

**WARDS: ALL**

**AGENDA ITEM NO.**

**DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**BRIERLEY HILL AREA COMMITTEE 25<sup>th</sup> November 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 Brierley Hill Area a number of proposals have been received as follows:-

### **Dell Stadium**

A skateboard ramp was installed at the Dell Stadium in the summer of 2001 and has proved to be successful. There have been a number of objections to this facility from local residents. Furthermore the relocation of sports pitches from the Briar School in effect mean that the tennis court area on which the ramp is currently situated will be lost and consequently

the ramp will have to move.. It is proposed to relocate the ramp to Russells Hall as part of the wider skate/wheeled sports strategy.

### **Kingswinford and Wall Heath - Enville Road/Albion Street**

There are continuing demands for further provision for skate related activities from young people in Kingswinford and Wall Heath. Awards for all funding and an Area Committee capital allocation have been made available for a Wall Heath facility, but a location has yet to be identified.

Consultations have taken place about developments at the Enville Road Playing Field, adjacent to the Tennis Club and Community Centre. There was a high degree of support for the location in terms of responses, but local Elected members recognised that the people in the immediate locale were vehemently opposed to the proposal as were other occupiers of the site.

During late June early July further consultation was undertaken, this time considering Wall Heath Park in Albion Street.

### **Withymoor**

A request has been received from residents of Withymoor for some form of skate provision to divert young people from local roads. A suggestion has been made that land adjacent to the Sainsbury's store could be developed to accommodate such a facility.

### **King George V Park, Wordsley**

Demand for a skate facility in Wordsley park has been intimated. However, the Secretary of the Friends of Wordsley park is unaware of the source of this demand and the group have no interest in developing such a facility at this point in time. There were strong local objections on this site which resulted in the closure of a BMX track.

- 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 Brierley Hill 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