

WARDS: ALL

AGENDA ITEM NO.

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE 23 OCTOBER 2003

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

SKATE/WHEELED SPORTS – BOROUGH STRATEGY FOR PROVISION

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To allow the Committee to consider the Council's strategy for Skate/Wheeled Sports provision in the Borough.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will be well aware, from discussions and questions that have taken place at previous Area Committees, that there is significant demand within the Borough for the local provision of skating, skateboarding and BMX facilities. A working party of the Select Committee for Culture and Recreation recommended that the Council draw up a strategy for the provision of such facilities in their final report to the Select Committee this year.
- 2.2 To date this has resulted in the ad-hoc provision of temporary BMX facilities, where some open spaces have been used to provide such provision, and a single half-pipe skateboarding facility was installed at the Dell Stadium. However this is due to be relocated to Russells

Hall subject to that site receiving planning permission for such a development.

- 2.3 It is undeniable that there is considerable demand for these facilities in the Borough and the failure to provide for the 'teen market' has invariably resulted in the gravitation of young people to inappropriate sites, including town centres, car parks and U-10's play area, with resulting complaints of damage and nuisance inevitably following.
- 2.4 Furthermore within the Council's Unitary Development Plan it states that the provision of outdoor recreational facilities for young persons will be supported in areas of recognised need and where there is no significant loss of amenity. Sites are to be selected in consultation with the affected community.
- 2.5 In order to progress this issue a report was considered at the Council's Executive Meeting on the 10 September 2003 which sought to identify the basic principles of a Borough Strategy for the provision of Skate/Wheeled Sports..
- 2.6 In summary the Executive approved an approach within which the Council took the lead in seeking to provide one outdoor skate/wheeled sports facility in each of the Area Committee areas. In addition officers have been requested to look into the possibility of providing an indoor facility somewhere in the Borough.
- 2.7 Each of these facilities would contain equipment that, as a minimum level of provision, would include:-
- Quarter pipe units x 2
 - Grind Rails
 - Wedge /Jump Combinations
 - Shelter/Seated area

- 2.8 The exact details of the equipment schedule would be specified locally but would comply with the standard listed above. An indicative layout for a skate/wheeled sports facility that meets the above specification is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.9 The Council's role through the Area Committee Process will be to oversee the development of a facility in each of the five areas which meets the minimum standards described, providing assistance and support, including finance to implement this strategy.
- 2.10 By inference it is proposed within this strategy that the Council will develop and operate a skate/wheeled sports facility within each Area Committee area and will utilise its land accordingly in order to facilitate this. A potential difficulty may arise when development over and above this minimum level of provision are proposed by other organisations/agencies on Council land. In such circumstances the Council would need to ensure that such proposals are sustainable in the long term and that there will be no residual responsibilities falling on the Council for the operation and maintenance of such sites.
- 2.11 Within the North Dudley Area a limited number of proposals have been put forward as follows:-

Coseley

there has been pressure to provide a skate/bike facility in the Coseley area. Two potential locations, Coseley School, or adjacent to Coseley Youth Centre, have been proposed but there has been no work done to progress either.

Milking Bank/Gornal

There is demand for a skate facility from young people in the Milking Bank/Gornal Area. It has been suggested that a site adjacent to the Youth Centre in Temple Street could provide a suitable location

Sedgley

At present work is taking place with the local young people and the Area Youth Worker to develop a dirt bike track in the Alder Coppice area of Sedgley. Sedgley Hall park has been identified as an alternative location for a dirt bike track. A scheme is currently being costed and will be submitted to appropriate committees in due course.

- 2.12 A principal difficulty that officers have faced thus far in dealing with such requests has been the lack of a strategic framework, which has now been addressed. Furthermore it is suggested that decisions on location/site selection will be more appropriately taken through Area Committees, probably in the form of a working group.

3.0 PROPOSALS

- 3.1 That the Committee notes the Council's Strategy for Skate/Wheeled Sports in the Borough.
- 3.2 That the Area Committee establish a working group to consider proposals for the development of a facility in the North Dudley Area and progress them accordingly.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

- 4.1 The costs of providing a skate/wheeled sports facility will vary dependent on the site selected, specifically whether there is an existing hard surface area already available

that could accommodate the equipment which would reduce the costs of overall provision considerably.

- 4.2 It is estimated that the equipment specification for an outdoor skate park would cost approximately £30,000, excluding surfacing costs, fees, site investigations, planning application fees etc.,
- 4.3 Potential sources of funding of facilities include the respective Area committees Capital allocations budget, appropriate Section 106 funds and external funding possibilities.
- 4.4 The provision of any facility will also attract on-going maintenance costs for inspections and repairs of the equipment alongside other routine maintenance of sites. Currently there is no provision within existing budgets for such costs.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous provisions) Act, 1976, enables the Council to provide recreational facilities.
- 5.2 Under Section 2 of the Local Government Act, 2000, the Council may do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.1 This report contains proposals which accord with the equal opportunities Policy of the Council.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the Area Committee approves the proposals contained in Section 3 of the report.

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Director of the Urban Environment

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BACKGROUND PAPERS.

'Providing for Wheeled Street Sports' – Sport England
'Guidance for Wheeled Sports Equipment on Childrens Playgrounds' - ROSPA.
Report to Executive - 10 september 2003