

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 13TH NOVEMBER 2002

PROVISION OF SKATEBOARDING FACILITIES

Report by Director of Community Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the issues surrounding the provision of skateboarding facilities.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 18th September 2002 the Committee approved £100,000 for the provision of skateboarding facilities from additional funding made available by the Scottish Executive.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Discussions with the Council's insurers have taken place to assess the most viable form of skateboarding provision. Skateboarding is an activity with a high potential risk of injury and the Council must do all it can to protect itself against insurance claims relating to injuries. Our insurers are currently reviewing their position on skateboarding as a result of recent claims history and this will influence any proposals the Council brings forward.
- 3.2 Initially it was considered that several smaller ramps would be appropriate, provided and maintained as play equipment, and installed as free-standing pieces of equipment. However following consultation with the Council's insurers, who felt that this would present a high level of risk, it was concluded that this form of provision would not be appropriate.
- 3.3 A single, large scale facility would offer the best opportunity to reduce the risk of injury and claims against the Council. In order to satisfy our insurers every effort must be made to provide a safe, well maintained facility, inform users of the risks and advise users of the need to wear appropriate safety equipment. This type of facility would obviously require management and supervision and any revenue costs associated with the inspection, repair, administration and promotion of the facility would require additional funding.

- 3.4 Consultation with the Ayrshire Skateboard Association established that local skateboarders would prefer a larger concrete skatepark which would be able to stage events and competitions and could be used by boarders, in-line skaters and BMX riders. The Association would recommend that the facility is floodlit and available 24 hours a day.
- 3.5 The Ayrshire Skateboard Association are not prepared, or able, to take on any managerial or insurance responsibilities for any new facility, they would be prepared to fundraise, bid for external funding and to take on a voluntary stewardship role to promote and supervise the facility.
- 3.6 There are several communities and groups interested in skateboard facilities however demand in Kilmarnock is likely to be strongest in view of the population size. Several sites in Kilmarnock including Annanhill, Kay Park, Queens Drive and Scott Ellis Playing Fields have been considered. Any site should offer a neutral venue to reduce any possible territorial conflict. The site must be owned by the Council and available for development and it must be far enough away from housing to reduce any possible nuisance to residents. Any site selected is likely to prove controversial and will require planning approval. The site at Scott Ellis Playing Fields, on the hard standing area, would be the favoured option at present.
- 3.7 The Scottish Executive funds could be used to fund Phase One of the skatepark. Bids for external funding could be made by the Ayrshire Skateboard Association to expand and develop the facility in the future. The timescale required for a bid to the Sports Lottery to supplement the Scottish Executive funding is now too tight and Phase One should go ahead with a value of £80/85k plus fees.
- 3.8 Initial discussions with skatepark constructors and other local authorities have indicated that a reasonable size 'concrete bowl' could be provided for this sum, and it is possible to design for future expansion when further funds become available.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A skatepark development in Kilmarnock would utilise the available funding. The type of development required to satisfy the requirements of our insurers would require management and supervision and would incur revenue costs which would require additional funding.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Nil

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Any proposal to develop skateboarding facilities will require detailed consideration in conjunction with the Council's insurers who are currently reviewing their position. A detailed proposal will be developed once our insurer's requirements are known.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the current position regarding provision of skateboard facilities.

William Stafford
Director of Community Services

WS/JAG/KH

29th October 2002

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

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AGENDA