

# TC/3972/21

## Oswestry Town Council

### Report from the Town Clerk to Council – Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021

#### Skatepark Feasibility

##### Purpose

To provide an update on investigations into the feasibility of improving skatepark provision in Oswestry.

##### Background

Council adopted a Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor Isherwood as set out below:

**“Formally acknowledging the petition raised by a local student, this Council instructs officers to produce a report on the feasibility of providing facilities, either indoor, outdoor, or covered, for the use of skateboard, scooter and bike riders.”**

This report provides an overview of the early investigations undertaken and the potential financial implications. It provides some examples and suggests a way forward taking into account the work programme of the Council. The report has been informed by a conversation with Ramped, a Shropshire based Community Interest Company with strong links to Oswestry. They previously ran sessions in the Centre as part of the Youth Club.

##### Options

###### Indoor

The use of outdoor skateparks are limited to times when the weather is favourable. The indoor skateparks provide an attractive offer and could be viewed as a “destination facility”. Clearly these need to be run commercially and therefore chargeable. Ramped are looking for a site within the county; however Oswestry is not viewed as being the first choice given its catchment area and the scale of demand.

The capital costs could be significant.

# TC/3972/21

## Case Study

Unit 1 (Stoke on Trent) <https://unit1parkworks.co.uk/> is a Family Managed Community Interest Company who state “our local riders at the heart of everything we do.” They offer facilities for Skateboard, Stunt Scooter, BMX, mini-rocker and Inline Skates (Roller blades).

They are open 6 days per week and prices start from £4 per hour.



Figure 1 Unit 1

## Mobile – indoor

As previously referenced, Ramped used to run sessions at the Centre as part of the universal offer; however this equipment is heavy to manoeuvre and takes time to set up and put away. That said, the feasibility of running an indoor session over the winter months could be explored. These would need to involve a third party and will incur costs, some of which could be part funded by the Council. It is not known whether this would be an attractive offer to local young people and therefore the feasibility study would need to include some engagement activity. Such a session could be linked to the Town Council’s youth services provision, but ideally would need to be held on a weekend.



Figure 2 [Specialprojects.co.nz](http://Specialprojects.co.nz)

## Mobile – outdoor

The same model, referenced above, could be applied to an outdoor space eg Oak Street Rec and its attractiveness further enhanced to integrate with the streetscape. This could be offered as part of the Council’s holiday activity programme and could include coaching, hire and activities. The costs and feasibility would need to be explored but such an idea could be a draw. This, however, would not necessarily be a solution that is in line with the petition.



Figure3 [evolutionskateparks.co.uk](http://evolutionskateparks.co.uk)

# TC/3972/21

## Outdoor – permanent

The discussions at the November meeting focussed on improving the existing skatepark at Eastern Oswestry. This is provided by Shropshire Council and the Town Clerk has spoken with officers regarding the condition of the existing provision. Feedback suggests that the facility needs renovation and upgrade. There are a couple of options for the Town Council to consider:

- It could seek permission from Shropshire Council to fund the refurbishment and improvement to the skatepark and request that maintenance is carried out by the unitary authority;
- Requesting an asset transfer of the skatepark to Oswestry Town Council and then fund the refurbishment and improvement to the skatepark. This option will have revenue implications.

It is difficult to provide an estimated capital budget for such a renovation project, however a budget of circa £100,000 could be needed for a newly built facility. Market Drayton and Baschurch Skateparks are cited as examples of good practice.



*Figure 4 Market Drayton Town Council*

## Destination Facility



Figure 5- Herford Skatepark.com

The skatepark at Hereford <http://www.herefordskatepark.com/> has been cited as an example of good practice and young people travel from the surrounding areas to skate at the facility which is run by a charity. The website notes:

**“We are different to normal skateparks. Indoor Skateparks are usually run as a business and outdoor skateparks are usually built and owned by local councils. We are different, our skatepark is a community project and is owned and managed by a charitable company - Wheeled Sports 4 Hereford Ltd. Our skatepark is run by a committee who listen to the end users and take their views into account to make it better for others. All the money has been raised through grants/donations, organised by the project group.”**

Only desktop research has been carried out on this project and this suggests project costs of circa £600,000 (although the breakdown is not known). The skatepark has been voted one of the top 10 skateparks in the UK.

The Town Council does not own land that could be readily identified for a project of this kind, however a destination facility close to the leisure centre could be an attractive proposition.

# TC/3972/21

## Conclusion

There are a number of issues for Councillors to consider within this headline report; there are some potential short-term solutions and some aspirational solutions. One of the key success factors cited, in the examples used in this report, is engagement and involvement with users – this has to be a fundamental element of any project proposal.

The Town Council's skills and capacity to lead this work is limited, with the research to date being undertaken by the Town Clerk. It would also seem that the development of any outdoor facility would need to include Shropshire Council. The benefits of working with either a Community Interest Company or a Charity are clear, in particular the engagement with users, the management and ownership of sites and access to external funding are advantageous.

Given this, the Town Council may wish to commission professional expertise to support the development of a community project. The feasibility of this could be investigated.

## Way Forward

Members are asked to provide some guidance on this headline feasibility study using the following series of questions:

Does the Council wish to explore the feasibility of running an indoor session over the winter months? These would:

- involve a third party and will incur costs, some of which could be part funded by the Council;
- include some engagement activity which could be carried out by a third party?

Does the Council wish to explore the feasibility of running a mobile outdoor facility as part of its holiday activity programme? This could:

- include coaching, hire and activities;
- be moved to different parts of the town;
- be used as a mechanism to engage with skaters/bikers and their families regarding establishing a community project.

## **TC/3972/21**

Does the Council wish to discuss the options surrounding the Eastern Oswestry Skatepark with Shropshire Council?

Does the Council wish to consider the development of a landmark facility in Oswestry? In doing so, seek to work with Shropshire Council and the local community to develop a project?

Does the Council wish to commission external support to support the development of a community project?

Arren Roberts  
Town Clerk