

DEVIZES AREA BOARD
25 January 2010

SKATEPARK FOR DEVIZES

1. Purpose of the Report

To advise the Board of progress to date and to seek authority for the creation of a working group to advise the process.

2. Background

Immediately after the formation of the Area Boards a significant number of local issues were raised, the majority of which were about how services are delivered, whether that be highway maintenance or bus timetabling. Within those issues were multiple requests for the Area Board to seek to provide a skatepark for Devizes.

There had previously been a skatepark in Devizes at Hillworth Park, provided by Devizes Town Council, but this was removed several years ago following a legal challenge from a nearby resident. In the intervening years, skateboarding has become even more popular, and many of the other towns in Wiltshire have been able to install skateparks to meet demand. In Devizes, however, it has not been possible to identify a site for a skatepark that both landowners and the public could agree on.

3. Main Considerations

There have been two material changes since the last skatepark was removed.

1. Many skateboarders now favour a design of skatepark known as a plaza. This style of skatepark relies on recreating an environment similar to a town centre street scene. It would normally be a low concrete construction, and doesn't need to contain any of the high, unsightly ramps and half pipes which traditionally create opposition to sites, because of their visual impact and the amount of noise they create.

2. Previously, the impetus for a skatepark in Devizes had come from the Town and former district council. The advent of the Unitary Council and the Area Board could potentially overcome some of the previous obstacles. Wiltshire Council is the landowner of at least one potential site for a skatepark, and most of the officers who would be needed in any working group are now employed by the same council.

4. Working Group

Approval is sought to set up a working group that would make use of officer expertise from various departments and agencies, appoint councillors from Wiltshire

Council, Devizes Town Council and Roundway Parish Council and include a representative of the skateboarding community.

It is proposed that a working group should consist of:

- 1 Area Board member
- 1 Devizes Town councillor
- 1 Roundway Parish councillor

Community Area Manager
An Officer from Parks & Open Spaces
An Officer from Alternative Sports
Play Development Advisor, Early Years

Matt Davies – creator of Facebook petition for a Devizes skatepark.

It should be understood that meetings may need to take place out of office hours to enable the skateboarding representative to attend.

5. Acquisition of land

Wiltshire Council owns a parcel of land on the Devizes/Roundway border that could be considered for development of a combined bmx and skateboarding facility if a neighbouring parcel of land were to be acquired. The parcel of land in question is not used by its owner, and is currently maintained by the Council as it forms a natural plot with the Council's land. Permission is sought to investigate avenues by which the land may be acquired.

6. Environmental Impact of the Proposals

At this stage there are no environmental impacts from the proposals.

7. Financial Implications

Funding streams for the construction of a skatepark will need to be identified by any working group. There will be a cost to the council in terms of staff time to support the process, and some funding may need to be identified to cover the costs of consultation.

8. Legal Implications

The report seeks authority to request that the Council's property department investigate the acquisition of a parcel of land.

9. HR Implications

There are no HR implications.

10. Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no Equality and Diversity implications.

11. Recommendation

The Board are requested to approve the following actions:

- 1. The creation of a working party as set out in item 4 above:**
- 2. The Council's property department to investigate the acquisition of the parcel of land referred to in item 5 above.**

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No unpublished documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report