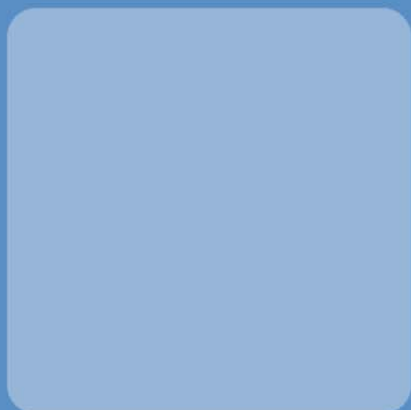
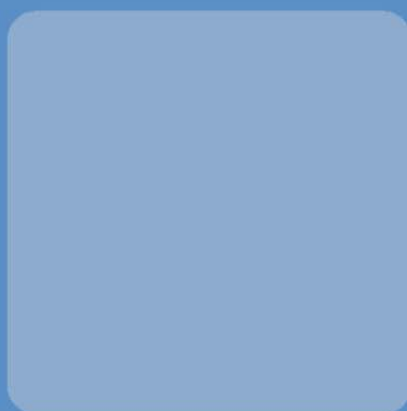
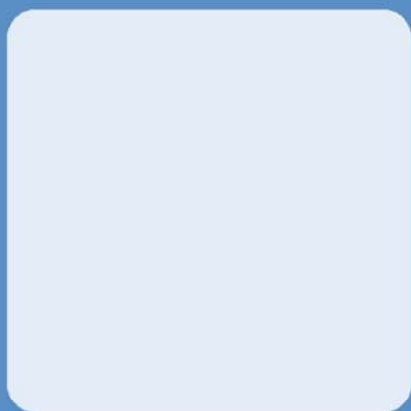


RPS

Downview Skate Park

Supporting Statement



DOWNVIEW SKATE PARK SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Date November 2016

Our Ref: OXF9824

RPS

20 Western Avenue
Milton Park
Abingdon
OXON
OX14 4SH

Tel: 01235 821888

Email: rpsox@rpsgroup.com

QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Prepared by:	Guy Bailey
Authorised by:	
Date:	November 2016
Project Number/Document Reference:	OXF9824

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APPENDICES:

1. SITE LOCATION PLAN

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of Wittering Skate Park, a community action group, to support the proposed provision of a regenerated skate park facility at Downview Park, East Wittering. The proposed wheeled sport or skate park facility would replace an existing, smaller skateboard park currently sited to the eastern side of Downview Park, an area of public open space maintained and owned by East Wittering and Bracklesham Parish Council.
- 1.2 RPS understands that an initial approach to East Wittering and Bracklesham Parish Council, aimed at gaining support for the provision of a new purpose built skate park facility at the Park, was supported in principal but had the following concerns with the replacement of the existing facility with a new larger , namely;
- The loss of green space
 - Noise and antisocial behaviour linked to the use of any new facility
 - Car parking
- 1.3 As a result, RPS were instructed to prepare a report to provide policy and practical evidence demonstrating support for the provision of a new skate park facility at Downview Park in East Wittering. Chapter 2 of the report will examine the policy support that exists, whilst the following chapter will assess the issues of car parking, noise and the impact of the facility on informal recreational users of the public open space. The final chapter will summarise the findings.

2 SITE CONTEXT & POLICY BACKGROUND

Site Context

- 2.1 The proposed skate park would be sited within an area of existing public open space, Downview Park, currently utilised for both formal and informal sporting and recreational activities. The site contains two football pitches (one junior and one mini), a bowling green, a children's play area, and an existing 'ramp' or 'half pipe' skateboard facility. The Park also offers other, un-delineated space for informal recreational activities such as dog walking.
- 2.2 Parking is available for users of the bowling green, accessed from Downview Close. The Park is bordered by Downview Close to the south, a minor access road serving the Park and terraces of two storey dwellings to its south. To the west of the Park are the rear gardens of the detached bungalows on Wessex Avenue, whilst to the north and east lies open countryside.

Policy Background

- 2.3 The provision of a new sporting and leisure facility on existing public open space is a proposal addressed by both national and local planning policies, as well as local studies and assessments into the provision of such space and related facilities. These provide the basis against which any planning application made for the provision of a new skate park located on existing open space should be assessed. It is incumbent upon decision makers and participants in the planning process to therefore give due consideration to their content.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.4 The NPPF was published on 27 March 2012 and is a material consideration for planning applications, consolidating all previous national policy statements, circulars and guidance. A core principle of the NPPF is that planning should contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy and support healthy communities by creating a high quality built environment. Allied to this is the need to ensure that development protects and enhances the natural, built and historic environment.
- 2.5 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through plan making and decision taking. This means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay, and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the framework taken as a whole, or specific policies in the framework indicate development should be restricted (paragraph 14). In other words, development, in this case the proposed replacement skate park, should be permitted if shown to be sustainable, unless there is clear conflict with the development plan or other material considerations indicate it would cause significant harm to outweigh any benefit.
- 2.6 In order to ensure the delivery of recreational facilities that the community needs, the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should;

*"plan **positively** [our emphasis] for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public*

houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.”

2.7 The emphasis is clear that the planning system should be positive in its provision of shared space and facilities for all the community, with development encouraged to be permitted that promotes this objective and contributes to healthy and sustainable communities.

2.8 In respect of open space, the NPPF reiterates some of the principles set out in the previous Planning Policy Guidance note 17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. Linked to the promotion of health within communities, the Framework states at paragraph 73 that:

“Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.”

2.9 The NPPF goes on to state, in respect of the assessment of proposals where there may be a loss of open space as a result, that:

“Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.”*

2.10 As with much of the NPPF, there is a clear responsibility placed upon there being evidence that demonstrates what the existing quality and quantity of open space is in an area to allow judgements to be made regarding the potential re-use, development or loss of open space.

2.11 Within Chichester District, such evidence exists, in the form of the 2013 Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Study. Its findings identify areas of deficiency in terms of quantity and quality within the District and formed part of the evidence base upon which the Council’s open space and recreational policies within the Adopted Chichester Local Plan were formed. The findings of the Study, and the resultant policies of the Local Plan, shall now be examined in turn.

Chichester Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Study 2013-2029 (COSSRFS)

2.12 The key aim of the Study was to:

“evaluate the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space and recreational land provision in Chichester District Council (excluding the South Downs National Park) and to recommend

standards and effective mechanisms in order for appropriate provision to be secured to meet future needs.”

- 2.13 It undertook an audit of local provision, an assessment of local needs, and set provision standards. In assessing local needs, the quantitative and qualitative provision of open space and sports and recreational facilities was surveyed and extensive consultation with key stakeholders undertaken.
- 2.14 The Study audited a range of types of open space, sports and recreational provision. In respect of the proposed provision of a replacement skate park at Downview Park, the relevant types of space as surveyed in the Study are considered to be ‘Parks, Sports and Recreation Grounds’ and ‘Play Space’. In relation to the former, the Study found that, quantitatively, the Parish of East Wittering and Bracklesham had an existing provision of 5.36 hectares (Table 3.7 of the COSSRFS), an undersupply of 1.72 hectares when measured against proposed standards. However, it is considered that, actually, the relevance of this typology of space in this case is small, for the following reasons;
- The proposal seeks to replace an existing, albeit smaller, skateboard park in the Park
 - The NPPF recognises that the loss of open space is acceptable if it is replaced by an alternative provision which has greater need, the benefit of which would outweigh the loss.
- 2.15 As such, if the need for a skate park is clearly evidenced, the loss of a small part of additional open space would be acceptable.
- 2.16 Importantly therefore, the Study found that the provision of Play Space (i.e. provision for children and teenagers such as play areas and skateboard parks) to be just 0.19 hectares within the Parish (Table 3.8 of the COSSRFS), a shortfall of 0.47 hectares. Expressed differently, current provision in East Wittering and Bracklesham is only 31.6% of what the local standards of provision standards require.
- 2.17 Turning to the audit of need, the Study reported on the consultation held with a number of key stakeholders, including local parish councils, the District Council, providers, schools, governing bodies and associations and users groups. A repetitive finding was the deficiency in the provision of play equipment for teenagers and young people. In summary, the Study reported that;
- Chichester District Council recognised that there was ‘very limited provision’ of wheeled sports facilities, such as skateboard parks, and that there was still a shortage of provision for teenage play. They identified a need for more and better play facilities across the District, particularly for older children.
 - West Sussex County Council also identified the need for more open space youth facilities and identified the success of the recent skateboard provision in Wick.
 - A Young People Focus Group reported that most young people commonly gathered in specific spaces, including local parks and play areas. A majority of the Group felt that there were not enough play areas and youth facilities to meet their needs.
- 2.18 The assessment of local needs concluded that there was clearly a significant shortage of outdoor facilities for teenagers, and that the current quality of provision for them was not satisfactory.

2.19 Concluding, and in setting priorities for provision and setting standards, the Study recommended a number of policies. Relevant to the provision of a new replacement skate park facility at Downview Park are the following;

“Policy OS4 – There is an undersupply of facilities for young people across the District. Loss of any existing provision should be avoided, unless alternative new provision can be provided.

Policy OS9 – Priorities for improvement include the enhancement of the existing provision for children and young people and the improvement of sports facilities.

Policy OS15 – The priorities for new provision are for children and young people, particularly young people’s space.”

2.20 The findings and recommendations of the COSSRFS is clear in its assessment of the provision of space and facilities specifically for the use of teenagers and young people. As such, this shows that, in consideration of the NPPF, there is a clear need for the new skate park, the benefit of which would outweigh the loss of the small increased area of open space at Downview Park.

Adopted Chichester Local Plan 2014-2029

2.21 The COSSRFS formed part of the background studies that informed the content and policies within the Adopted Chichester Local Plan (ACLP). The Plan, adopted in July 2015, is the key development plan for the area, and must be accorded significant weight. No neighbourhood plan is yet drafted or adopted for the Parish.

2.22 Chapter 20 of the ACLP addresses the issue of Health and Well Being. Paragraph 20.3 reflects the findings of the COSSRFS, and notes that *“the study also highlights the very poor access to youth provision, with significant gaps in many settlements.”* Policy 54 of the ACLP, relating to Open Space, Sport and Recreation, seeks to protect existing open space where needed therefore, and in respect of the provision of new space or facilities, states that:

*“.....Where opportunities arise, the provision of new or **enhanced** open space, sport or **recreation facilities** will be encouraged to **meet any identified shortfalls** in the local area.”* [our emphasis]

2.23 In respect of the proposal the subject of this report, it clearly would offer a new, enhanced, higher quality sporting and recreational facility in East Wittering where there is a significant shortfall in the provision of play space when measured against locally adopted standards. Such a proposal would clearly comply with Policy 54 of the ACLP, the development plan, and should therefore be supported and approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2.24 The next section of this report shall briefly assess some of those material considerations.

3 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 This section briefly addresses other considerations that may be material to the proposed provision of a new improved replacement skate park facility at Downview Park, East Wittering. Specifically, the report has been asked to address the following issues:

- Parking
- Noise/Anti-social behaviour
- Impact on other users of the Park.

3.2 Each shall be reviewed in turn.

Parking

3.3 Parking provision for development within the area and throughout the County is guided by the West Sussex County Council SPG, titled 'Revised County Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology'. This was last revised in September 2010. No specific standard relates to new or improved skate parks. The relevant reference in the SPG refers to 'Other Outdoor Leisure Activities'. For that, there is no specific parking allocation, each proposal required to be assessed on its own merits.

3.4 The 'merits' of this proposal are considered to be the following;

- The main users of the facility are too young to drive
- An existing skateboarding facility already exists and creates no parking problems in the area
- Car parking already exists both for the bowls club and is unrestricted on local roads.

3.5 The demand for parking by those using a skate park is likely to be low, with most users being under the legal age to drive. Visitors are therefore most likely to visit on foot, on bicycle or skateboard, or be dropped off. Consequently, once in operation, a new facility is unlikely to place any additional parking pressures or problems on the highway network or local area.

3.6 By way of comparison, other new or redeveloped skate parks within the local area have been completed recently, and therefore provide examples of where such facilities have been provided, and now operate. No dedicated parking provision was or has been provided at these facilities. They are;

- New Milton Skate Park – replacing a previous facility, the new skate park was opened in 2015 off Whitefield Road, New Milton. The facility is located within an existing recreational park area, alongside bowling greens and tennis courts. No associated parking was provided or exists for the new skate park.
- Bartley Park, Totton – the existing facility was replaced in 2015 with a new purpose designed skate park. The new facility is located within Bartley Park and has no car park. It is accessed on foot via existing footpaths and restricted lanes.

- Selsey Skate Park – again opening in 2015, this new facility lies close to the seafront. It has no dedicated car parking area.
- Shoreham Skate Park – located on Eastern Avenue on a relatively small area of previous open space, the skate park has no car parking area serving it, with pedestrian access only from the surrounding network of pavements and footpaths.

3.7 A further review of skate park proposals elsewhere in the UK replicates those findings. This includes some of the larger, nationally known skate parks such as at Radlands in Northampton. Examples of new parks provided elsewhere in the UK without specifically allocated parking include;

- Radlands, Northampton
- Strathmiglo Park, Fife
- Projekts Skatepark, Manchester
- Roundwood Park, Willesden
- Stallard Recreation Ground, Trowbridge

Noise & Anti-social behaviour

3.8 Any noise issues from skate parks can be from the actual use of the facility or from the users. The measurement and assessment of the impact of noise from such facilities requires a measurement of the baseline conditions – in other words, what are the current noise levels to then compare potential future noise levels and therefore assess impact and possible mitigation.

3.9 The measurement of current noise levels will therefore include and incorporate the use of the existing skateboarding facility, along with the use of the children’s playground and the use of the playing fields and bowling green. Any additional noise levels over those currently experienced by the ‘sensitive receptors’ (i.e. the nearest housing) are therefore unlikely to be significant, taking account of the existing facility, its design, and the high quality and design of a new skate park. The new facility would also be able to incorporate effective design techniques to mitigate any noise impacts.

3.10 A review of proposed skate park facilities elsewhere, and the noise assessments that accompany them, indicate that the levels of noise from such facilities, when measured against the most relevant British Standards (BS4142:1997), is not necessarily at a level to be likely to raise objections. For example, in assessing a proposed new skate park facility in Steyning, West Sussex, noise reports prepared for the Parish Council by Acoustic Dimensions concluded that the noise levels generated by the proposed skate park would be lower than the noise generated by the use of the junior football pitches within the same park.

3.11 It is not disputed that noise is an important issue and its consideration can lead to some proposed skate parks failing to gain the required permissions. However, where such concerns have been paramount and where local opinion has campaigned against them, they normally relate to a new facility being provided where one does not already exist. That is not the case here. The periods of activity at the facility would be no different to those currently operated.

3.12 In respect of anti-social behaviour, the existing facility operates already without raising any significant issues in this area. Through continued effective management and self-policing, and instilling a further sense of pride in the new facility, it is considered that the new skate park would raise no new issues of anti-social behaviour.

Impact on other Park users

3.13 The proposed skate park would replace an existing, smaller facility of the same use. The new facility, although larger, will not lead to any physical encroachment or impact on other existing activities or facilities on site, including the playing pitches, bowling green and playground. Informal users of Downview Park, such as dog walkers, would have the same access to and opportunity to use the park for such use.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The proposed new skate park would replace an existing, smaller skateboard facility at Downview Park, East Wittering, a local park owned by East Wittering and Bracklesham Parish Council and providing the skate park, a bowling green, two football pitches and a children's play area.
- 4.2 Audits of the provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities undertaken for Chichester District Council's COSSRFS show a deficiency in the provision of play space in the District and significantly so within the Parish of East Wittering and Bracklesham. The Study also found that, in assessing the needs of the area, there were significant deficiencies in the quantity and quality of provision for teenagers and young people. The Study concluded that a key priority was therefore for the '...enhancement of the existing provision for children and young people...'. The Adopted Chichester Local Plan, the development plan, reflects the findings of the COSSRS, identifying the same need and proposing the enhancement of open space, sport and recreation facilities within the district.
- 4.3 Clear planning support therefore exists for the provision of a replacement skate park at Downview Park. Applications for development supported by or in accordance with the development plan should be permitted unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This report has indicated that, due to the specific circumstances of the proposal, no issues exist that should outweigh the benefits of the proposal to the local community. Noise can be mitigated through careful design, whilst acknowledging also that the Park users already generate noise levels that studies have shown can exceed the level generated by a skate park. Parking, like at many other similar local and national facilities, is not required, nor will the new skate park lead to any local problems of highway parking.
- 4.4 It is therefore concluded that there is strong policy and survey evidence to support the provision of an enhanced skate park facility at Downview Park.

APPENDIX 1

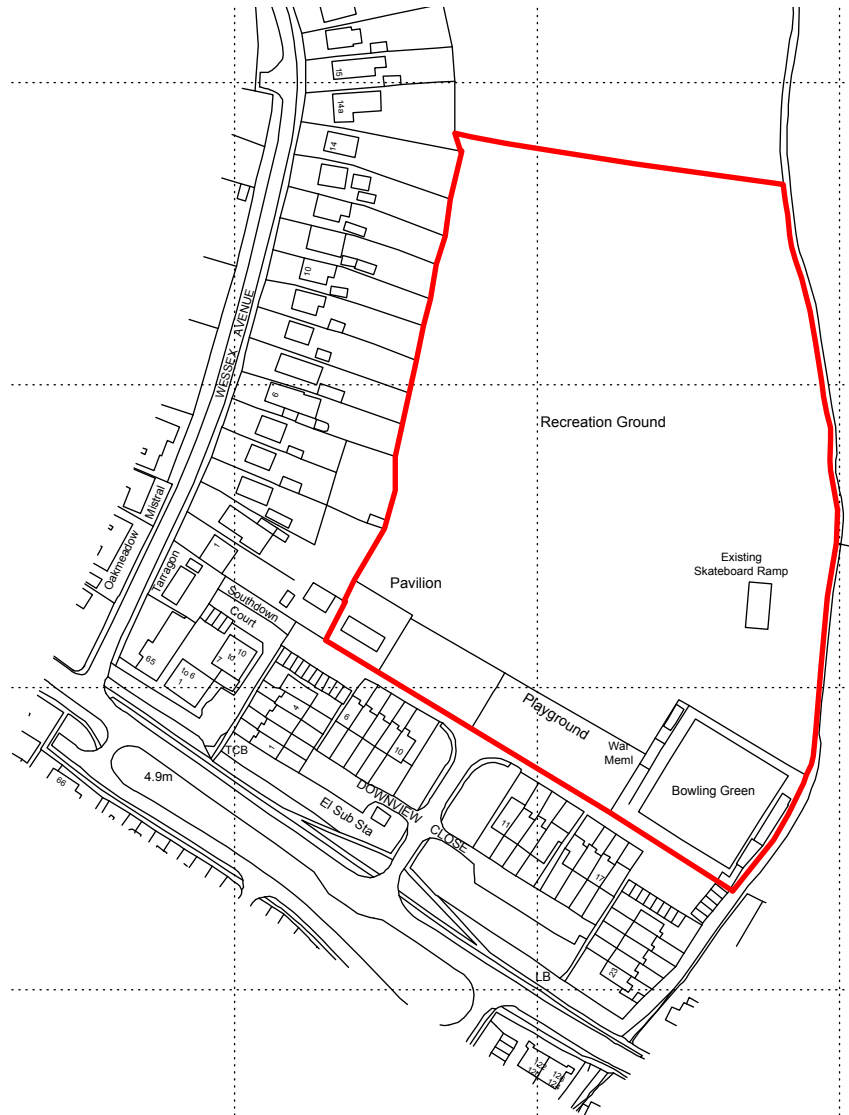
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 Park Boundary

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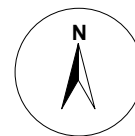
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20 Western Avenue, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 4SH
 T: +44(0)1235 821888 E: rps@rpsgroup.com F: +44(0)1235 834698

Client Wittering Skate Park

Project Downview Skateboard Park,
 Downview Close, East Wittering,
 West Sussex PO20 8NS.

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