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Application Number:	20/02933/FUL
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Application Type:	Planning FULL
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Proposal Description:	Change of use from open space to enclosed Forest School facility to provide outdoor education and well-being, including security fencing and siting of a metal storage container adjacent to allotments for storage of educational equipment
At:	Woodfield Quarry Amenity Grass Area Woodfield Road Balby Doncaster DN4 8HN

For:	Mrs Ryalls - Wildlings And Wellbeing CIC
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Third Party Reps:	9 objectors, 0 supporters	Parish:	N/A
		Ward:	Balby South

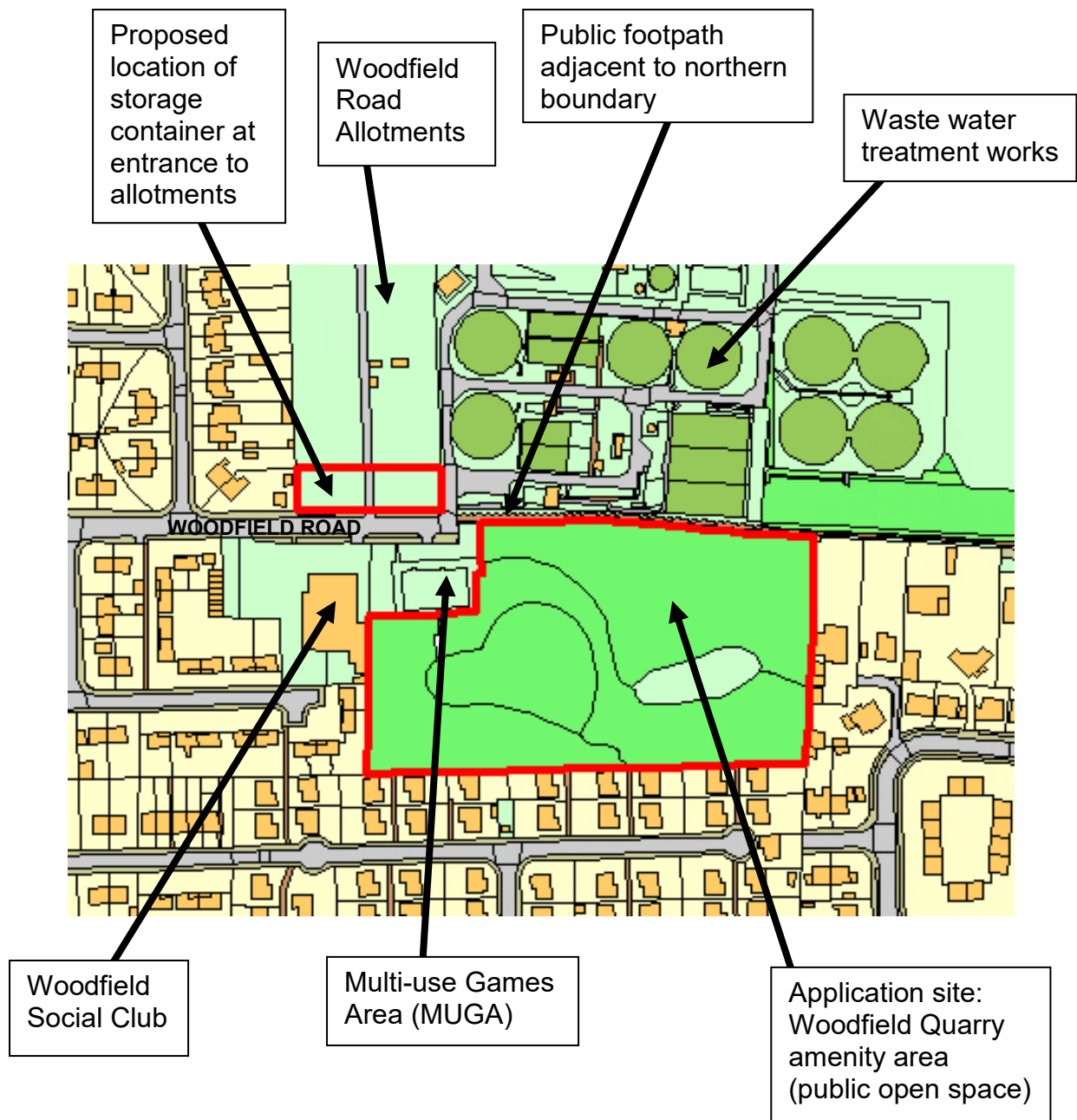
Author of Report:	Jacob George
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SUMMARY

This planning application seeks permission to enclose the existing Woodfield Quarry open space site for use as a 'forest school', providing outdoor educational and recreational activities for children and disadvantaged adults with a focus on nature and wellbeing. A security mesh fence of 2.1 metres in height would be erected at the northern side of the site, and a metal container would be placed inside the entrance to Woodfield Road Allotments to store items required to support the activities of the enterprise. The application is presented to Planning Committee as a departure from the development plan, as it would result in the loss of a publicly accessible open space. The application has also received a significant level of public interest.

It is considered that the proposal would provide social benefits for the local community, improve environmental management of the site, and reduce anti-social behaviour. The loss of a publicly accessible open space can be justified by strong support shown in responses to a community consultation exercise. Overall, there are no material considerations which would indicate that the application should be refused.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT planning permission subject to the imposition of suitable conditions.



1.0 Reason for Report

- 1.1 This application is being presented to Planning Committee as the proposal represents a departure from the development plan, due to the loss of public open space. Upon re-consultation, a significant number of public objections to the development have also been received.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 Planning permission is sought for a change of use from open space to an enclosed 'forest school' facility run by the community interest company Wildlings & Wellbeing CIC (hereafter referred to as 'Wildlings'). Wildlings have been granted a five-year lease by the Council, who is the owner of the land. The site would be used to provide outdoor activities and education for children, including den building, tree climbing, campfire cooking, bushcraft skills, physical exercise, environmental awareness, and crafts using natural resources. The intention is to generate an interest in nature, improve physical activity, and teach transferrable life skills. In addition to activities for children, Wildlings would also run sessions for young adults and parents oriented around healthy eating and sustainability, as well as nature-based mindfulness, eco-therapy and wellbeing activities for adults, including disadvantaged adults.
- 2.2 Wildlings have a five-year plan for the site, which would involve sessions run over a timetable from 10:00 to 19:00, between five and seven days per week. It is proposed to provide open access to the site for at least 24 days per year, allowing locals to visit a community garden within the site.
- 2.3 The application proposes the erection of a fence at the north and north-west of the amenity area, which would restrict public access to the space in order to safeguard participants in the Wildlings sessions, as well as deterring anti-social behaviour. The type of fencing originally proposed was stainless steel palisade security fencing of 2.0 metres in height, but this has since been amended to anti-climb '358' security mesh fencing of 2.1 metres in height.
- 2.4 A metal storage container of 6.4 metres in length, 2.44 metres in width and 2.44 metres in height would be required to store equipment and resources required to support the activities at the site. This was initially proposed within the amenity area itself, but the applicant has amended the proposal to locate the container on the opposite side of Woodfield Road, at the entrance to the allotments.

3.0 Site Description

- 3.1 The application site is a substantial area of public open space measuring approximately 1.7 hectares in area. The site is a naturally regenerated former sand quarry, and as such the ground levels undulate significantly within the open space. The site has a woodland character, with mature trees providing canopy cover over most of the space. The site has been identified in the Doncaster Local Plan evidence base as being of low quality and low value as an open space.

- 3.2 The site is located in the neighbourhood of Balby, and is surrounded by residential dwellings (mainly bungalows) to the south and east. Immediately to the north of the site is a public footpath, and to the north of the footpath is a waste water treatment works. To the north-west corner of the site is a multi-use games area (MUGA) which would not be included in the land to be enclosed by the fence. To the west of the MUGA is a social club with a substantial area for parking. To the north side of the road is the entrance to Woodfield Road Allotments, and the proposed storage container would be located to the west of the entrance on a piece of land which, on a site visit, was seen to have been used for fly tipping. The storage container would not be sited on any land currently used for growing. The amenity area and sewage works mark the end of Woodfield Road, which is a residential street also providing access to other streets in the suburb. Further to the west, the road is characterised by semi-detached houses and small groups of terraces, and on-street parking is available on both sides of the street.

4.0 Relevant Planning History

Application Reference	Proposal	Decision
96/0136/P	Application for certificate of appropriate alternative development for use of part site for community park / recreation ground (D2) & part site for community complex (D1) / assembly & leisure hall (D2) / community based employment projects (B1) / community shop/laundry (being application under Section 17 of the Land Compensation Act 1961 as amended by the Planning Compensation Act 1991)	Granted 04.03.1996
07/02455/3FUL	Formation of multi-use games area, street lighting, new footway and associated landscaping	Granted 24.09.2007

5.0 Site Allocation

- 5.1 The site is allocated as Open Space, as defined by the Proposals Maps of the Doncaster Unitary Development Plan (adopted in 1998).

- 5.2 In the draft Local Plan, the site is allocated for Open Space, Sport and Recreation.
- 5.3 The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is not considered to be at high risk of flooding.

5.3 Relevant Planning Policies

5.4 National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF)

- 5.5 The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and outlines how local planning authorities should apply these policies. Planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions and the relevant sections are outlined below:
- 5.6 Paragraphs 7-11 establish that all decisions should be based on the principle of a presumption in favour of sustainable development (considering the social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainability).
- 5.7 Paragraph 38 states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 5.8 Paragraph 48 states that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:
- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
 - b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
 - c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 5.9 Paragraphs 54-56 state local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to

planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. The tests are:

- a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in terms;
- b) Directly related to the development; and
- c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

5.10 Paragraph 91 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
- c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

5.11 Paragraph 97 states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

5.12 Paragraph 109 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or if the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

- 5.13 Paragraph 117 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.
- 5.14 Paragraph 124 states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.
- 5.15 Paragraph 127 states that planning decisions should ensure developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character, and will establish or maintain a strong sense of place. Paragraph 127(f) sets out that planning decisions should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 5.16 Paragraph 130 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, taking into account any local design standards or style guides in plans or supplementary planning documents.
- 5.17 Paragraph 170(e) states that planning decisions should prevent new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.
- 5.18 Paragraph 175 sets out how decisions should avoid or mitigate harm to biodiversity and habitats.
- 5.19 Paragraph 178 states that decisions should ensure that:
- a) a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. This includes risks arising from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and any proposals for mitigation including land remediation (as well as potential impacts on the natural environment arising from that remediation);
 - b) after remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and
 - c) adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is available to inform these assessments.

5.20 Core Strategy 2011 - 2028

- 5.21 To the extent that development plan policies are material to an application for planning permission, the decision must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise: see section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
- 5.22 In May 2012, the Local Development Framework Core Strategy was adopted and this replaced many of the policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP); some UDP policies remain in force and will continue to sit alongside Core Strategy Policies until such time as the Local Plan is adopted. The Core Strategy policies relevant to this proposal are set out below.
- 5.23 Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy states that as a means of securing and improving economic prosperity, enhancing the quality of place, and the quality of life in Doncaster, proposals will be supported that contribute to the Core Strategy objectives. Proposals should strengthen communities and enhance their well-being by providing a benefit to the area in which they are located, and ensuring healthy, safe places where existing amenities are protected. Developments should be place-specific in their design and work with their surroundings, protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment. Proposals should also protect local amenity and be well-designed.
- 5.24 Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy requires development to be of a high quality design that contributes to local distinctiveness and that integrates well with its immediate and surrounding local area. Policy CS14(A) sets out the following qualities of a successful place:
1. character – an attractive, welcoming place with its own identity appropriate to the area;
 2. continuity and enclosure of streets and spaces by buildings;
 3. quality, stability, safety and security of private property, public areas and the highway;
 4. permeability – ease of pedestrian movement with good access to local facilities and public transport services;
 5. legibility – a development that is easy to navigate;
 6. adaptability – flexible buildings capable of changing over time;
 7. inclusive – accessible development that meets the needs of as much of the population as possible;

8. vitality – creating vibrant, busy places with a mix of uses where appropriate; and
 9. sustainability – proposals are environmentally responsible and well managed.
- 5.25 Policy CS16 provides for the protection and enhancement of Doncaster's natural environment, including enhancing the borough's ecological networks; protecting nationally and internationally important habitats, sites and species; and enhancing the borough's landscape and trees.
- 5.26 Policy CS17 states that Doncaster's green infrastructure network will be protected, maintained, enhanced and, where possible, extended. Policy CS17(D) supports proposals which make an appropriate contribution to sport, recreation and related community uses.
- 5.27 Saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policies (Adopted 1998)
- 5.28 Policy RL2 of the UDP states that the development, or change of use, of open space not designated as an open space policy area will not be permitted if it would have an adverse impact on the use of the open space for any of the following:
- A) as a facility for casual play
 - B) as a buffer area between incompatible uses
 - C) as a visual/environmental amenity
 - D) as a contribution to the setting of individual buildings or groups of buildings.
 - E) as an area of existing or potential nature conservation interest
 - F) as a link between other open spaces
- 5.29 Policy RL5(3) allocates the application site as open space for recreation purposes, suitable for use as an adventure playground.
- 5.30 Policy ENV59 states that the Council will attach considerable importance to the need to protect existing trees, hedgerows, wetland habitats, watercourses and other natural landscape features, and will require that new developments do not cause an unnecessary loss of trees.
- 5.31 Local Plan
- 5.32 Doncaster Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan to supersede the Core Strategy and UDP. Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that the local planning authority may give weight depending on the stage of the Local Plan and the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given). Taking into account the remaining stages of the local plan process, it is considered that the following levels of weight are appropriate between now and adoption dependant on the level of unresolved objections:
- Substantial

- Moderate
- Limited

5.33 The Council has now advanced to the latter stages of the examination in public (Regulation 24 stage) and the consultation period on the proposed main modifications concluded on the 21st March 2021. The local planning authority is looking to adopt the Local Plan by summer/autumn 2021. The following emerging policies are considered appropriate in assessing this proposal, and consideration has been given to the level of outstanding objections resulting in appropriate weight attributed to each policy.

5.34 Policy 14 (Promoting Sustainable Transport in New Developments) states that new development shall make appropriate provision for access by sustainable modes of transport to protect the highway network from residual vehicular impact. The Council will work with developers to ensure that appropriate levels of parking provision are made in accordance with the standards contained within Appendix 6 of the Local Plan. Development should not result in unacceptable impacts on highway safety, or the severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network. Developers must consider the impact of new development on the existing highway and transport infrastructure. This policy has limited weight based on the volume of objections.

5.35 Policy 42 (Character and Local Distinctiveness) states that development proposals will be supported where they:

1. recognise and reinforce the character of local landscapes and building traditions;
2. are of a high quality design that contributes to local distinctiveness;
3. respond positively to their context, setting and existing site features, respecting and enhancing the character of the locality; and
4. integrate visually and functionally with the immediate and surrounding area at a settlement, neighbourhood, street and plot scale.

In all cases, applications and design proposals will need to demonstrate an understanding of the context, history, character and appearance of the site, to inform the appropriate design approach. This policy has limited weight based on the volume of objections.

5.36 Policy 48 (Safe and Secure Places) supports developments which are designed in a way that reduces the risk of crime. This policy has substantial weight based on the volume of objections.

5.37 Policy 50 (Health) states that the Council will improve and promote strong, vibrant and healthy communities, including requiring development to positively contribute to creating high quality places that support and promote healthy communities and lifestyles; providing good access to leisure facilities, green

space and the countryside; and requiring developments to be designed to encourage and support healthy lifestyles.

5.38 Other material planning considerations

- Development Requirements and Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (adopted 2015)
- National Planning Practice Guidance
- National Design Guide (2019)

6.0 Representations

6.1 This application has been advertised in accordance with Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) as follows:

- Advertised on the Council website
- Notice displayed outside the site
- Press advertisement in the Sheffield Star
- 18 neighbours notified by letter

6.2 The application has been re-advertised on two occasions. Firstly, in February 2021 the application was re-advertised because the red line boundary was extended to include the entrance to the allotment site on the opposite site of Woodfield Road, as the applicant had chosen to re-locate the proposed storage container to this location.

6.3 Secondly, the application was re-advertised in April 2021 as a departure from the development plan, where it had not previously been advertised in this way. As discussed further in this report, through the life of the application the Council has worked with the applicant in discussions regarding the potential imposition of a condition to ensure the site is kept open for public access during daytime hours other than when sessions involving children or vulnerable adults are in progress. It was considered that with the public still able to access the site, the proposal would not have involved a loss of open space and would not have been contrary to the development plan. Following a meeting between the applicant and the planning officers, the applicant made the decision to instead proceed with the proposal on the basis that there would be no requirement to keep the gates open to the public, thus resulting in a loss of open space and rendering the proposal a departure from the development plan (requiring a committee determination rather than an officer delegation). The application was re-advertised accordingly.

6.4 During the initial consultation period, two objections were received, summarised as follows:

- Whilst the outdoor education and well-being initiative is supported, fencing off the area will not make the activities accessible to local people
- Children will have less green space to run around in

- People will lose their local nature walk
 - There is no proposal for parking to support the development
 - Access to green space should not be limited to use by the few
 - The proposal will leave children with nothing to do
 - The proposal should only be for part of the area, not the whole site
- 6.5 In March 2021, seven further objections were received, six of which were exactly identical in their content and wording. The further objections can be summarised as follows:
- Many families use the land to walk their dogs or explore the outdoors
 - Taking down trees and making the use of the site private would be a loss to the community
 - The community has been misinformed about the plans, with more development occurring than just a 'tidy up'
 - Opposed to the destruction of wildlife habitats
- 6.6 The principle of the development, regarding the reduction of public access resulting from enclosing the site with a fence, is discussed in detail in section 9 ('Assessment') of this report. Matters related to the protection of trees and wildlife are also discussed below, and are addressed in responses from the Council's internal consultees.
- 6.7 In terms of misinformation relating to the planning application, the Council has advertised all relevant aspects of the development requiring planning permission: the change of use, the erection of the fence, and the siting of the storage container. The operational development has not yet occurred, and the application is not retrospective, so no planning breaches have occurred. The specifics of the general maintenance of the site are not a planning matter. To the best knowledge of the Council, there has not been any false information distributed to residents.

7.0 Parish Council

- 7.1 The application site does not fall within an area served by a Parish Council.

8.0 Consultations

8.1 Pollution Control

As the historic maps and application form confirm, the site is a former quarry sand pit, which may have been subject to infilling with made ground/waste material previously. Due to the site's isolation, it is also possible that the site could have been used for the fly tipping of waste.

From the information initially submitted, it was unclear how much bare soil was currently on site; whether any vegetation clearance was planned; whether further soils could be exposed; and whether any soils were to be imported.

The Senior Pollution Control Officer requested a Phase 1 land contamination risk assessment, and this was received by the Council on 30 March 2021.

The report has thoroughly risk assessed all the proposed activities' on site, with a view to the "management of exposure to soils". It has considered the risk of potential ground gas affecting the proposed "container" to be brought on to site, and the potential risks to proposed "camp fire" areas. The report concludes the risks posed to future site users are minimal, with no remedial works required, to which the Senior Pollution Control Officer concurs.

It is understood that some soils are to be imported. A condition is requested to ensure all soils are suitable for their proposed use.

8.2 Environmental Health

No objections, subject to daily operating hours within the hours of 09:00 to 20:00. This can be enforced through a condition, and accommodates the applicant's planned timetable within the hours of 10:00 to 19:00 plus some additional flexibility.

8.3 Public Rights of Way Team

There is a public footpath on the northern edge of the site boundary, currently surfaced and accessed through barriers. This path should not be obstructed or reduced in its width, and should remain available for public use. A condition can be applied to ensure the path is not obstructed.

8.4 Highways Development Control (HDC)

HDC have looked at the information provided, site photos, street view images and aerial images. The facility will only be used by and for locals with the added benefits for the local schools in the area. The level of traffic created by the facility would be negligible. Woodfield Road is wide and accommodating for a residential road, and no changes to the highway would be necessary.

8.5 Ecology

In favour of young people being given the chance to experience urban wildlife, with overall positive benefits. No objections, and no ecological conditions necessary.

8.6 Councillor John Healy

Supportive of the application.

8.7 South Yorkshire Police

The area around the site as mentioned in the Design and Access statement is not secure and there is open access from the north and north-west boundary of the property that adjoins the sports facility and multi-use games area

(MUGA), which results in arson, drug use and other anti-social behaviour activities. There is no surveillance from surrounding properties, which leaves the MUGA and proposed site vulnerable to a continuation of this behaviour.

A risk assessment should be undertaken to ascertain what property if any is likely to be left in the containers or in the log cabin when the site is closed. Depending on the property, reasonable steps to mitigate and reduce the risk of attack or theft must be taken.

The palisade fencing originally proposed would provide little in the way of a deterrent. The rivet holding the palings to the cross member can be broken if struck with a hammer and the palings separated, to allow a person to gain entry through the gap. Alternative fencing options were recommended.

On 20 January 2021, the applicant informed the Council that an alternative type of anti-climb mesh fencing would be used. The Designing Out Crime Officer considers this to be far more suitable. The location of the shipping container has also been amended, in part to address issues raised by South Yorkshire Police regarding the lorry transporting the container to the site, and also related to improving surveillance.

8.8 Tree Officer

The benefits of young people being given the chance to experience urban wildlife are positive. From a tree perspective it is advised that some care and additional precautions need to be taken while the site fencing is implemented. These are:

- The holes for the uprights should be hand dug and any roots that are uncovered should be appropriately addressed. Roots smaller than 25 mm diameter may be pruned back, making a clean cut with a suitable sharp tool (e.g. bypass secateurs or handsaw), except where they occur in clumps. Roots occurring in clumps or of 25 mm diameter and over should be severed only following consultation with an arboriculturist, as such roots might be essential to the tree's health and stability.
- Due to the highly alkaline leachate produced during the curing of wet concrete, concrete should not be poured within the root protection area or in close proximity to retained trees unless an impermeable liner has been installed. The liner should be sufficient to allow it protrude from the ground an inch or two to account for the concrete being poured settling in the holes, help avoid spillages and account for a little overflow. Once the concrete is dried, the liner can be cut off at ground level.

The above information can be provided in informatives on a decision notice, and an additional informative is requested in relation to nesting birds and bats.

The Tree Officer highlights that the trees at the site are not protected by a Tree Preservation Order or a Conservation Area, so can be removed or worked on without the approval of the local planning authority. Some trees highlighted in the submitted tree survey appear to be of a low quality and/or have major defects, and there is no objection to their removal. It is understood that Arboricultural Officers within the Council's Street Scene team have already removed some dangerous defected trees.

8.9 Planning Policy

The site is proposed in the Local Plan as open space, and is in the Green Space Audit as Site 95 (Woodfield Quarry) (Amenity). The Rationalising RL5 Policy Areas work, undertaken to sort UDP open space allocations moving forward to the Local Plan, notes it is a "naturally regenerated former sand quarry" (Site RL5(3)). The RL5 work concludes it should be retained as open space, but advises investigation of whether it should become a Local Wildlife Site as it is of low quality and value, unsuitable for unsupervised children's play.

It is not seen as particularly good or useable open space, but is an open space nonetheless. The loss of access to open space is contrary to policy RL2 of the UDP and emerging Local Plan policy.

Consultation has been carried out with ward councillors and the Neighbourhoods Team, which is positive. It is considered that the proposal will result in an improved alternative facility, but public consultation is required to ensure that the loss of access to the open space is acceptable with the local community, and that support is forthcoming from local residents. This is standard procedure to comply with paragraph 97 of the NPPF.

The proposal will not result in the loss of green infrastructure and would more than likely lead to improved management and maintenance on the site, which is a positive site benefit and is in accordance with policy CS17. The management and maintenance of the site should be for both environmental educational benefit and improved biodiversity.

A temporary approval is recommended for any storage container, as storage units of these kinds can deteriorate and become unsightly over time. This would provide the applicants with a timescale to consider a more aesthetic and permanent structure, should the venture be successful.

As discussed below, the requested community consultation exercise has since been carried out in response to the comments from Planning Policy.

8.10 **Ramblers Association**

No comments received.

9.0 **Assessment**

9.1 The main issues for consideration under this application are as follows:

- The Principle of the Development
- Access to Open Space
- Safety and Security
- Residential Amenity
- Design and Visual Impact
- Highway Safety and Parking
- Trees and Ecology
- Land Contamination Risk

9.2 For the purposes of considering the balance in this application, planning weight is referred to in this report using the following scale:

- Substantial
- Considerable
- Significant
- Moderate
- Modest
- Limited
- Little or no

The Principle of the Development

9.3 The site is allocated as Open Space in the UDP, as site (3) of the allocations set out in policy RL5. The site is identified as a former sand quarry “suitable for an adventure playground”.

9.4 Doncaster Council conducted a Green Space Audit (GSA) in July 2013, originally intended to contribute towards the evidence for a new Sites and Policies Development Plan Document which was never adopted. The GSA now contributes towards the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan, which will supersede both the UDP and the Core Strategy when adopted.

9.5 The application site is addressed as site 95 in the GSA, and is categorised as ‘Amenity (other)’. The GSA describes amenity areas as public open spaces that improve and enhance the appearance of the local environment. Generally, amenity areas are either unsuitable for recreational use or recreational use is prohibited, and as a result they are distinct from informal open space suitable for children’s play. ‘Amenity (other)’ is a category which includes areas which

are Council owned and capped landfill sites used for passive recreation such as dog walking. The site falls within the character area of Balby, which is identified as having sufficient public parks and allotments overall, but being deficient in woodland and nature conservation areas.

- 9.6 In 2019, the Council published a further study to support the Local Plan preparation, entitled *Assessing and Rationalising UDP RL5 Policy 'Open Space Proposals'*. The purpose of this work was to analyse each allocated open space site in the UDP in turn according to up-to-date information, resulting in a recommendation for how each site should be designated or modified in the Local Plan.
- 9.7 This report identifies the Woodfield Quarry site as being overgrown and requiring management, being of low value and very low quality. Despite the allocation in the UDP for adventure play, it is deemed in the report that the site is unsuitable for unsupervised children's play, due to the nature of the site including its isolated characteristics, as it is not overlooked by houses. It is recommended that the site retain its designation as open space, but be allocated for nature conservation rather than adventure play.
- 9.8 With the open space designations in RL5 being somewhat out of date due to the updated assessments in the GSA and the 2019 rationalisation work, policy RL2 of the UDP becomes relevant until such time as the Local Plan is adopted. This policy states that the development or change of use of open space not designated as an Open Space Policy Area (which is distinct from an open space designation in policy RL5) will not be permitted if it would have an adverse impact of the use of the open space for casual play; as a buffer between incompatible uses; as a visual/environmental amenity; as a contribution to the setting of buildings; as an area of nature conservation interest; or as a link between other open spaces.
- 9.9 The change of use of Woodfield Quarry to a 'forest school' would not be considered to harm the nature conservation value of the site due to improved management, and the proposal would support children's play. However, with the site being fenced off, only organised activities would occur, resulting in the site no longer being available for "casual play". Whilst the site would not be built on and would be retained for recreational purposes which are generally in accordance with the purposes of open space policy, the space would no longer be publicly accessible by any persons not attending a session organised by Wildlings. The loss of a publicly accessible open space available for *casual*, as opposed to organised, play is therefore contrary to policy RL2. Consequently, the proposed development represents a departure from the development plan.
- 9.10 Paragraph 97 of the NPPF, being more up-to-date than the UDP, is relevant to this application and states that existing open space should not be built on unless:
- a) an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or

- b) the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- c) the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

- 9.11 Whilst the only actual building work would be the erection of the boundary fence, this paragraph does still apply to the proposed development, particularly as the proposal would involve the open space ceasing to be publicly accessible. Policy 28 of the draft Local Plan (which has limited weight) states that proposals involving the loss of open space will only be supported in accordance with national policy, and where community support can be demonstrated through public consultation. A public engagement exercise can be considered to address criterion a) of paragraph 97 of the NPPF, as positive community feedback to a development proposal can be considered to demonstrate that the open space is 'surplus to requirements'.
- 9.12 As discussed further below, a public consultation exercise has been carried out which satisfactorily demonstrates a majority of public support for the proposal, satisfying criterion a) of paragraph 97. Criterion c) is also considered to be relevant, as the 'forest school' activities can be considered to be an alternative recreational provision. For reasons discussed in detail below, the benefits of this alternative recreational proposal can be considered to outweigh the loss of the publicly accessible open space in this case.
- 9.13 Overall, the proposal represents a departure from the development plan in that it will result in the loss of a publicly accessible open space. However, the NPPF outlines that the development of an open space can be acceptable where the site is demonstrated to be surplus to requirements, and where the benefits of an alternative recreational proposal outweigh the loss of the open space. As discussed in detail below, the proposal is considered to bring notable benefits which would meet this national policy criteria, and the principle of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable on balance, despite being contrary to policy RL2 of the UDP.

9.14 SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Access to Open Space

- 9.15 The main consideration in relation to this application is the justification of the loss of a publicly accessible open space. As outlined above, the site's allocation for use as an adventure playground in policy RL5 of the UDP is considered to be out of date, and policy RL2 is therefore relevant. The loss of publicly accessible open space is contrary to policy, and therefore requires robust justification in line with the NPPF.
- 9.16 As discussed in section 6 of this report, the application was not originally advertised as a departure from the development plan, as the applicant and the Council were engaging in discussions regarding an arrangement to ensure the

gates to the site were left open to the public during daytime hours at which organised sessions were not in progress (meaning that there would not have been a loss of open space in planning policy terms). During these discussions, the applicant expressed to the Council that the purpose of the Wildlings enterprise is to improve the quality of the space and provide educational and wellbeing opportunities for the community, rather than to privatise the space, hence an initial willingness to maximise accessibility where possible. However, the applicant eventually decided that they would prefer to proceed to the determination of the application without any condition requiring the gates to be left open for a specified period of time, as the management of the opening and closing of the gates at the appropriate times would simply be too complex for the small organisation, and they were increasingly concerned about anti-social behaviour. The Council must now, therefore, assess whether a loss of public access to the open space can be justified in this case.

- 9.17 As outlined in section 2 of this report, the aim of the Wildlings group is to provide outdoor education and wellbeing activities, primarily for children but also for adults in some cases. The sessions will focus on nature conservation, and the applicant is committed to restoring and managing the site. Wildlings is a Community Interest Company, meaning that the group is not conducted for private gain, and any surplus or assets are used principally for the benefit of the community.
- 9.18 Wildlings have already begun operating some sessions at the site, which is not considered to be a breach of planning control as the site has not yet been enclosed by the fence and is still available as a public open space. At present, Wildlings are running sessions for free and aim to continue to provide free sessions, or at least to keep prices to an absolute minimum, as long as the funding for this is in place. The group has stated that they aim to obtain contract work with schools and other charities, and to run some paid-for sessions for families from more affluent areas, which would enable them to keep costs low and provide free places for disadvantaged children. The project will also bring social value by providing volunteering opportunities, as well as teaching children to respect nature, in turn ensuring the site is better cared for in the future.
- 9.19 As identified in the Rationalising RL5 work conducted in 2019, the Woodfield Quarry site is considered to be of low value and very low quality, inappropriate for casual play. The site has some biodiversity value, but requires management. The analysis states that the site “may have a higher value if managed for nature conservation”, and the Wildlings enterprise can be considered to bring the community management that the site needs. The site has seen a variety of anti-social behaviour including fires, littering, fly-tipping and drug use, as seen in a multitude of photographic evidence which has been provided to the case officer. Whilst erecting a fence would limit public access to the site, it would allow for far better management of the site and would deter anti-social behaviour which has been to the detriment of the area and is considered to discourage local people from making use of the site at present.

- 9.20 Whilst the proposal is not in accordance with policy RL2 in the sense that it would result in the loss of publicly accessible open space, the site would still remain in recreation use, and the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the use of the space “as an area of existing or potential nature conservation interest”. In fact, the nature conservation value of the site is likely to be improved by proper management.
- 9.21 Paragraph 97(c) states that the development of an open space for alternative sports and recreational provision may be acceptable if the benefits clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use. In this case, it is considered that the benefits do outweigh the loss: the Wildlings activities will bring social value in providing character-building activities for children and disadvantaged young people. The Council’s Safer Neighbourhoods Team, the ward councillors for Balby and the South Yorkshire Policy Neighbourhood Inspector are all in support of the project and were engaged in discussions over the future of the site prior to submission of the planning application. It is agreed, overall, that the site is not currently well-used and that the Wildlings activities would improve the area. Therefore, the scheme is considered to be in accordance with paragraph 97(c).
- 9.22 Paragraph 97(a) of the NPPF states that it may be acceptable to build on open space where an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space to be surplus to requirements. The GSA has found Balby to be deficient in woodland and nature conservation areas, but well-served by public parks and allotments. The siting of the container at the entrance to the Woodfield Road allotments would not result in the loss of any growing space, and there are sufficient allotments in the area in any case. In terms of places for the community to enjoy playing and walking outdoors, there is adequate alternative space available in public parks and so the loss of public access to the Woodfield Quarry site can be tolerated. The use of the site as a well-managed ‘forest school’ would be likely to improve the woodland and nature conservation value of the site. Overall, in terms of publicly accessible open space, the GSA can be considered to appropriately demonstrate that the Woodfield Quarry site is surplus to requirements as a publicly accessible space.
- 9.23 Nonetheless, the Council considered that a community consultation exercise would be necessary to further support an assertion that the site is surplus to requirements, and therefore requested that the applicant distribute a questionnaire to all properties within a 200 metre radius of the site. The applicant has complied with this request, and actually increased the number of properties surveyed beyond that requested by the Council, leafleting 319 properties in total. The consultation ended on 31 January 2021 with 90 questionnaires returned, representing a response rate of 28%. It is not unreasonable to assume that those residents who did not respond to the questionnaire had little interest in the future of the Woodfield Quarry site.
- 9.24 Of the responses received, 86.7% stated that they did not currently use the site for any purpose (including sports, play and dog walking). 93.3% of the respondents stated that they would support the development of the site. Where residents were invited to provide any additional comments, the most common

theme raised by respondents was that the area is currently too unsafe to use due to anti-social behaviour, explaining why the enclosure and management of the area was supported by the majority.

- 9.25 Of the few negative comments received, the main concerns were that a small number of residents would miss walking their dog in the area, and that residents would not want to pay to use the site. There have also been some objections submitted directly to the Council, similarly raising concerns about limiting public access to the open space, as well as accusing the Wildlings group of harming local habitats and trees. Six of the objections received were identical in content and wording.. Wildlings is not a profit-driven organisation, and as outlined above, the sessions are largely free to attend where possible. The group has a nature conservation focus, and maintenance works undertaken at the site so far are considered to be in the interests of improving the environment. The nine objections received directly to the Council are clearly outweighed by the overwhelmingly positive response from the majority of the 90 respondents to the questionnaire.
- 9.26 It is considered, on balance, that the site can be deemed surplus to requirements in its current use, given the largely positive results of the widespread community consultation exercise, the support of local politicians and other Council departments, and the findings of the GSA and the Rationalising RL5 work. The proposal is therefore in full accordance with criteria a) and c) of paragraph 97 of the NPPF, and it is considered that the loss of a publicly accessible open space can be justified in this case. Whilst the site would not be available for residents to access at any time, it would be better managed and more secure, and the activities run by the Community Interest Organisation would be more beneficial for the community overall.

Safety and Security

- 9.27 As alluded to above, the application site has unfortunately fallen victim to numerous incidences of anti-social behaviour, harming the local environment and reducing the quality of the open space. The community consultation responses highlighted that many residents would feel too unsafe to visit the Woodfield Quarry site for this reason. The applicant has provided photographic evidence to the case officer on numerous occasions, indicating the damage being done through fires, fly-tipping, and malicious acts such as destroying a bee hive. This anti-social behaviour is one of the primary motivations for enclosing the site with a fence, along with the need to safeguard children attending the Wildlings sessions.
- 9.28 Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, chapter 8 of the NPPF, and policy 48 of the draft Local Plan all place an emphasis on ensuring places are safe, including reducing the risk of crime. The erection of a fence can therefore be supported in line with the above policies, as it would be expected to reduce crime at the site and secure the area for effective management. South Yorkshire Police have provided guidance regarding the fencing specification, and the palisade fencing originally proposed has now been amended to anti-climb '358' security mesh fencing of 2.1 metres in height, which is considered to provide better

protection. The proposed storage container has also been relocated so as to sit adjacent to the entrance to the allotments on the north side of Woodfield Road, where it would be more publicly visible and would therefore benefit from improved surveillance to deter theft. Overall, the proposal is considered to be positive in terms of deterring crime and improving the safety of local residents.

Residential Amenity

- 9.29 Policies CS1 and CS14 of the Core Strategy, along with paragraph 127(f) of the NPPF, require developments to ensure a good standard of amenity for residents. In this case, the only operational development would be the erection of the fence and the siting of a storage container, neither of which would have any effect on the light, outlook or privacy enjoyed by inhabitants of nearby properties.
- 9.30 The proposal for a 'forest school' at the Woodfield Quarry site would likely intensify the use of the space, with organised activities potentially generating a higher level of noise. However, this would occur during the daytime only, and a condition can be applied to ensure that organised activities occur only between the hours of 09:00 and 20:00, which is considered by the Council's Environmental Health to be acceptable in terms of preventing disturbance to neighbours. Outside these hours, it is likely that the gates would be closed and the site inaccessible to the public, which would reduce the likelihood of disturbance at anti-social hours in comparison to the current situation. Overall, the proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of residential amenity.

Conclusion on Social Impacts

- 9.31 Despite being contrary to policy RL2 of the NPPF, the proposed change of use to a 'forest school' would be acceptable overall in accordance with paragraph 97 of the NPPF, as the loss of public space is justified through strong community support, and the alternative recreational provision is considered to provide considerable social benefits compared to the largely un-loved open space currently available. The proposal would improve safety and security at the site, and noise-generating activities would be limited to acceptable daytime hours so as not to cause disruption to neighbours' residential amenity. Therefore, the development would also be in accordance with policies CS1 and CS14 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 127 of the NPPF. The social impact of the development is considered to be acceptable overall.

9.32 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Design and Visual Impact

- 9.33 Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy and paragraph 127 of the NPPF require developments to display a high quality of design, integrating well into the local context.

- 9.34 The application site is located at the end of Woodfield Road and is not of any special visual character, with the adjacent waste water treatment plant giving a largely utilitarian and industrial aesthetic. The woodland character of the Woodfield Quarry amenity site softens the appearance of the area. The erection of a fence would not be considered to be a positive addition in design terms, but neither would it be considered to harmfully detract from the character of the area. The design of the fence has been revised for security reasons, but amending the proposal to mesh-style fencing also has positive benefits for the impact on the character of the area. This fencing would be less heavy in appearance than the palisade fencing originally proposed, and would not block views of the woodland behind. It can also be coloured green (secured through condition) in order to blend in with the woodland character of the site. In the context of the proximity to the waste water treatment plant, a tall fence is considered acceptable in this case, and any visual harm can be outweighed by the benefits of increasing security at the site.
- 9.35 The proposed storage container would be sited inside the entrance to the allotment site, on a patch of land which is currently unused. On a site visit, it was clear to see that this land is not contributing positively to the street scene, and there was evidence of fly tipping. Therefore, it is not considered that a storage container would cause further harm to local character. Furthermore, a condition is recommended so that permission for the storage container is temporary for a period of five years, in order to address the possibility of a metal container deteriorating over time.
- 9.36 In terms of the use of the Woodfield Quarry site itself, the improved environmental management would be considered beneficial for the character of the area, as the woodland would be better maintained. This would enhance the quality and appearance of the site overall, which is positive for local character. Overall, the development is acceptable in terms of visual impact.

Highway Safety and Parking

- 9.37 Part 3 of policy CS14(A) of the Core Strategy emphasises the importance of the “quality, stability, safety and security of private property, public areas and the highway”.
- 9.38 The proposal does not involve any additional parking to support the ‘forest school’ activities. However, this is considered to be acceptable, as it is envisaged that many of the participants will be local to the site and would walk to the sessions. Woodfield Road has free on-street parking, and on a site visit the road did not appear to be busy. In historic aerial images and street view images retrieved from Google Earth, there are no snapshots where the street appears to be congested with parked vehicles. Furthermore, it is likely that increased vehicular movements would be fleeting, taking the form of drop-offs and pick-ups rather than additional vehicles parking for long periods of time. Highways Development Control have no objection to the lack of parking to support the change of use, and consider that any increase in traffic would be negligible. The proposal is acceptable in terms of highway safety.

Trees and Ecology

- 9.39 Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy requires developments to protect and enhance the natural environment, and policy CS17 discusses the protection of green infrastructure in the borough. The 'forest school' project has a nature conservation focus, and its general themes are aligned with policies CS16 and CS17 in encouraging respect for the natural environment and providing outdoor recreation opportunities.
- 9.40 Some recent objections have suggested that the proposal would be harmful to the local environment, and that trees are being removed unnecessarily. It is important to note that the trees at the site do not benefit from Tree Preservation Orders or Conservation Area protection, and the local planning authority is therefore unable to enforce their retention. With that said, the applicant has provided full details of all those trees which have been felled, demonstrating that these particular trees were dangerous and defected. The trees were removed by the Council's own Street Scene team, and the local planning authority's Tree Officer is satisfied that any trees removed were of low quality, raising no concerns regarding the works undertaken.
- 9.41 Given that the proposal is for a 'forest school', the Tree Officer is supportive of the proposal overall, as it will provide access to nature and teach children about nature conservation. With the enterprise having a nature-centric focus, it is expected that the remaining trees will be cared for appropriately. The protection of nesting birds and bats is covered under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and the applicant is reminded that any planning decision does not constitute an exemption under the Act. Good practice guidance is provided regarding appropriate methodology for installing the fence without harming tree roots, and this can be provided as an informative. The Council's Ecologist also has no objections to the proposal, welcoming the opportunity to immerse children in nature and wildlife. No ecological conditions are recommended. Overall, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with policies CS16 and CS17 of the Core Strategy, as well as policy ENV59 of the UDP, and the improved environmental management of the site is supported.

Land Contamination Risk

- 9.42 As the site is located on a former sand quarry, Pollution Control raised concerns about intensifying children's play on the site, as the land could be contaminated from infill materials, as well as the fly tipping which has been evident at the site.
- 9.43 A Preliminary Geo-environmental Investigation has now been undertaken, identifying contamination risks and outlining risk reduction actions for various activities to be undertaken at the site. If operated effectively, the risk to participants in the sessions is considered to be acceptable, and the Council's Pollution Control team are satisfied with the measures proposed. A condition is required to ensure that any imported soils are tested for contamination. The proposal is considered to accord with paragraph 178 of the NPPF.

Conclusion on Environmental Issues

- 9.44 The proposed fence and storage container would not have a harmful visual impact, and the proposal would not create any highway safety or parking issues. The environmental management of the site is welcomed, and it is not considered that the proposal would be harmful to trees or wildlife. Land contamination risks are considered to be appropriately managed. Overall, the proposal is in accordance with policies CS1, CS14, CS16 and CS17 of the Core Strategy, policy ENV59 of the UDP, and paragraphs 127 and 148 of the NPPF.

9.45 ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

- 9.46 The proposal would have limited economic benefits, as the Wildlings organisation is not a profit-led enterprise. However, it could be said that the activities will provide children with transferable skills which could help in their future working environments. This could result in a small contribution to building a skilled workforce in the borough, strengthening Doncaster's economic resilience.

Conclusion on Economy Issues

- 9.47 The development would have little economic impact, either positive or negative, and as such the proposal would not be contrary to the economic pillar of sustainable development.

10.0 PLANNING BALANCE & CONCLUSION

- 10.1 In accordance with Paragraph 11 of the NPPF, the proposal is considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Officers have identified no adverse economic, environmental or social harm that would significantly or demonstrably outweigh any benefits identified when considered against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. Whilst the application site would no longer be publicly accessible open space, it would be better utilised to provide children and disadvantaged adults with educational and wellbeing-focused activities to improve their skills and allow them to connect with nature. Environmental management of the site would also be improved. Subject to the recommended conditions, there are no material considerations which indicate that the application should be refused.

11.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 11.1 **MEMBERS RESOLVE TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO THE CONDITIONS BELOW:**

Conditions

01. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

REASON

Condition required to be imposed by Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02.

The development hereby permitted must be carried out and completed entirely in accordance with the terms of this permission and the details shown on the approved plans and documents listed below:

- Location Plan - amended 20 January 2021
- Site Plan - amended 20 January 2021
- Design and Access Statement - received 23 October 2020

REASON

To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application as approved.

03.

The new fencing to the northern boundary as indicated on the approved site plan shall consist of anti-climb '358' security mesh fencing of 2.1 metres in height, coloured green and permanently retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Works to fencing at the southern boundary as indicated on the approved site plan shall consist only of the installation of panels where there are gaps in the existing perimeter fencing.

REASON

To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development, in accordance with Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy.

04.

The storage container hereby permitted shall be present at the site for a limited period being the period of five years from the date of this decision, unless an alternative timescale is otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. At the end of the five-year period, the container hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored in accordance with a scheme previously submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON

To prevent the temporary storage container from deteriorating and become unsightly over time, in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with policy CS14 of the Core Strategy.

05. The storage container hereby approved shall be coloured green during the entirety of the period for which it is present at the site.

REASON

To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development, in accordance with policy CS14 of the Core Strategy.

06. The organised activities hereby approved to take place at the site shall be operated between the hours of 09:00 and 20:00 Monday-Sunday and at no other time.

REASON

To ensure that the development does not prejudice the local amenity.

07. Any soil or soil forming materials brought to site for use in soft landscaping, filling and level raising shall be tested for contamination and suitability for use on site. Proposals for contamination testing including testing schedules, sampling frequencies and allowable contaminant concentrations (as determined by appropriate risk assessment) and source material information shall be submitted to and be approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to any soil or soil forming materials being brought onto site. The approved contamination testing shall then be carried out and verification evidence submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to any soil and soil forming material being brought on to site.

REASON

To secure the satisfactory development of the site in terms of human health and the wider environment and pursuant to guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

08. The Public Right of Way to the north of the application site shall not be obstructed or reduced in width as a result of the proposed development, and shall not be obstructed at any point during the undertaking of the operational works.

REASON

To ensure the Public Right of Way remains free and clear for public access.

Informatives

01. INFORMATIVE

The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Coal Authority on 0345 762 6848.

Further information is also available on the Coal Authority website at:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-coal-authority

Standing Advice valid from 1st January 2021 until 31st December 2022

02. INFORMATIVE

Please be aware that this decision does not constitute an exemption under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to disturb nesting birds or bats and their roosts even when not in use. The felling or pruning of trees or removal of climbing plants such as ivy should not be carried out unless it has been verified that no bat roosts or active bird nests are present within the tree.

03. INFORMATIVE

In the interests of safety and sustainable practice, any tree surgery at the site must be carried out in full accordance with clause 7 (Pruning and related work) and clause 12 (Tree felling and stump management) of British Standard 3998: 2010 (Tree Work - Recommendations) by a reputable and suitably qualified arborist.

04. INFORMATIVE

Due to the proximity of the trees, when deciding the position of the upright fence posts site investigation should be used to determine their optimal location whilst avoiding damage to roots important for the stability of the tree, by means of hand tools or compressed air soil displacement, to the required depth. When roots are uncovered, roots smaller than 25mm diameter may be pruned back, making a clean cut with a suitable sharp tool (e.g. bypass secateurs or handsaw), except where they occur in clumps. Roots occurring in clumps or of 25mm diameter and over should be severed only following consultation with an

arboriculturist, as such roots might be essential to the tree's health and stability.

If concrete is used for the upright posts to support the fence, due to the highly alkaline leachate produced during the curing of wet concrete, concrete should not be poured within the root protection area of trees unless an impermeable liner has been installed. From a trees perspective a design that uses driven in posts or ground screws could be preferable as well as cost-effective.

The above objections, consideration and resulting recommendation have had regard to Article 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention for Human Rights Act 1998. The recommendation will not interfere with the applicant's and/or objector's right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

Appendix 1: Proposed Site Plan



Key :



Sites



Proposed Container
Location 21ft x 8ft



New Fence



New Fence to
fill gaps

Appendix 2: Example of Fencing Type



Appendix 3: Example Storage Container (to be coloured green)

