



Your Housing Group

(MARITIME CORRIDOR) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2025

Proof of Evidence – Summary Document





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SUMMARY PROOF

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

- 1.1.1. This Proof of Evidence is submitted on behalf of Your Housing Group (YHG) in response to the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) issued by Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council for land required as part of the Maritime Corridor pedestrian and cycleway scheme.
- 1.1.2. YHG, a major provider of affordable housing in the northwest, owns several plots affected by the CPO and objects to the current design and process.
- 1.1.3. I have prepared this Summary to my main Proof of Evidence. I am a Director at WSP, and have over 30 years of planning experience. I have been advising YHG on this site since 2021. The evidence is structured to present YHG's scheme, the grounds for objection, an alternative scheme, and conclusions.

1.2 THE YHG SCHEME

YHG's approved scheme consists of 54 new affordable homes (a mix of 2, 3, and 4-bedroom houses and apartments) on land north of Sentinel Way. The scheme is 100% affordable, exceeding local policy requirements, and offers both affordable rent and shared ownership options. The design incorporates a variety of house types, active frontages, private gardens, landscaping, and sustainable features, aiming to create a strong sense of place and meet local housing needs.

1.3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 2021: YHG acquires the site and commissions WSP to prepare a planning application.
- 2022: Initial application for 65 (later 64) dwellings is refused due to concerns about living conditions arising from proximity to industrial uses and traffic.
- 2023: Revised application (reduced to 54 dwellings) addresses previous concerns with layout changes, noise mitigation, and technical studies. Despite officer support, the application is again refused, citing unsuitability for residential development. The application is amended to align with the Council's Maritime Corridor Works.
- 2024: YHG appeals the refusal.
- 2025: The Planning Inspectorate allows the appeal, granting full permission. YHG is now progressing towards construction, aiming to start in March 2026.

1.4 PLANNING BENEFITS

The scheme delivers substantial social, economic, and environmental benefits:

- Social: Addresses acute affordable housing need, provides family homes, and supports community vibrancy.
- Economic: Generates construction jobs (50 person-years), adds £4.2 million to the local economy, and increases local spending.
- Environmental: Efficient use of brownfield land, new landscaping, biodiversity net gain, and sustainable practices.

The below table provides a summary of the multitude of positive public benefits that the residential scheme will deliver and the weighting to be associated. This has been fully tested and accepted by SoS via the Planning Inspectorate decision.

Benefits	Weight
Social Benefits	
The delivery of 54 high quality affordable homes addressing an identified need for both affordable housing and a mix of much needed family homes in a sustainable location.	Very Significant
The proposal comprises 100% affordable housing, this is over and above the local policy requirement.	Very Significant
Widening the National Cycle Network (NCN) route to the south making it more accessible and user friendly, in turn encouraging active travel, healthy lifestyles and positive well-being.	Significant
Contributing towards the strength, vibrancy and health of the local community. The development proposals comprise high-quality new homes, located with excellent access to local goods and services, including an excellent local network of open green spaces and opportunities for recreation.	Significant
Economic	
Economic and employment benefits during the construction phase; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 person years of temporary construction employment; The construction employment generated by the proposed development will create gross value added to the local economy of around £4.2 million 	Very Significant
Economic benefits once operational; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £105,000 per annum in additional Council Tax payments to Sefton Council; £711,000 per annum of increased consumer spending by the new households at the site. 	Significant
Environmental	
Making efficient use of previously developed land in an accessible and highly sustainable vacant site;	Very significant
New landscaped areas including new tree and hedgerow planting;	Moderate
A net-gain in biodiversity;	Moderate
Planting of new hedges to provide adequate screening between new dwellings towards the southern boundary of the site;	Moderate
Reducing the pressure on other greenfield sites.	Moderate
Implementation of sustainable practices.	Moderate

1.5 HOUSING NEED IN SEFTON

Sefton faces a significant shortfall in affordable housing, with only 41% of annual needs met in recent years and a cumulative deficit of over 1,300 homes. The 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has increased Sefton's housing requirement to 1,368 dwellings per year, further highlighting the importance of YHG's scheme.

The Council's latest Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) dated October 2025 acknowledges that the Council can only demonstrate a supply of 2.92 years.

1.6 GROUNDS OF OBJECTION

YHG's objections to the CPO focus on three main areas:

Sterilisation of YHG Site

The Council's scheme would block access to YHG's site from Heysham Road, widen the adjacent cycleway (impacting gardens and dwellings), and create conflicts at the Sentinel Way connection preventing access. These changes would entirely sterilise the brownfield site, making the approved residential scheme undeliverable and resulting in the loss of 54 affordable homes and their associated public benefits.

Existence of an Alternative Scheme

YHG has proposed an alternative design that would allow both the Maritime Corridor and the residential scheme to be delivered. This alternative:

- Retains the cycleway for cycling only and routes pedestrians through the residential development, providing better surveillance and safety.
- Aligns the Council's route with minor tweaks to the residential layout, avoiding conflicts and costly engineering works.
- Offers cost savings by utilising infrastructure delivered by YHG and reducing the need for new construction.

Lack of Engagement and Use of CPO

Government guidance states that CPOs should be a last resort, with acquiring authorities expected to negotiate voluntary agreements first. YHG has engaged with the Council throughout the consultation process, offering constructive feedback and alternative solutions. However, the Council failed to meaningfully respond or negotiate before issuing the CPO, contrary to guidance.

Public Interest Test

While the Council's scheme offers benefits, YHG alternative scheme delivers all these benefits plus the substantial public benefits from the affordable housing scheme, and at a lower cost to the public purse. The CPO scheme, by contrast, would deliver only the corridor benefits and lose the housing benefits, failing the public interest test.

1.7 THE ALTERNATIVE SCHEME

Description and Deliverability

The alternative scheme, developed in consultation with the Council, aligns the pedestrian and cycle routes to avoid conflicts, uses YHG's estate road for pedestrian access, and integrates with infrastructure proposed by YHG. It is deliverable within the existing planning permission, requiring only a Non Material Amendment (NMA).

A Development Agreement is proposed between YHG and the Council to formalise responsibilities and delivery timescales, though it is not yet signed.

Policy and Funding Compatibility

The alternative scheme meets all relevant policy and funding objectives, including:

- CRSTS (City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement): Improves accessibility, active travel, safety, and air quality.
- LUF (Levelling Up Fund): Reduces congestion, improves connectivity, supports economic growth, and enhances health and wellbeing.

Additional Planning Benefits

The alternative provides a safer, more attractive pedestrian route with better surveillance, reducing security concerns and encouraging greater use. Segregation of pedestrians and cyclists improves safety and user experience.

1.8 COST SAVINGS

The Council's scheme is estimated to cost around £500,000, with additional compensation liabilities to YHG. The alternative scheme, by integrating with YHG's development, offers substantial cost savings and avoids unnecessary expenditure.

1.9 DELIVERY TIMEFRAMES

There are significant doubts about the Council's ability to deliver the CPO scheme within the required funding window (by March 2027), given planning, legal, and construction timelines. By contrast, YHG's scheme is ready to proceed, with a contractor to be appointed in February 2026 and works commencing in March 2026, ensuring timely delivery.

1.10 DELIVERABILITY

YHG has a proven track record, with over 29,000 homes delivered across the region. The active travel improvements are embedded in the housing scheme, providing certainty of delivery.

1.11 CONCLUSIONS

YHG concludes that:

- The Council has not demonstrated a compelling case in the public interest for the CPO.
- The CPO scheme would result in the loss of the much-needed affordable housing and its associated benefits.
- There are significant concerns over whether the Council can deliver the CPO scheme within the funding timeframes and thus it is highly questionable whether the scheme is actually deliverable.
- An alternative, deliverable scheme exists that achieves all the Council's objectives, delivers additional benefits, delivers affordable housing and saves public money.
- The Council failed to negotiate in good faith before resorting to compulsory purchase.
- There are serious doubts about the deliverability of the Council's scheme within the funding timeframe, while YHG's scheme is ready to proceed.

1.12 IN SUMMARY

YHG's proposals will deliver 54 affordable homes, addressing a significant and rising need in Sefton, and provide a multitude of social, economic, and environmental benefits. The Council's CPO scheme, as currently designed, would result in the total loss of these benefits, is not justified in the public interest, and is less deliverable and more costly than the alternative proposed by YHG.

Indeed, it is notable that the Council does not seek to refute any aspect of YHG's objection in its response to objections at Appendix 4 of its Statement of Case. On the contrary, the Council has

stated its agreement to the alternative scheme enabling the delivery of both the residential development and the Maritime Corridor Works as proposed by YHG.

In addition, the Council has failed to justify its interference with YHG's rights under Article 1 of the First Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights. No reasoning whatsoever has been forthcoming from the Council as to how it justifies the clear interference with those rights and how its interference is proportionate in circumstances where the very same benefits (and more) are capable of being achieved without the compulsory acquisition of YHG's land.

The loss of the affordable housing and associated public benefits must be weighed against the Council's cycle and pedestrian route benefits for which a more than reasonable alternative exists as acknowledged by the Council in its Statement of Case. The alternative solution forms a material consideration of substantial weight against the CPO.

The CPO is thus not in the public interest and should not be confirmed.

Appendices referenced in the document include:

- Appendix A - Council correspondence
- Appendix B - Alternative Scheme
- Appendix C - Compensation note
- Appendix D - YHG Delivery Document



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