

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Dave Wood, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	On or after 11 Feb 2023	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3433
TITLE:	Bath Bike Park – decision not to proceed	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1 – Feasibility costs		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Plans for a mountain bike and activity park at the site of the former Entry Hill golf course site in Bath will not proceed.
- 1.2 A 20% increase in supply costs alongside additional site costs have impacted on the viability of the proposal which means the Bath Bike Park project cannot progress.
- 1.3 The council had planned to fund the project through a combination of its own capital funding and by attracting external support, however a bid to the British Cycling Places to Ride Fund was unsuccessful and due to the current national economic climate, it has become increasingly difficult to attract funding for projects of this nature.
- 1.4 Progressing the project further now would require substantial further borrowing at a time of unprecedented financial challenges for all local authorities, which the council will not do.
- 1.5 The feasibility cost incurred to get the project to planning stage will now need to sit as a revenue pressure and are included in the Cabinet's Q3 monitoring report.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is asked to;

- 2.1 Approve the decision to not proceed with the Bath Bike Park project and that the costs incurred to date will be treated as a revenue pressure as part of Q3 reporting process.
- 2.2 To delegate approvals to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the S151 officer, to secure income to cover future maintenance and security costs.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 Following an open procurement exercise (Decision E3201 22 July 2020), Bath & North East Somerset Council agreed to appoint Bristol-based company Pedal Progression to provide a new family cycle and activity park on the former Entry Hill Golf Course site (Decision E3214 11 Feb 2021).
- 3.2 The site had historically cost the Council more than £70,000 per annum to operate. This was made up of £35k-£40k maintenance costs per year and operational loss of £35k-£40k per year.
- 3.3 The concept design and business case that was submitted by Pedal Progression as part of their bid demonstrated that a mix of activities could be achieved on the site in a commercially viable way. The park would provide free access to park areas and trails for walking and cycling, a learn-to-ride area with pump track, new café and a new natural play park.
- 3.4 Following the announcement of Pedal Progression as the preferred bidder for the Entry Hill Golf Course site to create the Bath Bike Park, the Council and Pedal Progression have been progressing designs to try to achieve the best outcome for both potential users and the local community.
- 3.5 Early consultation had been undertaken. Opinions have been sought on the various options to develop the design and to mitigate any concerns. Many respondents commented in support of the proposals, noting that they were excited about the facilities opening. Concerns were raised by some in respect of the potential increase in traffic and parking.
- 3.6 Bath-based planning consultants, Planning Sphere, were engaged to co-ordinate the requirements for planning application including the pre-app process.

The project team expanded to include Greenhalgh Landscape Architects who have prepared a Landscape Master Plan, Landscape Strategy and Planting Plan. Ethos Environmental have also been brought in to complete the Ecological Statement and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and support Planning Sphere to produce a Landscape and Environmental Management Plan.

- 3.7 The pre-app response received for the Bike Park proposal indicated that the principle of the development was supported, as is the aspiration to bring the site back into community use.
- 3.8 The proposal included a package of new planting and land management to deliver biodiversity net gain and an enhanced landscape setting to the proposed development.
- 3.9 Due to the previous use of part of the site as a refuse tip a contaminated land survey was completed to advise on any constraints or precautions that need to be considered. Integrale Ltd who completed the study have indicated that there

were no major concerns with the proposed use of the site as a bike park. However, it seems unlikely to be possible to reuse any of the Made Ground on the site and landfill material should be left in-situ where possible. This would require material to be imported to create the trails additional cost.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Before completing any disposal of the land, the Council must comply with the following provisions:
- 4.2 The Local Government Act 1972 section 123 (2A) by advertising the disposal in accordance with that section and considering any representations made.
- 4.3 The Local Government Act 1972 section 123 (2) the Council must not dispose of the land, other than a short tenancy, (less than 7 years) for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained.
- 4.4 July 20 – Cabinet Paper and decision:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s61951/Future%20of%20Entry%20Hill%20and%20Approach%20golf%20courses%20E3201.pdf>

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=25553>

- 4.5 Other relevant papers:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=5531&Ver=4>

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=27022>

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 The council has committed resource of approximately £80K into the feasibility required to get the project to planning stage. The information will be useful when deciding the future of the site.
- 5.2 Capital funding was allocated from the ‘Inception’ budget for the feasibility works. However, because the project has not resulted in an asset and is no longer proceeding, those costs cannot be capitalised. This means the costs need to be moved to revenue and presented as a revenue pressure of £80K.
- 5.3 Total costs incurred - £80,122.84.

£36,167.51 revenue

£43,955.33 on capital over the period 21/22 and 22/23
- 5.4 The budget envelope for the project was estimated at £1,337k and of this £672k of funding had been identified. This included a £135k contingency and assumed Pedal Progression would get £155k of sponsorship. This left a funding gap of £665k.

- 5.5 The business case demonstrated it could fund up to £700k of additional borrowing by the council. The business case also included an income arrangement whereby the council received just under £0.5m over the 20 years of the contract.
- 5.6 The full business case showed there was sufficient overall cost contribution of £1.3m expected to the council to enable funding of the borrowing to address the capital shortfall.
- 5.7 There is £385 K of capital available from Leisure which is the remaining contingency from the leisure centre refurbishment projects. The financing for this funding is already covered by the existing Leisure Model. This funding was allocated to the project.
- 5.8 Progressing the project further would require substantial further borrowing at a time of unprecedented financial challenges and increased risk.
- 5.9 With the project not progressing there is a revenue reversion of £80K and several holding costs which need to be covered. The holding costs are set out below:
- grass cutting and emptying the bins (dog waste) – approximately £4k pa.
 - access gates to the car park will also need to be replaced to secure the site. - £1K
 - Utility costs. These will be minimal as the site is not being used.
 - property maintenance costs – officer times for inspection visits
- It is proposed that until a new solution is found for the site, these costs will be covered by Leisure income generated from the tennis lease payments from Excel Tennis.
- 5.10 An approach has been made by a developer to use the car park at the site for up to 12 months. This would generate income that could be used against the holding costs and for replacing the access gates. Property colleagues are exploring the options.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.
- 6.2 It should be noted that there would have been a risk of judicial review of any planning approval which would have added costs and delayed the project. The decision to stop the project is registered as a SMD on the forward plan and therefore in the public domain.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 An EIA was completed for the project. We have spent time engaging with service users and potential service users - to make sure that we sought the views and

experiences of and meeting the needs of a wide cross section of our communities.

7.2 A number of social, health and economic benefits for priority groups were identified to be delivered by the project.

7.3 The land will remain as a public open space to all communities.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 The proposal included a package of new planting and land management to deliver biodiversity net gain and an enhanced landscape setting to the proposed development. It was the ambition that Bath Bike Park will be an opportunity for exemplar urban habitat restoration and could set the scene for investing in biodiversity in built up areas.

8.2 There was also a commitment from Pedal Progression for the site to be carbon neutral.

8.3 The site will remain a green space until a decision is made with regards to its future. There is potential for significant BNG opportunities from the site and the Nature Recovery and Green Infrastructure Team are working on options.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 The council had planned to fund the project through a combination of its own capital funding and by attracting external support, however due to the current national economic climate, it has become increasingly difficult to attract funding for projects of this nature.

9.2 The site is currently maintained by Parks under an SLA with Leisure. This minimal management includes cutting desire pathways and bin emptying. This costs approximately £4k per year.

9.3 Full management of the site as a green space / park would likely require considerably resource from the Parks Team. This is currently unfunded. It is estimated that the resource require would be £20k – £30k pa.

9.4 CiL funding could be allocated to this and any other improvements. However, it is unclear without a reason to visit the site, how this investment would be sustainable. This option may also require another phase of community consultation to gain resident views.

9.5 As part of the initial consultation support was shown for a park and café option for the future of the site. If this option was selected it should be noted that the buildings on site (café/shop/toilets) will require capital investment which could be in the region of £40K. A full condition survey would need to be completed – a resource of approximately £2K will be needed for this.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 Extensive consultation has taken place with residents and key stakeholders.

- 10.2 The decision to stop the project was made in consultation with Cllr Roper; Cllr Samuels and Cllr Born with the Director of Public Health and Prevention.
- 10.3 Report circulated to Cllr Roper, S151 Officer. Monitoring Officer and Director of Public Health and Prevention.

Contact person	Martin Pellow 07768096164
Background papers	<p>July 20 – Cabinet Paper and decision:</p> <p>https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s61951/Future%20of%20Entry%20Hill%20and%20Approach%20golf%20courses%20E3201.pdf</p> <p>https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Allid=25553</p> <p>Other relevant papers:</p> <p>https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=5531&Ver=4</p> <p>https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Allid=27022</p>
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