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Michael Laing Interim Chief Executive

4th July 2007

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you Notice that a Special Meeting of the **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **THURSDAY 12th JULY 2007** at **6.00 P.M.**

AGENDA

- | | Page No. |
|---|----------|
| 1. Apologies for absence | |
| 2. To consider development control application 3/2007/0307 – Installation of new children’s playground – age range 0 – 12 years at recreation land adjacent to Thistleflat Road, Crook for Thistleflat Community Group. | 1 - 6 |
| 3. To consider Pastoral Measure 1983 - the proposed redundancy of the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Howden le Wear and alteration of parish boundary. | 7 - 8 |

Yours faithfully

Interim Chief Executive

Members of this Committee: Councillors Anderson, Bowser, Buckham, Mrs Burn, Mrs Douthwaite, Gale, Grogan, Jopling, Kay, Kingston, Laurie, Mrs Lee, Lethbridge, Mairs, Mowbray, Mews, Murphy*, Perkins, Seabury*, Stonehouse, Taylor, Des Wilson and Zair.

*ex-officio, non-voting capacity.

Chair: Councillor Grogan

Deputy Chair: Councillor Mews

TO: All other Members of the Council for information
Management Team

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

12TH JULY 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

PART 1 – APPLICATION FOR DECISION

3/2007/0307- INSTALLATION OF NEW CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND - AGE RANGE 0-12 YEARS AT RECREATION LAND ADJACENT TO THISTLEFLAT ROAD, CROOK FOR THISTLEFLAT COMMUNITY GROUP – 23.05.2007 – AMENDED 29.06.2007 (WIDTH AND POSITION OF PATHS AMENDED)

description of site and proposals

1. Full planning permission is sought for the formation of an equipped children's play area with associated footpaths on land adjacent to Thistleflat Road Crook. The site is part of an open grassed area that is designated as Open Space within Built up Areas (Policy BE14) in the Wear Valley District Local Plan. The application site is at the southern end of this open space area where the proposed play area would be centrally sited and where the ground is level. The land to the north and northwest is mounded. The site is bounded by roads to the west, north and east and surrounded by housing on all sides. The road to the east will be widened and improved with a footpath and parking area as part of an agreement under planning approval ref 3/2006/0881 for housing approval to the south. Although the parking area is shown on the submitted plans, it is not part of this application and therefore not under consideration.
2. The proposed play area would contain a variety of play equipment catering for different elements of play throughout the age range. There would be two 1.8m wide footpaths linking the play area to the roads to the east and west. The majority of the play area would be on a tarmac base, however individual equipment would be sited on safety surfacing. The play area would be surrounded by a 1m high bow top fence.

planning history

3. None.

planning policies

4. The following policies of the Wear Valley District Local Plan (WVDLP) are relevant in the consideration of this application:
 - BE14 Open Spaces within Built-up Areas

- H3 Distribution of Development
- RL1 Recreation and leisure - New Provision
- RL3 Targets for Open Space Provision
- RL4 Children's Playing Space Target
- RL8 Improvement to Existing Open Spaces

consultations

5. Durham County Highways: All paths should be 1.8m wide. This width is required to allow two pushchairs or wheelchairs to pass comfortably.
6. WVDC Community: No comments.

officer analysis

7. The key issues for consideration are:
 - Principle of Development
 - Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Surrounding Area
 - Impact on the Amenity of Neighbours

principle of development

8. Policy BE14 of the WVDLP seeks to protect open spaces in built up areas such as playing fields, recreation areas, village greens, paddocks, allotments, which all contribute to the amenity and character of built up areas. The proposed development of a play area would retain the recreational use of the site and is therefore not in conflict with Policy BE14. The play area would be located within the settlement limits. It would be in a position where there would be some natural surveillance from surrounding properties, particularly from the west. The design and types of equipment have emerged out of public consultation with the community and meet the relevant standards for play areas. The proposal is therefore in accordance with policies GD1, BE14, H3, RL1, RL4 and RL8 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan.

impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area

9. The proposed play area would be located in an area of open space surrounded by modern housing. The scale of the play area, type of equipment, surfacing and fencing would not detract from the character or amenity of the surrounding area. This accords with policies GD1, RL1 and RL8 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan.

impact on the amenity of neighbours

10. The proposed play area would be centrally located in the area of open space where it would be between 35 and 50 metres from the nearest neighbouring dwellings to the west, south and east. The location is considered to be an acceptable compromise between separation and surveillance without causing an unacceptable level of disturbance to nearby properties. Surveillance over the proposed play area would also reduce potential for anti-social behaviour. As the land would continue to be used for recreational purposes claims of

potential noise problems are considered to be unjustified as noise generated from activities at the proposed play area would not be materially greater than the potential level of noise from current use of the recreation area. The proposal is therefore in accordance with policies GD1 and RL1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan.

objections/observations

11. Occupiers of the surrounding properties have been notified in writing and a site notice was also posted.
12. Two letters making observations and three letters raising objections have been received. The observations have raised issues about the size of the car park. However, as the car park is not part of this application and not specifically a requirement for the play area, which would largely be accessed by foot from the surrounding housing areas, these comments cannot be taken into consideration.
13. The main points of objection are summarised as follows:
 - a) The playground should be located behind the mound to limit its visual impact and muffle noise.
 - b) The playground will affect the view from houses.
 - c) The playground will cause anti-social behaviour and security problems for surrounding houses.
 - d) There are no children under 12 in the surrounding area so a facility for use by 0-12 year olds is inappropriate.
 - e) Why can't it be located in other parks in Crook?
 - f) Dog mess on the field would not be hygienic for children.

response to objections

14. In response to these observations, I make the following comments:
 - a) It is considered that the visual and noise impact of the proposed play area would not be unacceptable and therefore does not warrant re-siting the play area behind the mound. Siting the play area behind the mound would also not allow a sufficient level of natural surveillance from surrounding properties.
 - b) This is not a material planning consideration as views over third party land cannot be protected.
 - c) Natural surveillance over the play area can reduce incidences of anti-social behaviour. Additionally, there are measures outside the planning system to control anti-social behaviour. Security impacts on surrounding dwellings is unfounded.
 - d) This is unfounded and demographics are constantly changing.
 - e) This is not a material consideration as a sequential approach to site selection is not a requirement for play areas.
 - f) This is no different to the existing situation. Additionally, dogs will not be allowed within the play area.

conclusion and reasons for approval

1. The proposal is acceptable in relation to policies GD1, BE14, H3, RL1, RL3, RL4, and RL8 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as it:
 - a) Would contribute to play area provision in Crook.
 - b) Would not compromise the protection of a designated Open Space in a Built up Area for recreation purposes.
 - c) Would be suitably located to ensure an adequate level of natural surveillance.
 - d) Would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
 - e) Would not cause unacceptable impacts on the living conditions of immediate neighbours.

RECOMMENDED

That planning permission be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions and reasons;

conditions

1. Notwithstanding the submitted details, all footpaths shown on the approved plans shall be 1.8 metres in width. Before use of the play area hereby approved is commenced these footways shall be constructed.
2. Nothing in this permission shall be construed as giving approval to the car park details shown on the approved plans.

reasons

1. To enable satisfactory pedestrian and wheelchair access. In accordance with policy GD1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan.
2. The submitted details are indicative only and do not form part of the application. In accordance with policy GD1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan.

background information

Application file, WVDLP.

PS code	<input type="text" value="10"/>		
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explanation			

Officer responsible for the report

Robert Hope

Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

Ext 264

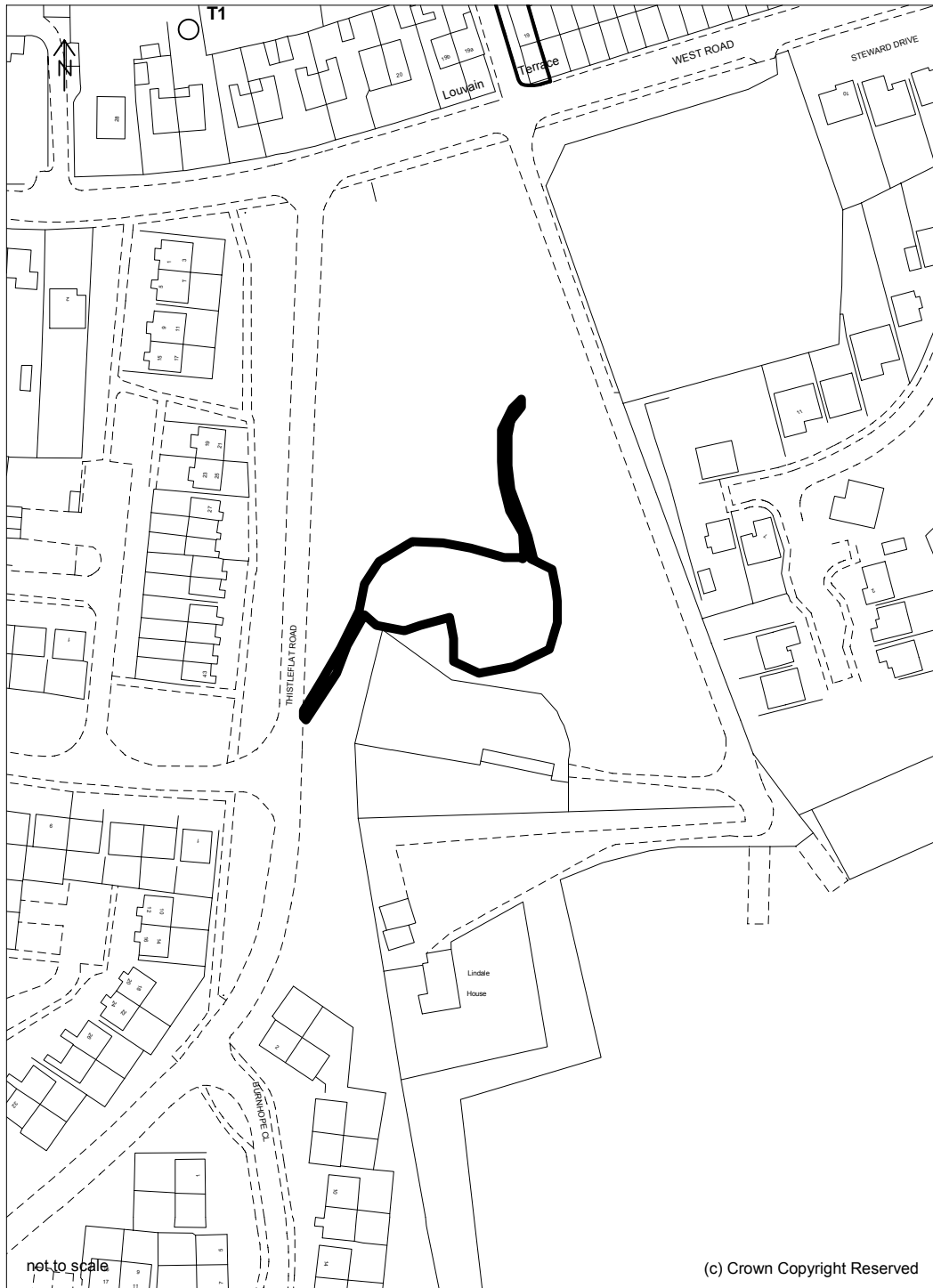
Author of the report

Adrian Caines

Planning Officer

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3/2007/0307- INSTALLATION OF NEW CHILDRENS PLAYGROUND - AGE RANGE 0-12 YEARS AT RECREATION LAND ADJACENT TO THISTLEFLAT ROAD, CROOK FOR THISTLEFLAT COMMUNITY GROUP - 23.05.2007 - AMENDED 29.06.2007 (WIDTH AND POSITION OF PATHS AMENDED)



SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

12TH JULY 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

PART 111 – OTHER ITEMS

PASTORAL MEASURE 1983

Proposed redundancy of the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Howden le Wear and alteration of parish boundary

introduction

1. On 7th December 2006 Members had no objection to the proposal to declare redundant the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Howden le Wear and to alterations to the boundary between the parishes of Crook and Hunwick.

proposal

2. The Administrative Secretary of the Diocese of Durham has now written to the Council stating that the proposals have been revised. It is now proposed to move quickly to make redundant the church of St. Mary, and proposals to change the parish boundary will follow later.

RECOMMENDATION

1. No objection.

Background information: Letter from the Administrative Secretary, The Diocese of Durham Board of Finance dated 14th June 2007.

Officer responsible for the report

Robert Hope
Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration
Ext 264

Author of the report

David Townsend
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