

HELENSBURGH WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT - SKATEPARK

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 As part of the planning consent for the new Helensburgh Leisure Centre there was a condition that the temporary skatepark facilities on the site were to be reinstated following the completion of the leisure centre. This was to ensure the continued provision of a skatepark until a permanent facility was approved on a suitable site. Due to the age and condition of the old equipment this required the ordering of new ramps which are due to be installed autumn 2023 depending on manufacturing time.
- 1.2 Helensburgh Skatepark Group have aspirations to construct a larger permanent concrete skatepark facility both for local users and to attract visitors from across the country to the area which is unlikely to be able to be accommodated on the waterfront site as it is primarily proposed for commercial development.
- 1.3 Accordingly officers are keen to support the Helensburgh Skatepark Group to secure a site that is capable of meeting their aspirations and becoming a facility which will encourage visitors to the area and the council has recently committed £80,000 to support this project to provide a permanent solution.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Area Committee:
 - 2.1.1 Notes that the reinstatement of the temporary skatepark facilities will be completed in autumn 2023 meeting the conditions of the leisure centre planning consent.
 - 2.1.2 Agrees that the waterfront site is not considered to be a suitable long term location for the skatepark as initial marketing of the site has highlighted that the site is not large enough to accommodate a larger scale skatepark which the group are seeking as well as a viable commercial development.
 - 2.1.3 Note that a further report will be brought before H&L Area Committee outlining a list of potential permanent locations for the skatepark and a preferred option will be recommended to be taken forward. Officers have commenced the identification of potential sites as outlined at Section 3.7 below and will continue to engage with the skatepark group as part of that process.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of the planning consent for the new Helensburgh Leisure Centre there was a condition that the temporary skatepark facilities on the site were to be reinstated following the completion of the leisure centre. This was to ensure the continued provision of a skatepark until a permanent facility was approved on a suitable site. Due to the age and condition of the old equipment this required the ordering of new ramps which are due to be installed autumn 2023 depending on manufacturing time.
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3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Prior to the development of the new Helensburgh Leisure Centre there was a small skatepark at the waterfront which consisted of 3 pieces of equipment. The original skatepark (approved in 2008) was specified as a temporary consent to safeguard the long-term redevelopment of the waterfront site and surrounding area. The Helensburgh Skatepark Group was keen to maintain and expand this facility and accordingly a planning condition was agreed that the equipment should be reinstated at the waterfront while the group developed their proposals.
- 3.2 Unfortunately, the existing equipment was old and had deteriorated during storage. Accordingly, as part of the wider waterfront redevelopment, new equipment (that can be relocated) has been acquired by the council and will be reinstated on the site around autumn 2023 (subject to manufacturing) to meet the planning condition and an order has been placed.
- 3.3 As part of the recent Community Engagement Event about Helensburgh Waterfront there was considerable support from the community for a skatepark to be developed in Helensburgh. However, a number of participants did not consider the waterfront site to be a suitable location.
- 3.4 The current and emerging Adopted Local Development Plan includes the waterfront site within the town centre and accordingly has an allocation (CFR 2001) which includes 2,700sqm of Class 1 retail use. The approved 2012 Masterplan for the Pierhead also outlines a strategic vision for the Waterfront and a 'Landscaping / skatepark / playpark' designation is noted as a compatible use within the public realm (i.e. the land that has now been completed) and this has evolved into formal landscaping including public seating space, events area and flexible hard landscape. As part of the current marketing of the Commercial Area, we have received feedback from our agent and bidders thus far that it is unlikely that the site will also be able to accommodate both a credible commercial proposal and a skatepark of the scale considered suitable by the Helensburgh Skatepark Group.
- 3.5 Helensburgh Skatepark Group have aspirations to create a larger concrete skatepark to attract visitors from across the country along with providing much needed facilities for local people. Some examples of the type of facility envisaged are shown below:

Kelvingrove Park skatepark, Glasgow



Dollan Aqua Centre skatepark, East Kilbride



- 3.6 Officers have been working with the group to identify suitable locations for a new skatepark which would meet their aspirations. Ideally, this would be a parkland site to avoid high land values, which is overlooked by passing foot and vehicle traffic creating passive supervision and also not too close to residential areas to limit noise issues.
- 3.7 This has led to a number of sites being considered as noted below:

1) Helensburgh Waterfront



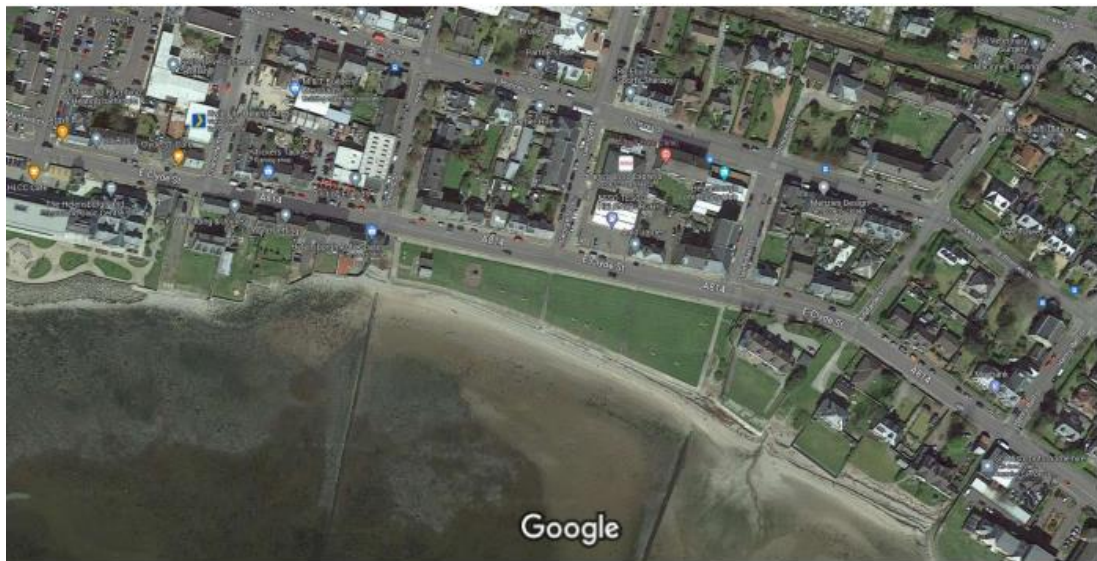
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2) Hermitage Park



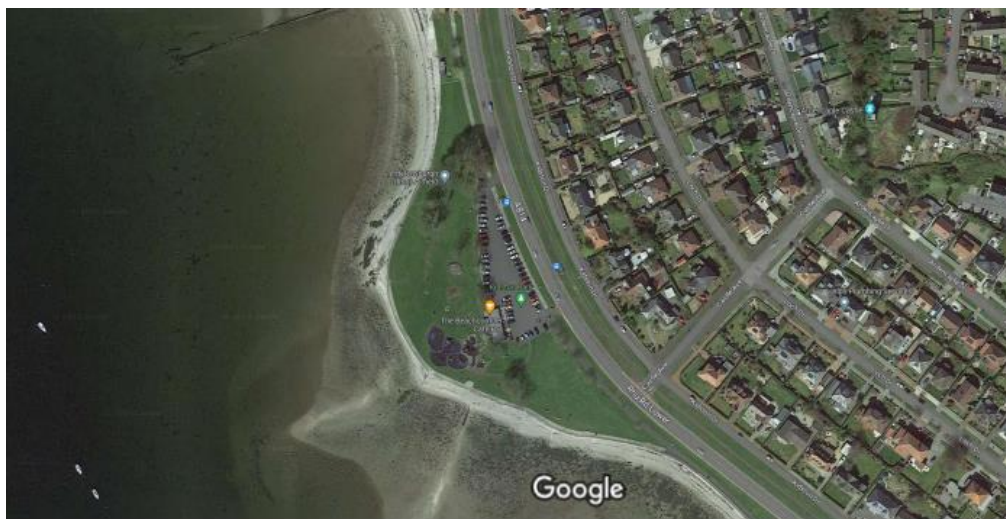
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3) East Bay Park



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4) Kidston Park



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5) Iona Stables, Colgrain



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The site at Iona Stables, Colgrain (next to Morrisons supermarket) is in private ownership. However, the council is in discussions with the landowner to promote the development of a business park at this location. During the early site investigations it was discovered that the ground next to Morrisons is potentially subject to flooding so can't be used for the development of business space. Therefore this site could be available for other uses which are allowed such as a skatepark.

- 3.7 Some other locations were also considered such as Helensburgh Rugby Club and East End Park but it was considered that the existing use and proposals from the teams using these areas didn't allow sufficient space / parking to support further development.
- 3.8 For any proposed location there will be positives and challenges to overcome and it is apparent that while there is general support for a new skatepark this does tend to be less enthusiastic when the development is proposed near people's own house / business / community activity.
- 3.9 When considering any of the above locations it is important to note that a number of factors will still require to be assessed. These include ownership / title conditions, planning issues, access / parking, flooding, environmental / noise concerns and the cost of development.
- 3.10 It should be noted that the Policy & Resources Committee on 10th August has approved the use of place based investment funding (£80k) to assist the delivery of a permanent skatepark subject to all conditions being met.

4. CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The Council and wider public are very supportive of the Helensburgh Skatepark Group and wish to support its aspirations to develop a skatepark in the Helensburgh area for local people to enjoy and also to attract visitors to the area. This is signified by the recent allocation of £80,000 to the project by the council.

- 4.2 There are a number of potential locations to consider, each with their own benefits and challenges, and officers will continue to work with the group to identify the best all round solution.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – The provision of a temporary skatepark at the waterfront is a planning condition associated with the delivery of the community sports hub.
- 5.2 Financial – The council has allocated £80,000 to the project. There is a risk that c£100,000 of funding from NLHF may be withheld if Hermitage Park is selected as the skatepark location.
- 5.3 Legal - The terms and conditions of any transactions to follow are intended to be delegated to the Executive Director of Customer Services.
- 5.4 HR – None
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty
- 5.5.1 Equalities – Protected characteristics – None
- 5.5.2 Socio economic Duty – None
- 5.5.3 Islands – None
- 5.6 Climate change – The use of ground which is unsuitable for alternative development for a community use is a positive outcome and also encourages a healthier outdoor lifestyle. The development of a skatepark, particularly if it is concrete, is a negative factor.
- 5.7 Risk – The main risk is that an alternative location is not found which could impact on the development of the waterfront site and fail to meet the aspirations of the skatepark group.
- 5.8 Customer Service – None.

Douglas Hendry, Executive Director with responsibility for Commercial Services
Kirsty Flanagan, Executive Director with responsibility for Economy & Rural Growth
Councillor Gary Mulvaney – Policy Lead, Finance and Commercial Services
Councillor Robin Currie – Policy Lead, Economy & Rural Growth

10th August 2023

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