

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

21 March 2012

CABINET

11 April 2012

NORTH WALLS SKATE PARK

REPORT OF HEAD OF LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACES

Contact Officer: Damian Offer Tel No: 01962 848419

RECENT REFERENCES:

[WTF143](#) – Playground Five Year Refurbishment Plan – 20 January 2010

[CAB 1963](#) - Capital Programme 2009/10 to 2013/14 – 3 February 2010

[CAB 1973](#) – Minutes of Winchester Town Forum 20 January 2010 – 3 February 2010

[CAB2118](#) – Playground five year refurbishment plan update – 9 February 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In February 2011 the Town Forum and Cabinet approved a five year plan for refurbishment of City Council play areas which included the refurbishment of North Walls Skate Park and an allocation of £45,000 from the play element of the Winchester Town Open Space Fund for this purpose.

This report invites Members to approve the principle of investigating the provision of a completely new skate park using modern methods of construction to create a landmark facility for the benefit of Winchester residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To Winchester Town Forum:

1. To give approval for officers to pursue the proposal to replace the existing skate park at North Walls Recreation Ground with a completely new modern skate facility suitable for the current and future needs of users.
2. To note that the proposal for a completely new modern skate facility may require additional demand for Open Space Funding over and above the £45,000 approved as part of the Five Year Plan for play area refurbishment.

To Cabinet:

3. To consider the views of the Town Forum on the proposal.

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DETAIL:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The skate park at North Walls is due for refurbishment and has been included in year five of the current Five Year Plan for refurbishment of play areas within Winchester Town. This plan has previously been approved by Cabinet and Town Forum with a sum of £45,000 allocated towards the project from the play element of the Winchester Town Open Space Fund.
- 1.2 The skate park currently consists of prefabricated steel ramps arranged on a tarmac surface. The ramps, layout and particularly the surface have deteriorated to the extent that they are no longer suitable for skateboarding and are now used primarily by BMX bikers.
- 1.3 The local skateboarding community have been campaigning for this park to be refurbished, so they have a facility in the town centre which they can use. Representatives of the users have come forward to assist with facilitating the development of a new skate-park and applications for grant funding. To take advantage of the opportunity this represents the project is recommended to be brought forward in the Five Year Plan.
- 1.4 Skate-park design has evolved since the existing Winchester skate parks were built and the preferred method of construction for all users is now spray concrete over a landscaped substrate. This provides a smooth seamless surface conducive to all types of wheeled sports including skate boarding, roller-blading, BMX biking and scooters.
- 1.5 The refurbishment of North Walls Skate-park offers the opportunity to provide the first park of this type in the Winchester District and to create a landmark facility within easy reach of the City Centre.

2. Site Requirements

- 2.1 Initial assessments of suitable sites have been undertaken to determine the possible locations for constructing a new facility. Due to layout and size

requirements, the new facility would not fit within the footprint of the existing skate park.

- 2.2 Consideration will need to be given as to whether the new skate park will require or would benefit from additional lighting to extend the usage window especially in winter.

North Walls – Existing Skate Park Site

- 2.3 To locate the new facility here would require the footprint of the skate park to be extended to incorporate the adjacent area currently given over to a multi-use games area (MUGA). While the MUGA does not appear to be well-used, consideration will need to be given to the impact of its loss on users and the need to find a new location for this facility.
- 2.4 This location benefits from its proximity to the leisure centre, which provides toilet and refreshment facilities, and the large adjacent car park. The recreation ground is lit and access is easy for all users via even hard-surfaced pathways. The site is already well known by the local wheeled sport users.

Land at Hillier Way

- 2.5 Given the spatial constraints on the existing site, consideration was given to constructing a new skate facility on Council-owned land at Hillier Way. The Council owns land at Hillier Way, part of which is put down to a car park and part let to the Air Cadets. The remainder of the Hillier Way is currently semi-abandoned, having been used by the Council for dumping of inert waste and as a silt lagoon when the channels on North Walls were dredged some 20 years ago.
- 2.6 This site is large enough to provide more than ample space for a new skate park, the park requiring only part of the land. It could also offer the potential to construct a BMX track on another part of the site, thus combining provision of two facilities at the same location.
- 2.7 However, this site is less suitable than the North Walls site for the following reasons:
 - a) Construction may be more complicated;
 - b) It is some distance from the city centre and more isolated;
 - c) Vehicular access is through adjacent residential estate; and
 - d) There are no facilities nearby to service user needs.

3. Selection of Equipment

- 3.1 It is proposed to provide a new skate park utilising the spray concrete technique rather than utilising prefabricated ramps for a number of reasons:

- Although the initial cost is much higher, the park requires little to no subsequent maintenance and has a much longer life-span. Prefabricated ramps have to be repainted on a regular basis to keep the surface safe. This can be an annual requirement on sites with high usage.
- There is no separate surface to maintain. Maintaining the tarmac surface between prefabricated ramps to keep it smooth is extremely difficult and costly.
- This would be a landmark facility and attract skate park users into the Winchester area.
- The layout is much more fluid offering users of all abilities much greater scope and range of movements. Prefabricated ramps dictate how the park can be skated rather than letting users devise their own course.
- The current park is spatially constrained, which severely limits its functionality and recreational value for users.

4. The Project

- 4.1 The project is in the early stages. The site's potential has been reviewed to confirm it would be suitable for the type of facility under consideration. Officers have had informal site meetings with representatives of several different skate park design companies to discuss the type of provision, the potential of the site and indicative costs.
- 4.2 A local skateboarder has acted as the main representative of the user community to ensure that what is being proposed meets with their requirements. He has set up a Facebook site, which has a good following and keeps interested parties informed of progress on the project.
- 4.3 An indicative design of what could be achieved at the North Walls site is attached at Appendix One. If funding can be found for the project, a similar design would be used to assist consultation with local users who would be asked to contribute suggestions and help finalise the design to meet specific local needs.
- 4.4 Once a design has been finalised a planning application will be submitted.

5. Funding

- 5.1 The various skate park design companies that have been consulted have advised that, on the basis of comparable schemes, the cost of providing the type of skate facility outlined in this paper is around £200,000.
- 5.2 A sum of £45,000 has already been allocated to the project in the Five Year Plan from the play element of the Open Space Fund.
- 5.2 Options for securing additional funding including grants are currently being investigated. The Town Forum is asked to note that it may be necessary to

allocate additional funding from the sports element of the Open Space Fund towards this project in order for it to proceed.

- 5.3 Funding is also being sought through grants such as those provided by Veolia Environmental Trust and Sport England. A bid is currently being prepared for the Veolia Environment Trust application process which closes in April.
- 5.4 Further information will be provided to Town Forum on funding once the opportunities for additional funding have been more fully explored.

6. Future Developments

- 6.1 A new park would offer the opportunity for a number of associated new initiatives:
- a) A local business has expressed interest in helping to operate a skate ranger scheme where experienced skaters would help to police the park and encourage young riders to develop their skills in a safe way.
 - b) It is also possible that teaching sessions could be run during school holidays to help young people master new skills and embrace wheeled sports.
- 6.2 The new skate park would provide a venue to host small-scale local events and competitions.

7. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN (RELEVANCE TO):

- 7.1 The development of the skate park will contribute to the delivery of the following outcome within the Active Communities theme of the Community Strategy 2010-2020, helping children to 'lead active and healthy lifestyles by exercising regularly'. Specifically, the skate park contributes to the following priority:

'provide opportunities for everyone to become more active through organised sport, walking, cycling and other recreational activities, making the most of our natural environment and countryside'

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 The project would be financed partly from the Open Space Fund and partly through funding applications to Veolia Environmental Services and Sport England.
- 8.2 There is potential requirement for additional funds to be allocated to the project from the sports element of the Open Space Fund. The uncommitted balance of this element of the fund currently stands at £101,000. A sum in the region of £50,000 has already been earmarked for the refurbishment of the pavilions at North Walls and King George V Recreation Ground leaving £51,000 available.

8.3 Due to the size of the project, it will be subject to a competitive tendering process in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules

9. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

9.1 Failure to refurbish the skate park will result in a reduction in provision within the Town and will lead to users seeking to utilise unsuitable alternatives such as car parks.

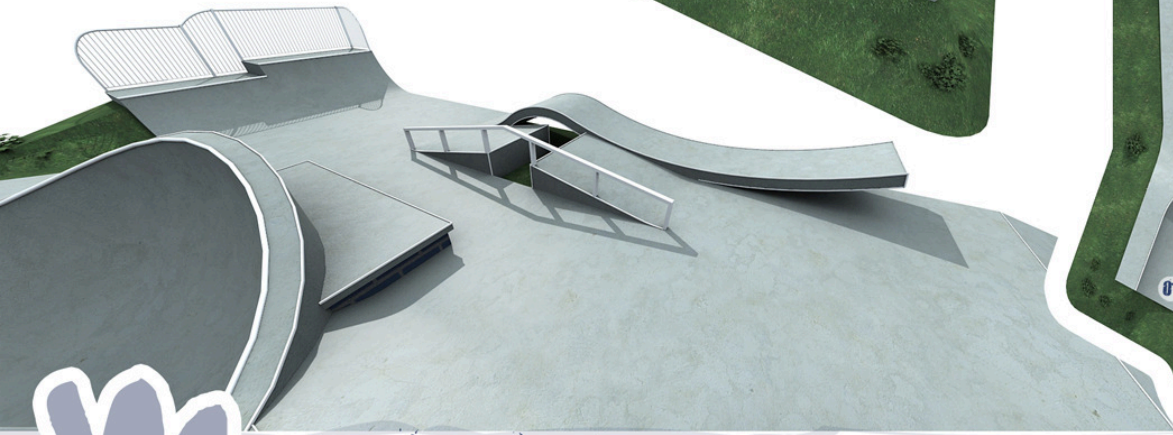
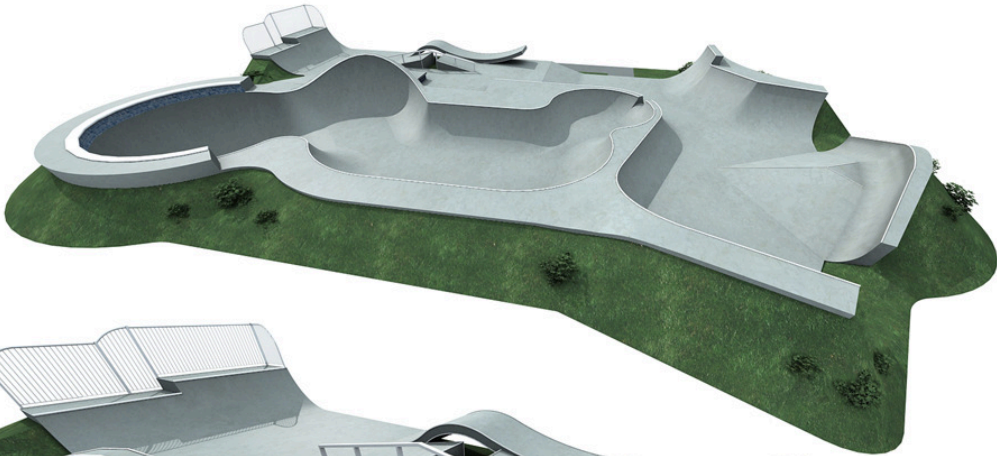
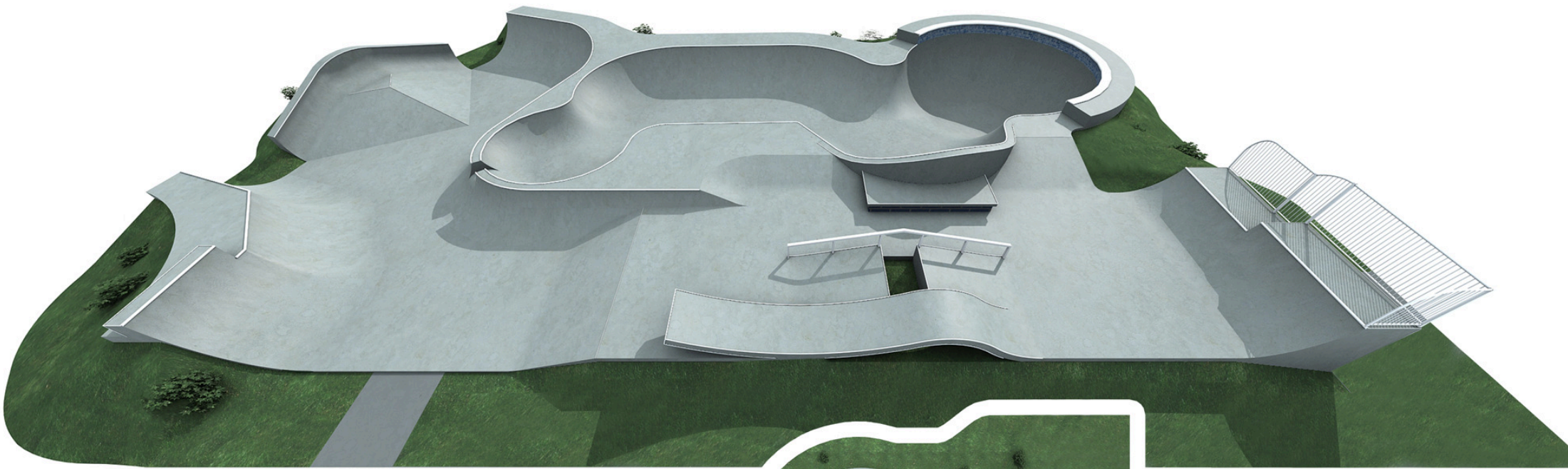
9.2 A spray concrete design will also reduce the health and safety risks associated with unsafe ramps and surfacing.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Indicative Design



equipment:

- 01. Quarterpipe 1500mm high (R2.3m)
- 02. Blend to Quarterpipe 1000mm high (R1.5m)
- 03. Inset Rollover 600mm high x 750mm wide
- 04. Bank Hip 1000mm high with Wallride 1000mm high
- 05. Hipped Quarterpipe 1500mm high (R2.3m)
- 06. Tombstone 1900mm high x 2.5m wide (R2.3)
- 07. Flatbank 600mm high
- 08. Wave to Kicker 800 - 400mm high x 1.5m wide
- 09. Earthquake Gap 450mm high with Box Rail 450mm high
- 10. Flatbank 400mm high
- 11. Plinth Ledge 350mm high x 4m wide
- 12. Flatbank 400mm high
- 13. Quarterpipe 900mm high x 3m wide
- 14. Quarterpipe 1200mm high x 3.5m wide
- 15. Shallow Bowl 900mm deep (R1.5m)
- 16. 450mm Waterfall
- 17. Bowl 1350mm deep with Hips
- 18. Cradle 1850mm high
- 19. 750mm Waterfall
- 20. Vert Bowl 2400mm deep (R2.3m) with Pool Coping
- 21. 1.8m wide Tarmac Path

Park dims: 33.2m x 21m