



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Northampton Skatepark Location
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AGENDA STATUS: Public

Cabinet Meeting Date:	14 th September 2011
Key Decision:	No
Listed on Forward Plan:	No
Within Policy:	Yes
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Planning and Regeneration
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr. M Hill
Ward(s)	Rushmills Ward

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To approve a preferred Skatepark location having considered an evaluation of potential sites.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the preferred Skatepark location on Midsummer Meadow be approved as a key component of the emerging Nene Meadows Masterplan (CAAP Policy 31 - 2011).
- 2.2 That subject to the approval of Recommendation 2.1, the committed ongoing revenue costs of £5,000 be included in the revenue budget for 2012/2013 onwards.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Northampton Borough Council approved a capital project with a budget of £250,000 for the design and construction of a Skatepark at Cabinet on 3rd November 2010.
- 3.1.2 Northampton Borough Council (NBC) has been working closely with the Skatepark Action Group (SAG) to bring this project forward. Officers have been liaising closely with SAG to establish a preferred location for a Skatepark for Northampton and the wider region.
- 3.1.3 The 'Locating a Skatepark in Northampton' report establishes a consistent 2 stage approach to the evaluation of potential sites by establishing assessment matrices; see Appendix A for more detail. This ensured that sites under consideration were measured against the same set of criteria.
- 3.1.4 The Stage One Guiding Principles to assess the potential locations for a Skatepark were:
- a) Central/town centre location preferred – although if the site is of significant quality, users will be prepared to travel.
 - b) Fits with Policy and or Masterplan for the area.
 - c) Level of residents, 'friends' and Skatepark Group support for the project
 - d) Match Funding Availability (funding from HCA, WNDC, S106 and others).
 - e) Ownership – Considers whether land is under NBC ownership, other public organizations or private ownership.
 - f) Minimal Crime and Community Safety issues
 - g) Accessibility to site for potential users.
- 3.1.5 Stage Two – Scrutiny of the top 3 scoring sites followed the Stage One Evaluation, further consultation feedback was considered by NBC and project partners.
- 3.1.6 NBC Planning Policy team is developing the Nene Meadows Masterplan (CAAP Policy 31 - 2011) as part of a Supplementary Planning Document; this fully supports in policy terms Midsummer Meadow as the location for a Skatepark. A plan of the proposed location for the Skatepark, is attached, see Appendix B.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 The need to choose a preferred site is critical for the Skatepark project to progress towards delivery:
- a) It will enable the Skatepark Action Group to apply for additional funding;
 - b) It will enable Officers to release the 'Design and Build' Brief to Contractors for procurement purposes;
 - c) Allow Officers to begin work on preparing the Planning Application and supporting documents, which, in itself, will allow for formal consultation.
- 3.2.2 Midsummer Meadow is on a main route into Northampton, and the appearance of a Skatepark at this location will require careful design and landscaping which will be dealt with within the planning application.
- 3.2.3 One of the key tasks set for the 'Skatepark Action Group' to partner NBC in bringing forward the project was to secure additional funding. Though they are progressing with this, as yet they have not achieved any additional funding. A preferred location and formal planning application will support their continuing efforts.

3.3 Choices (Options)

- 3.3.1 There are two choices available.
- a) Approve the preferred location for the Skatepark at Midsummer Meadow.
 - b) Not approve the site and ask for more work and evaluation of potential Skatepark location sites in Northampton.
- 3.3.2 Given the need to have an approved location and the evaluation and consultation work that has already been undertaken, Option b) is unlikely to identify a better site. Option a) is the preferred approach.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The preferred location of the Skatepark on Midsummer Meadow supports current planning policy and would be in line with the emerging Masterplan for Nene Meadows. Identifying a "preferred" location at this stage in the project does not and cannot prejudice the determination of a subsequent planning application.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 If the proposed preferred location is approved, the principle resource implications are on Officer time to deliver the project and to bring forward an appropriate planning application. Planning Committee will need to consider such an application and take into account any representations received.
- 4.2.2 If a preferred location is not approved and more work on the evaluation is asked for, this will delay the delivery of the project. This will disappoint our partners, particularly the Skatepark Action Group, who fully support Midsummer Meadow as the preferred location.
- 4.2.3 A capital budget of £250k has been set aside to deliver this project and all costs must be contained within this sum. The ongoing maintenance costs for this facility has not yet been budgeted for and will need to be included in the revenue budget for 2012/2013 onwards. The cost is currently estimated at £5,000 and Cabinet will need to agree this, in principle, at this time, if the project is to proceed to procurement.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 It is likely (dependent upon final management responsibility for site) that Northampton Borough Council will have to cover the Public Liability Insurance for a facility on land in Northampton Borough Council's ownership. This will need to be agreed as part of the annual ongoing cost.

4.4 Equality

- 4.4.1 A Screening Equality Impact Assessment, Part 1, of the Strategy has been undertaken. Two issues were identified that could potentially have an adverse effect on the equality strands:
- a) Difficulties in ensuring that a full range of age groups can use the facility;
 - b) Disability access
- 4.4.2 If the Skatepark is designed appropriately and youth workers help breakdown barriers between different youth groups, the identified issues would be reduced. Therefore, a full impact assessment was not deemed necessary.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.5.1 Internal consultation has been undertaken, as part of the formulation of the location options including consultation with – Asset Management, Planning Policy, Development Control, Community Safety, Legal Services, Regeneration, Development and Assets, Sports Development (now Northampton Leisure Trust) and Parks Maintenance (now Enterprise Ltd). External consultation has included – Skatepark Action Group, Representatives of Friends of Parks and Northamptonshire Police.

4.5.2 Further detailed consultation would be undertaken as part of the formal planning process, allowing all material planning considerations to be fully considered.

4.5.3 As an integral part of the emerging Midsummer Meadows Masterplan, a range of consultation exercises/workshops have been completed which have influenced the preparation of the overall Masterplan to date. A report to Cabinet is expected by the end of the year to consider the plan for the purposes of formal consultation.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 The implementation of a Skatepark contributes towards a number of our priorities, particularly the delivery priorities for our community and our town by, supporting access to quality leisure facilities, supporting initiatives on healthy living – CP3 and by delivering inviting and enjoyable open spaces - CP5.

4.6.2 Implementation of a Skatepark also fulfills one of the outcomes of the Corporate Plan, which is to, 'Create a Skatepark.'

4.7 Other Implications

4.7.1 Following the approval at Cabinet in November 2010 and a number of questions to full Council in 2011, there is an expectation from partners that a Skatepark will be delivered in a timely manner and for this to happen a decision on location is now required.

5. Background Papers

5.1 Cabinet Minutes from November 2010.

Report Authors

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