

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

13 October 2010

Joint Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure, the Director of Finance and the Cabinet Members for Finance and Leisure, Youth & Arts

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Council

1 LARKFIELD RECREATION GROUND – PLAY IMPROVEMENTS

Summary

This report seeks the confirmation of a funding contribution of £25,000 from this Council towards a scheme by East Malling & Larkfield Parish Council to improve play facilities for young people at Larkfield Recreation Ground.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The provision of a skatepark facility to serve the needs of young people in the East Malling and Larkfield area has been identified for a number of years, to provide leisure facilities of interest to local teenagers to encourage them to engage in healthy living activities, and to assist in the reduction of crime and disorder.
- 1.1.2 The difficulty to date with the project has been the identification of a suitable location, and Members may recall the initial focus was on a facility on the East Malling Recreation Ground. This site proved not to be viable due to potential noise disturbance to nearby residents. Following a thorough review, however, a suitable alternative site at Larkfield Recreation Ground has now been identified by the Parish Council, and has been assessed by officers as being suitable. This has included a specific noise assessment by officers in the Environmental Protection Team.
- 1.1.3 In 2006 the Council awarded the East Malling Parx Project a grant of £25,000 to help finance this scheme, but the grant was not claimed and was subsequently withdrawn earlier this year. The East Malling Parx Project no longer exists as an entity, and the skatepark project is now being pursued by the Parish Council, alongside improvements to its existing play facilities.

1.2 Proposed Facilities

- 1.2.1 A proposal has been developed by East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council to improve play facilities on the Larkfield Recreation Ground, including a skatepark. The existing play facilities will be replaced and a small extension is proposed.

The new skatepark will provide a skate arena, steps set with steel handrail, double level ledge, quarter pipe, grind rail and a shelter. The size of the skatepark is of an appropriate size and scale to serve teenagers from the local area. The total estimated cost of the improvements is £125,000, and a Capital Plan evaluation is attached at **[Annex 1]**.

- 1.2.2 East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council wishes to progress the programme of improvements in early spring 2011. Following considerable delay and care over the choice of site the project is now designed and nearing readiness for implementation. Developer contributions from the Leybourne Park development have been secured towards the project and with a £25,000 contribution from this Council, the new facilities, including the skatepark, can be progressed.

1.3 Local Issues

- 1.3.1 The procurement for the works will be undertaken by the Parish Council in accordance with its Contract Procedure Rules.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 The level of investment proposed by the Council represents excellent value for money in securing new and improved facilities for young people in the local area, at no ongoing revenue implication to the Council.
- 1.5.2 Members may recall that in advance of the finalised fundamental review of the Council's finances, it was agreed that the annual capital plan "allowance" should be set at a maximum of £350,000. Calls have already been made, and approved by Members against the allowance for 2011/12, and there is currently an unallocated balance of £134,000. Support for this project will reduce the unallocated balance to £109,000.
- 1.5.3 As the skatepark will be maintained and managed by the Parish Council, there will be no ongoing revenue implications for the Borough Council.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 Without the Council's contribution to the project, there is a risk that the scheme will not be able to proceed, and local young people will not be able to access high quality local play facilities.

1.7 Policy Considerations

- 1.7.1 Community, Crime & Disorder Reduction, Healthy Lifestyles, Young People.

1.8 Recommendations

- 1.8.1 It is **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the List C evaluation set out in **[Annex 1]** to this report be approved, and the scheme be accelerated immediately to the Capital Plan with funding of £25,000 from the 2011/12 Annual Capital Allowance.

Background papers: Nil

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