

Ringmer Parish Council - Relocation of the Anchor Field Skatepark Project

Report to **Ringmer Parish Council – Greens and Amenities Committee**

Key Decision: **Yes**

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to update the Greens and Amenities Committee of progress on the implementation of the skatepark relocation project.
2. The report seeks to gain agreement to a stakeholder consultation exercise which would then inform the project brief for the new facility.
3. Member's agreement to endorse and support the proposed project management approach is sought, to enable the Council's project team to be able to demonstrate that Council has considered the matter for project governance purposes.

Recommendations

4. **Members agreement is sought to:**
 - a) **Agree the membership of the project team / project task & finish group going forward.**
 - b) **Seek agreement from Council to implement a stakeholder consultation, to enable the new skatepark to be properly specified and a detailed cost estimate to be prepared.**
 - c) **Agree the project team / task & finish group work up a detailed project plan in-conjunction with officers from Lewes District Council and other technical advisors, to plan the design, procurement and implementation stages and to undertake sufficient legal and technical assessments for the project to be recommended for full implementation in due course.**
 - d) **Establish deadlines for joint CIL bids to be submitted, and to identify additional funding sources and work up supportive documents.**
 - e) **Prepare a final project implementation report for Council, once these initial preparatory stages have been completed and assessed, and that funding sources have been identified and obtained.**
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Background

5. Following two informal meetings with officers from Lewes District Council in 2019, an update meeting was convened for the 14th January 2020, to seek agreement to the resources that LDC might provide to support the implementation of the project. Regretably, the initial meeting was not able to take place as planned, but the time was usefully deployed in mapping out a way forward which forms the basis of this report. A follow up meeting did take place on the 5th February 2020 and a verbal update will be given at the next meeting. The Parish Council has already agreed to focus on the skatepark replacement project as a matter of some priority for the Council, due to the recent commencement of works at the Anchor Field housing development and furthermore that existing funding contributions are time limited.

6. At recent Parish Council meetings, Councillors have indicated that the Parish Council's involvement might be best delivered through a Parish project team or "Task and Finish" group consisting of named Councillors working up the scheme through the Clerk. Final membership of this team / group is required, supportive input will be needed from a wider group of Councillors but the key roles for the team need to be agreed at this stage.
7. The popular and well used existing skatepark facility on Lewes District owned land at Anchor Field has been modified and extended over a twenty year lifespan and much of the equipment is worn and approaches replacement. The existing facility is well located with a good natural surveillance and access is well served via the car park and path.
8. The project team representatives recognise the development of similar facilities both in terms of existing provision made elsewhere in Lewes district, but also in the advances in equipment and skatepark design over the last two decades.
9. The Parish Council is keen to firm up the resources that will be needed to deliver the project and Lewes District Council's involvement resources, and grants, that will be required to successfully deliver the project.
10. Based on the informal discussions with Lewes District Council officers to date, have suggested that they would wish for Ringmer Parish Council to be involved in stakeholder consultation process.
11. The initial scoping exercise for potential sites has looked at possible recreational land that might be suitable. Additional land parcels owned by third parties have been identified, but have been discounted due to the delayed timescales and additional cost that might be incurred in land acquisition or securing an interest in the land that may be required by funding partners. If any additional opportunities are identified through the consultation process, a further report will be brought back to Council.
12. The suggested site for the replacement facility is the Village Green. Whilst the specific location is yet to be identified, as technical assessments are required, it is noted that the Green features certain facilities and activities, which will be carefully considered to avoid conflict. A desktop study of alternative sites has been produced against criteria discussed with LDC and ROSPA Guidance. It is assumed that planning consent will be required and therefore the consultation process will help inform that formal process.
13. An indicative consultation document for the project has been drafted and will be available in due course to this report. However, LDC indicated that the project would aim to be delivered within 12 months following all funding being in place, which would require the timeline to re-worked.
14. Working up the detail of the approach and documenting the stages of the project will assist in signing off the final project. It also enables the project to be monitored once approved.

Other Options Considered

15. Recreational land at Finger Post Field owned by Lewes District Council, has not been ruled out at this stage, but as Lewes District Council has initially suggested that it is not suitable for such a development, this is seen as a second priority site. A new skatepark would lead to a loss of other recreational facilities, and to improve user safety the boundary hedge would need to be lowered in places to provide natural surveillance needed. Facility drainage will need to be carefully considered in this low lying site.

Financial Implications

16. The consultation works being proposed by the project team will assist in identifying the final scheme, and in conjunction with advice from project partners the detailed cost estimate to be prepared. The existing equipment is not considered to be suitable for relocation, therefore the capital costs of the scheme will include all elements of a new facility.
17. At this preliminary stage the project team has been advised that the pre-formed concrete skateparks have a higher capital cost but a significantly lower maintenance costs.

Other Material implications

18. By undertaking a robust consultation process, the Council will be able to demonstrate its attempt to find the best solution for residents and facility users alike.
19. Any risks identified by the project team will be recorded with corresponding mitigating actions drafted to reduce the risk to an acceptable level of from materialising.

Revised draft 10th February 2020.