

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 17 May 2021
Title: Skate Park - Update
Contact Officer: Project Officer - Nicky Cayley

Background

The Council has been approached by several members of the community in the last few years asking for improvements to be made to the skatepark at The Leys. Currently there is a member of the skate community who is keen to drive this forward and Officers are working alongside him and Cllr Butterfield to do so.

Current Situation

The Project Officer met a month ago via Zoom with Cllr Butterfield and Mr Ollie Pockett to discuss initial steps toward getting the project started.

It was agreed that either a charity or community interest group should be set up and a bank account opened ready to start fundraising. The Project Officer advised that she would be happy to support the group in grant applications but that there would be more opportunities for funding if the applications were made in the community group's name. She has put Mr Pockett in touch with the former Chair of the "Liven Up the Leys" group who were very successful in shaping the current provision at The Leys [note: having achieved its objective this group has now been disbanded and the bank account closed].

At the meeting, community engagement was also discussed. The Project Officer explained that in order to apply for grants there was often a requirement to demonstrate community engagement and support for a project. Cllr Butterfield and Mr Pockett explained that it was hoped to hold an open day at the current skatepark, to gather views on what skaters would like to see in the park in the future. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, it was agreed to wait until the next meeting (scheduled for 20 May) to discuss this further, as there was concern about attracting a large crowd in what is an enclosed space.

Mr Pockett has been in touch to confirm that the group "Ramp Up the Leys" now has a formal constitution and that he has an appointment with a bank to arrange opening an account.

A timeframe for the project was discussed and Ramp Up The Leys would like to see tangible progress within a year – however this is dependent upon how quickly funds can be raised.

Included at the end of the report is the tender contract for the existing skatepark along with the proposed design, as requested at the last meeting of the Sport and Play Committee.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates. There is currently nothing of concern at this point.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability. There is currently no area of risk to the Council.

Financial implications

The Council has budgeted £40,000 toward the skate park and there is £12,000 S106 designated for skatepark improvements from the Abbey Homes development at Thorney Leys. It is probable that Ramp Up The Leys will need to raise at least that amount again, depending on what the group wishes to see put in.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the update.