

Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

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Petworth Skatepark Project

1. Contacts

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2. Executive Summary

Petworth Town Council has, for a number of years, looked to make improved provision for young people and provide a skate park.

Following the conclusion of an Options Appraisal they have identified a location within the Pound Street Car Park as their preferred location, and have asked the Council as landowner for consent to proceed to apply for Planning Permission.

This report details the proposal and asks the Cabinet to consider and balance the feedback and objections received against the request for use of parking spaces to deliver the skatepark.

The project has been driven in part by the availability of the remaining balance of the Petworth Leisure Fund, and Petworth Town Council are also seeking confirmation of that funding of £50,000, and in addition, up to a further £20,000 for this project

3. Recommendation

- 3.1. That the Cabinet considers the results of the Options Appraisal of potential sites for a skatepark undertaken by Petworth Town Council and the consultation responses set out in the report.
- 3.2. That the Cabinet considers whether it should give agreement (subject to the replacement of any lost parking spaces) to Petworth Town Council to develop detailed plans for the provision of a skate park at the identified site in Pound Street Car Park.
- 3.3. That subject to the Cabinet's decision in recommendation 3.2 above that:
 - (a) Subject to planning consent and other necessary requirements being obtained that appropriate agreements are entered into to enable construction and use of the skatepark on Council land, and

(b) That the Cabinet provisionally confirms the availability of a contribution of up to £70,000 towards the project being £50,000 from the Petworth Leisure Fund, and up to an additional £20,000 (subject to detailed costings).

4. Background

- 4.1. Petworth Town Council has, for many years, looked to make improved provision of facilities for young people, both for those that live in the town and those that live in the villages and settlements around. Planning permission had previously been granted for a skatepark on the Sylvia Beaufoy car park, but the scheme was not implemented and the permission has now expired.
- 4.2. In 2001, the Council established a dedicated £1m fund (the Petworth Leisure Fund) for the provision of improved sport and leisure facilities in the town and surrounding area. A number of projects have been funded since that time, but there remains a balance of £50,000 which was earmarked for the proposed skatepark. Petworth Town Council (PTC) have reconfirmed their support for a skate park and developed proposals for consideration by Cabinet.
- 4.3. At their meeting in February 2016, the Cabinet considered a proposal, *inter alia*, for the use of Council land for the creation of a skate park facility at the Sylvia Beaufoy Car Park in Petworth. The Cabinet resolved:

“That the District Council, whilst supporting the provision of a skatepark facility for Petworth, has concerns regarding the safety of the proposed facility in this location. As a result it requests Petworth Town Council to explore alternative locations for the proposed skatepark or to look at an alternative form of youth facility provision (not wheeled sports) at the identified location at Sylvia Beaufoy Car Park, subject to planning permission, full occupational terms and site management arrangements”.
- 4.4. Mrs Keegan and officers have met with PTC to discuss the Cabinet’s decision, and agreed that if a thorough search for sites was unsuccessful then the Cabinet would review the decision regarding the use of Council land.
- 4.5. With the support of the Communities Team, PTC developed a methodology for an Options Appraisal (OA) and identified sites in the town for consideration, including sites previously considered and rejected by PTC for reconsideration, and additional sites identified by Hyde Housing. The OA considered:
 - (a) Accessibility – for skate park users and their family on foot, and if arriving by car
 - (b) Visibility (for safety and a deterrent to anti-social behaviour) and Activity (what else is taking place nearby)
 - (c) Feasibility, Ownership and Future Plans for the site – it was essential to PTC that this was a proposal that could be delivered as quickly as possible, rather than a medium term proposal that might further frustrate the aspirations of local young people.
- 4.6. In total, 20 sites (including two sites in CDC ownership – Sylvia Beaufoy Car Park and Pound Street Car Park) were identified and considered by PTC against

the agreed criteria. Their assessments were scrutinised by officers before the final version of the OA was agreed.

- 4.7. It is the PTC view that the OA demonstrates that no other sites are viable, and have submitted their report together with a formal letter asking for reconsideration of the use of Council owned land in the southeast corner of the Pound Street Car Park, Petworth (see Appendices 1 and 2).

5. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 5.1. To fulfil the aspirations of local young people for a skate park in Petworth, which would both serve their own community and the surrounding parishes in an appropriate location.

6. Proposal

- 6.1. An area in the south east corner of the Pound Street car park has been identified by PTC as their preferred location (see Appendix 3). This part of the car park is used for season ticket holders as well as being available for day parking and is the furthest distance from the retail centre. The area identified on the map is not indicative of the final size of the skatepark. PTC have appointed consultants who, in designing a skate park for that location, would look to minimise the land take and address any planning constraints of that location.
- 6.2. The Cabinet will wish to consider carefully the feedback from officers, the Petworth Business Association and the Petworth Vision Group (see paragraph 9 below) who raise concerns about the loss of parking spaces and the negative cumulative impact of the Petworth Vision proposals and the skatepark proposals both proceeding. If the Cabinet is minded to agree to the proposal in principle it should be on the basis that lost spaces can be replaced so as to comply with the Council's approved Parking Strategy.
- 6.3. The proposal will still require detailed consideration of siting, land take and safe access across the car park. However, PTC requests an indicative approval for the land use, in order to commission detailed design sufficient to support a planning application for the project.

7. Alternatives Considered

- 7.1. PTCs OA suggests the Sylvia Beaufoy car park as the preferred site (see Appendices 1 and 2). The use of Pound Street Car Park came second by a narrow margin, as PTC had assumed the Council would be reluctant to lose car park capacity and revenue; heard concerns from local businesses regarding the loss of parking spaces; and, saw the then bi-weekly mobile recycling centre operating from the car park as a further constraint. However since that appraisal the mobile recycling service has ceased and the willingness to consider the opportunities for managing the loss of parking space has mitigated the original score and resulted in the change in preferred location.

8. Resource and Legal Implications

- 8.1. PTC had previously sought an allocation of £50,000, being the final balance of the Petworth Leisure Fund (originally circa £1m), towards this project. PTC have identified a further £10,000 that they could add to the budget, and the Cabinet is asked to consider approving an additional sum of up to £20,000 from reserves if agreement to proceed is given. The additional sum in part addresses the depreciation of the £50,000 in the years it has remained unused, and the rise in costs of an appropriate facility, this being subject to the final costs of the skate park once identified.
- 8.2. The initial design proposals suggest that an estimated 11 parking spaces (maximum) would be lost of the current total of 249 (4.4%). The current average income per parking space is approximately £200 per annum indicating a loss of some £2,200 of income. It is recognised that the area of car park is not always used by Season Ticket holders, and has previously accommodated the mobile WSCC Waste and Recycling Centre which has now ceased. However, a Lease Agreement to PTC for the use of the land will need to be provided, and the rent payable will reflect, at least, the loss of income to the Council.
- 8.3. In consulting with the Parking Services Manager (see 9.3) it is evident that relining of the Pound Street car park will be necessary to mitigate the loss of car parking spaces. Relining options for the whole of Pound Street car park are being sought from consultants, which may increase the number of spaces available. If mitigation or net gain can be achieved through a greater efficiency in car park layout, then the consequences of such a scheme on the local economy can be minimised.

9. Consultation

- 9.1. A meeting between Mrs Keegan (supported by officers) and representatives of PTC took place on Friday 14 October 2016 and included visits to both Sylvia Beaufoy and Pound Street Car Parks.
- 9.2. Internal departments have been consulted on the potential use of the identified area of Pound Street Car Park. Economic Development is currently supporting the Petworth Vision group, who are developing proposals for the potential enhancement of the northern end of Pound Street Car Park. The refinement and implementation of such enhancements are not fully mature, but the initial concern was the potential for a cumulative loss of car parking spaces. The Vision Groups own proposals are now unlikely to lead to direct loss of car parking spaces but the group is still considering whether the current space for coach parking could be used differently and this could lead to pressure on spaces elsewhere.
- 9.3. The concern regarding any loss of car parking spaces remains due to the possible impact on the visitor economy. Recent research from Tourism South East (Petworth Visitor Survey – Report of Findings, September 2016) states that 96% visitors use a car to reach the town and only 4% of visitors surveyed stated ‘plenty of parking’ as a positive aspect of the town. Given the lack of public transport, the current use of the car to reach Petworth is likely to increase at least in line with general car use. Predictions for future car use from the

Department of Transport's 'Road Transport Forecast 2013' projects that car demand per person will increase at a rate of 1% pa between 2015-2025.

- 9.4. Parking Services is aware of the emerging Petworth Vision and that a number of options are under consideration. They echo the concern regarding the loss of car parking spaces. Pound Street car park is well used, recent observations have shown an average occupancy level of 85%, but there will be seasonal fluctuations and specific events can influence the demand for parking. There are currently 73 season ticket holders. A consultant has been commissioned to look at raising the capacity of Petworth car parks (see 8.3 & 10.2). The Parking Services Manager awaits the outcome of this work, in conjunction with final designs for a skate park, to understand the capacity impact or what could be done to compensate for the loss of parking spaces. Opportunities to increase capacity in the Sylvia Beaufoy car park could also be considered.
- 9.5. There is also concern regarding skate park user movements through a car park and a full Risk Assessment of access is required at the design stage.
- 9.6. Estates would wish to ensure that any leasing of land incorporates sufficient flexibility to ensure alternative uses of any part of the car park are not prevented in the medium term. Further discussion would be required with PTC to ensure agreeable lease terms and implications of the proposed facility. However, Estates and Legal Services have confirmed that there are no covenants on the land that would preclude the proposed use.
- 9.7. Planning Officers, acting for South Downs National Park, have made initial comment on the proposal. They have identified key constraints to development in that location. It would be in a conservation area, and any proposal would need to preserve or enhance the appearance of the area. The impact on neighbour amenity such as noise, and the loss of car parking would also need to be considered in any planning application. They encourage a Preliminary Planning Enquiry to better understand the implications and to advise on the likelihood of planning permission being granted.
- 9.8. In developing its proposals, it is recognised that PTC has consulted with residents (including young people) to determine support for the skate park proposal. PTC is engaged in developing a Neighbourhood Plan, drawing in other local stakeholders and the wider community, and the skate park is one of a number of projects identified within that exercise – although it is hoped that it is one that can proceed ahead of a completed plan. PTC is also represented on the Petworth Vision group, and while they recognise that the Vision Group are concerned about any loss of car parking that might impact on businesses, hope that the two aspirations (the skate park and Vision aspirations to make Petworth more attractive to visitors) are sufficiently exclusive to prevent a conflict.
- 9.9. Petworth Business Association is objecting to the proposals. Their objection focuses principally on the strategic importance of Pound Street car park to the town, the impact on parking capacity and the consequent impact on current and future economic growth. Their full response is included at Appendix 4.

10. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 10.1. The continued availability of funds for the provision of improved leisure facilities in Petworth assumes that greater provision can be made for community benefit, if the form and exact location can be agreed in due course.
- 10.2. The proposal remains subject to the development of a detailed scheme and Planning Permission and other consents being obtained. Any potential health and safety, or land management, risks associated with the installation of a skate park in this location should be identified and mitigated in any approved scheme. However, the outcome of the car park relining study should be known and understood before PTC proceeds with a planning application.

11. Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder The provision of a skate park is hoped to have a positive impact	X	
Climate Change While construction of a permanent skate park will have an inherent carbon footprint, the provision of improved facilities within easy travelling distance to young people could reduce car journeys	X	
Human Rights and Equality Impact Provision would be a positive impact for young people	X	
Safeguarding and Early Help The provision of a skate park would not in itself create a safeguarding responsibility for PTC but the original proposal included proposal for their management and oversight of operation, which could be duplicated here.	X	
Other:		X

12. Appendices

- 12.1. Petworth Town Council – Options Appraisal Overview
- 12.2. Petworth Town Council – Options Appraisal Site Assessments
- 12.3. Location Map – Pound Street Car Park
- 12.4. Response to the proposals from Petworth Business Association

13. Background Papers

None