

**REPORT FROM: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES MANAGER**

**TO: WEST CRAVEN COMMITTEE**

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## **VICTORY PARK SKATE PARK, BARNOLDSWICK**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform Members of the current annual maintenance and running costs for the Skate Park at Victory Park in addition to providing details of the issues/implications of transferring ownership from Pendle Borough Council to the Lock On Skate Park Group.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the costs and detail provided in the report are taken in to consideration when deciding the next steps.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

To ensure that the Skate Park can be managed and maintained effectively in the long term.

### **Issue**

At the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016 West Craven Committee meeting during 'Public Question Time', Josh Cramphorn spoke on behalf of the Lock On Skate Park Group, users of the skate park in Victory Park, and asked if it was possible for the Committee to recommend that the Executive grant the Group a long term lease or to be given the freehold for the facility to help them apply for funding.

The Chairman said he would ask the Neighbourhood Services Manager to provide a report for discussion at the next meeting on the possibility of transferring ownership of the skate park to the group and to include details of annual maintenance and running costs.

### **Annual Maintenance and Running Costs**

In total there is approximately £1,293 per site per annum for the management and maintenance of play facilities. Play Facilities include play areas, MUGA's and Skate Parks. It is important to remember that there is no specific budget for any individual play facility only an amalgamation of general ones for all facilities across the borough.

Average breakdown of costs per site:

- Day to Day Repairs & Maintenance (includes annual independent inspection) - £357
- Vandalism repairs - £129
- Litter/Cleanliness - £214
- Landscape Maintenance (includes weekly play facility inspections) - £593

As such, for the Skate Park at Victory Park, the playground inspector undertakes weekly inspections that includes him carrying out any minor and urgent repairs on equipment as a result of general wear and tear or vandalism on an as and when basis. Examples of minor repairs undertaken in the past are replacing missing rivets on a ramp and cleaning graffiti off signage with more urgent repairs being the filling in of holes on ramps with P40 filler and replacing a broken handrail on the steps at the edge of the Skate Park area.

We empty any litter and/or dog bins associated with the Skate Park, including a general litter pick, 3 times a week during the Summer months (April – September) and twice a week during the Winter months (October – March). We tend to sweep or blow off any detritus on the facility on an ad-hoc basis as opposed to a set schedule.

We maintain any soft and hard landscaping associated with the Skate Park or in the surrounding area, e.g. weed-killing, edge maintenance, shrub work, etc.

We also commission the Playground Inspection Company on an annual basis (usually in July) to carry out an independent inspection of the Skate Park. A report is completed for Victory Park with recommendations relating to high, medium and low risks. Most of the risks identified are low risk although we do occasionally get medium and high risks that we must act upon as a matter of urgency. With the low risks, we tend to work through the list with any health & safety actions being the priority. These repairs/actions are dependent upon available revenue budget finance and as such we are unable to do all the recommendations suggested thus a priority list is produced. This list forms the basis of spend from the R&M budgets along with any issues that arise out of the weekly inspections done by the playground inspector.

There are four lighting columns that directly serve the Skate Park (one at each corner) in addition to the MUGA lights which adjoin this area. There is a single fitting on the two columns adjacent to the MUGA and twin fittings on the other two columns adjacent to the pavilion.

As there is no sub-meter for the Skate Park lighting, we have had to calculate an estimated annual usage cost. This amounts to circa £360 a year excluding VAT.

In addition, it is worth taking note that last year three of the lighting columns for the MUGA at Victory Park needed repairing at a cost of £1,510. This job involved 3 new lamps (£70 each) as well as 3 new fittings (£350 each) plus labour costs at £250. If the lights failed on the Skate Park, there would be similar costs to bear.

As stated above, there is no specific budget allocated to Victory Park Skate Park although on average we have £1,293 per annum to spend on the facility (based on an equal split of general budgets across all sites in the borough). In some financial years, we may not spend the average £1,293 on a site due to there being no vandalism and/or repairs needed whereas another year we may need to spend in excess of the average due to instances of vandalism, a higher degree of wear and tear, etc. This needs to be taken in to account by members and the Lock On Skate Park Group when looking at putting aside budgets for maintenance as it may cost more or come in under the average budget allotted dependent upon the factors raised above.

## Issues/Implications of transferring ownership of Skate Park to Lock On Skate Park Group

Unfortunately, this has been the case at Victory Park in that the spend from revenue budgets has been significantly in excess of the annual average over the last 2-3 years. Since the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2014, £7,471 has been spent on repairs to equipment. Appendix 1 provides information on the work undertaken and the associated costs.

Of the £7,471, £6,084 has been as a result of vandalism. The last major repairs on a piece of equipment was in March 2016 and since this time we have had no further reports of vandalism on the Skate Park.

If the Skate Park Group did take on ownership of the facility, they would need to ensure that all health & safety guidelines were followed and it would be incumbent upon them to make sure the equipment was checked regularly (ideally once a week) by a qualified inspector and records maintained in case of any future insurance claims for injuries sustained on the Skate Park.

Members also need to be mindful that Barnoldswick Town Council have expressed an interest in taking over Victory Park as a whole in the future via the Transfer of Services and Facilities to Town and Parish Council's Committee. At the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016 meeting it was resolved:

- (1) That further discussions take place with Barnoldswick Town Council with regards taking over Victory, Letcliffe and Clough Park and Valley Gardens.

In view of this, if members are supportive of transferring the facility to the Skate Park Group it may be worthwhile waiting until the Town Council have taken over the management of the Park before this transfer occurs. If the transfer is done whilst still in PBC's ownership, the legal paperwork will need to be changed again once the Town Council gain control of the Park.

### IMPLICATIONS

**Policy:** None

**Financial:** The Lock On Skate Park Group need to be aware of the financial undertaking they would be taking on if the ownership of the Skate Park was transferred to them from the Council. Information regarding the costs associated with the management and maintenance of the facility is provided in the main body of the report.

**Legal:** If the Skate Park was transferred to the Lock On Skate Park Group, it would be dependent upon who owned the land at the time in terms of organising the necessary legal paperwork for transfer of the asset.

**Risk Management:** There is concern that the Skate Park Group may not have the requisite skills, resources or capacity to effectively manage and maintain such a facility. This in turn may bring about issues pertaining to health & safety and the long term quality and viability of the facility.

**Health and Safety:** A qualified Playground Inspector is needed to undertake regular checks of the Skate Park equipment. The health & safety of users is paramount on a facility such as this.

**Sustainability:** The long term viability of the Skate Park is of most importance. Whoever manages and maintains the facility must ensure that an adequate level of quality in terms of play value and safety is forthcoming.

**Community Safety:** See 'Health and Safety' implications above.

**Equality and Diversity:** None

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Details of costs associated with Victory Park Skate Park since September 2014

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None