

Body: Cabinet

Date: 10th July 2013

Subject: Provision of a Skate Park in Hampden Park

Report Of: Jefferson Collard, Senior Head of Development

Ward(s) Hampden Park

Purpose To agree a location within Hampden Park for the provision of a new skate park.

Decision Type: Key decision

Recommendation: That Cabinet agrees the location of the skate park as follows:

- a) That it is located within the parameters of the Cross Levels Way site **OR**
- b) That it is located within the parameters of the disused rifle range

If option (a) is selected, Cabinet is further recommended to:

- i. agree a capital bid for the additional build cost to develop the site into a skate park estimated up to a sum of £21,000;
- ii. That agreement between ESCC and EBC is finalised to transfer the freehold of the Cross Levels Way land to EBC;
- iii. seek planning permission to develop a skate park at the Cross Levels Way site.

If option (b) is selected, Cabinet is further recommended to:

- i. agree a capital bid to cover any additional noise mitigation measures that may be required;
- ii. agree a capital bid for the additional build cost to develop the site into a skate park, estimated up to a sum of £7,000;
- iii. consider a capital bid to provide a BMX pump track at the Cross Levels Way site as part of the 2014/15 service and financial planning process;
- iv. seek planning permission to develop a skate park at the disused rifle range site.

Contact: Gareth Williams, Senior Specialist Advisor, Telephone 01323 415281 or internally on extension 5281.
Gareth.williams@eastbourne.gov.uk

Sue Oliver, Manager, Specialist Advisory Team
Telephone 01323 415360 or internally on extension 5360.
Sue.oliver@eastbourne.gov.uk

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 A budget of £120,000 has been approved by Cabinet to provide a skate park within Hampden Park and there was initially an expectation that it would be located on the existing BMX ramp site near Cross Levels Way, where there are currently earth ramps that are well used.
- 1.2 A meeting with representatives from the skate park users' community raised very strong reservations and concerns in relation to the Cross Levels Way site being used. These were mainly in relation to the close proximity of the hospice which they considered inconsiderate and disrespectful, the isolation of the site, the cost of the build and the exclusion of skate park users from the wider parks community.
- 1.3 Other potential suitable sites within the Hampden Park area were investigated such as Tugwell Park, Elm Grove and Holly Park but all had issues with drainage, being former tip sites and/or close to residential properties of varying degrees and were therefore discounted.
- 1.4 A further site within Hampden Park that was adjacent to the Sports Park athletics track was also considered, but objections were received from our contractual partners and it was discounted.
- 1.5 One other site, the former Rifle Range Club Site within Hampden Park, was considered to have some advantages as a potential skate park and was supported by the skaters. However the Friends of the Hampden Park (FotHP) expressed strong opposition to the use of any of the area of the disused rifle club as a skate park as they were developing their own ideas about how to best use the site. The FotHP had previously undertaken consultation about how the rifle range site could be used and this resulted in the following recommendations:-

- the creation of an earth stage
- butterfly sanctuary
- bog garden
- woodland walks
- wood sculptures in the trees
- radio controlled cars area
- covered seating
- roller blade facility and possibly even an ice skating rink

Consequently the FotHP do not support the idea of a skate park co-existing in the same vicinity as the proposals they were developing for the disused rifle range site.

- 1.6 As there were very conflicting views on where the skate park should be located, a consultation questionnaire was designed to determine the preferred site and the Council undertook this work. The questionnaire provided a choice of two sites, one identified as Site A which is located off Cross Levels Way and the second was Site B which is the disused rifle
-

range, near to the indoor and outdoor bowls club.

- 1.7 Currently, the Cross Levels Way site is owned by East Sussex County Council. The transfer of the freehold for the site to Eastbourne Borough Council was put on hold, pending the outcome of the skate park questionnaire.

2.0 Works associated with the locations of the skate park

- 2.1 The two sites that were put forward were both considered as possible locations for the creation of a skate park.
 - 2.2 The development of a part of the disused rifle range to create a skate park will be more economically viable as the temporary access required for the build process will be cheaper than that required to develop Cross Levels Way.
 - 2.3 A preliminary assessment of noise impact was obtained from an independent noise consultant in December 2012. Proposals for the design and layout of the skate park were not available to them at this very early stage, so noise impact was assessed assuming a worst typical case scenario. No noise measurements were taken at the time, and a standard skate park sound power level was modeled at each proposed site, and associated impact at nearby noise sensitive development was considered.
 - 2.4 The report indicated that as regards the disused rifle range, the existing wall will act as a noise mitigation barrier for the residential area to the east of the site, and additional mitigation or careful design/layout may be required to reduce noise levels at the housing to the north. There is also mention within the report that an extension to the existing wall would likely be sufficient to result in acceptable levels of noise at all housing to the north. If an extension to the wall is required, this represents a further cost.
 - 2.5 The report indicated that there would be a need for a noise mitigation barrier in the Cross Levels Way site due to the relatively close proximity of the hospice. This would have represented a further cost. However, one of the issues raised at the site visit between members and the Friends of The Hampden Park in June 2013 was whether the earth bund and the planting at the boundary of the hospice site would provide sufficient mitigation and avoid the need for a sound barrier. The noise consultant has been contacted about this matter, as it was understood that they were aware of the earth bund when they visited the site in December 2012, and therefore factored it into their modelling. They replied to say they were not aware of the bund, and they undertook further modelling. They suggest that based on their calculations, no mitigation needs to be in place if the skate park is built at Cross Levels Way. At the time of their visit the site was in the early stages of construction, and an assumption was made that the pile of earth at the boundary, which was more recently shaped into a bund, was spoil from the building works. In addition the site has been security fenced since work started.
 - 2.6 The cost of the temporary trackway for vehicles and plant will be confirmed
-

within the skate park contract, but based on the costs for the trackway provided for Manor Gardens, the access cost to develop the disused rifle range will be approximately £7,000. An extension to the existing wall (which could be brick or timber treated with fire retardant) may or may not be required. This will depend on the final design, layout and orientation of the skate park, and so it cannot be costed at this stage.

- 2.7 The approximate additional cost to provide a temporary trackway to develop the Cross Levels Way is £21,000.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1 The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was designed to gauge opinion for the preferred site for a skate park and this was open for comment from the 22nd February 2013 until the 15th March 2013. This was distributed to local schools, sports centres and colleges within a one mile radius of the site and also to specialist shops in Eastbourne.

- 3.2 To ensure that the questionnaire reached all parts of the community it was advertised in the local newspaper, on the Council's website and a consultation plan was created. Posters were distributed and questionnaires were available in public venues such as the Hampden Park café. Officers also carried out some one to one questionnaire surveys within Hampden Park itself.

- 3.3 A public consultation event was held in the Community Centre on Brodrick Road. There were two time slots available, between 2 – 4 p.m. and 6 – 8 p.m. where there was the opportunity to view the questionnaire and larger plans and also to discuss the two sites with officers and councillors.

- 3.4 The results of the questionnaire have supported the Cross Levels Way site (Site A) and a summary of the results is shown below (see also Appendix 2):

- 319 questionnaire returns with 56% in support of Cross Levels Way and 44% in support of the disused rifle range.
 - From the 179 questionnaire returns for Cross Levels Way, 48 were skate park users or potential users, representing 27% of the total questionnaire returns for this site. 131 returns didn't confirm whether they were skate park users or would use the facility representing 73% of the total questionnaire returns for this site.
 - From the 140 questionnaire returns for the disused rifle range, 96 were skate park users or potential users, representing 69% of the total questionnaire returns for this site. 44 returns didn't confirm whether they were skate park users or would use the facility representing 31% of the total questionnaire returns for this site.
 - A separate vote from Ratton School comprising of 167 votes through a show of hands was received. It provided no further data in relation to whether they were skate park users or potential skate park users.
-

- The results for Ratton School from their 167 votes were 81% in favour of Cross Levels Way and 19% in favour of the disused rifle range with no further measurable data provided from the school

3.5 Consequently the results show a preference for a skate park at Cross Levels Way. It is noted that this is not the preferred site for the potential users with only about a quarter of the votes for this site. One of the concerns of the users is the higher cost of making the Cross Levels Way site suitable for a skate park, therefore leaving less funding to provide the actual skate facility.

3.6 There were some specific references within the questionnaire returns:

- 9 references of Site B preventing other uses of this site
- 5 references to the police preferring Site A
- 5 references disputing the costs
- 4 references to better emergency access for Site A
- 4 references to overall access better for Site A
- 2 references to EBC biased consultation

All the relevant comments received will be considered accordingly as the project develops. Within the public consultation event, concerns were raised in relation to the additional costs associated with the development of Cross Levels Way in terms of the more difficult access.

3.7 The nearest neighbour to the Cross Levels Way Site is St Wilfrid's Hospice who has expressed no concern about the skate park being located close to their facility. The police have expressed no preference for either site and recognise that both will require some resource input to ensure that they don't attract anti social behaviour issues.

4.0 Visits to skate park potential locations

4.1 Cabinet members and ward councillors undertook direct consultation with representatives of both the skate park users and the FoHP at both of the potential skate park locations to hear the issues first hand. Visits took place on two separate occasions in June 2013, firstly with the representatives of the skaters, and secondly with the representatives of the Friends of The Hampden Park.

4.2 With regard to the meeting with the skate park users' representatives, the key issues that were raised were as follows:

- They have a very strong preference for the disused rifle range as they want to be included within Hampden Park as an integral part of the park community;
 - They described it as being centrally located and easily accessible from Hampden Park as a youth hub in an area dominated by spectator sports, and they believe the skate park will attract casual spectators;
 - They said that at the disused rifle range, skate park users would be closer to facilities such as the public conveniences, and they would
-

be far more likely to support the café and purchase food and drink there;

- Even with the prospect of additional funding, (at this time it was thought that a barrier to mitigate noise would be required) the proposal to provide a skate park in Cross Levels Way of equivalent financial value was not a scheme they favoured for the above reasons;
- They said that although the hospice had expressed no issues with the close proximity of a skate park, they felt uneasy and conscious of the noise generated which they believed would be disrespectful and limit design potential;
- The disused rifle range is very open and fully visible to other park users which will deter bullying and anti social behaviour;
- The Cross Levels Way site has well established BMX earth ramps and is well used and the only such facility in any of Eastbourne's parks. The skate park users suggested this could be enhanced as a built BMX "pump track" so that BMX users could still use it. It was suggested that noise wouldn't be an issue due to the fine gravel riding surface. This is a new proposal which could provide two new facilities.

There is insufficient space on the Cross Levels Way site to provide both a skate park and a BMX pump track, which would require removal of the existing earth ramps.

4.3

It was agreed that further discussion would be required with the Outdoor Bowls Club to highlight any issues or concerns, if the skate park location was to be at the disused rifle range. This discussion has taken place, and the following matters were raised by the Bowls Club;

1. Intrusion – they had previously met with the skaters' representatives, and accept that the skaters are responsible people, their concern is with non-skaters. They reported existing problems with youths gaining access to the bottom green and they would like this to be fenced.
 2. They have confirmed they already have a high level of noise from the play area and have requested that the hedge to the south should be allowed to grow taller with EBC taking responsibility for cutting the top. They have also asked that this boundary is reinforced and there is additional planting.
 3. They anticipate foot traffic through the lane between their club and the Indoor Bowls Club car park to the disused rifle range and they asked if this would be a laid path. This is being investigated.
 4. They asked about the opening hours of the toilets (which are 07:00 to an hour after dusk), compared with the opening hours of the skate park, and they asked if the skate park would be fenced in with set hours. They also asked about policing and surveillance. The skate park will be open and not enclosed by a fence for use within set hours, and skate park users wouldn't use it in darkness as it would be dangerous. The police have acknowledged that additional resource will be needed to show a presence when it is opened.
 5. They enquired about lighting to the lane between them and the play area, to the tennis courts. This is currently being explored, but it
-

appears to be a reasonable suggestion in that if the refurbished tennis courts are lit, the access to the courts should be.

The bowlers also asked if the Council could reinforce their boundary with spiky plants, which again, is reasonable irrespective of the location of the skate park, considering that they have been broken into twice recently. Additional "defensive" spiky plants have been ordered and improvements to security on the boundary with the disused rifle range are under consideration. The improved security to the lower green will require a capital bid through the service planning process.

4.4 With regard to the meeting with the Friends' representatives, the key issues that were raised were as follows:

- They have a very strong preference for the skate park to be at the Cross Levels Way site. They have ideas for the disused rifle range as a community project, and have worked on it with schools. They have ideas such as a communal area, planting, an earth stage, and covered seating. They would like to offer two facilities to the community, and if the skate park was to be located at the disused rifle range, it would curtail other possibilities. They made the point that these ideas can't be replicated at Cross Levels Way;
- The Friends are exploring potential sources of funding for the disused rifle range, and have a record of raising funds for the Park, such as the recent lottery grant to refurbish the Decoy Pond;
- They would like to see the BMX area reinstated and a new skate park on the Cross Levels Way site, and they don't want to see the park covered in concrete;
- They drew attention to the Ratton school block vote, in that 81% of the 11-16 year olds who voted showed a preference for the skate park to be located at the BMX track;
- They raised the issue of St Wilfrid's hospice, and they said that they had been advised that the hospice don't mind noise, it is preferable, and the hospice is located on a busy road, near to a supermarket and sports centre;
- They raised the issue of the location of the skate park at the disused rifle range, and whether it would be against the brick wall, as assumed by the consultant who prepared the preliminary noise assessment, or whether it would be nearer to the sports park, as shown on the Council's consultation document;
- They raised the issue about access, and explained that access to the Cross Levels Way site from the village and the station is on tarmac footpaths, and that the main cycle way is lit.

4.5 The following issues were raised at the visit, and further information was sought;

1. What would be the final location of the skate park if it was to be situated within the disused rifle range, and why has there been a change from the consultant's report, to that shown in the Council's public consultation?

The response to this is that when the potential skate park options were originally referred to the noise consultant, they assumed that

the skate park would be located against the wall in the disused rifle range. With regard to the public consultation, the Council considered various locations within the site, and moved the potential location further away from the nearest noise sensitive development, and nearer to the Sports Park. There will of course need to be further detailed advice from the consultant over the final location, layout, orientation and design of the skate park, once a site is selected. Further advice has now been sought about the location of the skate park with reference to the wall, and the consultant suggests that although it would be usual to locate a noise source as far away as possible from noise sensitive development, the best place in this particular location is in fact close to the brick wall, as it offers existing mitigation against noise.

2. If a barrier was to be built at Cross Levels Way, would any trees need to be removed?

This is no longer an issue, given the noise consultant's advice that a barrier is not required.

3. If there was a need for an extension to the wall at the disused rifle range, would any trees need to be removed?

The view of the consultant has been sought, and they recommend that trees are not taken down as although they do little in terms of absorbing sound, they will help to remove the visual stimulus which can sometimes increase the perception of noise. As the layout of the skate park is still unconfirmed they suggest it be designed so that if a barrier is needed it would not need to result in trees being taken down.

4. Does the earth bund and the planting at the boundary of the hospice provide sufficient mitigation and avoid the need for a sound barrier?

Please see paragraph 2.5 of this report. Since the site visit with the Friends of the Hampden Park, the noise consultant has advised that based on their calculations, no mitigation needs to be in place because of the existence of the earth bund. Trees do little in terms of absorbing sound.

5. If the final location of the skate park within Cross Levels Way was at the end of the site furthest away from the hospice boundary, and nearer to the sports park, would any mitigation in the form of a barrier be required?

The consultant has responded that they had already located the skate park as far away from the hospice boundary as possible.

5.0 Resource Implications

- 5.1 A sum of £120,000 has been allocated from section 106 budgets to fund the construction of the skate park. However with a decision to build at
-

Cross Levels Way there will be the need for a temporary trackway to be laid to protect the grounds throughout the build. The cost is estimated at approximately £21,000 for temporary access when either gaining access through the Indoor Bowls Club car park or through Sussex Downs car park, during the summer recess, the only time when access through their car park could be achieved.

There are also associated costs with building the skate park at the disused rifle range, approximately £7,000 for access, and an additional sum which cannot be quantified in the event of an extension to the existing brick wall being required. As previously indicated, this may not be required as mitigation may be possible with careful design/layout.

If a decision is taken to provide a BMX pump track at the Cross Levels Way site, there will be an associated cost. It is suggested that this is considered through the 2014/15 service and financial planning process. A BMX pump track will require planning permission. It is made of earth and fine gravel so there will not be the same noise issues in comparison with the ramps and grind rails of a skate park.

The maintenance of the skate park will be included in the Parks Ground Maintenance Contract, and contained within budgets identified within this service area.

The improved security to the lower green of the Outdoor Bowls Club will require a capital bid through the service planning process.

- 5.2 The costs associated with the temporary access to the Cross Levels Way site will reduce the available budget for the skate park, and it is recommended that a further sum of up to a maximum of £21,000 is allocated from Council budgets to fund the extra costs and to enable a reasonable facility to be constructed.
- 5.3 The costs associated with the temporary access to the disused rifle range will reduce the available budget for the skate park, and it is recommended that a further sum of up to a maximum of £7,000 is allocated from Council budgets to fund the extra costs and to enable a reasonable facility to be constructed.
- 5.4 The creation of the skate park facility will be managed within existing staffing resources.

6.0 Implications

6.1 Environmental Implications

- 6.1.1 The greatest environmental impact will be through the noise created by both the physical use of the new structure and the usual sounds of the participants who use the facility. Although there is an existing facility on the Cross Levels Way site, the earth ramps create none or very little noise through the use of this facility, and there is an expectation of a greater number of users at either site with the development of a new skate park.
-

- 6.1.2 The build material of the skate park will need to be determined through discussions with the skate park users but some returned questionnaires incidentally indicated a preference for a concrete facility. This will need to be verified as the preferred material, but the longevity of such a structure will far outlast structures manufactured from other materials like wood, which was used at the Sovereign Park skate park and has a 10 year lifespan.
- 6.1.3 Both sites have mature vegetation that is managed naturally for biodiversity and wildlife benefits. At the Cross Levels Way site, this forms a natural screen with the Sports Park and would provide some shelter from the prevailing wind. At the disused rifle range, the vegetation provides separation from the sports pitches.
- 6.1.4 It has been identified that there are aquifers under Hampden Park. The Environment Agency have advised the Council that both proposed locations for the skate park do not fall within any areas with sensitive water issues.

6.2 Community Safety Implications

- 6.2.1 Consideration will be given to recognised good practice for designing out crime within the selected location for the skate park, and will be a relevant factor when the final layout and design is agreed.

6.3 Youth Implications

- 6.3.1 The skate park will be open to all users and will typically attract skate boards, BMX bikes, scooters, skaters and provide other wheeled play opportunities.

The BMX pump track will be open to all users and will attract bikes.

- 6.3.2 There will be a second phase of consultation to determine the build material and consideration will be given to the longevity and sustainability of the preferred material. The second phase of consultation will be focussed on the skate park users to determine the build material, design and features within the skate park. This is likely, from previous experience, to be well attended and represented by youths.
- 6.3.3 The build of the skate park at the Cross Levels Way location will have an impact on the use of the existing earth ramps, used by BMX'ers currently, as there is insufficient space for all of them to remain alongside the skate park. However, if the skate park is built at the disused rifle range, there is ample space for a professionally designed BMX pump track at the Cross Levels Way site.

6.4 Equality and Fairness

- 6.4.1 The principles of Equality and Fairness have been considered and specific emphasis was applied to the existing focus and community groups, who are the Friends of the Hampden Park who represent the existing park users, and the representatives from the skate park users.
-

- 6.4.2 From the eight protected characteristics within the Equality and Fairness framework, the most consideration will be given to age as this has the greatest relevance for this project.
- 6.4.3 The wider issues of design and accessibility will be considered within a second exercise, directed more specifically towards the representatives from the skate park users, who will have a greater input into the actual design characteristics of the new facility as they will be the main users of the facility.

7.0 Summary

- 7.1 The results of the consultation have favoured the use of Site A, Cross Levels Way, through the return of questionnaires with 56% in support of this site and 44% in support of the disused rifle range. The returns from Ratton School which were submitted through a "show of hands" voting process supported the use of Site A also, with a much stronger variance of 81% in support of the site and 19% in support of the disused rifle range but did not identify any other data such as the numbers of skate park users and their preference.
- 7.2 However when considering the responses from the users of the new facility, there is a clear preference for the new skate park to be located at the disused rifle range, a majority of 69% to 31%.
- 7.2 If the Cross Levels Way site is the preferred option, the agreement to transfer the freehold from East Sussex County Council to Eastbourne Borough Council will need to be finalised, but the Heads of Terms have already been agreed in principal with ESCC in agreement to transfer of the freehold of the BMX site to EBC for a nominal fee.
- 7.3 The additional costs for both sites in terms of noise mitigation and access have been explored as fully as possible, and estimates have been made where necessary. The final costs will be subject to the design, layout, and orientation of the skate park. Further detailed advice will be sought from the consultant once the site has been selected, to ensure that the impact of noise is minimised.

Gareth Williams
Senior Specialist Advisor

Sue Oliver
Manager, Specialist Advisory Team

Background Papers:

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

Hampden Park Skate Park Questionnaire

Hampden Park Skate Park responses

Hampden Park Skate Park – Friends of the Hampden Park fact sheet

MAS Environmental Preliminary Assessment of Noise Impact December 2012

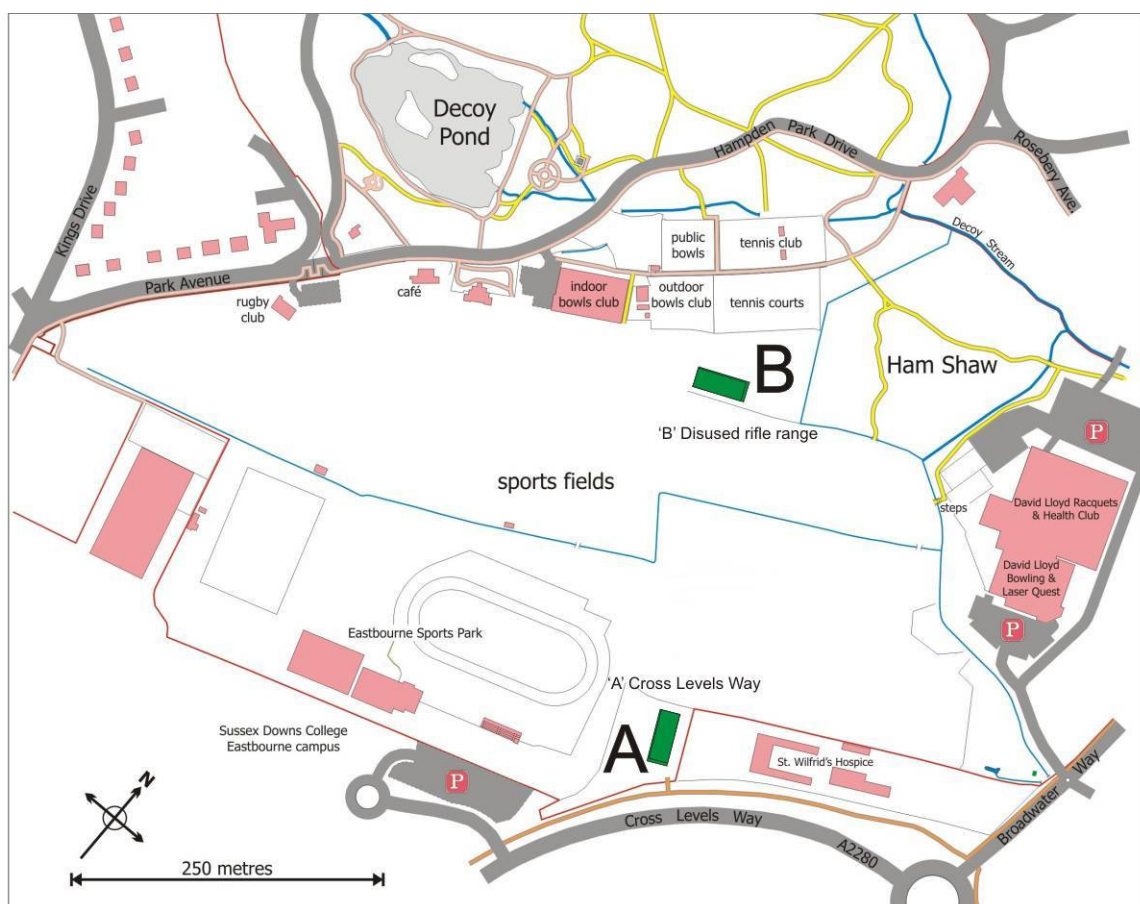
To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.

Hampden Park Skate Park Consultation

Eastbourne Borough Council have set aside a budget of £120,000 to build a skate park and this will be programmed for completion during 2014. Two locations within Hampden Park have been identified for the building of the new skate facility and the public are being asked to choose which site they prefer:

'A' Cross Levels Way Site – situated between the Sports Park Athletics Track and the new St Wilfrid's Hospice buildings. Earth BMX ramps are currently located here.

'B' Disused Rifle Range – situated on fallow land adjacent to existing outdoor tennis and bowls facilities and with the old rifle range back wall against the woodland of Ham Shaw at one end of the site.



Please put an 'X' in each box that represents your answers:

Are you a skate park user?

YES

NO

As a skate park user would you use the new facility?

YES

NO

Which is your preferred site for the skate park?

Both sites will require a level temporary access road to be built across the fields from Hampden Park Drive.

Location A. A temporary access road will need to be put in to build the skate park. Access to build at this location will be more costly than location 'B' and a noise barrier will be needed to screen the nearby hospice building. It is near a busy main road but isolated from the general park users by mature trees and bushes.

Location B. A shorter temporary access road compared with location 'A' will need to be put in to build the skate park. There is an existing wall to deflect noise from the nearest properties and it is central in the park being open and well overlooked from the sports areas. The Friends of the Hampden Park have suggested other possible outdoor recreational uses that could also be created here.

'A' Cross Levels Way

'B' Disused Rifle Range

Please return your completed questionnaire by noon on 15th March 2013.

Email returns to – parks@eastbourne.gov.uk

By post to – Skate Park Consultation, 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne BN21 4TW.

Please include your name, address and contact details so that you can be contacted with updates or invitations to participate in further stages of the development of this project.

Name

Contact details



Appendix 2

Hampden Park Skate Park Consultation

For site A - Cross Levels

		number	%
User		36	20.11
Potential user		12	6.70
Status unknown		131	73.18
	TOTAL for A	179	99.99

For site B - Rifle Range

User		81	57.86
Potential user		15	10.71
Status unknown		44	31.43
	TOTAL for B	140	100.00

Site unknown/no preference	5
-----------------------------------	----------

Ratton School status unknown	TOTAL for A	135	81%
Ratton School status unknown	TOTAL for B	32	19%

Specific issues mentioned

Security fence required at B		1
Toilets required at B		1
Police prefer A		5
Antisocial behaviour potential at B		1
Use of B will prevent other uses there		9
Lottery funding from Friends		1
EBC biased consultation document		2
Emergency access better at A		4
Better overall access at A		3
Site B use detrimental to wildlife		2
Lighting bad for surroundings		1
Costs disputed by respondent		5