

WARDS: ALL

AGENDA ITEM NO. 12

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE – 21st MARCH 2005

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

PROPOSED SKATEPARK – STEVENS PARK, WOLLESCOTE

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the results of the public consultation carried out in respect of the proposed skatepark at Stevens Park, Wollescote
- 1.2 To seek the Committee's views on the proposed skatepark

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following work undertaken by a Working Group established by this Committee in 2002, at its meeting on the 15th November 2004 the Committee authorised that a consultation exercise be carried out with regard to the provision of a skatepark in Stevens Park, Wollescote.
- 2.2 A feasibility study carried out by the officers in the Directorate of the Urban Environment has identified that a number of sites in Wollescote Park would be suitable for the construction of a skatepark. However, one of these sites falls within the geographical area covered by Halesowen Area Committee, and in line with the Council's approved strategy for skate/wheeled sports provision would not be eligible for consideration by Stourbridge Area Committee. As a result, and as referred to in the report to this Committee on the 15th November 2004, this site has not been included in the proposals put forward for public consultation.
- 2.3 The consultation exercise started on the 25th January 2004 and took the following format;
- Postal consultation with a Freepost return questionnaire to all residents within 400 metres of the park boundary. This included residents in Cradley and Foxcote Wards and had a closing date of the 18th February 2005. 3,529 Households were invited to participate in the consultation
 - Consultation meeting with the Friends of Wollescote Park
 - Exhibition panel with Freepost questionnaires in local schools
 - Consultation with 3 local youth groups
 - Consultation with West Midlands Crime Prevention Unit

- 2.4 The leaflet and questionnaire used in the postal questionnaire are included in appendices A & B
- 2.5 A full report on the consultation responses is included in appendix C. In summary, the results of the consultation are shown below;
- 1,097 questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 28%
 - 68% of respondents supported the proposal for skatepark at Stevens Park, 23% opposed it and 9% had no opinion
 - Of those who opposed the proposals, the majority did so on the grounds of antisocial behaviour (64%) and unsuitability of Wollescote Park for a skatepark (18%)
 - The most popular location for the skatepark was Site 1 (as shown on Appendix A) with 23% in support, but this site also received the most opposition (29% strongly opposed)
 - The most popular response to a question about security of the skatepark was to provide tall perimeter fencing with lockable gates (50%)
- 2.6 The Friends of Wollescote Park have advised that whereas they would not have chosen the provision of a skatepark as the highest priority for improvement in the park, they do not object to its construction. However, they expressed concerns about the capacity of the existing car park to take any extra visitors and over issues associated with the maintenance of the skatepark.
- 2.7 The West Midlands Police Crime Prevention Unit have advised that they have no objection to any of the sites, as all the sites suggested are well located; they support the scheme providing it is designed adequately; and they would prefer to see a scheme with either controlled fencing and gates with lighting, or no security at all.
- 2.8 Should the proposal proceed, implementation will be subject to the determination of a planning application for the skatepark and associated works and funding approval through the Council's Capital Programme. Subject to these approvals and the acceptance of a suitable tender for the work, the skatepark may reasonably be expected to be completed by September 2005.
- 2.9 A letter will be sent to all those invited to participate in this consultation advising the of the outcome of the consultation
- 3.0 PROPOSAL**
- 3.1 That following the results of the public consultation exercise a skate park be constructed at Wollescote Park on site

3.2 That the costs of constructing the skate park be established and that a request be made to the Cabinet to include this within the Council's Capital Programme.

4.0 FINANCE

4.1 The costs of the project are to be funded by the Community Facilities budget contained within Culture & Community's capital programme and from available Section 106 funds

5.0 LAW

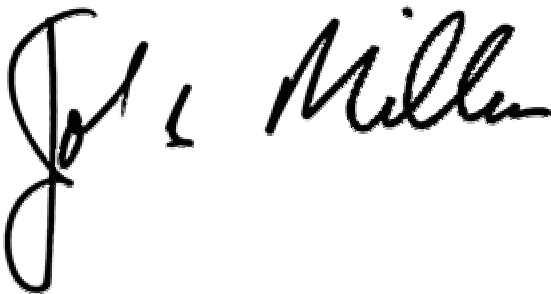
5.1 The Council may provide recreational facilities under section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions) Act 1976

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

6.1 The proposals take into account the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 That the proposals set out in paragraph 3.1 & 3.2 of this report be approved



Director of the Urban Environment - John B. Millar

Contact Officer: Rupert Dugdale ext 5538

Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-

- i. Feasibility study into the provision of a skatepark at Stevens Park, Wollescote
- ii. Report of the Director of the Urban Environment; Skate/Wheeled sports strategy; Stourbridge Area Committee 15th November 2004
- iii. Report of the Director of the Urban Environment; Stourbridge Area Committee Skate/Wheeled sports Working Group 7th September 2004

What is a Skatepark?

A Skatepark will provide local youths with a carefully designed space to use skateboards, roller blades and BMX bikes.

The facility is not intended to be fully supervised, but however placed in a discreet location where it can be observed by local residents/pedestrians for safety reasons and without causing a nuisance.



however consideration is being given to the use of perimeter fencing and/or lighting.

- Safety/guidance signage will be available at the site.

- Seating and a possible shelter may be incorporated into the design of the scheme.

- Improvements will also be made to access paths, planting and drainage.

Maintenance

The Skatepark will be inspected on a regular basis, and larger inspections carried out on an annually. The site will also be monitored for 12 months following its completion.

When will the work be carried out?

Following the consultation & further site investigations planning approval will be required on a final design yet to be agreed. If it is agreed to continue with the scheme it should be completed by Autumn 2005.

How do I find out more information?

Contact Dan Rudge (Landscape Technician)
T: 01384 815520
E: dan.rudge@dudley.gov.uk

Please complete and return the attached questionnaire in the envelope provided by Friday 18th February 2005.

Benefits of a Skatepark?

A Skatepark will focus youths' attention away from other areas where they may otherwise not be welcome. For instance skateboard users would rather use obstacles found on this facility other than benches and kerb edges found in and around shopping centres. Skateparks would generally attract youths who have a keen interest in skateboarding and BMX riding.

Why this site?

This particular site is central to a large residential area in a part of the Borough that has no access to skateboarding facilities.

Why have these three locations within the site been chosen?

All locations are also at least 50m away from residential properties providing an acceptable sound buffer zone to residents.

Design

- The park will be fully designed to RoSPA & BSI standards.
- The proposed Skatepark is intended to be available to all users during daylight hours.



STEVENS PARK, PROPOSED SKATEPARK

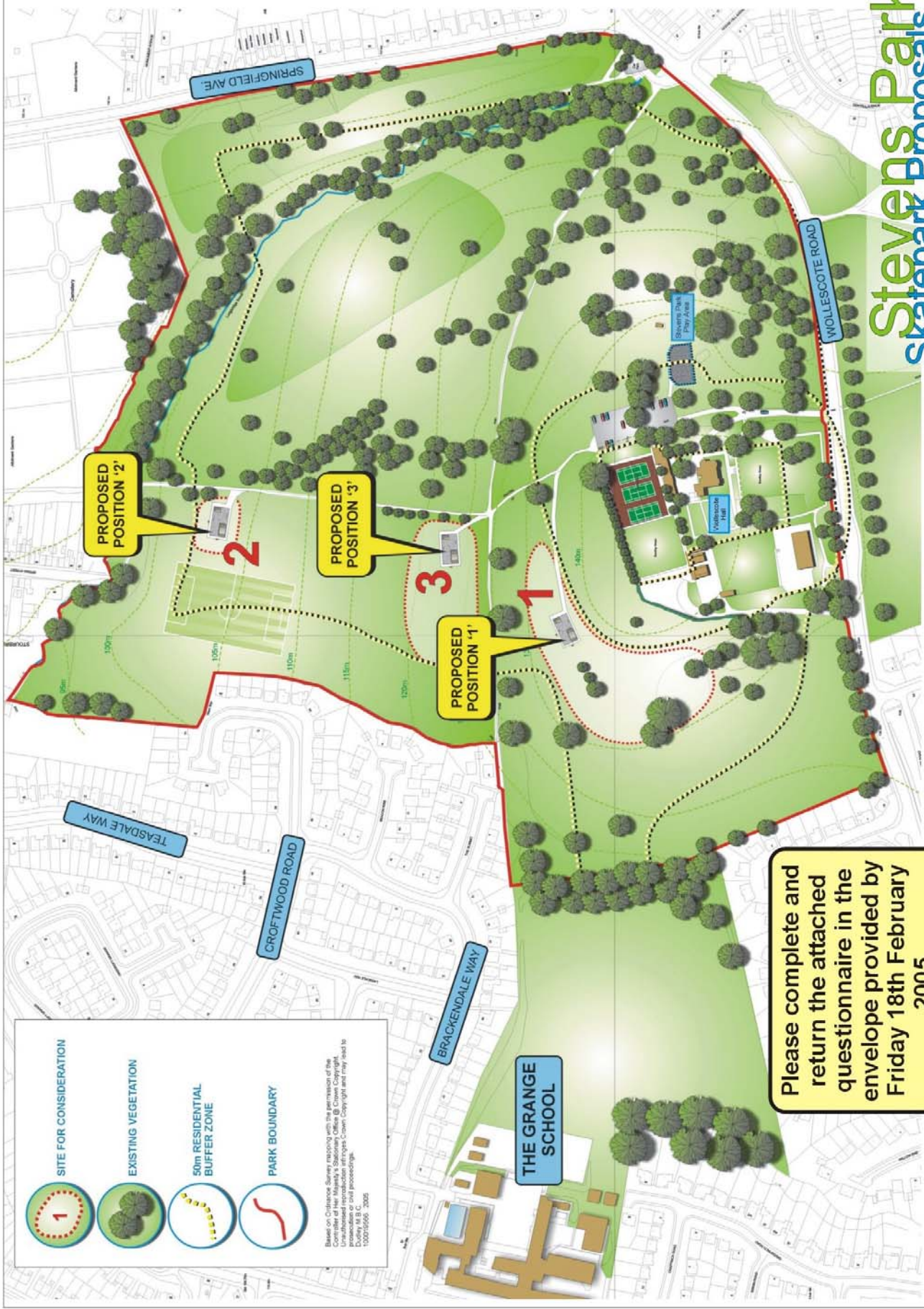
Public Consultation Information



Consultation Overview

This site has been selected for a Skatepark to serve this part of Dudley Borough. The Council would like to seek your views on this proposal and on where the Skatepark should be built within the site.

Stevens Park Skatepark Proposals



1
SITE FOR CONSIDERATION

2
EXISTING VEGETATION

3
50m RESIDENTIAL BUFFER ZONE

4
PARK BOUNDARY

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Please complete and return the attached questionnaire in the envelope provided by Friday 18th February 2005.

Stevens Park (Wollescote); Proposed Skatepark Questionnaire

Please fill in this questionnaire and return in the prepaid envelope provided (no stamp required).

1. Please tell us which Street you live in, your postcode and gender.

Street: -----

Postcode: ----- - ----

Gender: Male
 Female

2. Which of the following applies to you? (Please tick)

- At Primary School (4-10)...
- At Secondary School / College (11-18)...
- Adult in household **(with children)**...
- Adult in household **(no children)**...

3. Do you support the proposals for a Skatepark at Stevens Park (Wollescote)? (Please see leaflet or large plan)

- Yes...
- No...
- No opinion...

If 'No', please give reason below?

.....

4. Of the three locations shown (1, 2, & 3), on which site would you agree with a Skatepark being situated? (Please tick one option for each site)

	For	----->			Against
	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't mind	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Site 1...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site 2...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site 3...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Space has been provided below should you wish to make any comments).

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5. The full design of the Skatepark is also yet to be agreed. In regard to the security of the scheme would you like to see the Skatepark...

...with tall perimeter fencing and gates so that it can be locked up at night...

...without tall perimeter fencing but with lighting for use during dark nights (up to 8pm)...

...without tall perimeter fencing and without lighting for natural daytime use...

6. The Skatepark is for use with skateboards, roller blades and BMX bikes. Which of the following activities are you most likely to use the scheme for?

- Skateboarding...
- Rollerblading...
- BMX riding...
- Watching...
- None...
- Other (Please specify below)

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Thank you for your comments! They will help us to decide a final location for the Skatepark at Stevens Park, Wollescote. Feedback from the consultation will be sent to all who have been invited to participate in this consultation. The information that you provide on this form is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. It will only be used for the purposes of public consultation relating to this Skatepark proposal. The data will be destroyed at the end of the project, or within 5 years. It will not be passed on to any third party.

Stevens Park (Wollescote)

Skatepark Consultation Summary report

February 2005

A postal consultation was carried out in January and February 2005 to all residential properties within 400 metres of the boundary of the park. 3529 households were invited to participate in the consultation as a result. The consultation took the form of a leaflet explaining the proposals and the option sites where the skatepark could be located, and a questionnaire where residents could note their comments on the proposals, to be returned with a Freepost envelope. A copy of the leaflet, questionnaire and plan showing the area covered by the questionnaire is appended to this report.

Plans showing the proposals were exhibited at The Grange and Wollescote primary schools with leaflets and questionnaires available for return. Leaflets and questionnaires were also issued to the following;

- o Youth and Community Workers
- o Lye Area Regeneration Alliance
- o Lye and Wollescote Partnership
- o Wollescote Community Centre

Officers attended a meeting held by the Friends of Wollescote Park on the 25th January in order to explain the proposals, and leaflets and questionnaires were left with this group for. At the meeting, the Friends noted that whereas they would not have chosen the provision of a skatepark as the highest priority, they did not object to its construction but had reservations about the capacity of the existing car park to take any extra visitors. The Friends also expressed concern that the cost of maintaining the skatepark might result in savings being made on maintenance of the park, with reductions in maintenance standards as a result.

A total of 3,850 questionnaires were issued as a result of the above, and by the closing date of the 18th February 1,097 had been returned. The response rate may therefore be expressed as 28%.

A summary of the consultation responses is shown below. For the purposes of data protection any information identifying individuals is not shown in the summary

Q1 Gender

Male	46%
Female	50%

Q2 Social data

4-10	7%
11-18	4%
Adult in household with children	19%
Adult in household no children	70%

Q3 Do you support the proposals for a Skatepark at Stevens Park (Wollescote)?

Yes	68%
No	23%
No opinion	9%

If no, reasons given:

Antisocial behaviour	64%
Wrong site	18%
Increased visitors to the park	4%
Value for money	3%
Noise	8%
No demand	2%
Inadequate car parking	1%

Q4 Of the three locations shown (1, 2, & 3), on which site would you agree with a Skatepark being situated?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't mind	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Site 1	23%	13%	22%	13%	29%
Site 2	16%	17%	31%	11%	25%
Site 3	14%	15%	31%	12%	28%

Additional comments referred to ;

Safety	13%
Impact on the park	20%
Antisocial behaviour	16%
Wrong site proposed	11%
Increased visitors to the park	1%
Value for money of the proposals	3%
Noise	3%
No demand for this facility	1%
Pressure for car parking	3%
Distance from residential areas	12%
Benefits of locating skatepark near existing facilities e.g. play area	6%
Accessible location	8%
Impact on sledging runs	3%

Q5 In regard to the security of the scheme would you like to see the Skatepark;

with tall perimeter fencing and gates so that it can be locked up at night	50%
without tall perimeter fencing but with lighting for use during dark nights (up to 8pm)	34%
without tall perimeter fencing and without lighting for natural daytime use	16%

6 The Skatepark is for use with skateboards, roller blades and BMX bikes. Which of the following activities are you most likely to use the scheme for?

Skateboarding	12%
Rollerblading	9%
BMX riding	10%
Watching	16%
None	49%
Other (specified below)	4%

Responses;

Too old to use	30%
Too young to use	7%
A family member will use	25%
Disabled	1%
Won't use	4%
Wildlife	2%
Walking	3%
Football	3%
Dog walking	1%
Skateboarding/rollerblading	2%
Watching skateboarding	7%
Motorcycling	3%
Other play	12%

In addition to the responses shown above, 3 emails, 3 letters and 7 telephone calls were received in response to the consultation. The content of these may be categorised as below;

In favour of proposals	4
Not in favour of proposals	7
In support of the proposals if located elsewhere in the park	1
No opinion expressed	1