this simply means the area at Orrest Head farm that will be used to create the new office for the National Trust in the Lake District.

Adjacent to the new-build office, there is a listed farmhouse and listed stone-barn that is currently being assessed for repair. The purpose for both will be reviewed as part of the plans alongside the new-build office for Trust staff.

The following responses have been provided by Westmorland and Furness Council

Webpage: <https://www.westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/business-support/town-and-village-projects/windermere-gateway>

1. What is Westmorland and Furness Council's role in the scheme?

We believe the project provides a fantastic opportunity to create a world-class welcome for everyone arriving in Windermere, sensitively creating an enhanced gateway to the Lake District World Heritage Site, through a redeveloped station and transport hub, as well as providing a significant amount of much-needed affordable housing for local people.

The developer (Urban Splash) is working on a scheme for the Orrest Head Farm site, a housing development planning application is to be submitted to the LDNPA as the local planning authority. A transport assessment will accompany the planning application for highway improvements which will outline and consider the impact of the likely traffic movements from the housing and employment schemes. The highway and transport aspects of this infrastructure improvement work will be considered by us as the highway authority. If the application is approved, we may have future input into the design and construction of the highway and transport improvements that are needed for the new development.

2. What work has been undertaken to inform the access and infrastructure improvements?

When the Windermere Gateway Transport Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted in 2021, solutions were explored by the former Cumbria County Council Highways team and their design consultant to address the existing highways and traffic challenges within the area. Early options, including roundabouts, were put forward but remained subject to design review. Further engineering and safety assessments determined that these options were not feasible due to insufficient space in the highway, as well as very steep gradients which would be unsuitable for larger vehicles using the road. Since then, numerous options have been explored looking at how the ambitions in the SPD can be met and these will be further refined through the planning process.

As the local highways authority, we undertook a junction assessment to consider the potential impact of Urban Splash's proposed highway changes as part of the Windermere Gateway proposals. The assessment combined existing traffic data, assumptions on future traffic growth, and estimates of traffic generation from the development to forecast traffic flows. These flows were used with junction modelling software to estimate the highway performance of the A591 with the future development traffic and proposed highways changes. The main access to the housing and employment site (Orrest Head Farm) proposes an improved junction from the A591 into Thwaites Lane and a slowing of traffic along the A591.

Also, the A591 is currently part of the Sustrans national walking and cycle network. The proposals will seek to align with the aspirations set out in the SPD, i.e., to improve cycling and walking connections linking the housing site to the station, bus stops and cycle network.

3. Are there plans to improve the High Street junction?

Solutions at the top of High Street and onward pedestrian/cycle connections through Windermere remain a priority of the programme and will be explored as part of future studies.

4. Will the proposed housing development and highways changes increase journey times?

Traffic data has been obtained through surveys, providing data on turning flows and vehicle types, on the A591 and Thwaites Lane. Allowance has been made for future traffic growth, using the government's National Road Traffic Projections. These projections suggested traffic could grow by around four per cent by 2028.

We have also considered the potential traffic generation of the development proposals at Orrest Head Farm. The traffic generation was estimated using evidence from existing similar development sites.

The results of the junction assessment and traffic modelling show that the development is expected to increase delays on Thwaites Lane, but not significantly. The model results estimate an increase in average delay in exiting Thwaites Lane from 27 seconds to 41 seconds. The model does not forecast significant queuing or delays on the A591 due to the relatively low flows turning right into Thwaites Lane – around 10–25 trips in any peak hour.

5. Are there any plans for improvements to the Railway Station interchange?

Ambitions to create a new transport interchange at the station continue to be central to the vision for the Windermere Gateway. An initial feasibility study to explore options in this area was commissioned on behalf of the partnership by us in 2023. Partners are working to secure funding to develop options further and see how these works may be brought forward.

The feasibility study provided concept designs which identify potential improvement options for the area surrounding Windermere Railway Station. Continuous engagement has also been undertaken with the LDNPA throughout the commission.

It is expected that the preferred option to be progressed will be decided based on further study and the availability of funding, however it is considered that each option shortlisted in the report has the potential to deliver meaningful improvements to the station area which will contribute towards achieving the intended aims of the wider Windermere Gateway programme.