

Skate Park and BMX Working Group

Final Report to Devizes Area Board

BACKGROUND

- Since the skate park was required to be removed from Hillworth Park in Devizes 9 years ago, there has been a desire by many young people and other potential users to find a permanent replacement skate park site. Alongside this there has also been a demand for a BMX track which Devizes also lacks.
- In August 2011, the skate park working group was reformed with a remit of assessing all potential locations and bringing a report back to the Area Board with recommendations for a permanent site for both a skate park and BMX facility.

KEY SITES CONSIDERED

The working group considered all possible locations including any suggestions made by the public and other partners. The working group took into account a variety of issues when assessing potential sites. These included

- i. Who has ownership and responsibility for the site?
- ii. Distance from local residents' property and the potential for any nuisance to neighbours
- iii. Will the site be visible, so that people can informally monitor use for safety?
- iv. Entrances and access routes on and off the site including access for emergency vehicles
- v. Pedestrian, cycle and public transport links. Is there car parking available close by?
- vi. Is the site big enough to fit all the equipment required?
- vii. Landscaping and levels of site
- viii. Condition of the site, potential for contaminated land and the need for any site remediation or preparation
- ix. Visual impact and noise levels associated with the proposed scheme in relation to its surroundings
- x. Is the site protected or covered by any special covenants or restrictions
- xi. The cost of the site and any alterations that may be needed

The group considered the following key sites but rejected them for the reason stated.

1. Land behind Coral Cove – Not able to get agreement with land owner
2. Land on wharf behind Carpet Right. – Wharf being redeveloped
3. Indoor facility – Those considered were too expensive and not sustainable
4. Land next to Youth Centre – Too small and unable to get agreement to use land

5. Land next to entrance to Devizes Sports Club – Unable to get agreement in short term
6. Improve access along canal to allow use of Rowde skatepark – Too remote and not supported by Rowde Parish Council
7. Land owned by TH White on Nursteed Road – Not able to get permission
8. Entrance to new Quakers walk development from London Road – Too controversial and very near housing
9. Old skid pan site – Only a possible long term option
10. Land at end of Elm Tree Close – Residents wish it to be used for other purpose
11. Warehouse on Hopton Industrial Estate – See indoor facility
12. The Green - This was the preferred site for many young people as it is central and near facilities. However it was not supported by the Town Council , mainly due to reasons of noise and aesthetics.
13. Devizes School – This was rejected as a learner pool is likely to be added to the leisure centre ruling out the possibility of using the old tennis courts as a location. In addition, the caretakers house which could have formed part of a deal has now been sold and there was a lack of support from the core of school governors
14. Station Road – Whilst having many advantages as a site, it became clear as further work was undertaken that the only way that zero additional increase above background noise could be achieved would be to use large noise barriers. There was no support for this option

The working group noted that there may be other potential long term options. However it made the decision that these would only be progressed if all other options were exhausted.

Windsor Drive as possible BMX site

- The obstacle of Wiltshire Council not owning all the land at this site was overcome by reaching an agreement with the land owner to transfer the land to Wiltshire Council at zero cost. As a result the Area Board agreed to this site being considered further for a possible BMX facility.
- At a public meeting in February 2012 the idea of a BMX site with local residents was discussed. However, it became clear that there were a number of local people who were totally against the proposal. The main reason was a belief that it would lead to increased ASB which they claimed was already prevalent in the area and not being dealt with.
- As a result, the working group decided to not continue with this proposal and the Area Board are arranging a separate meeting with the Police and local people to explore the situation around ASB

GREEN LANE – Working group’s preferred option

- Green Lane is managed by the Town Council who are supportive of a skate park site being found

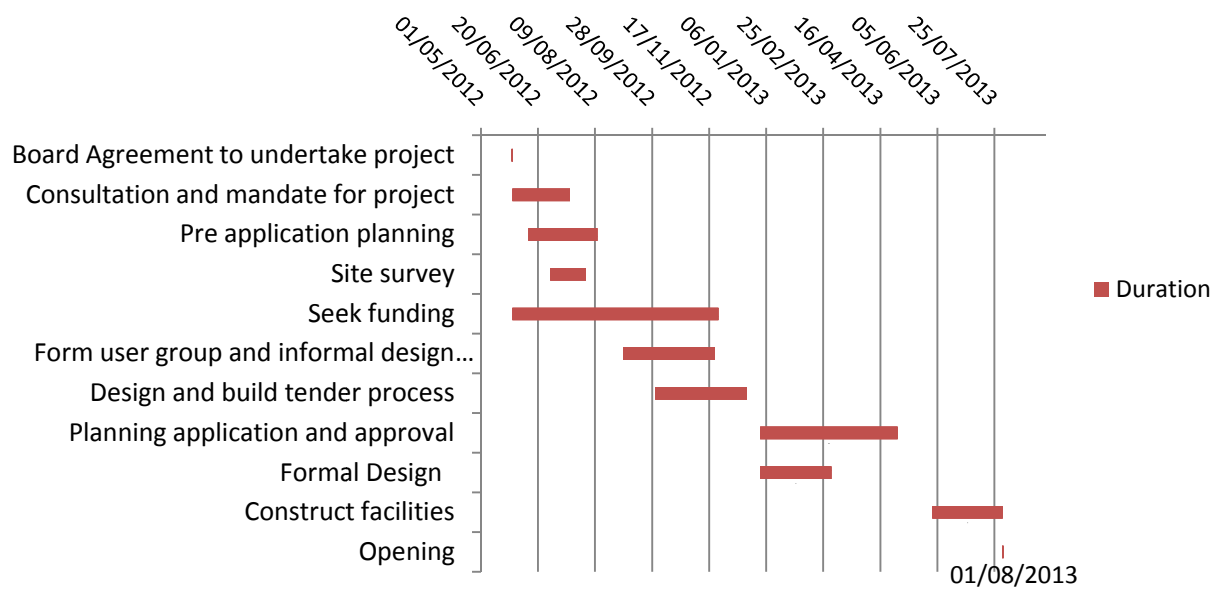
- Permission to explore Green Lane as a potential site was granted by the Town Council at a meeting held on the 6th December.
- The site is already used for football and general recreation and there are relatively few residential properties in the immediate area.
- In March 2012, the Area Board at the request of the working group and with the agreement of the Town Council commissioned Mach Acoustics to undertake a noise impact assessment of the site. They were asked to ensure that it would meet the most stringent criteria.
- The key finding was that the skate park should be located beyond 175m from the nearest residential property and should have a 2m high sound barrier (earth bund) at the side that faces this residential property.
- The working group considered the findings and fully supported the proposal to take forward for formal consultation the location of a permanent skate park at Green Lane
- The working group also decided that the BMX facility would best be placed at the same location.
- On 8th May, this proposal was taken to the Town Council who agreed for it to formally be pursued

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Isolation** – In order to find a site far enough away from residential properties, some have raised the concern that Green Lane is rather isolated. Whilst the working group agreed that this was a legitimate concern, it felt that:
 1. Locating the BMX site at the same location would create more activity
 2. The site would still be visible from the hospital
 3. There are plans to develop the whole site for sport and recreation and this would be an ideal start
 4. The proposed Roundway Parish Council allotments will be very near and they would be able to observe if any abuse or ASB was taking place
 5. An agreement with the young people would be made regarding care of the facilities
- **Indoor skate park** – The working group and the Town Council are fully aware of the proposed indoor skate park In Devizes. However, there was agreement that this proposal was for a commercial indoor facility rather than a free outdoor facility. There were also concerns that the indoor facility may not be permanent.

OUTLINE PROJECT PLAN FOR THE GREEN LANE SITE

The following chart is an initial attempt at outlining the key stages for the project from the Area Board meeting on May 28th to completion by August 2013. The proposed timeframe has sought to allow sufficient time to undertake the tasks and to allow for some delay to take place. It does though assume that no major problems arise.



Board agreement to undertake project

- Area Board to decide whether they support the recommendations of the working group

Initial consultation and mandate for project

- Acquire mandate for skate park and BMX from potential users

Pre application planning

- Pre application
- Identify further work required
- Adjust timeframe accordingly

Site survey including issues such as

- location of utilities
- flooding
- drainage etc.

Seek Funding including

- Investigate possible S106 funding
- Put in external funding bids
- Speak to partner organisations

Form user group and informal Design

- Form a user/advisary group
- Select representatives for future meetings
- Start informal design process

'Design and build' tender process

- Draw up the tender document
- Commissioning process for design and build
- Choose preferred contractor

Planning Application

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Application • Approval
<p>Formal design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit informal designs into formal structure • Agree final design
<p>Construct facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should take about 8 weeks if the weather is not too bad

The pre application phase will start as soon as possible in order to identify any possible problems and to adjust the timeframe accordingly. Initially the only formal consultation required will be to confirm support for the project from the potential users. This is likely to be in the form of a simple 'yes' or 'no' question.

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FUNDING

- Area Board funds
- Parish Councils contributions
- Section 106 funding
- Wiltshire Council
- Youth Services
- External funding applications

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION BY AREA BOARD

The Skate Park and BMX working group recommends that

1. the Area Board agrees to take forward the proposal to construct a skate park at Green Lane.
2. the Area Board agrees to take forward the proposal to construct a BMX facility at Green Lane.