

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Asset Manager – Streets and Open Space

TO: North Area Committee

12/02/2015

WARDS: East Chesterton

**UPDATE ON LOCAL S106 PRIORITY PROJECT: BROWNSFIELD BMX/
MINI WHEELS FACILITY**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Using its devolved-decision-making powers over the use of S106 contributions, the North Area Committee on 22 November 2012 allocated £30k of devolved informal open space contributions for improvements to the BMX track next to Brownsfield community centre. Following an update to the Committee on 6 February 2014, however, it was agreed that more information and consultation with neighbours and BMX track users was needed before a report back to the Committee for a decision on this project.
- 1.2 A revised project appraisal was reported to the Committee on 3 July 2014, which reduced the scope of the project, with the emphasis now on use by mini-BMX bicycles and scooters aimed more at younger children. This appraisal was agreed, subject to further consultation on design options.
- 1.3 Following consultation last autumn, this latest report summarises the responds to the consultation and recommends a way forward for implementing the scheme which takes accounts of the views of both local residents and track users.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The North Area Committee Chair is recommended to:-

- a) approve Option D for the delivery of project PR031b – BMX/ mini wheels track next to Brownsfield Community Centre (S106) subject to adaptations set out at 3.18.6

3. Background

- 3.1 North Area Committee on the 6th of February 2014, resolved to defer consideration of additional funding and approval for the implementation of the BMX track improvements next to Brownsfield Community Centre.
- 3.2 At the North Area Committee Open Forum of the 6th February 2014, members of the public queried the impact on surrounding properties and whether or not there was support for the approved project.
- 3.3 In an updated project appraisal to the North Area Committee on the 3rd July 2014, it was agreed that further consultation with neighbours and BMX track users was required.
- 3.4 In this updated project appraisal, Officers' recommended lessening the impact of the project to emphasise mini-wheels rather than a full scale BMX track. The electronic start and lap time displays were removed from the design brief.
- 3.5 The design brief also stated that mini-wheels facilities are primarily for scooter users and mini BMX bicycles and are not intended to attract older riders.
- 3.6 Officers' have completed a Request for Quotation (RfQ) exercise to seek expressions of interests and offers from suppliers. This RfQ resulted in four schemes being offered which allowed for a further full and extended consultation of neighbours and other stakeholders.
- 3.7 An online consultation was hosted on the City Council's website and it ran from 24th October 2014 until the 28th November 2014. This consultation considered whether there was support for the BMX/ Mini wheels project, with respondents commenting on, and making a choice from the four options offered.
- 3.8 Officers' using the consultation sought views on four options:-
 - Option A Concrete finish, with subtle curves and ramps lowered into the landscape. This lowered the visual impact from the original proposal;
 - Option B A tarmac finish with a series of mounds with grass mounding to reduce the visual impact;
 - Option C A tarmac finish with different roll over hills with a quarter pipe; and

Option D Tarmac finish with different sized roll over hills, quarter pipe and areas ramped up to create mounds.

Appendix A details and illustrates the four options considered during the consultation.

- 3.9 This online consultation was supplemented by a paper based questionnaire (using the same information as the web questionnaire), and this was circulated to addresses within the Brownsfield area on the 24th October 2014. The total number of properties mail dropped (surrounding Brownfields Community Centre) is approximately 60, and 90 questionnaires were left at the Community Centre.
- 3.10 A drop in session was held on the 1st November from 1pm to 3pm, at the Brownsfield Community Centre, where Officers' outlined the proposal options. The session was intended to allow the opportunity for questions, prior to completing the questionnaire. This session was attended by 3 people. Officers' believe that, as many of the initial concerns relating to noise and competitive use of the space had been overcome through design, the levels of response were low.
- 3.11 The consultation was intended to give respondents the opportunity to say whether or not they support the plans associated with the proposed scooter park and to comment on the four design options.
- 3.12 A copy of the consultation paper is available at Appendix C.
- 3.13 There were 49 responses received to the consultation. Of the 49 responses received:
- 38 supported the need for a BMX/ Mini Wheels facility;
 - 8 did not support the need for a BMX/ Mini Wheels facility; and
 - 3 were unsure.

A summary of the reasons given by respondents for supporting/ not supporting the facility is included in appendix B.

- 3.14 As a consequence of the consultation, and having given all responses consideration, Officers' now have a better understanding as to whether or not the BMX/ mini wheels facility is supported.
- 3.15 Those respondents who did not support the BMX / mini wheels facility cited the following reasons.** *Officer responses are in italics directly below:-*

- 3.15.1 It is not needed and would be better elsewhere; Children enjoy the area as it is and can use their scooters.
There is an established use of BMX/ mini wheels around the neighbourhood, as expressed and stated by those that raised the project. There is also ongoing evidence of use of scooters from the Children and Young People Participation Service who conduct regular activities and workshops on site. Officers' have considered a range of locations and believe linking the proposed facility to the community centre area is the most effective use of available land.
- 3.15.2 It will attract quad bikers and motor scooters; Scooter and bikes do not use this area.
There is currently no evidence to support this claim. The recommended option however, does help to overcome these concerns through design.
- 3.15.3 Just the old BMX plan modified and presented again.
The old BMX plan was a single generic proposal; four different options were worked up for this consultation
- 3.15.4 The facility will attract young adults and vandalism; it will add to noise disturbance and bring Anti-Social Behaviour:
These are legitimate concerns, however previous experience and knowledge has shown that the installation of multi-use games area, skate parks & youth shelters does not increase the incidences of Anti-Social Behaviour. For example, recent similar installations at Cherry Hinton Ground and Nuns Way Recreation of skate parks have not prompted an increase in Anti-Social behaviour.
- 3.15.5 It spoils a natural area.
Officers have taken considerable lengths to make as minimal impact on the space as possible including the minimal pruning (only if necessary for health and safety) of any surrounding vegetation.
- 3.15.6 Effect on the natural environment/destroy the peace and quiet/noise can disrupt wildlife:
The introduction of a BMX/ mini wheels facility is unlikely to contribute greatly to any cumulative impact. The BMX / mini wheels facility is considered by Officers' to be another play offer and therefore deemed to have minimal additional impact on an area of land with an already established use.

- 3.15.7 There may not be the staffing or funds to supervise this space sufficiently; it will cause friction between the young people and other users.
It is envisaged that as the intended user of the facility are within the target range of the Children and Young Peoples Service; and as this service occupies the Brownsfield Community Centre that they will take an active role in managing this BMX/ mini wheels facility. This arrangement will be considered further when developing the scheme as it is not confirmed. It is not anticipated as being an issue in that CHYPPs team have had an active involvement in development of the current proposed facility.
- 3.15.8 Other use should be considered e.g. fruit trees and benches
The preferred option (option D) detailed at paragraph 3.18.8 can be adapted to includes such features.
- 3.15.9 It will devalue the surrounding property.
Officers are not aware of any link that would establish that an additional play facility installed into an existing park will devalue a property value.
- 3.15.10 Sad to lose the existing ground which is fun to use also.
The existing ground is an empty pit which has limited play value; this project will enhance opportunities for children's' play.
- 3.15.11 People from outside the area will be drawn in:
Play areas are intended to support communities and extending the use to residents outside the immediate Brownsfield area is justified on the basis that these are publicly funded accessible spaces.
- 3.15.12 Concerned at the cost and that it is too expensive;
A request for quotation exercise has been completed and all proposals are within the defined and approved budget.
- 3.15.13 It excludes other users from this area; Brownsfield is for the enjoyment of all not just for children.
Play areas are intended to support communities and extending the use to children is justified on the basis that these are publicly funded accessible spaces.
- 3.15.14 Other play equipment may be more suitable e.g. challenging climbing
Wheeled activity is one of the largest leisure pursuits for children and this facility will encourage greater participation and

enjoyment; Existing fixed play provision within the local area already fulfils this requirement.

- 3.15.15 There are similar facilities close by (less than a mile)
Similar facilities close by do not provide BMX/ mini wheels provision.
- 3.16 Those respondents who supported the BMX/ mini wheels facility cited the following reasons; Officer Responses are in italics directly below.**
- 3.16.1 It's a safer place for the children to play than on the streets;
Keeps stunts away from pedestrians.
Officers' believe the proposals overcomes the concerns raised about somewhere safe to play and the concerns regarding traffic and road safety as many children played in the road riding scooters.
- 3.16.2 Good addition to existing space.
The BMX/ Mini wheels facility is considered by Officers' to be another play offer and therefore deemed to added play value to an area of land with an already established play use.
- 3.16.3 Makes it a more exciting/interesting place to play.
The scooter park is considered by Officers' to be another play offer and therefore deemed to added play value to an area of land with an already established play use.
- 3.16.4 Easier to supervise.
Officers' believe the proposals will allow close supervision and overcomes the concerns raised about somewhere safe to play and the concerns regarding traffic and road safety as many children play in the road riding scooters.
- 3.16.5 Existing area is too muddy for scooters so developing would make more usable.
The construction proposed would allow all year round use.
- 3.16.6 Need more outdoor facilities; Looks like Fun/Good idea; this age group need somewhere to go/something to do.
This project will significantly contribute to improvements of outdoor play provision in the immediate area.
- 3.16.7 Scooting would be less noisy in this area then on the street.
The sounds of children playing on scooters would be maintained in an already designated area on the Brownsfield site.

- 3.16.8 Excellent for younger children; would make lots of people (children, parents and grandparents) happy.
A BMX/ mini wheels track fits into an already established play area expanding the range of choice of pre-teens provision.
- 3.16.9 Looks great/a great idea.
Modern play design makes no distinction between different types of fixed structures and placing a concrete track adjacent to metal play equipment follows this design philosophy.
- 3.16.10 Encourage play with other children: Long awaited by many young people.
The project is a strong offer in terms of enhancing the already existing usage of the space and will make BMX and mini wheels a more enjoyable pursuit.
- 3.16.11 No similar facilities nearby; Would add to the other great initiative run at Brownsfield; Would be great to have a facility like this closer to where we live; There is a need for this kind of facility; Will add to the community centre; Good use for this space; Good to encourage exercise; Easy entry sport so very inclusive; Helps to develop motor skills; Children deserve good places to play; great camaraderie between users at these facilities.
Officers agree with these comments and statements
- 3.17 Officers have read all responses to the consultation and responded to the points raised through this report. Officers' believe all concerns have been considered in this report.

3.18 Choosing which option to progress

- 3.18.1 Respondents to the consultation where asked to choose a preferred options from a choice of four. Appendix A details these options. 41 respondents of the 49 who replied answered these questions.
- 3.18.2 The response rates indicate option D as clear 1st (22 votes), with option A 2nd (15 votes).
- Option A – 15 votes
 - Option B – 0 votes
 - Option C – 1 votes
 - Option D – 22 votes
 - None – 3 votes

Option D: Respondents favour this scheme for the following reasons:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the design/look; • Seating would be a good addition; • More flexible for a range of ages and abilities; • More options for learning new tricks; • More advanced/challenging; • Ramps get used the most; this option has the most of those; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More interesting; • Would fit into the space well; • Would be better with a bypass for more challenging sections/more range; • Looks the most fun; • Can use other things like BMXs; • Safety aspect.
--	--

Option A: Respondents favour this scheme for the following reasons:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benches good for adults; • Well integrated into the environment/makes surroundings usable for everyone; • Good for younger users; • Good for full range of users; • Looks the best in the context; • Most Interesting; • Not too challenging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth/gentle for users; • Good Fun; • Most suitable for scooters rather than boards or BMXs; • Low impact; • Multi-function area; • Full range of challenge; • Not as menacing as the other options.
--	---

3.18.5 Officers have considered the points raised from the consultation and the objections to the BMX/ Mini wheels facility when technically appraising all of the options submitted. All options are capable of being delivered within the available budget.

3.18.6 Based on the options appraisal, including representations received, Option D is considered by Officers' to be the preferred option, subject to the following modifications:

- a. Add benches and bins;
- b. Infill the limestone grit with concrete or tarmac to facilitate scooter usage;
- c. Modify the berms to encourage scooter use; and

- d. Keep all existing shrubs and adapt the design to blend into the existing landscape.

These modifications are required to address the design issue that option D is a full BMX facility and therefore likely to attract a competitive user who may travel distance to access it, ie. from outside of local neighbourhood. This is contrary to the need to lessen the impact of the project and to emphasise mini-wheels, rather than a full scale BMX track.

- 3.18.7 Option D is also favoured by the Children and Young Peoples Participation Service, in response to representations made by local children and young people, which the service has engaged with.
- 3.18.10 Officers have considered all the options and support Option D, with the adaptations proposed in 3.18.6 for the following reasons:
 - a) The proposal is the most favoured amongst consultation respondents;
 - b) Then proposal is the most favoured amongst its target audience;
 - c) Minor changes, can overcome concerns about competitive use; and
 - d) Officers' can install additional benches outside this project brief.

4. Implications

(a) **Financial Implications**

A full project appraisal will be completed which will cover the financial elements of this project. The project appraisal will be considered by Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition Spokes.

(b) **Staffing Implications**

There is no staff implications associated with this project

(c) **Equality and Poverty Implications**

An equalities impact assessment has not been completed at this stage.

(d) **Environmental Implications**

A climate change rating of –L is applied to indicate that the proposal has a low negative impact. The loss of open space and the use of concrete in the build have contributed to this rating.

(e) **Procurement**

A RfQ exercise has been completed and the costs of this project are known. No further procurement is anticipated.

(f) **Consultation and communication**

No further consultation is anticipated. A communication plan will be developed if the project is approved at the final Project Appraisal stage.

(g) **Community Safety**

Respondents to the consultation have raised concerns about the increased likelihood of anti-social behaviour associated with the BMX/ Mini wheels facility. These are legitimate concerns. However previous experience and knowledge has shown that the installation of multi-use games area, skate parks & youth shelters does not increase the incidences of Anti-Social Behaviour. Recent installations at Cherry Hinton Recreation Ground of a Panna goal and skate park have not prompted an increase in Anti-Social behaviour.

5. Background papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Previous project appraisals and committee reports relating to this project.

6. Appendices

Appendix A – The four options considered;

Appendix B – A summary of all responses received (for/ against);

Appendix C – A copy of the consultation document.

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Author's Name:	Alistair Wilson
Author's Tel. No.:	01223 458514
Author's Email:	alistair.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk

Appendix A – The options (taken from inside cover of consultation flier)

Option

A

This scooter trail is a smooth concrete track with subtle curves and ramps and interesting low transitions. Rather than mounding around the elements this track is lowered into the landscape and flows over it following the changing levels. This

lowers the visual impact of the design while making the feature more versatile to use. This scheme also includes areas for seating and has varying textures. It also forms a connection back to the existing path through the site.

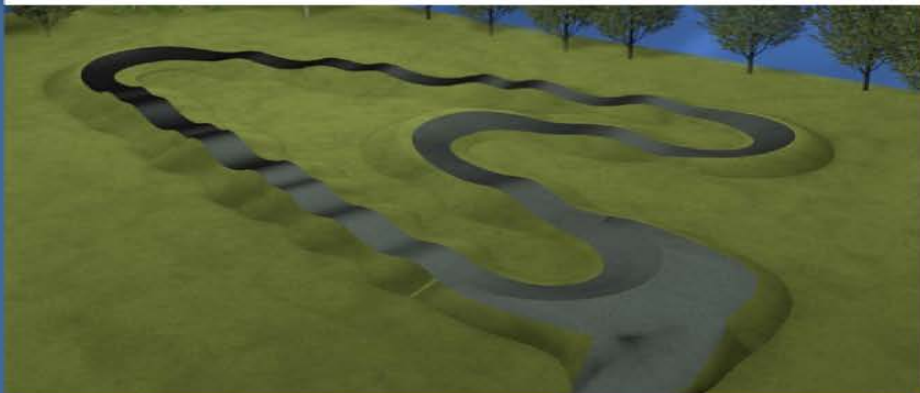


Option

B

This scooter trail is a smooth tarmac surface with a series of varying roll-over mounds and curved corner transitions. The appearance of the track will be softened overall with grass mounding to the side of the features to reduce the

visual impact. This feature includes a section to connect back to the existing path running through the site.

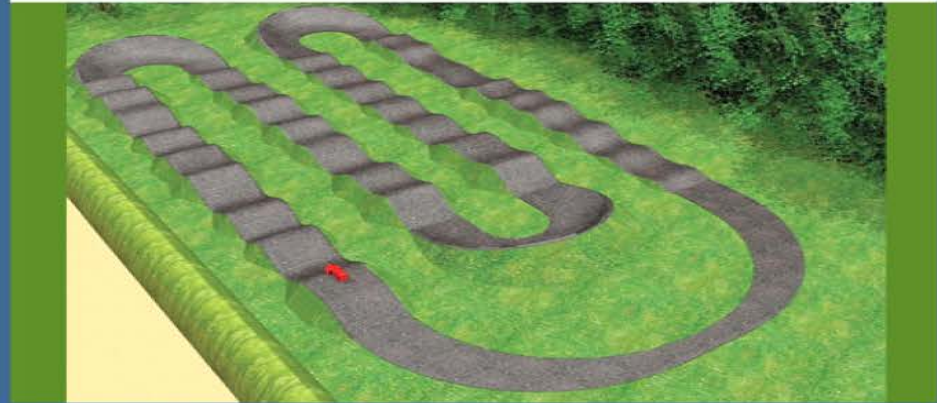


Option

C

This scooter trail is a smooth tarmac surface with a series of different sized roll-over hills and curved corner sections. This circular route has quarter pipes and subtle level changes. Earth bunds will be used to reduce the

fall distance on either side of the higher sections and re-use the excavated soil.



Option

D

This scooter trail is a smooth tarmac surface with a series of different sized roll-over hills, challenging corner sections and quarter pipes elements. Areas of earth are ramped up to create mounds behind and beside the

features, to reduce the fall distance and soften the overall appearance.



Appendix B – Summary of stakeholder responses

Comments in support	Reasons for not supporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more outdoor facilities • Looks like fun/good idea • Good to encourage exercise • Great idea/addition to the space • Less crime at young age • Keeps children off the pavements/safer/designated area • No similar facilities nearby • Existing area is too muddy for scooters so developing would make more usable. • This age group need somewhere to go/something to do • Would get a lot of use in this area • Helps to develop motor skills • Keeps stunts away from pedestrians • Children deserve good places to play • Would add to the other great initiative run at brown's field • Something different for the area • Would make lots of people (children, parents and grandparents) happy • Easy entry sport so very inclusive • Great camaraderie between users at these facilities • Would be great to have a facility like this closer to where we live • There is a need for this kind of facility • Will add to the community centre • Scooters very popular • Young people are expected to be out of sight/quiet/inside(then media complains about obesity) • Children will love it • Encourage play with other children • Long awaited by many young people • Good use for this space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excludes other users from this area • Will attract more people to the area (at night) and lead to more anti-social behaviour • Will affect the peace of the surrounding residents/cause noise • Would be better elsewhere • There may not be the staffing or funds to supervise this space sufficiently • Other use should be considered (e.g. fruit trees and benches) • Cause friction between the young people and other users • Sad to lose the existing ground which is fun to use also • Other play equipment may be more suitable e.g. challenging climbing • Unclear what age group this is for • Unclear what equipment will be used, some options e.g.more suitable for BMX • Will affect the value of property • Brown's field is for the enjoyment of all not just for children • Limits use to a minority of users who take part in this activity • Just the old BMX plan modified and presented again • Spoils a natural area • Children enjoy the area as it is and can use their scooters • Will attract quad bikers and motor scooters • Scooter & bikes do not use this area • Not a priority in this time of limited budgets • Similar facilities close by (less than a mile)

Junior Scooter Facility Questionnaire

1. Do you support the need for a junior scooter facility in Brown's Field?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure ☐

2. Please use the space below to explain your answer:

3. If you answered yes to question 1, which one of the design options do you prefer?

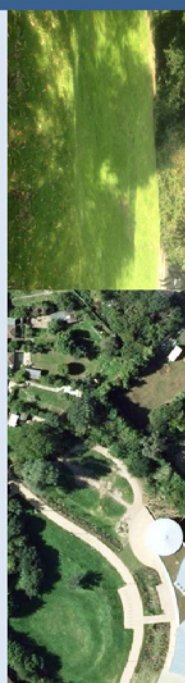
A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ None ☐

4. What is it about your preferred option that you like?

5. Please use the space below for any other comments or suggestions you have on the proposed facility.

Please return your completed form to us at:

Freeport RTGU-HXRA-REBZ
Asset Management
Cambridge City Council
Mill Road Depot
Mill Road
CB1 2AZ



Brown's Field

Cambridge City Council are interested in obtaining your views on plans to develop a junior scooter facility for children on Brown's Fields (see location plan opposite). This is being funded by developers contributions.

We hope you will use this opportunity to say whether or not you support the plans, and to comment on the four design options outlined overleaf. The four designs are based on the same brief but vary in complexity and challenge offered but are based on the same sized footprint.

To respond to this consultation, please complete and return the questionnaire on the back of the form or online at:

www.surveymonkey.com/s/BS9LHDH

The deadline for returns is **28th November 2014**



Please attend the **public consultation event** at Brown's Field community centre on 1st November at 1pm-3pm, where you will have the opportunity to see the four design options, and talk to us in person.

If you have any questions please call Declan on 01223 457000 or email parks@cambridge.gov.uk