

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 7 March 2022

Title: The Leys – Skate Park

Contact Officer: Project Officer - Nicky Cayley

Background

The Council has a long-standing intention to improve the skate park, and this has been reflected in the community. Most recently a community group - Ramp Up the Leys, was set up but unfortunately the group does not have the time to support the project to the extent that it would require. Without a community group, the Council does not have access to the majority of grant funding sources. Officers also had a virtual meeting with a consultant who has worked on local skatepark projects. He pointed out that the biggest bar to funding is that Witney does actually have a skatepark. Any funding bid would be likely to be up against areas that do not have any sort of skate facility, and these are usually in areas of high deprivation.

Current Situation

Currently the project has stalled as the community group has not made progress with the project. The alternative is for the project to be taken back in-house and for the Council to progress it.

The next step to move the project on is for the Council to decide whether it wishes to extend the existing park or demolish this and create a completely new space.

The Project Officer visited the park and whilst not qualified in inspecting such equipment, could not see any major signs of rust weakening the metal elements or cracking to the concrete – with the exception of a crack on one of the big ramps. The RoSPA inspection in January 2021 did not identify any issues that required action. There is certainly space to add equipment to the existing park.

It is worth noting that the Faringdon skatepark cost £131,000 in 2012 (photo attached for information) and Meadow Lane in Oxford which opened in 2013 cost £380,000. Both were mentioned as popular places to visit by respondents to the Ramp Up the Leys.

Ramp Up the Leys did get a concept drawing done and produced a style guide. This is attached to this report.

The survey done by Ramp Up the Leys can be accessed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-289BTPJJ/>

A glossary of terms is attached to this report for members' information.

Members will need to provide officers with a brief for the project on the scale of refurbishment in the park and whether there are any specific items which need to be included.

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.

Most skateparks are made out of concrete due to its smoothness and durability. Unfortunately, concrete is not environmentally friendly (please see the following link for further information).

https://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/38si10_en.pdf

The Council may wish to consider some ways of offsetting this.

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.

The risk is that the Council may not be able to deliver the community's aspirations – partly due to the wide range of views on what the park should include and partly due to the available budget if an entirely new park is to be constructed.

Financial implications

- The Town Council's current budget is £102,500 from 1st April 2022 (it is currently £40k EMR and £12.5k S106)
- From the scoping document provided from Ramp Up the Leys by Cllr Butterfield, it looks as though the concept design that they commissioned is in the region of £150, 000.
- Skateboard GB gives a cost of £400 per m² for design and construction, with a micro skatepark costing from £40, 000 - £50, 000 through to an international sized park costing anything up to £2 million.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. To confirm that the Council wishes to take on this project internally
2. To decide if the Council wishes to create an entirely new skate park or extend the existing provision
3. To decide which elements should be included in the refurbishment (e.g., bowl, boxes etc) to create a project brief for the Project Officer to take forward. The survey monkey survey may help to guide members.