



THE
ENVIRONMENT
PARTNERSHIP



PHOENIX PARK THURNSCOE PLANNING STATEMENT

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of a community hub/café building, naturalistic play area, extended car park and resurfaced footpath ('the Proposed Development') at Phoenix Park, Barrowfield Road, Thurnscoe ('the Application Site').

1.2 The application is submitted on behalf of The Land Trust ('the Applicant') with the following description of development being applied for:

"Erection of a community hub/café building with surrounding hop path surfacing and fencing; naturalistic play area, extended car park, resurfacing improvements of current access and parking area and new footpath"

1.3 The Land Trust and The Conservation Volunteers manage the park as a vital green space within the community. The Park is also managed for wildlife as part of the Nature Improvement Area. The work they do with the community includes:

- Provision of multi-purpose trails to encourage walking, running and sport.
- Working with local schools to engage children with the outdoors and nature.
- Hold training courses in partnership with Green Angels and informal training through their volunteer programme that cover a wide range of skills on countryside management and conservation.
- Family bushcraft sessions to help children and adults connect with nature.
- Volunteers help create and manage wildlife habitats

1.4 The Phoenix Park Management Plan 2020-2025 by The Land Trust and The Conservation Volunteers explains that on-site facilities would help realise the potential of Phoenix Park to support a greater level of organised community activity. The application is also driven by the need to support outdoor recreation in the park for general visitors.

1.5 The Planning, Design and Access Statement provides a background to the Proposed Development, covering the Application Site and its surroundings, the policy context and the technical assessments which have considered the potential effects of the Proposed Development upon the Application Site and its surroundings.

1.6 The Planning Statement has been prepared to assist Barnsley Council ('the Local Planning Authority') in its determination of the application and should be read in conjunction with the suite of supporting material.

1.7 The structure of the Planning Statement is as follows:

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Application Site and Surroundings
- 3.0 Proposed Development
- 4.0 Planning Policy Context
- 5.0 Compliance with Planning Policy
- 6.0 Technical Assessment
- 7.0 Design and Access Statement

8.0 Green Belt Assessment

9.0 Conclusion.

- 1.8 A number of technical reports have been prepared to support this application and should be read in conjunction with the Planning Statement:

| Document | Reference |
|---|-----------------------|
| Planning, Design and Access Statement | 10560.001 |
| Arboricultural Impact Assessment | 10590.001 |
| Ecological Appraisal Report | EE1052.001 |
| Ecological Appraisal Appendix 4 DEFRA Condition Assessment Sheets | EE1052.001 Appendix 4 |
| Ecological Appraisal Appendix 5 DEFRA Biodiversity Metric Calculator V4.0 | EE1052.001 Appendix 5 |
| Ground Investigation Report | NE4303B |
| Geological and Mining Risk Assessment | NE4303 |

- 1.9 The following plans have also been produced to support the planning application:

| Plan | Reference |
|--|----------------------------|
| Location Plan | G9915.047 |
| Existing Site Plan | 4002 25 - 102 |
| Proposed Site Plan | 4002 45 - 200 |
| Building Elevations | 230106-ELT-00-00-DR-A-2000 |
| Bin Store Elevations | 4004 25 - 506 |
| Floor Plan | 230106-ELT-00-00-DR-A-1000 |
| Service and Drainage Plan – Proposed and Existing 1 of 2 | 4002 25 - 202 |
| Service and Drainage Plan – Proposed and Existing 2 of 2 | 4002 25 – 203 |
| Indicative Proposed Play Area | 005 |

2.0 Application Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The Application Site lies comprises of an open area within Phoenix Park, access of Barrowfield Road, car parking and footpaths. Phoenix Park is a former colliery that has been landscaped into parkland.
- 2.2 The Site is within the northwest of Phoenix Park and includes vehicle access off Barrowfield Road.
- 2.3 The Application Site has Barrowfield Road to the north and the rest is surrounded by parkland. There are employment uses to the north of Barrowfield Road and also to the east of the Site.
- 2.4 The Application Site lies within Flood Zone 1 as shown on the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning online resource¹.
- 2.5 A public right of way runs to the east of the Site and there is another one to the north along Barrowfield Road. There is also a network of unrecorded routes around the Site that go through the park.
- 2.6 The Application Site is not subject to any statutory ecological, heritage or landscape designations.
- 2.7 The Policies Map for Barnsley Council shows the Application Site designated as Green Belt, Greenspace and a Nature Improvement Area.

Planning History

- 2.8 The following previous planning applications are relevant to the Proposed Development:

Table 1

| Application No. | Location | Description | Date Registered | Decision |
|-----------------|---|--|-----------------|----------|
| B/01/0539/DE | Hickleton Colliery, Off Barrowfield Road, Thurnscoe | Installation of landscape features and artistic sculptures within proposed community | 04/01/2002 | Unknown |
| B/01/0525/DE | Hickleton Colliery, Off Barrowfield Road, Thurnscoe | Formation of 3m high naturalistic climbing boulder within proposed Hickleton Colliery Community Park | 23/04/2001 | Unknown |

¹ <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/location>

3.0 Proposed Development

- 3.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of a community hub/café building, fencing, play area, extended car park and resurfaced footpath. The Proposed Development is being funded through Levelling Up Funding from the national Government.
- 3.2 The existing access track and parking off Barrowfield Road is to have hop path overlay on existing rolled stone made of 100% recycled aggregate. There shall be new markings for the existing parking spaces with dimensions of 2.5m x 5m and an additional 2 disabled parking spaces created, therefore providing a total of 14 spaces. An access in the existing wall shall be created for overflow parking in the existing grass field. The area for overflow parking shall be used for special events only and used less than 28 days in total in any calendar year. Therefore the use for overflow parking shall be Permitted Development.
- 3.3 There shall be a new pedestrian path linking the parking area to the new community hub building, which shall consist of a two flexible space for activities and events; a small café and toilets.
- 3.4 The new footpath shall have a 0.5m high timber knee rail. The building shall have a covered courtyard. In front of the community hub building, there shall be picnic tables and a new naturalistic play area. The building shall be surrounded by a 2.4m high weld mesh palladin fence and a gate shall be locked outside of opening hours to increase the security of the building. There shall be seven cycle racks and a cycle maintenance stand to encourage active travel.
- 3.5 Internally, the community hub building shall consist of two flexible spaces for volunteer/community groups, a café, a kitchen with servicing hatch, entrance lobby, toilet facilities, and a store room.
- 3.6 The café element of the development shall be not-for-profit, and any money made by the café goes into the running of the community hub. Any profit shall go into the budget for the upkeep of Phoenix Park. The provision of the space for community groups would not be financially viable without the café.
- 3.7 The community hub building shall have ocean blue plastic coated steel cladding and a bull nose anti climb fascia round all the building. Bespoke corten steel feature panels are proposed. There shall be bi-fold doors to open in direction of the play area. For added security, there shall be roller shutters on all doors, windows and hatches. There shall be a bin store made from stone and timber to the side of the community building for the collection of waste. The cladding, anti climb fascia, roller shutters and fencing are to increase security of the development due to concerns about anti-social behaviour.

- 3.8 A play area is proposed to the south of the community hub building. An indicative plan of the play area is provided and the exact design of the play area can be conditioned if planning permission is given. The indicative plan shows trim trail equipment, trees, river washed boulders for climbing, climbing logs, mounds of earth including one with a tunnel an embankment slide with climbing rocks and ladder to the top. Boundary tree planting is proposed to the south of the play area. The creation of the play area shall use spoil material from other works on site.
- 3.9 The construction compound shall either be within the site boundary or in the adjacent field to the west. There shall be a temporary access road for construction, which is to be made good after the works.

4.0 Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise.
- 4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') and Planning Practice Guidance are material considerations in the determination of this planning application.

Adopted Development Plan

- 4.3 The Development Plan for Barnsley Council comprises of the Barnsley Local Plan (Adopted January 2019). The Local Plan review (November 2022) determined that no updates are to be carried out ahead of a further review.
- 4.4 Table 1 identifies the key policies from the Local Plan that the development will be assessed against.

Table 1 Relevant Planning Policy

| Policy | Description |
|-------------|--|
| Policy SD1 | Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development |
| Policy GD1 | General Development |
| Policy T3 | New Development and Sustainable Travel |
| Policy T4 | New Development and Transport Safety |
| Policy TC1 | Town Centres |
| Policy GB1 | Protection of Green Belt |
| Policy CC1 | Climate Change |
| Policy CC2 | Sustainable Design and Construction |
| Policy CC3 | Flood Risk |
| Policy CC4 | Sustainable Drainage Systems |
| Policy GI1 | Green Infrastructure |
| Policy GS1 | Greenspace |
| Policy GS2 | Green Ways and Public Rights of Way |
| Policy BIO1 | Biodiversity and Geodiversity |

| Policy | Description |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| Policy CL1 | Contaminated Land and Unstable Land |
| Policy Poll1 | Pollution Control and Protection |
| Policy D1 | High Quality Design and Place Making |
| Policy I2 | Education and Community Facilities |

4.5 The following SPDs are also relevant:

- SPD: Parking
- SPD: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- SPD: Sustainable Travel
- SPD: Trees and Hedgerows
- SPD: Walls and Fences
- SPD: Sustainable Construction and Climate Change Adaption

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.6 The National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') sets out the Governments definition of sustainable development and identifies how planning policies for England are expected to be applied. The Framework is a significant material consideration.
- 4.7 The Framework is purposefully positive, opportunity focused and pro-growth in seeking to facilitate development which will contribute to meeting the wider Government objectives.
- 4.8 Paragraph 7 of the Framework explains that 'the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' which can be summarised as "*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*".
- 4.9 Paragraph 8 of the Framework states that "*achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives)*:"
- 4.10 a) *economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

- 4.11 *b) social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- 4.12 *c) environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy".*
- 4.13 Chapter 7 sets out the sequential test for main town centres uses outside of an existing centre.
- 4.14 Chapter 8 supports the provision of social, recreational and cultural facilities. The chapter also sets out the circumstances when existing open space can be built on.
- 4.15 Chapter 12 says that development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area and sympathetic to local character.
- 4.16 Chapter 13 focuses on protecting Green Belt land, with paragraph 142 identifying the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to "*prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence*".
- 4.17 Chapter 15 of the Framework sets out the Government's policies for conserving and enhancing the natural environment. The aim is to ensure that natural habitats are protected and enhanced, to contribute to wider patterns of sustainable development.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.18 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) supports the NPPF and provides guidance of all aspects of the Planning System, including the use of conditions and planning obligations as well as on specific areas including transport, open space, flood risk, renewable energy and design.

5.0 Compliance with Planning Policy

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 5.1 Policy SD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development supports taking a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the NPPF and working proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean proposals can be approved wherever possible and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
- 5.2 As described in the following sections, the proposal is a sustainable development which shall provide local jobs, provide a community space, enhance a green space, be accessible by sustainable transport and shall be sensitive to environmental conditions in the area.

Community Infrastructure

- 5.3 Policy I2 Educational and Community Facilities supports the provision of community facilities. New community facilities such as meeting places should be located centrally to the communities they serve in places where they will be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 5.4 The proposed community hub shall provide a new meeting place for local community groups. The Flexible Space area shall be open to groups to use for such uses as workshops, meetings, talks and a range of activities based on the group's purpose.
- 5.5 Any money made by the café goes into the running of the building and the provision of the space for community groups would not be financially viable without the café. Therefore the café is a vital part of providing the community facility.
- 5.6 The community facility is linked to public paths through the park and is accessible through walking and cycling. The community facility is also accessible by public transport, it is approx. 100m away from the nearest bus stop and is within 500m of Thurnscoe Railway Station. Therefore it is accessible by sustainable transport.

Green Space

- 5.7 Policy GS1 Green Space supports working with partners to improve existing green space to meet the standards of the Green Space Strategy. The Policy states that proposals that result in the loss of green space will not normally be allowed unless the proposal is for small scale facilities needed to support or improve the proper function of green space.
- 5.8 The Proposed Development results in the loss of a small amount of green space at Phoenix Park by erecting the community hub building with hardstanding, a bin store and a small extension to the car park. This adds up to approx. 570m² of lost green space. However, the Proposal meets the requirement for it to be a small scale facility needed to support or improve the proper function of green space.
- 5.9 The Land Trust manages and makes improvements across the existing green space of Phoenix Park. This proposed development shall contribute to these improvements to green space.

- 5.10 The community hub building shall improve the function of the green space by providing a space for community groups to meet and take part in activities. Many of these groups will use the wider park for their activities and the community hub provides a space for these groups to have a base to facilitate these activities by providing shelter during poor weather, space to hold meetings, storage for any equipment and toilets to enable groups to stay at the park for longer.
- 5.11 The Phoenix Park Management Plan identifies that the current lack of toilets or secure storage on site limits activities and any on-site facilities would benefit staff, trainees, volunteers, visitors and third party led activity. The Proposal would help to realise the potential of Phoenix Park to support a greater level of community activity. The Phoenix Park Management Plan says that an onsite facility could support the provision of:
- Preschool and family environmental activities - currently having no inside space or a toilet is a limiting factor on site for these groups.
 - Regular evening and weekend youth activities could link to the workshop space.
 - A volunteer base leading to a social enterprise approach, providing opportunities for young people locally who may have no clear academic routes but would benefit from practical mentoring opportunities.
 - Catering to serve nearby industry, cyclists and other visitors, such as community walking groups.
- 5.12 A range of community groups have been asked how the proposed development will help them and how they would use the new space. Most of the email responses from the community groups are in Appendix A and these are summarised below.

The Conservation Volunteers

- A space for Green Gym Volunteers to store stools, have toilet facilities and have breaks. Green Gym Volunteers work on projects which improve fitness whilst benefiting local green spaces.
- Host Green Angel training courses. These are delivered to improve health and wellbeing.
- Allow the running of workplace away days by having toilet and café
- A wider range of wellbeing activities will be supported such as crafts, nature journaling, willow weaving and foraging.
- Will attract a wider range of ages due to meeting space and toilets.
- The orienteering course could be promoted wider with a community building on site.
- Dearne Valley Family Centre provide sports equipment at Phoenix Park during school holidays for families to come and use for free. This might include footballs and nets, badminton sets, volley-ball nets etc.

Station House

- Access to dedicated area for the children's holiday club will make activities much easier.

- Storage of equipment, a space to change footwear, access to toilets, access to free drinking water will enable group to stay longer and do more activities.
- These activities include treasure hunts, egg rolling, walking along the trails, litter pick, picnics and football.

Sport and Physical Activity Team, Barnsley Council

- What's Your Move Festival, which showcasing a multitude of sports and physical activities that are on offer in the area. This would base activities around the community hub and be an annual event focussed around the school holidays.
- Proposed facility can host physical activity needs for the community, such as chair based exercise, boxercise and other low-impact activities. These activities would fill any identified gaps in current physical activity provision.
- Social physical activity such as cuppa and a walk, litter pick and bacon buttys etc to give more incentive for physical activity and social connection.
- Park Run with a regular bank of volunteers using the facility as a base.
- RampUp activity delivering confidence building through cycling activations for children and younger people from balance bikes to BMX.
- Scooter skills programme, to again develop confidence and enable young people to choose to travel actively.
- Bike Maintenance - we can perform free bike checks and maintenance to give people confidence that their bike is safe and in a usable condition.
- Walk programme using the cafe as a hub and meeting location for walking activity that we can host in Phoenix Park.
- Health walks - more accessible for older people with use of toilets and place indoors to sit down.

Dearne Churches Together

- The Proposed Development will help have a central base to continue run events. These events by Dearne Churches Together include Summer Fun Days and Family Fun Days including 22 different organisations. These events have include Forest Schools, walking trails, orienteering, sports, crafts, reading and history activities.

Dearne Family Hub

- Utilising the room spaces for group delivery and pop up sessions
- Outdoor learning opportunities
- Forest school sessions
- Community Family Hub pop ups
- School holiday projects
- Developing partnerships with parents (Nursery Families)

- 5.13 The floorspace of the community hub is based on the size required for a group of 30 people to use the space. This floorspace size was the advice from community groups and a Community Officer. This careful consideration of the needs of community groups shall help maximise the function of the community hub and the surrounding green space.
- 5.14 As well as being beneficial for community groups, the Proposal would enhance the green space for general park users, attract more visitors, bring in a greater range of people and increase the amount of time people spend at the park.
- 5.15 The café and toilet facilities shall attract a greater number of visitors to the park and encourage people to stay for longer. This includes elderly people being more likely to visit the park if there is somewhere warm to sit and a toilet available. Therefore the Proposal shall increase accessibility allowing people to visit who would not without the proposed facilities. The additional outside seating shall provide a place for people to rest and meet up. The additional people drawn to visit the park for the café and community space are then likely to visit the rest of the green space, therefore this is a direct enhancement.
- 5.16 The current access for vehicles and car parking area is in a very poor condition. The resurfacing of this access and parking shall provide a smooth surface, replacing the current uneven surface that causing difficulties for people access the green space. This shall improve accessibility for people accessing the park by motor vehicle, on foot and by bicycle. There shall also be 2 disabled parking bays added in proximity to the path leading to the community hub building, further improving accessibility and enhancing the green space.
- 5.17 The proposed playground is directly linked to enhancing green space at the park by providing a place for children to play and exercise. It shall help attract parents of young children to visit the park by providing facilities aimed at children. The playground shall also encourage both parents and children to spend more time at the park. The playground is also likely to increase the amount of visitors to the cafe, which will help fund the provision of the community space and further enhance the park.
- 5.18 The proposed community hub shall provide 7 bike stands and 1 bike maintenance stand, therefore improving the function of the green space. There are 4 bike stands within the fence boundary and 3 bike stands outside of the fence boundary. The cycling facilities shall enable and encourage more people to visit the park by cycling because they will have somewhere to secure their bike. Secondly, the maintenance stand will encourage people to visit the park so that they can service their bike. The maintenance stand will also enable people to improve the working condition of their bike so that they can better use the park for cycling. Currently there are no cycle parking facilities at the park, so this makes it more difficult for someone to travel to park by cycling and then secure their bicycle to explore on foot. There is a newly enhanced cycling link between Thurnscoe and Goldthorpe, users of this route will be more encouraged to visit the park.

- 5.19 These enhancements to the green space shall encourage more people to visit and therefore contribute to improving health and wellbeing. This is especially important for the local area, which has high levels of deprivation compared to the national average.

Green Infrastructure

- 5.20 Policy GI1 Green Infrastructure supports the protection, maintenance and enhancement of green infrastructure assets to provide attractive environments, meet the needs of communities, enhances quality of life, improves opportunities for recreation and maximises potential social benefits. The network of Green Infrastructure will be secured by protecting open space, creating new open space and improving Green Infrastructure.
- 5.21 Policy GD1 General Development supports development that incorporates existing landscape features. Existing trees should be considered in the layout in order to avoid overshadowing.
- 5.22 The Proposal shall enhance the green infrastructure assets of Phoenix Park by providing facilities for users of the park such as toilets, a place to rest and a space for community groups to use. This shall help provide attractive environment for people to visit, meet the needs of community by providing a space for community events and activities and improve opportunities for recreation by improving the park's visitor facilities and increasing accessibility for a greater range of users. As described above, the provision of cycling stands and a maintenance stand shall improve opportunities for recreation and maximise potential social benefits by encouraging people to use the green infrastructure of the park for cycling.
- 5.23 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment was completed by TEP in July 2024. The immediate effects of the development on trees would be negligible. The report found that there are no adverse effects that cannot be mitigated or offset and which therefore lead to potential grounds for refusal of planning permission. The six new trees on the southern side of the play area is more than would be removed and the proposed tree works will recover quickly naturally with no overall long-term effects. Therefore, the proposed development represents an increase in the number of trees on the site. More details on in the Technical Matters section.
- 5.24 Policy GS2 Green Ways and Public Rights of Way protects green ways and public rights of way from development that may affect their character or function. Where development affects a Green Way or Public Right of Way, protect the existing route within the development or include an equally convenient and attractive route. Where development is close to a Green Way or Public Right of Way, it may be required to provide a link to the existing route, improve an existing route or contribute to a new route.
- 5.25 The justification text of Policy GS2 states that one of the benefits of Green Ways and Public Rights of Way is that they allow connections with and access to leisure and facilities.

- 5.26 Paths through the site and connecting to it shall be resurfaced to improve their accessibility and enhance the green space. The nearby Public Right of Way shall be unaffected by the development and remain open for access. Access to the community hub shall be accessed via public footpaths and this will help encourage their usage.

Landscape

- 5.27 Policy LC1 Landscape Character states that development will be expected to retain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the individual Landscape Character area in which it is located.
- 5.28 This is discussed in detail in Chapter 8 Landscape and Visual Consideration of Green Belt.

Green Belt

- 5.29 Policy GB1 Protection of Green Belt protects Green Belt from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy. The Application Site lies within Green Belt land. A full Green Belt assessment is provided in Chapter 8 Green Belt Assessment, it addresses Policy GB1 and national planning policy on Green Belt.

Out of Centre Development

- 5.30 Policy TC1 Town Centres says that a sequential approach will be used to assess proposals for new town centre development. Edge of centre and out of centre development will only be allowed where it meets the requirements of NPPF.
- 5.31 The proposed café floorspace is classed as a main town centre use by the NPPF and the development site is outside of a centre. However, it is necessary that the café operates from within the community hub inside the park and not elsewhere because it is linked to the community use of the building. Any money made by the café goes into the running of the community hub and any profit shall go into the budget for the upkeep of Phoenix Park. The provision of the space for community groups would not be financially viable without the café. The café shall be managed by the same organisation and people who run the community hub and the café shall help provide a space for volunteers, social groups and other users of the hub.
- 5.32 The cafe would have to be run for profit if it was located within a designated centre instead of the park in order to pay commercial rates, meaning that it could not contribute to the functioning of the community space. Therefore, a sequential test is not required on this occasion because of the nature of the development.
- 5.33 Policy TC3 Thresholds for Impact Assessments requires retail and leisure uses to provide an impact assessment if they could have a negative impact on the vitality and viability of a centre and are located within the catchment of a local centre and have a floorspace in excess of 500sqm gross.
- 5.34 The proposed building is 130sqm and therefore is lower than this threshold for an impact assessment.

Ecology

- 5.35 Policy BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity supports protecting and improving habitats, species, sites of ecological value and geological value; maximising biodiversity and geodiversity opportunities; following the national mitigation hierarchy; and encouraging biodiversity enhancements. Development which may harm a biodiversity or geological feature or habitat will not be permitted unless effective mitigation and/or compensatory measures can be ensured.
- 5.36 An Ecological Appraisal was completed by Evergreen Ecology in July 2024. The proposed development is primarily within modified grassland which is of low biodiversity value. Existing habitats have been retained as far as possible. The loss of grassland habitat will be compensated for through the planting of other neutral grassland strips within the retained green open space surrounding the development. See the Technical Matters section for more details.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.37 The Environment Act 2021 mandated a minimum measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for all developments covered by the Town & Country Planning Act, which requires the biodiversity value of a development to exceed the predevelopment biodiversity value of a site by a minimum of 10%.
- 5.38 The proposed development is predicted to result in a net unit change of +0.14 Habitat Units which is a net percentage change of +17.16%. The BNG assessment has confirmed that the current proposed development design will provide a greater than 10% net gain in biodiversity thereby meeting both national and local planning policy. See the Technical Matters section for more details.

Amenity and Pollution

- 5.39 Policy GD1 General Development states development will be approved if it is compatible with neighbouring land and not significantly prejudice the current or future use of neighbouring land; include landscaping to provide high quality setting for buildings and minimise any adverse impacts on the environment.
- 5.40 The Proposal shall enhance the green space functions of the park and so is fully compatible with the neighbouring land.
- 5.41 Policy CL1 Contaminated and Unstable Land requires that where development would be affected by contamination or stability issues, or where contamination may present a risk to the water environment, proposals must be accompanied by a report which shows that investigations have been carried on contamination or stability issues and the possible effects. The report should also set out detailed measures to allow the development to go ahead safely.
- 5.42 A Ground Investigation Report was completed by Sub Surface Consultants in February 2024 and a Geological and Mining Risk Assessment was completed by Sub Surface Consultants in October 2023. Details of the reports are set out in the Technical Matters section below.

- 5.43 Policy Poll1 Pollution Control and Protection expects development to demonstrate it is not likely to result, directly or indirectly, in an increase in air, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, light or other pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people.
- 5.44 The Proposal is of a small scale and not in proximity to any sensitive uses, therefore no pollution issues are expected from operation of the proposed use. There shall be a Construction Environmental Traffic Management Plan implemented by the contractor during construction to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented to control pollution from construction.

Sustainable Travel and Accessibility

- 5.45 Policy T3 New Development and Sustainable Travel expects new development to reduce the need to travel, be accessible to public transport, meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists; provide minimum levels of parking for cycles and disabled people.
- 5.46 Policy T4 New Development and Transport Safety says that new development is expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users with safe, secure and convenient access and movement.
- 5.47 The Proposal is very sustainability located by public transport and active travel. The nearest bus stop is approx. 100m away and Thurnscoe Railway Station is within 500m, therefore both are within walking distance. The community hub is fully accessible by public paths through Phoenix Park and facilities for cyclists shall be provided such as cycle parking and a maintenance stand. There shall be 7 bike stands provided at the community hub, 4 within the fence boundary of the community hub and 3 outside of the fence boundary. This means there is cycle parking available for users of the park whilst the gate to the community hub is closed. The Parking SPD requires 4 cycle parking spaces, therefore the development exceeds this requirements. There shall also be a bike maintenance stand next to the bike stands, this shall further encourage people to cycle to the proposed community hub because they will be able to service their bike.
- 5.48 The resurfacing of the access track and parking shall improve access for visitors travelling by foot, bicycle and wheelchair. The provision of two new disabled parking spaces closest to the community hub shall increase access for disabled people.
- 5.49 There shall be provision of 12 car parking spaces at the resurfaced parking area individually at 2.5m x 5m. There shall also be 2 disabled parking spaces. The Parking SPD requires 11 car parking spaces and 2 disabled parking spaces, therefore the development exceeds these requirements.

Climate Change

- 5.50 Policy CC1 Climate Change seeks to reduce the causes of and adapt to the future impacts of climate change by promoting sustainable design and construction techniques; reducing the risk of flooding, promoting SuDS and promoting investment in Green Infrastructure and encourage biodiversity gain.

- 5.51 Policy CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction supports sustainable design and construction features where this is technically feasible and viable.
- 5.52 The building is in a U shape and south facing with bi-folding doors opening up onto the outside. This layout of the building shall maximise solar gain, therefore increasing energy efficiency. The development shall use SuDS through a French drain system. Investment is promoted in green infrastructure by encouraging more people to use the park and stay for longer. Biodiversity net gain is achieved through the planting of a neutral grass area around the tree line surrounding the site and by the ditch to the south. Tree planting is also proposed to the south of the play area.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.53 Policy CC3 Flood Risk states that new development where it would be an unacceptable risk of flooding or would give rise to flooding elsewhere will not be permitted. Proposals over 1000sqm floorspace or 0.4 hectares in Flood Zone 1 will be expected to demonstrate how the proposal will make a positive contribution to reducing or managing flood risk. Development on greenfield sites are expected to maintain or reduce existing run-off rates requiring development proposals to use SuDS.
- 5.54 The application site is within Flood Zone 1 and so is at low risk of flooding.
- 5.55 Policy CC4 Sustainable Drainage Systems promotes the use of SuDS on minor development.
- 5.56 Details on drainage are shown on the two plans titled 'Service Plan - Proposed and Existing' (ref 003 and 004). As part of these plans, there shall be a Sustainable Drainage System through a proposed French drain with slotted pipe entering the ditch to the south of the application site.

6.0 Technical Matters

Ecology

- 6.1 An Ecological Appraisal was completed by Evergreen Ecology in July 2024. The proposed development is primarily within modified grassland which is of low biodiversity value. Existing habitats have been retained as far as possible within the landscape scheme including other broadleaved woodland and areas of modified grassland for amenity use. The loss of grassland habitat to the development will be compensated for through the planting of other neutral grassland strips within the retained green open space surrounding the development. In addition a small bin store will support a sedum roof which will provide a pollination resource to invertebrates.
- 6.2 There is no suitable habitat to support roosting bats and the site offers limited habitat for foraging and commuting bats in the form of grassland and surrounding woodland with a small section within the site being retained. A more species diverse grassland habitat is anticipated to increase suitable foraging habitat, albeit on a small scale. It is considered that the loss of habitats from within the site will not significantly impact upon the conservation status of bats at a site or wider level.
- 6.3 The grassland provides limited foraging to birds and it shall be improved following the creation of a more diverse grassland habitat. The grassland is not suitable for supporting nesting birds. The woodland has the potential to support nesting birds however this will be retained and protected during the construction phase. It is therefore considered that there will be no impact to nesting birds.
- 6.4 With limited suitable habitat within the site, the presence of more optimal foraging and commuting habitats within the immediate and wider landscape; the loss of habitat within the site will not significantly impact upon the local conservation status of hedgehogs.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.5 Baseline habitats on the site comprise of modified grassland, the existing access track/car park and a strip of broadleaved woodland to the south adjacent to the dry ditch. The modified grassland is common and the proposed development is unlikely to significantly impact upon the conservation status of this habitat. The access track and parking has no ecological value. The broadleaved woodland is to be retained as part of the development. The baseline site habitats have a total Habitat Units of 0.81.
- 6.6 The proposed development will remove some modified grassland, slightly increase the parking area and create new neutral grassland strips surrounding the development, which is of a higher ecological distinctiveness and condition than the modified grassland. The post-development Habitat Units shall be 0.95, which is a total net change of +17.16% upon the pre-development baseline of 0.81 Habitat Units. Therefore the proposed development will provide a greater than 10% net gain in biodiversity thereby meeting both national and local planning policy.

Arboriculture

- 6.7 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment was completed by TEP in July 2024. The tree survey recorded 6 tree groups within influencing distance of the application site and described them as not yet functionally mature or at their full height or spread. Tree groups G1, G2, G3 and G6 to the west, north and east of the application site were recorded as moderate quality. Tree groups G4 and G5 to the south of the application site were recorded as low quality. There are no Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas, ancient woodland or veteran trees which could be affected by development of the site.
- 6.8 For the effects of the development, very minor pruning of small trees may be required for the proposed services corridor running adjacent to group G3 but they will quickly recover with no material detriment. In order to install a small drain in the southwest corner, it will be necessary to remove a small part of this group G4. The drain would be adjacent to the bridge, minimising impact and the tree removal would be limited to one or two small trees.
- 6.9 The immediate effects of the development on trees would be negligible. In the longer term, periodic pruning of trees with G3 may be required to maintain clearances for the new path, it may be necessary to remove fallen apples and leaves from the path and there could be risk to trees in G6 from soil compaction caused by overflow parking but this could be controlled with fencing. The café may increase the use of desire lines to the east that pass tree belt G2, this should be monitored and improvements made if footfall begins to cause any degradation. In all other respects, the proposed development would not have any interaction with trees that is materially different from the existing site use and management.
- 6.10 The report found that there are no adverse effects that cannot be mitigated or offset and which therefore lead to potential grounds for refusal of planning permission.
- 6.11 Mitigation measures proposed by the report include tree protection fencing, tree works to be under arboricultural supervision to ensure tree removal is minimised and if major roots are uncovered during construction, works liable to damage them will cease.
- 6.12 The six new trees on the southern side of the play area is more than would be removed and the proposed tree works will recover quickly naturally with no overall long-term effects. Therefore, the proposed development represents an increase in the number of trees on the site.
- 6.13 A scheme of planting is recommended to augment the treescape and associated habitats and amenity. Hedgerow and/or trees to soften the appearance of the palisade fence to the east and south of the café building is recommended. Also specimen tree planting to the west of the car park to screen it from views across the field parcel to the west is recommended.

Ground Investigations

- 6.14 A Ground Investigation Report was completed by Sub Surface Consultants in February 2024.

- 6.15 On foundations, the report says that in view of the depth of Made Ground shallow foundations in natural ground are not feasible and hence alternative foundations need to be considered. These might include ground improvement by vibroflotation with shallow reinforced foundations or piled foundations transferring the structural loads down to the underlying bedrock indicated by the dynamic probing to possibly be at depths of 7.40m to 7.80m.
- 6.16 With regard to the design and construction of normal ground bearing floor slabs, it should be noted that due to the thickness of Made Ground there will be a risk of significant total and differential settlements, the extent of which will be a matter of chance rather than being assessable by calculation.
- 6.17 There should be no particular difficulties in excavating the strata indicated in the exploratory holes utilising an appropriate and suitably sized mechanical excavator.
- 6.18 In view of the natural strata being potentially pyritic ground, total sulphate, total sulphur, magnesium, chloride, nitrate and ammonia have been determined for one soil sample. The calculations have determined that pyrite (sulphides), which might weather and produce higher levels of sulphates, are not present.
- 6.19 Knowledge of the site and ground conditions indicates that the site is “brownfield” and acidic with mobile groundwater. Consequently, in accordance with the Design Sulphate Class for the site together with the site and groundwater conditions an Aggressive Chemical Environment for Concrete (ACEC) classification of AC-5z should be used.
- 6.20 Based on the contamination analyses, the assessment indicates elevated arsenic concentrations are present in the made ground (source). The pathway from the source to site operatives during earthworks, end users of the development and any proposed planting (receptors) need to be removed by precautions and/ or remedial measures.
- 6.21 Where the contaminated materials are covered by buildings or a hard surface cover of concrete or bituminous macadam no clean cover will be required. However, in proposed areas of soft landscaping, such as within the play area depending on the proposed design, the end users should be protected from the contaminated materials and plants should be provided with a medium in which they can safely grow.
- 6.22 It can be seen from the monitoring that elevated levels of carbon dioxide and depleted levels of associated oxygen have been consistently detected in all three of the standpipes. In addition occasional very low gas flow has been detected in M4. However, no methane was detected over the six monitoring visits.
- 6.23 Based on the monitoring to date, the site falls into Characteristic Situation 1 (CS1). However, as on this site the levels of carbon dioxide are >5%, the CS1 is increased by one to CS2.

Geological and Mining Risk Assessment

- 6.24 A Geological and Mining Risk Assessment was completed by Sub Surface Consultants in October 2023.

- 6.25 Given the findings of the geological and mining appraisal, it is not considered that there is potential for unrecorded shallow mine workings beneath the site which could affect the proposed development, as the shallowest coal seam beneath the site is estimated to be at a depth of 62 metres.
- 6.26 Due to the site being situated on colliery spoil from historical open cast mining, there may be a possibility of coal traces within the made ground, which may pose a potential risk of combustion.
- 6.27 Consideration should be given to the extensive depths of Made Ground that could be present on the site. In addition, mine gas remedial works have been recorded close to the site boundary. In light of this, the report recommends the installation of gas standpipes to be monitored over an extended period of time for potential gas migration.
- 6.28 Where mineworkings are found at shallow depth there is a potential for accumulated mine gas migrating to the surface or near surface level. Given this scenario, the report recommends that consideration should be given to installing standpipes and undertaking ground gas monitoring followed by a ground gas risk assessment.

7.0 Design and Access Statement

Introduction

- 7.1 Policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making expects development to be of high quality design and to respect, take advantage of and reinforce the distinctive local character and features of Barnsley. This includes landscape character, topography, green infrastructure assets, important habitats, woodlands and other natural features.
- 7.2 Policy D1 also says development should complement the character of distinctive places; provide accessible and inclusive environments; ensure ease of movement and legibility for all users; display architectural quality; and include high quality scheme for landscaping.
- 7.3 The Proposal has been designed to improve accessibility, attract more people to spend time at the park, provide an attractive space for community groups and for visitors to the café. The design respects the local setting of the park by being well screened.

Use

- 7.4 The Proposal is driven by the need to enhance the park and improve opportunities for outdoor recreation and sport. There shall be a community space for groups to meet, store equipment and host events in the park. The toilets and café shall encourage greater numbers of people to visit the park, including people who depend on these facilities to visit. The play area shall enhance the green space for children, encourage exercise through active play and increase dwell time. The resurfacing of paths, the car parking area and the provision of cycling facilities shall improve accessibility to the park.

Amount

- 7.5 The application site comprises an area of 0.47ha. The proposal comprises of the community hub building, play area, extended car park and resurfaced footpath. The total internal floorspace of the building is 114m². The floorspace of the different sections of the building are:
- Flexible Community Space - 28m²
 - Office - 10m²
 - Store - 7m²
 - Toilets - 8m²
 - Café - 40m²
 - Kitchen - 10m²
 - Serving Hatch - 6m²
 - Lobby - 5m²
- 7.6 The floorspace of the building has been based on providing adequate space for community groups consisting of 30 people to meet in the flexible community space and enough space for the café to properly function and make enough money to go towards the running of the building. There is also enough storage space for the community groups to store equipment.

Layout

- 7.7 The building is in a U shape and south facing with bi-folding doors opening up onto the outside. This shall increase dwell time for users of the outside space by protecting visitors from any wind and maximising sunshine. The layout of the building shall also enhance solar gain, making it more attractive for visitors on the inside as well as outside and also it shall increase energy efficiency.
- 7.8 For security, there shall be a fence around the community hub with access through a gate. Crossing the fence unauthorised shall set off an alarm. There shall also be CCTV on the roof and double caging of the AC units. The outer plastic coated cladding is steel lined. There shall be roller shutters on doors and windows. These security features are necessary to ensure the protection of the building from vandalism.
- 7.9 The Proposal shall attract people to visit the area and use the space, therefore increasing natural surveillance in Phoenix Park. This shall improve safety including perceptions of safety, therefore make people feel safer and more likely to visit the park and spend longer for outdoor recreation. This shall help address any concerns about anti-social behaviour in the area and attract a greater range of people to spend time in the park.
- 7.10 The proposed building shall be screened by trees to the west, north and east. There shall be a small amount of tree planting to the south of the play area. Visibility into the Site from the surrounding area is very limited due to the enclosing woodland, while views from within the park are confined to its north-west region. Visibility of the development inside the park will generally be limited to a distance of approximately 200m to the south, as the terrain falls screening the Site.

Scale

- 7.11 The external floorspace of the building is 130m². The building has a height of 3.5m

Appearance

- 7.12 The cladding is a steel lined plastic coating. There are anti climbing eaves all the way around the roof by being completely curved. Both of these features are on the advice of the Secure by Design team to protect the building from any criminal damage. This is necessary to protect the community hub from vandalism.
- 7.13 There are decorative panels on the side of the building to improve the appearance and give character and identity.

Landscaping

- 7.14 The access track, car parking, paths and area surrounding the community hub building shall be surfaced in hop path material with a speckled dark grey colour. This shall have low visual impact. The naturalistic play area shall consist of wooden play equipment, mounds of earth and boulders to climb on. This has a low visual impact and will be in keeping with the character of the park. There shall be some trees planted to the south of the play area to provide screening.

Access

- 7.15 Access to the park shall be improved by resurfacing the access track, car parking and footpaths with hop path material. The current condition of the access track is very poor and this resurfacing shall make it easier for all users to visit the park. The additional of two disabled parking spaces to improve accessibility for disabled people.
- 7.16 The proposed building is located on one of the few flat areas of the park and is also close to an existing access off Barrowfield Road. There shall be 7 cycle racks and a bicycle maintenance stand, improving access to the park for cyclists.
- 7.17 The existing site access and car park will be closed during construction. There shall be a road closure to bring in the community hub building onto the site.

Indicative Visualisations

- 7.18 To help visualise the Proposed Development, indicative visualisations are provided below:



Figure 1 Indicative Visualisation - Aerial



Figure 2 Indicative Visualisation - Looking West Towards Development



Figure 3 Indicative Visualisation - Looking East Towards Development



Figure 4 Indicative Visualisation - Looking North Towards Development

8.0 Green Belt Assessment

Policy Context

- 8.1 National planning policy (NPPF 2023, Section 13 Protecting Green Belt Land) refers to the need to consider the potential harm to the Green Belt which may arise from the Proposed Development.
- 8.2 The Site is in the Green Belt covered by Policy GB1 of the Barnsley Local Plan 2019.
- 8.3 The Council has undertaken further work (*The Barnsley Green Belt Review, August 2014*) in reviewing and setting the inner and outer Green Belt boundaries and this report forms part of the local plan's evidence base. There are no proposed changes to the Green Belt boundary that encompasses Phoenix Park to the east of Thurnscoe
- 8.4 NPPF paragraph 137 states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of the Green Belts are their openness and permanence. It is set out in paragraph 148 of the NPPF that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. Paragraph 147 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt, and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations. Paragraph 149 of the NPPF states that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt should be regarded as inappropriate unless they fall within certain specified exceptions.
- 8.5 Paragraph 154 of the NPPF states that the construction of the new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate with reference to several exceptions. Paragraph 154 (b) allows for the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The proposed development is for the erection of a new community hub/café building, the creation of a new naturalistic play area, an extended car park and a resurfaced footpath.

Landscape and Visual Consideration of Green Belt

- 8.6 This section considers the visual effects of openness of the Green Belt and the effects on the purposes of the Green Belt related to landscape and views.

Consideration of the Contribution of the Site to Perception of Green Belt Openness

- 8.7 Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that 'the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence'. PPG sets out the visual aspects that can relate to the perception of openness.

- 8.8 Paragraph 137 of the NPPF further states that the fundamental purpose of Green Belt policy is to keep land permanently open. The concept of 'openness' in this context means the state of being free from development, in the absence of buildings, and relates to the quantum and extent of development and its physical effect on the Site.
- 8.9 The Site is located towards the north-western corner of Phoenix Park which comprises a 64-hectare country park with deciduous woodland. The park lies between the urban edges of Thurnscoe to the west and Goldthorpe to the south, underscoring the importance of maintaining openness as a key purpose of the Green Belt. Phoenix Park is a former colliery that has been reclaimed and landscaped into a country park.
- 8.10 The area of the proposed community hub and play area (the Site) is flat and generally contrasts with Phoenix Park's undulating terrain, which gently ascends to the east and south. The Site comprises open space surrounded by woodland, along with parking, footpaths, and part of Thurnscoe Dike. It is surrounded by additional open space areas and woodland, with industrial development outside the park to the north, east, and south. Locally, the Green Belt is predominantly recreational, encompassing Phoenix Park's public green space, a small woodland block north of Lidget Lane and linear woodland along the Dearne Valley Line. West of the railway, there is a separate Green Belt parcel which is mostly agricultural.
- 8.11 Visibility into the Site from the surrounding area is very limited due to the enclosing woodland, while views from within the park are confined to its north-west region. The proposed community hub and play area would primarily be visible from walking paths within Phoenix Park, close to the proposed development and from the tops of elevated mounds in the west. Visibility inside the park will generally be limited to a distance of approximately 200m to the south, as the terrain falls screening the Site. From the vehicular entrance along Barrowfield Road, the car park will remain visible, while the café would be screened by intervening vegetation. Urban influences are noticeable when looking to the north and south from the Site, marked by the rooftops of industrial and business units. There is also noise and traffic intrusion from the A635 to the south of Phoenix Park.
- 8.12 Any building by its very form will have some impact on openness of Green Belt. But in the context of Phoenix Park and its surroundings and screening, the impact upon openness is very restricted and overall, it is preserved. Any potential impacts upon openness are outweighed by the strong community benefits of providing a community meeting space and enhancing the green space.
- 8.13 An assessment of the Site's contribution to the specific purposes of the Green Belt is considered below.

Assessment of Site's Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

- 8.14 Paragraph 138 of the NPPF states that the Green Belt serves five purposes. These are:
- 8.15 *Purpose 1: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- 8.16 *Purpose 2: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*

- 8.17 *Purpose 3: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- 8.18 *Purpose 4: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
- 8.19 *Purpose 5: To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

8.20 The relevant landscape and visual aspects of each of the purposes of Green Belt are considered in turn below.

Purpose 1: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

8.21 The Site is within Parcel DE7: Land to the south east of Thurnscoe, which has been identified to protect the openness of the landscape.

8.22 In terms of 'the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas', the proposed development is a small and discrete parcel of land in an extensive area of Green Belt surrounding Thurnscoe. The parcel is presently in recreational use and the proposed development would expand on existing park infrastructure to strengthen its use. Whilst the north-west corner of the park is relatively open, the Site is reasonably well contained and surrounded by dense vegetation along its northern and eastern boundaries. Existing vegetation along Thurnscoe Dike contributes to the strength of these boundaries, as the Dike serves as a distinct physical landscape feature, ensuring the Green Belt is able to continue fulfilling this purpose.

Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

8.23 Thurnscoe and Goldthorpe are distinctly defined settlements either side of the A635, predominantly surrounded by agricultural land.

8.24 Although this parcel is reported as being vital for maintaining a '*largely essential gap*' between Goldthorpe and Thurnscoe, the proposed development represents only a very small area within this gap and is set along its edge, limiting any real sense of coalescence. The proposed development does not reflect the surrounding industrial or urban development and would not encourage further development of these types. Overall, the development of the Site would not give rise to effects on the perception of separation, individual character, and identity of either of these settlements.

Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

8.25 The Site is within the East Dearne Settled Arable Slopes LCA which is characterised by large open arable farmland with varied topography consisting of low-lying ground and elevated undulations. The Site is not part of the surrounding agricultural landscape and is set within the gentle slopes of Phoenix Park which does not exhibit a clear rural character. Despite the site's high sense of openness, woodland along the northern and eastern boundaries would restrict the far-reaching views typical of the landscape and provide a firm barrier preventing unmanaged encroachment beyond the development's extent. Development of the Site would encourage greater access to the countryside for nearby residents through the provision of outdoor facilities in Phoenix Park.

Purpose 4: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 8.26 The Site is not located between or near any historic settlements and, as such, does not interfere with any protected views, landscapes, or areas of historic value. As a result, preserving the historical setting is not a purpose served by this Site.

Purpose 5: to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

- 8.27 The proposed development would not recycle derelict land but would involve the reuse and resurfacing of the existing car park, which is visible from Barrowfield Road. The remainder of the development occupies land east of the car park, making better use of this open space, which does not form the predominant current recreational area for visitors in the park and is mainly cut off from the main park area by Thurnscoe Dike. This development would complement existing amenities in Phoenix Park (a climbing wall and carved animals) by providing a new community hub, play area and improved parking and footpath links.

Summary

- 8.28 The Site is in the Green Belt. The Proposed Development would give rise to very limited harm to openness as it is well-contained and would not lead to unrestricted sprawl on the Site due to its strong physical boundaries. There would not be any perception of towns or settlements merging and there would be very low level of harm to the purpose of protecting the countryside from encroachment due to the enclosed nature of the Site. There would be no material harm to the setting of nearby settlements as a result of their historical insignificance. There would be a neutral effect on encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land, although the proposed development will enhance the recreational facilities already present in the park.

Green Belt Exception

- 8.29 The proposed development meets the definition of NPPF Paragraph 154 (b) that allows for the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 8.30 The proposed use shall be used for people using Phoenix Park for the purposes of outdoor sport and recreation. The community hub building shall improve the outdoor recreation function of the green space. The community hub provides a space for community groups to have a base to facilitate outdoor sport and recreation activities by providing shelter during poor weather, storage for any equipment and toilets to enable groups to stay at the park for longer.
- 8.31 The Proposal would enhance the outdoor sport and recreation function for general park users too, by attracting more visitors, bringing in a greater range of people and increasing the amount of time people spend at the park.

- 8.32 As discussed on the section on Green Space, the café and toilet facilities shall attract a greater number of visitors to the park and encourage people to stay for longer. The resurfacing of the access and parking and the provision of cycling facilities shall improve accessibility for people visiting the park for outdoor recreation. The new play area shall encourage outdoor recreation through active play. All these improvements shall enhance the outdoor sport and recreation use of the park.
- 8.33 Also discussed in the Green Space section, a range of community groups have been asked how the proposed development will help them and how they would use the new space. Most of the email responses from the community groups are in Appendix A. Their responses are summarised in the Green Space section and how the groups shall use the proposed development for specifically outdoor sport and recreation is summarised below:
- A space for Green Gym Volunteers to store stools, have toilet facilities and have breaks.
 - A wider range of wellbeing activities will be supported such as nature journaling and foraging.
 - The orienteering course could be promoted wider with a community building on site.
 - Dearne Valley Family Centre provide sports equipment at Phoenix Park during school holidays for families to come and use for free. This might include footballs and nets, badminton sets, volley-ball nets etc.
 - Storage of equipment, a space to change footwear, access to toilets, access to free drinking water will enable holiday clubs to stay longer and do more activities such as walking the trails, picnics and football.
 - What's Your Move Festival can be hosted on the site, which showcasing a multitude of sports and physical activities that are on offer in the area.
 - Social physical activity such as cuppa and a walk, litter pick and bacon butties etc to give more incentive for physical activity and social connection.
 - Park Run with a regular bank of volunteers shall use the facility as a base.
 - RampUp activity delivering confidence building through cycling activations for children and younger people from balance bikes to BMX.
 - Scooter skills programme, to again develop confidence and enable young people to choose to travel actively.
 - Bike Maintenance - we can perform free bike checks and maintenance to give people confidence that their bike is safe and in a usable condition.
 - Walk programme using the cafe as a hub and meeting location for walking activity that we can host in Phoenix Park.
 - Health walks - more accessible for older people with use of toilets and place indoors to sit down.
- 8.34 These uses by community groups demonstrate that the development shall be directly used for outdoor sport and recreation, meeting the exception of the NPPF.
- 8.35 The proposed playground also meets the NPPF para 154 definition of outdoor recreation by providing a place for children to play and exercise. It shall help attract parents of young children to visit the park by providing facilities aimed at children.

- 8.36 NPPF para 154 also says that these facilities should preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This has been demonstrated in the section above on Landscape and Visual Consideration of Green Belt.
- 8.37 Visibility into the Site from the surrounding area is very limited due to the enclosing woodland, while views from within the park are confined to its north-west region. Visibility inside the park will generally be limited to a distance of approximately 200m to the south, as the terrain falls screening the Site. From the vehicular entrance along Barrowfield Road, the car park will remain visible, while the café would be screened by intervening vegetation.
- 8.38 Therefore this limited visibility of the Proposed Development means that the openness of the Green Belt shall be preserved.
- 8.39 The Assessment of Site's Contribution to Green Belt Purposes section above has demonstrated that the Proposal has no conflict with the purposes of Green Belt. The Site is well contained, strong Green Belt boundaries are maintained, separation of neighbouring towns is maintained, woodland prevents unmanaged encroachment beyond the development's extent and the Proposal would continue enhancing the green space which was formerly a colliery.

9.0 Conclusion

- 9.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the erection of a community hub/café building, naturalistic play area, extended car park and resurfaced footpath ('the Proposed Development') at Phoenix Park, Thurnscoe, Barnsley ('the Application Site').
- 9.2 The application is submitted on behalf of The Land Trust ('the Applicant') with the following description of development being applied for:
- "Erection of a community hub/café building with surrounding hop path surfacing and fencing; naturalistic play area, extended car park, resurfacing improvements of current access and parking area and new footpath"*
- 9.3 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that decisions on planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan for Barnsley Council and this has been demonstrated through the policy analysis which supports the proposals.
- 9.4 The Proposed Development will provide a valued community use and enhance the function of green space at Phoenix Park. The Proposal meets the NPPF definition of an exception to inappropriate development within the Green Belt by being for outdoor sport and recreation, preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 9.5 The technical assessments and reports which support the application identify any potential impacts of the Proposed Development on the Application Site and the surrounding area. These reports identify that the Proposed Development would not give rise to any significant adverse impacts.
- 9.6 In the absence of any adverse impacts that outweigh the benefits of the scheme, and that the proposed development is not in conflict with the development plan, we would urge that the development be approved.

APPENDIX A: Community Group Emails

Sport and Physical Activity Team Email 1

A few bullet points to highlight potential for activities;

- What's Your Move festival - similar to a model we are hosting at Dorothy Hyman and Thurnscoe sports ground this summer, showcasing a multitude of sports / physical activities that are on offer in the area, I've attached a draft flyer to give you an idea. This would be using the cafe as a hub and basing all activities around the cafe / wider park area. This might be an annual event or events focussed around school holidays.
- Community based physical activity - if there is demand and need from the community we can utilise the facility to deliver activities centred around health and exercise, this might range from chair-based exercise, boxercise and other forms of low-impact based activities. The activities might be delivered by partners or ourselves and would only exist to fill any identified gaps in current provision within the area. These could easily run on a weekly basis.
 - I don't envisage the facility being a place for regular team sports, that is why the focus would largely be on exercise and social engagements.
- Social physical activity - cuppa and a walk, litter pick and bacon butty's etc. giving people an incentive for doing some form of physical activity. Allowing the physical activity element to almost become secondary.
- parkrun - again if community appetite is there as you would need a regular bank of volunteers to help deliver this but could be another weekly activity that takes place within the park and will give the facility a USP.

Our team

- RampUp activity delivering confidence building through cycling activations for children and younger people from balance bikes to BMX.
- Scooter skills programme, to again develop confidence and enable young people to choose to travel actively.
- Bike Maintenance - we can perform free bike checks and maintenance to give people confidence that their bike is safe and in a usable condition.
- Walk programme using the cafe as a hub and meeting location for walking activity that we can host in Phoenix Park.

All of the above would be dependant on cost unless there is food / beverages involved all of our facility hire at the minute we don't pay a penny for and would receive this in-kind, mainly because of the mutual outcomes that we would be looking to achieve, or because it is a BMBC facility.

Any further questions, please ask 😊

Sport & Physical Activity Officer

Sport and Physical Activity Team

Barnsley Council

Sport and Physical Activity Team Email 2

From: [REDACTED]@barnsley.gov.uk
Sent: Thursday, July 11, 2024 2:43 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Phoenix Park Community Hub & Cafe_Planning Application, supporting statements

Warning: This email was sent from outside the organisation.

Utilising the space for any sports events or meetings (depends on price) as we get free space at the moment but we have a lot of meetings
Could publise the space for external partners , we do hav a lot of people ask about meetings rooms

Thank you

[REDACTED]
Dearne Area Council Manager
Public Health and Communities Directorate
Stronger, Safer, Healthier Business Unit
Dearne Area Team
Goldthorpe Lift Centre
Goldthorpe Green

The Conservation Volunteers Email

Hi [REDACTED]

Please find below some supporting information for the phoenix park project.
TCV are the managing partner for the Land Trust on Phoenix Park.
The site is extremely busy in the middle of both Goldthorpe and Thurnscoe. It is used by a lot of the Community.
A community building would

- Allow us to have a space for the green gym volunteers, for tools, toilets and breaks
- Act as a social area for the variety of groups run on the site
- Be a base to run green angel training courses from
- Allow us to run corporate days on site - as toilet provisions, cafe
- Will help improve physical and mental health by having a community space on site.
- it will allow a wider range of activities and opportunities to take part on the site. eg woodland craft events and wellbeing events
- Will be able to attract a wider age group due to the toilet facilities and rooms available.
- Our Community Woodland at Kiveton is a lot busier currently due to the toilet facilities next door. we have larger school groups and events accessing the site.
- The orienteering course could be promoted wider if there was a community building on site.

Is that ok? - do you need any further information

Thanks



[REDACTED]
Operations Leader

t: [REDACTED]

m: [REDACTED]

The Conservation Volunteers
TCV South Yorkshire, 7 Bullrush Grove, Doncaster DN4 8SL

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

Station House Email 1

From: childcare@shouse.org.uk <childcare@shouse.org.uk>
Sent: 08 November 2022 15:04
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Phoenix Park, Barrowfield Rd, Thurnscoe

Hi [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is away by we work together so rather than make you wait I will reply ☺

- What size group might typically visit Phoenix Park from Station House? **Normally anywhere from 10 -25 , age ranging from 2-11years**
-
- What features would make a group visit easier to manage, e.g. space for coats / muddy footwear, toilets & hand-washing, storage space for environmental education materials...
- **Toilets are a number on item, preferably with a bit of space in them (sometimes staff need to help children and tiny cubicles are a nightmare). Access to the toilets without having to go through a café area is outstanding, when you are just playing, a quick dash to an outside door is so much easier than going through a building.**
A cloakroom for coats bags etc is always welcome, changing footwear is a nightmare, so lots of really good pre entry mat/boot cleaners and a surface in the area that can be easily cleaned means we don't have to change footwear. Carrying 25 spare inside shoes and the changing into them and then back into boots is horrific. At Wentworth garden centre play area, they have a tap outside to clean feet/boots etc (they also have a great adventure play area, highly recommended for a visit, probably the best multi age play area I have seen).
In a perfect world, we don't want to carry equipment (we have our hands full keeping an eye on the kids!) so anywhere that provides equipment/maps/activities are the best places for us.
Access to free drinking water is always good.
When we visit, if we have a dedicated area it makes things 100 times easier.
We need clarity about what we can expect, some places have dedicated staff to support visits, other places just have staff who serve food and drinks
We don't mind being outside but cover is nice.

The children who would probably be the best to help you with play equipment are our after school club children , we can arrange a focus group from 3.45 any day (Monday to Friday)

I don't work Wednesdays, but apart from then happy to chat any time: if I get any more inspiration I will email you ☺

[REDACTED]
Chief Executive

Station House Email 2

Current usage of Phoenix Park and its barriers

We are a short walk from the park, which should mean that we could be regular visitors but the lack of toilets is a big barrier: we are not close enough to dash back should the need arise. This is even more true of our youngest children (playgroup age 2-4yrs) and those with individual needs. Toilets on site would make a huge difference to how often we feel confident to visit.

When we do visit, we do not always make the most of our time there. We do not have capacity to walk kids and equipment so we arrive empty handed if there was an equipment store we would stay longer and do a wider range of activities.

We have previously enjoyed the climbing wall, the sculptures (we take photos and do a sort of treasure hunt) and use the grassy hills for activities such as egg rolling (getting a bit of science into our play)

We love walking and running up and down the trails, identifying local landmarks and try and do a quick litter pick. (Litter pick would be easier if there was equipment available on site)

We use the open spaces for traditional games such as Statues, football, hide and seek and races.

We have had a quick picnic but again the lack of handwashing and toilets has put us off doing more (we don't mind a bit of muck but there is a limit)

When we combine the number of steps to get there and the number of steps, we take inside the park we would expect that to be in excess of 5 thousand, each child can work at there own pace making it more inclusive.

What we have noted is that if we take the children, families will often visit after. It's a bit of a hidden treasure so newer families in the area are sometime unaware of it

When the new resources are in place we will certainly use it more: we could do session with our playgroup children and their parents to encourage and role model more active play. During our school holiday activities we would use the park for longer sessions.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Station House Community Association

Station House

Lidget Lane

Thurnscoe

Rotherham

Dearne Churches Together Email 1

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, July 30, 2024 2:50 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: PLANNING FOR THE COMMUNITY, PHOENIX PARK, GOLDTHORPE

Warning: This email was sent from outside the organisation.

Hi, [REDACTED]

I have organised events at Phoenix Park on behalf of Dearne Churches Together, and the community fun days we have held there involving 22 different organisations have proved extremely popular with local residents. Having toilet facilities permanently on site would be a massive help in running community events (we have had to hire portable toilets for these events previously, which adds to the cost of these events) and a small building and play area would greatly enhance the site both for general use and for public events. Such amenities would raise the profile of Phoenix Park and would help us to have a central base from which to run events.

Hope that helps,



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