

REPORT TO PRESTATYN TOWN COUNCIL

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DEPARTMENT: Commercial Leisure, Facilities, Assets & Housing

DATE: 6th September 2017

SUBJECT: Prestatyn BMX / Pump Track

1.0 Scope:

1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Prestatyn Town Council (PTC) on the development of a small BMX pump track and seek further guidance from the Council on how to proceed taking into account both internal and external reports, planning guidance and recommendations.

2.0 Background

2.1 In 2011, a survey was carried out by Youth Services looking at provision of wheel based activities within Prestatyn. At the time it was clear that there was a demand for both a skate park and or a BMX pump track with mixed views on the exact location. North Wales Play carried out a further survey within the town to identify the most appropriate area for either a skate park or pump track. The evaluation was based on a number of factors including personal and physical safety, access, travel distance, age appropriateness, environment / physical features, existing play value, user neutrality and potential development. They made a recommendation as to the most suitable site and put them in order of suitability.

1. Central Beach

2. Dawson Drive

3. Morfa Playing Fields

4. Bodnant Parc

5. Ffrith Beach

6. Bastion Road

2.2 In November 2013, an exercise was carried out in order to determine the costs associated with the development and construction of a skate park. Unfortunately the cost of constructing a skate park was in excess of the available budget (Circa £30,000 excluding on-going revenue costs). At the time, the costs associated with a small BMX pump track were more affordable, subject to any conditions relating to ground conditions, design and planning approval.

2.3 In 2014 a report was presented to Prestatyn Town Council providing a brief evaluation of each of the locations identified by North Wales Play with the intention of constructing a small BMX pump track. The evaluation was based on RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) guide lines on management and safety of outdoor areas.

3.0 BMX / Pump Track - Site Location Requirements

3.1 RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) provides information on playground management and the safety of indoor and outdoor play areas. This includes guidelines on the installation of BMX / Pump Tracks.

Whilst it is recognised that the availability of land is the overriding factor the following should be born in mind:

- The track should be overlooked either from nearby housing or a busy road or footpath.
- There should be good access for emergency vehicles
- Where practical and where finances allow there should be some shelter from the prevailing wind (a major contributor to BMX accidents) and the orientation should ideally be such so as to avoid side winds on obstacles/jumps. It is appreciated that this is not always possible.
- There should be no trees or other fixed objects within 3m of the track and where riders are likely to leave the track a larger distance should be allowed.
- Access to the track area for disabled spectators should be considered.
- There should be clear separation (at least 25m) from any children's play area or skateboard facility.
- If positioned on a playing field measures should be taken to prevent stray balls interfering with the users of the facility.
- Routes taken by riders to get to the track from nearby housing etc should be safe and traffic should not present a hazard (Road Traffic Warning signs are recommended if near a busy road).
- Where possible there should be public toilets within a reasonable distance.
- To avoid the cost of expensive drainage it is recommended that a naturally well-drained location be chosen.
- The well-being of nearby residents should be born in mind and whilst the track should be overlooked there should be sufficient separation from housing so that noise is not a nuisance.

- BMX tracks are designed for a single lap sprint. The track is NOT continuous and should be designed to be One Way only such that there are distinct start and finish areas which are preferably close together.
- There should be safe provision for casual spectators.

4.0 Prestatyn Location Options.

4.1 Further meetings and discussions were held in 2014 regarding the preferred location of any new track but excluded both Dawson Drive and Bastion Road which had previously been considered but discounted.

- **Central Beach (at rear of amusement arcade).** This site was identified as the prime site in the study carried out by North Wales Play. It has good access, has shelter from prevailing winds, close access to toilets, there is good separation between residential housing and good natural drainage. Unfortunately the area does not have the sufficient space to accommodate a BMX / Pump Track. RoSPA guidelines advise that there should be clear separation (at least 25 metres) from any children's play area. The proximity of the existing play provision restricts any development of this site for this purpose. The future development of the area as a skate park could be considered.
- **Morfa Playing Fields.** This is the former land fill site. The risks associated with use of the land are low as it is not deemed as part IIa designated contaminated land. However, it would still be recommended that for any development works like a BMX Track / Pump Track contractors should avoid excavations and build on top. Ideally the land for a BMX / Pump track should be flat with good natural drainage. Unfortunately, the topography of this area is not suited to this sort of development and the costs to prepare the land and mitigate any risk from land fill contamination would be outside the available budget. The area is also quite isolated having no passing vehicular traffic and opportunity for supervision of the area.
- **Parc Bodnant.** A planning application was made by Prestatyn Town Council in January 2012 for the construction of a Pump Track on land just off Parc Bodnant. This application was withdrawn. In the original application the location of the BMX / Pump Track under RoSPA guidelines would have been too close to an existing play area however there is sufficient space for this facility by taking the track further away from residential property, there is good access for emergency vehicles, the area has good natural drainage, is far enough from an existing play area / grass playing field and is overlooked by a major road.

- **Ffrith Beach** The Ffrith Beach site is located in front of the North Wales Bowls Centre. This area has sufficient space for a BMX / Pump Track, the site is located enough distance away from existing play provision, it has good emergency vehicle access, has good natural drainage and compliments the other leisure offers in that area. It is however closer to residential property than Parc Bodnant. The areas further around this proposed site are either common land or on lease to the operators of the Ffrith Beach Fun Parc / Festival Gardens. Environmental Services carry out low level grounds maintenance. Any new facility in this area would require increased levels of grounds maintenance and further discussions would need to take place with Environmental Services to establish a service level and cost.
- 4.2 Although both Parc Bodnant and the Ffrith Beach site have the sufficient space to accommodate this facility as Parc Bodnant had been previously subject to a withdrawn planning application it was agreed by Prestatyn Town Council that Ffrith Beach presented the best option creating an opportunity to develop an area that would benefit from further attractions of this type and would make better use of this land for recreational activities. The activity would compliment the range of activities that take place down on the site and would not compromise the safety of users of the MUGA (Multi – Use Games Area) and play area. It was further agreed that any development would need to take into consideration the views of residents, tenants of the Ffrith Beach Fun Parc / Festival Gardens and the Friends of the Ffrith group who have a management agreement on part of this land.
- 4.3 Prestatyn Town Council gave agreement in principal for Denbighshire County Council Officers to carry out further investigation and consultation with the various interested parties and present any designs, costs etc at future meetings.

5.0 Design and Development

- 5.1 As this was a new outdoor play / recreational facility on land managed by Environmental Services, a consultation exercise was carried out with them to understand if they had any concerns or issues, how they would manage the facility going forward and to provide costs associated with grounds maintenance i.e. litter picking, daily visual checks, weekly in – house inspections, six monthly external inspections and an annual ROSPA safety inspections. The cost for these services was approximately £1,300 **excluding** daily checks, increased litter picking, reactive / planned repair and maintenance and insurances. Environmental Services supported the development of this site on the basis that they would not incur any additional costs for the management of this facility.

- 5.2 In order to establish an indicative cost for the design and construction of a BMX Pump Track, a specialised company was engaged to advise and carry out a feasibility exercise on the proposed area providing details of the general specification, risk management, track layout / design and future repair and maintenance liabilities. The remit was to work with Denbighshire County Council officers to prepare and submit a future planning applications. The costs associated with the construction of a mini pump track with a tarmac finish rather than a dust finish, which requires more maintenance than tarmac finish, was circa £36,000 excluding professional fees and planning conditions. As part of their work they also attended a number of consultation exercises with residents (April 2015 & August 2015) and Planning (April 2016). As a result of these meetings and further ROSPA recommendations there is the potential for costs to 'creep' on the indicative construction cost of £36,000.
- 5.3 The potential 'creep' in design costs is associated with ROSPA recommendations for the track to be enclosed in a fenced area to prevent dogs, stray balls etc along with improved drainage, additional safety signage and access to the track by way of tarmac pathways.
- 5.4 A track layout / design and draft planning application has been developed and shared with the Planners who have requested that as part of any submission, a flood consequence assessment (FCA) should be carried out as the works involve ground works and the site is within a C1 flood risk zone. As a result we will need to carry out a topographical and drainage survey of the area as well as a ground investigation survey to determine whether there are any contaminants in the soil and confirm the porosity of the site. The indicative costs for this work is approximately £3,200
- 5.5 As part of the planning application we have also been advised that we would need to carry out an acoustic survey of the proposed site due to the close proximity to residential property and resident's concerns highlighted in the consultation exercise. The costs of this survey are approximately £1,400. There may be additional costs associated with any necessary mitigation.
- 5.6 DCC Design and Construction will assist in procuring and managing contractors in regards to ground, topographical and acoustic surveys and will prepare any FCA but the costs of these surveys will need to be met from the project.

6.0 Funding

- 6.1 Prestatyn Town Council were awarded £20,000 from commuted sums towards a pump track, skatepark or improved play provision with a further £10,000 allocated from Prestatyn Town Council and continued year on year

funding towards the operational costs of the facility in the region of £2,000 per annum.

- 6.2 To date, taking into account professional fees on design, consultation and preparation of the draft planning application project spend is £3,141.

7.0 Operational matters to consider

- 7.1 Due to the nature of the activity. Daily checks should take place on the track. These have not been costed by Environmental Services. Weekly checks are currently built into the cost plan
- 7.2 ROSPA also recommends that any facility should be located near accessible toilets. In the planning application use of the toilets at the North Wales Bowls Centre is suggested. Unfortunately, the centre does not operate 7 days a week between May and October due to the seasonal demands for indoor bowls and does not operate every evening. This leave the facility without any toilet provision.
- 7.3 There are also concerns by residents that as the track is at the end of a cul - de - sac there is very little passive supervision i.e. overlooked and have concerns that without this informal supervision there is more risk of anti – social behaviour. They are also concerned that the track will be used by motor cycles as they currently have experience of this on some areas of the Ffrith. Any gated fencing provision would need to have a management system in place for opening and locking the area which comes with a financial cost.

8.0 Summary

- 8.1 Although a track layout / design and draft planning application has been completed there are other factors that need to be taken into consideration before we can proceed.
- 8.2 Funding - construction cost for the track alone are circa £36,000. Additional survey costs as part of planning are approximately £4,600 excluding the additional need for fencing, improved drainage and improved pathways. Expenditure to date on professional fees is £3,141. These known costs alone would exceed the available budget by £13,741. Prestatyn Town Council would also need to consider the £2,000 on-going operational cost which would **include** increased litter picking, reactive / planned repair and maintenance and insurances but **not** daily checks. This would need to be subject to a partnership agreement between DCC Environmental Services and PTC for an agreed term.

8.3 If we are to proceed with this project, we will need to commission the ground investigation, topography and acoustic survey but all this work will be done at risk.

9.0 Options to consider

9.1 Proceed with surveys to ascertain cost certainty including any mitigation measures related to the acoustic surveys and seek further capital and revenue funding.

9.2 Suspend the current project due to insufficient capital and re-direct available funding to an alternative outdoor play project within Prestatyn. Existing drawings and proposals can be used for a future scheme.

DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILPLANNING APPLICATIONSAPPLICATIONCOMMENT

43/2017/0719 (Central)
Erection of extension to dwelling
95 Meliden Road, Prestatyn

43/2017/0645 (Meliden)
Erection of extensions and alterations to
form 2 no. dwellings
Craigrathin, 61 Ffordd Talargoch, Meliden,
Prestatyn

43/2017/0805 (East)
Variation of no. 2 of planning permission
code no. 43/2015/0727 to allow adjustment
to landscaping and external finishes
Land adjacent to 2 Mount Ida Road,
Prestatyn

43/2017/0806 (North)
Erection of extensions and alterations to
dwelling
8 Second Avenue, Prestatyn

43/2017/0793 (Meliden)
Erection of extension to dwelling
4 Glasfryn Avenue, Meliden, Prestatyn

43/2017/0803 (South West)
Demolition of garage and erection of
extensions to dwelling
84 The Meadows, Prestatyn