

City of Durham District: Change of use from playing field to children's play area, including installation of MUGA, play equipment and general landscaping, Kelloe Primary School, Front Street, Kelloe. (Regulation 3)

Introduction

- 1 The proposed site, measuring approximately 0.8ha, is located to the south of Kelloe Primary School and is currently designated as playing field land, but has not been used as such for several years. The school has now offered the land to the Kelloe Village Community Partnership to develop as recreational space for the whole community and it is proposed to construct an unlit multi use games area (MUGA), junior football pitch, wildlife area and children's play area. These facilities would compensate in part for the loss of a small area of playing field required to facilitate the development of a Sure Start Centre at the school site, which is the subject of a separate application.

Proposal

- 2 The proposal involves construction of an unlit MUGA measuring 37 x 18.5 metres, located directly to the south of the proposed Sure Start Centre and existing school buildings. This would accord with Sport England design standards and would be enclosed by a 3.0m high weldmesh fence. A 27.5m x 18.5m junior football pitch would be marked out on the existing field to the west of the proposed MUGA and two wildlife areas containing shrub planting and soft landscaping would be created on its south and east sides. A children's play area containing various pieces of play equipment would be constructed to the south east of the proposed MUGA. This would have a black tarmac surface with pre-cast concrete edging and a wet pour safety surface around individual pieces of equipment. A 2.0m landscape mound would separate the junior football pitch and most southerly wildlife area.
- 3 A 1.8m wide tarmac footpath to the children's play area from Front Street would be created with links to the school and proposed Sure Start Centre. A 2.4m high steel fence and access gate would be installed along the northern (school) boundary of the site. A 1.0m high fence would be erected along the edge of the existing embankment to the south west of the site.

Consultations and Representations

- 4 City of Durham Council offers no objection to the proposal.
- 5 Kelloe Parish Council fully support the proposal.
- 6 Sport England does not wish to raise an objection to the proposal, subject to a planning condition requiring details of the design and layout of the MUGA to be agreed.
- 7 The application has been advertised on site and neighbouring residents notified. No representations have been received.

Planning Comment

Planning Policy

- 8 The proposal would involve the provision of improved sports and recreational facilities on school playing fields and would be acceptable in principle in this location. Policy Q1 (General Principles – Designing for People), Policy Q2 (General Principles – Designing for Accessibility) and Policy R8 (New Recreational Facilities) of the City of Durham District Local Plan are relevant planning policies.

Sport and Recreation

- 9 Although the proposal would involve the loss of part of an existing playing field, it is considered that this would be outweighed by the creation of a versatile MUGA that would be available for school and community use on a more extensive basis. An area to the south and west of the MUGA would be available for use as a junior size grass pitch, wildlife area and play area and would cater for a range of outdoor recreation needs. Other grass playing fields to the west of the school building would be retained for school use.

Amenity Issues

- 10 The proposals would involve low rise open uses with associated fencing and play equipment and would be largely screened from the surrounding area by mature trees around the perimeter of the site. The 2.4m high school boundary fence would be coloured green and set back into the site and its overall impact would be limited. It is therefore considered that the proposals would not adversely affect the appearance of the surrounding area.
- 11 Community use of the MUGA is proposed but it would be unlit, therefore limiting its potential hours of use. The applicant has confirmed that it would be used between the hours of 9.00am and 8.00pm, daylight permitting. Whilst some additional noise would be generated from use of the recreational facilities, the land is currently available for outdoor play purposes and there is not expected to be a significant change in existing noise levels. The nearest residential properties are 60 metres away and the proposal is therefore not considered to have an adverse impact upon local amenity.

Accessibility

- 12 The proposed pedestrian access to the site, with links to the Primary School and Sure Start building, is welcomed by the Head of Highway Management and he has no objections to the scheme.

Recommendation and Reasons

- 13 The proposal would assist Kelloe Primary School to strengthen the level of community based activity on site and enhance recreational opportunities in the local area. Having considered the scheme and its likely impacts, I am of the view that it can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site and is acceptable in planning terms.
- 14 I therefore **recommend** that planning permission be granted for the development subject to appropriate conditions for the following reasons:
- i. The development would accord with Policies Q1, Q2 and R8 of the City of Durham District Local Plan and would have no material conflict with other development plan policies.
 - ii. The proposed MUGA, junior football pitch, wildlife area and children's play area in terms of size, location and appearance would relate acceptably to the site and surrounding area and would not have a significant impact upon visual and residential amenity.

No departure

Background Papers: Application, consultations and responses, site location plans.

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Local Member:	Councillor D Morgan	

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