

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Special Council Meeting

29 February 2024

Skatepark Location

Recommendation

The Council RESOLVE to agree: to consider the issues involved that are mentioned in the report and decide the location of the skatepark and other actions.

Ward

Isabella

Risk Management

There is budget provision for the skatepark however any delays could affect the payment of section 106 money from NCC.

Objective

To provide a mixture of first-class recreation facility for families and young people in the town.

Report

At the Special Council Meeting on 13 February the Mayor gave an update on the meeting he had the previous week with residents who live around the proposed skatepark location. He painted a full picture of their concerns about consultation and other mainly anti-social behaviour issues, the input from Northumbria Police and Shred the North. The Police gave feedback on current complaints as logged on their system plus planned initiatives and Shred the North on the work that needed to be done engaging the community.

Some preliminary work had taken place a while ago on various location options and the relocation of the skatepark was agreed to be on the open space next to the Isabella Community Centre. See Appendix 1.

After giving feedback to the Special Council on 13 February, the Mayor felt that the members needed to reflect on the discussions and come back to a special meeting to decide on a final location.

Some discussion took place at the last meeting about locating the skatepark to the existing skatepark site. See Appendix 2. This seems to be an option that NCC is comfortable with providing any damage to the drainage system is reinstated. However, the change of location may bring about some delay that may affect the section 106 contribution of £92,359 but this needs to be further discussed with NCC. There may also be planning issues re the floodlighting that need to be faced because of the proximity to the Isabella Heap. Shred the North are in discussion with the contractor to find out if any change of location will cause a problem to them. Further consultation on this site needs to be considered, if necessary, by the Council.

Another option that was explored is to relocate on a site near the Blyth Ranger's changing room, but that option appears to be unsuitable because of NCC changing the football pitch size etc and the skate park will be too close to the pitch and nearby housing.

There may be other options that may be feasible near the Blyth Rangers changing area but there would need to be checks on distances between the proposed pitch and perhaps a feasibility study to determine ground conditions.

Summary

After several site visits Officers feel that an alternative option (existing skate park) would be appropriate, if members agree to changing their decision, using most of the footprint of the existing skatepark - Appendix 2.

Other parts of the Blyth Rangers site don't seem to be feasible from preliminary visits, but if the go ahead is given for other locations on this site, then a feasibility study may be necessary. If the alternative (existing skate park footprint) is chosen there will still be the need for Section 106 renegotiation re timescales on the offer of funds, another planning application submission with lighting effect on the area's ecology, and the contractor's input. There may be also additional costs due to any damage of existing drainage works recently installed, and the question of consultation on this site needs to be considered by councillors. Considering all these factors this may mean the skate park completion date will slip back.

Joseph Hughes
Town Clerk

20 February 2024