

Report to: **Planning Committee**
 Date of Meeting: **13 December 2011**
 Report by: **Executive Director (Enterprise Resources)**

Application No HM/11/0476
 Planning Proposal: Formation of a Bespoke Natural Play Area

1 Summary Application Information

- Application Type : Detailed Planning Application
- Applicant : The David Livingstone Trust
- Location : David Livingstone Centre
165 Station Road
Blantyre
G72 9BY

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) Grant Detailed Planning Permission – Subject to Conditions (Based on the Conditions Attached),

2.2 Other Actions/Notes

- (1) The Planning Committee has delegated powers to determine this application.

3 Other Information

- ◆ Applicant's Agent: ERZ Ltd
- ◆ Council Area/Ward: 15 Blantyre
- ◆ Policy Reference(s): **South Lanarkshire Local Plan (adopted 2009)**
Policy STRAT 3 – The Green Belt and Urban Settlements In The Green Belt.
Policy ECON 9 – Tourism Development

◆ Representation(s):

- ▶ 0 Objection Letters
- ▶ 0 Support Letters
- ▶ 0 Comments Letters

◆ Consultation(s):

Environmental Services

Scottish Natural Heritage

Land and Fleet Services (Arboriculture)

Planning Application Report

1 Application Site

- 1.1 The application site extends to approximately 0.3 hectares and is located within the grounds of the David Livingstone Centre. The northern edge of the site adjoins the banks of the River Clyde which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (Bothwell Castle) due to its important woodland and associated bio diversity value. The remaining area of the application site is surrounded by both managed and rough grassland. The site itself also comprises of both managed and rough grassland and slopes towards the river.
- 1.2 The David Livingstone Centre currently welcomes 25 000 visitors per annum from all over the world. The Centre is located in extensive woodland gardens which are over 500 years old incorporating a children's play area, an explorers garden, the African Pavilion, footpaths, open space as well as several sculptures. In 2010 The Trust, who operate the Centre, were awarded a grant by the Central Scotland Green Network Development Fund to support the commissioning of a Landscape Master Plan which was produced earlier this year. The overall aim of this plan is to reinvigorate the grounds of the Centre. This proposal forms phase 1 of this plan.

2 Proposal(s)

- 2.1 This proposal relates to the creation of a bespoke natural play area comprising of play structures which will be formed primarily from natural materials. A natural play space allows children to play together in a naturalised setting where plants and trees provide the background for physical and creative challenges and fun. The structures to be created include tunnels created from woven willow, timber bridges, seating areas formed using timber blocks, native tree planting as well as some footpath work.
- 2.2 The proposal also necessitates some land remodeling operations works which will establish terraces on which the structures will be created. No trees however will be felled.

3 Background

- 3.1 The relevant policy in terms of the assessment of this application are Policies STRAT 3 – The Green Belt and Urban Settlements in the Green Belt and ECON 9 – Tourism Development. The content of these policies and how they relate to this proposal are assessed in detail in Section 6 of this report.

4 Consultation(s)

- 4.1 **Environmental Services:** Have no objection. They have however advised that noise during any construction phase should be strictly controlled and that an Action Plan be prepared in advance in order to ensure that, should any contamination be encountered during the earth work operations, it can be adequately dealt with.
Response: Noted, It is considered that these comments can be addressed by the use of suitably worded informatives should consent be granted. It should be noted however that the responsibility for noise nuisance and the investigation of such accusations rests essentially with Environmental Services.
- 4.2 **Scottish Natural Heritage:** It is noted that the proposed play area is located in close proximity to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (Bothwell Castle). Nevertheless it is considered that it will not adversely impact upon this site subject to no works being undertaken within the SSSI boundary and that any new proposed planting should be native broadleaved species of a local provenance.

Response: Noted. It is considered that these matters can be addressed by the use of suitably worded conditions should consent be granted.

- 4.3 **Land and Fleet Services (Arboriculture):** No objection
Response: Noted

5 Representation(s)

- 5.1 Given the relatively 'remote' location of the site within the grounds of the David Livingstone Centre, there was no statutory requirement to notify neighbours as all neighbouring land is owned by the applicant. No representations have been received to the proposals.

6 Assessment and Conclusions

- 6.1 The determining issues in the consideration of this application are its compliance with the South Lanarkshire Local Plan and its impact on the amenity of the area.
- 6.2 In terms of Policy STRAT 3 – The Green Belt and Urban Settlements in the Green Belt – this policy aims to ensure that these areas continue to function as places suitable for agriculture, forestry, recreation and other appropriate uses. In this connection all development should seek to enhance the environmental quality of these areas. In this case it is considered that the provision of an area for natural play will enhance the recreational facilities which the centre provides. The use of natural materials will also ensure that the structures sit well within the setting of the woodland gardens. The natural play dimension of the proposal provides a green backdrop to play which may also instill positive associations with the natural world at an early age. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with the terms of Policy STRAT 3.
- 6.3 In terms of Policy ECON 9 – Tourism Development - the David Livingstone Centre is seen as an important tourist attraction. This proposal forms the first phase in the implementation of a Landscape Master Plan which will reinvigorate the grounds of the centre which attracts 25,000 people per annum. This particular area of the grounds is relatively underused at the moment and the proposal will ensure it is utilised to its full potential as well as making a contribution to promoting the grounds as a significant green tourism asset. It is considered that this proposal supports the Council's aspirations to ensure the development of high quality visitor attractions based on the sustainable management and interpretation of the areas natural, built and cultural resources. It is therefore considered that the proposal accords with the terms of Policy ECON 9.
- 6.4 Overall the proposal represents further investment in the David Livingstone Visitor centre. It will use an area of ground that is presently under utilised and should help increase visitor numbers thereby helping sustain the future of this important visitor attraction. The proposals raise no issues in terms of local plan policy or visual amenity and therefore it is recommended that planning consent be granted.

7 Reasons for Decision

- 7.1 The proposal has no adverse impact on the amenity of the area and complies with Policies STRAT3 and ECON9.

Colin McDowall
Executive Director (Enterprise Resources)

28 November 2011

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ▶ Application Form
- ▶ Application Plans
- ▶ South Lanarkshire Local Plan Adopted March 2009

- ▶ Consultations

Environmental Services [e-consult]

25/10/2011

Scottish Natural Heritage

21/10/2011

Land and Fleet Services (Arboriculture)

02/11/2011

- ▶ Representations - None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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E-mail: planning@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Detailed Planning Application

PAPER APART – APPLICATION NUMBER : HM/11/0476

CONDITIONS

- 1 This decision relates to drawing numbers:
erz/11/07/SE01,
erz/11/07/P05,
erz/11/07/P04,
erz/11/07P03,
erz/11/07/P01, and
erz/11/07/P02
- 2 That the development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the plans hereby approved and no change to the design or external finishes shall take place without the prior written approval of the Council as Planning Authority.
- 3 That no works, including machinery access, shall be undertaken within the grounds of the adjacent Bothwell Castle Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- 4 That any new trees planted within the application site should be native broadleaved species of a local provenance which shall be inspected and approved by the Council as Planning Authority prior to any planting works being undertaken.

REASONS

- 1 For the avoidance of doubt and to specify the drawings upon which the decision was made.
- 2 In the interests of amenity and in order to retain effective planning control.
- 3 To ensure the protection of the existing woodland within the area
- 4 To ensure the protection and enhancement of the existing woodland within the area

For information only

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