

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Alice Park Trust Sub Committee	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	22nd August 2016	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Report on Alice Park considering the skate park proposal and alternative park improvements	
WARD:	Lambridge	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Please list all the appendices here, clearly indicating any which are exempt and the reasons for exemption		
Appendix A Alice Park Skate Park Consultation Summary V6.doc		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 £110k capital was provisionally allocated by the Council, to the installation of a skate park within the east of Bath locality in February 2014. After site searches, the only site that would be appropriate and could accommodate such a structure was found to be Alice Park.
- 1.2 A public consultation led by the Council in December 2014 came out with a two thirds majority vote for the skate park, however there was and remains strong local feeling about this proposal.

Discussions with skatepark designers suggested that £110K would deliver only a limited project and with additional offers of support from third parties; outline proposals for a scheme with a value up to £150k were commissioned.

The additional budget was pledged to be met through further fundraising by the London Road Partnership).

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Alice Park Trust Sub-Committee is asked to consider whether the proposed skateboard park is a suitable use of the Park in accordance with its objects, and if so to consider and identify their preferred option.

- 2.1 Option 1 is to go ahead with the skate park, built with a sub-optimal design to meet the funding available.
- 2.2 Option 2 is to bid to the Council for a further £75K within the 17/18 Capital programme to allow a more comprehensive scheme to be developed if the bid is successful.
- 2.3 Option 3 is to work with the London Road Partnership to seek to fundraise a further £75k to help deliver a more comprehensive scheme.
- 2.4 Option 4 is to propose to the Council that the capital funding is reallocated towards improving the infrastructure of Alice Park, including new play equipment, as a more inclusive scheme for all to enjoy and to decline the proposal to build a skate park as it currently stands. Officers to scope and report the detail back to a future Sub-Committee.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 After budget adjustments (expenditure on project management fees, surveys, consultations and admin costs in 2014/15), a provisional budget of £97K remains for the development of a skatepark in the east of Bath.
- 3.2 It is estimated that additional project management costs would leave a sum of £73,235 for the actual construction of the skatepark itself.
- 3.3 After the indicative designs were shown to the public, a fund was set up to collect a further £25k to allow a greater proportion on building the actual skate park. This £25k has been pledged to the London Road and Snowhill Partnership on behalf of the Friends of Alice Park Skate Park group.
- 3.4 The amount of funding available is not enough to build to an optimal skatepark design. A further £75K would be required to construct an optimal facility to work well at this location.
- 3.5 If a skatepark were constructed, the Alice Park Trust and the Council would need to determine who would own and insure the apparatus, who would be responsible for repairs and maintenance and who would be responsible for its removal at the end of its useful life.
- 3.6 If this is intended to be a Council facility to be placed on the park with the trustees agreement, then there may need to be a lease/licence to enable this. If the Option to build a skatepark is recommended by the Sub-Committee, then Officers will make further recommendations on this issue to a later meeting of the Sub-Committee.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Since the design of the skate park is less than 300 m³ metres in volume and under 3m in height, it constitutes permitted development, and so if the Trust were to go ahead with the skate park, then planning permission would not be needed. However it is recommended that a letter from the Planning department to this effect be obtained in writing before proceeding.
- 4.2 A noise survey was carried out based on sound measurements 80m from the Alice Park Cottages. The results of the survey predicted no significant increase in noise if the skate park were to be built.

- 4.3 The National Playing Fields Association recommend that there should be a 50m buffer between the skate park facility and residential property but a couple of court judgements indicate that there should be a buffer of up to 200m
- 4.4 The Council is sole corporate trustee of the Alice Park Trust and the sub-committee's terms of reference are to undertake the operational management functions in respect of the Alice Park site and its resources, in accordance with Trust's objects and the duties it owes pursuant to the Charities legislation.
- 4.5 The objects of the trust require the land bequeathed to be used as a public park and children's recreation ground. The committee must consider whether any proposed use falls within the trust's objectives, and if so whether to permit the use requested. If it permits the use then it must decide on what terms, in order to ensure effective use of the park whilst minimising any conflict between the different uses to which the park is subject to under the terms of the trust deed.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council has provisionally allocated capital funding to develop a skatepark in the east of Bath. The only suitable location that could host such a facility is at Alice Park.
- 5.2 A public consultation was carried out, detailed in Appendix A. The consultation showed support for the proposal.
- 5.3 The funding allocated, including funding pledged by the public, is not enough to build a comprehensive facility. A sub-optimal design only can be delivered. A further £75K would allow a more comprehensive design to be delivered to work well at this location.
- 5.4 Although there is support for a skatepark, public opinion is divided. A skatepark caters for only a proportion of park users. As public finances are tight, rather than seeking more funding, one option would be to seek permission from the Council to reallocate the existing capital to developing a more comprehensive scheme, which seeks to invest in the park and improve facilities for different park users rather than investing in a skate park alone. This could include upgrading the play area and linking up the perimeter paths to create a circular route around the park. Officers could be asked to scope this and bring to a future Sub-Committee to agree. Some ideas are included in section 7 below.
- 5.5 The Alice park Sub-Committee are asked to agree their preferred option.

6 RATIONALE

- 6.1 If another site were available with toilets and a café, that would be ideal for creating a second skate park, however following extensive searches for other parks or open spaces located in the east of Bath, no other site exists.
- 6.2 The alternative to the skate park is to allocate capital to upgrading the play area in Alice Park (and possibly linking up the perimeter paths to create a circular route around the park) would be appreciated by all park users.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Improve the play area as described below:

- Plant more trees at Southern corner against the road
- Install a trim trail in the grass (with Safa rubber grass matting to protect turf)
- Install a new self-closing gate at play entrance closest to London Road.
- Table tennis table –move to outside the play area to encourage adult/young adult play.
- Shift entrance to play area away from the café to divert foot traffic from café al fresco dining area.
- Remove the existing springies and the stressed arch swings to make room to install a new multi activity climbing frame with slide suitable for older children up to 14 years, thus extending the age range of the play area
- Install 3 new springies in a group facing inwards together
- Install a small water play feature e.g water pump and rill
- Swap some tarmac for grass along the edges of the play area and alter the grass edge to make a more naturalistic wavy design
- Swap some tarmac in the centre of the play area for a more playful (porous) surface using ecomulch or Nottsport etc.
- Swap two flat swings for tango seats (dual seat swings for sharing “carer and baby”)
- Swap the logs in the bark pit for a see saw or low rotator / wok and resurface
- Add more seating and bins

Improve other facilities throughout the park. To this end, the Parks Team has undertaken a SWOT analysis of the space and has identified a number of areas where improvements are required:

- Re-surfacing of the tennis courts
- Installing an all weather circular path around the park
- Repair and restore of he park’s pond

Paint and repair of the shelter and improvement to surfaces in the vicinity

- Improvements to the car park area to include new signage and surfaces

Landscaping work in a number of locations: including the pond area, the WWI Memorial Gardens, and a programme of bulb planting around the park.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 A public consultation was held in 2014.

8.2 Local residents were notified about the consultation on November 13, and had 25 days to submit their feedback. A press release was made available 13/11/14 on B&NES website and the *Bath Chronicle*, and in *Now Bath*; and letters (and feedback forms) were distributed to 150 houses and flats in the vicinity of Alice Park.

8.3 An online survey was launched online 20/11/14 and paper copies of the consultation were made available to the public at three public sessions held in Alice Park with Parks' officers in attendance to discuss the issues with visitors and local residents. Other social media e.g. Facebook and Twitter carried links to the survey. Also, local schools and youth groups were sent a link to the survey. The survey ended at midnight 08/12/14. A total of 282 responses were recorded with 68% in favour of developing a skate park. The results can be found in Appendix A.

8.4 The Council's S 151 officer or his representative has not had opportunity to comment on this report. The implementation of any recommendation will be subject to his/her advice.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has not been undertaken as yet.

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Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	