

Item 7 **10/00136/FUL** **Permit Full Planning Permission**

Case Officer **Mrs Nicola Hopkins**

Ward **Euxton South**

Proposal **Creation of a public outdoor leisure skate park facility at Yarrow Valley Park**

Location **Land 75m South East Of Highfield Southport Road Euxton Lancashire**

Applicant **Euxton Parish Council**

Proposal

1. The application relates to the creation of a public outdoor leisure skate park facility at the entrance to Yarrow Valley Park. The application site is located adjacent to an existing car park and is occupied by a grassed area with picnic benches.
2. The application has been submitted by Euxton Parish Council. In July 2008 the Parish Council contacted Chorley Council with a view to providing the facility and several sites were considered. Potential sites included the field adjacent to Southport Road, land adjacent to the railway station and James Moorcroft Play Area. All of the sites were ruled out due to restrictions such as land ownership, the size of the land available and access problems.
3. This site is considered to be the most appropriate as it has good access arrangements and it is sited away from neighbouring properties. The site is owned by Chorley Council. and is considered to be the only site available for this facility.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that this application is granted conditional full planning approval.

Main Issues

5. The main issues for consideration in respect of this planning application are:
 - Green Belt
 - Impact on Valley Park
 - Impact on the Neighbours
 - Highways
 - Noise and Litter
 - Security

Representations

6. 4 letters of objection have been received

Consultations

7. **The Architectural Design and Crime Reduction Advisor** has commented on the scheme
8. **The Council's Parks and Open Spaces Officer (Development)** has confirmed that he is in support of this development. The design will provide a new and unique recreation facility for both the local community and the borough at large

Assessment

Green Belt

9. The site is located within an area designated as Green Belt. Development within the Green Belt is restricted to development which is considered to be appropriate. Inappropriate development

will only be considered where very special circumstances can be demonstrated which outweigh the harm the development will have on the Green Belt.

10. The proposed development incorporates the creation of a public outdoor sports facility which falls within the definition of essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation which is considered to be appropriate development within the Green Belt.
11. The design of the facility incorporates a mixture of elements set below the existing soil line and above. Sunken elements will be created and the material dug out to create the sunken elements will be utilised to create the higher elements which will create the ramps. The site will be surrounded with grass bund/ mounds to cover the concrete edges of the facility. All of the existing trees and hedges will be preserved on site. The facility will not be fenced and the design, below the existing land level, ensures that the openness of the Green Belt is not impinged upon.
12. The proposals will provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas which is one of the objectives of designating Green Belt in accordance with Government advice contained in PPG2: Green Belts.
13. As the proposals fall to be considered appropriate development within the Green Belt and will not adversely impact on the openness or character of the Green Belt the proposals are considered to be acceptable in respect of Policy DC1 and PPG2.

Impact on the Valley Park

14. The application site is located within the boundary of Yarrow Valley Park, which is one of the three Valley Parks located with the Borough. The site is owned by the Council and the Council's Parks and Open Space Officer has confirmed that he is in support of this development.
15. These parks have considerable recreational value due to their location adjacent to the main urban centres of Chorley
16. It is considered that the proposed facility will provide a new and unique recreation facility, which will ensure that the amenity value of the Park for recreation is enhanced and alternative recreation facilities within the Borough are provided. As such the proposals are considered to be acceptable in respect of Policy LT8 of the Local Plan.

Impact on Neighbours

17. The site is located adjacent to the existing car park at the Valley Park. The nearest residential neighbour to the site is Highfield, located to the north west of the application site, which is in excess of 60 metres away from the application site.
18. To the north west of the site the character of the area is mainly residential however the immediate area surrounding the site is relatively open in nature and the facility is set away from the nearby residential properties. The Council's Parks and Open Space Officer considers that due to the size and appeal of the attraction it would not be possible to locate the Skate Park close to residential properties as this would adversely impact on the neighbours amenities. However the location of this site ensures that the facility is close to the residential population who will utilise the facility whilst protecting the neighbours' amenities.
19. Additionally the submitted application forms states that the operational hours of the facility will be during daylight hours. As it is not intended for the facility to be used during the evening this ensures that the neighbours amenities will not be affected by noise through people utilising the facility during the evening.
20. The scheme does not incorporate external lighting which ensures that the facility can only be utilised during daylight hours. In order for the facility to be utilised during the evening lighting would be required and this lighting would require planning permission. However the installation of external lighting within this Green Belt location would not fall to be considered appropriate development and would detract from the character of the Green Belt. Additionally external

lighting would have the potential to create nuisance to the neighbours as the facility could be used during the evening. As such it is unlikely that planning approval would be granted for lighting at this facility.

21. The facility will not be fenced off so it is not possible to enforce conditions in respect of operational hours. Any fencing at the site would also fall to be considered inappropriate development within this Green Belt location and would ensure that the facility creates a prominent feature within the Green Belt detracting from the openness of the area. As such it is unlikely that any proposals to fence the facility would be considered favourably. Fencing the facility would also create management issues in regards to opening and securing the facility.
22. Although the operational hours of this facility cannot be controlled via condition it is considered that the lack of external lighting ensures that use of this facility is restricted to daylight hours which will mitigate any nuisance to the neighbours. Additionally the Parish Council proposes measures to ensure the facility has natural surveillance, which will reduce the potential for people congregating at the facility during the evening.
23. There is an existing shelter located to the west of the application site closer to the residential properties. The Parish Council have not received any nuisance reports in respect of this facility and the Crime Advisor has not raised any concerns in this regard in respect of his comments. As such it is not considered that the facility will increase the potential for nuisance during the evening.

Highways

24. The application site is adjacent to an existing car park facility. The Council's Parks and Open Space Officer has confirmed that Skate Bowls/Plaza's of this nature can attract an older audience with their own transport however the existing car park ensures that this is feasible for this proposal.
25. The site is considered to be in a sustainable location with good road access and is well served by public transport. It is considered that the facility will attract younger people who do not drive hence it is not considered that the proposal will create any highway safety issues.
26. Concerns have been raised in respect of the proximity of the facility to the main road. There is however a hedgerow and knee rail between the application site and the road which acts as a barrier to the highway. Additionally the facility will be located approximately 20 metres from the highway. It is not considered that the siting of the facility will adversely impact on highway safety in the area.

Noise and Litter

27. It is envisaged that the facility will attract young people and children due to the nature of the facility. Concerns have been raised over noise and disturbance from the proposed facility along with the potential for littering.

28. It is considered that the siting of the proposal set away from the nearby residential properties mitigates the impact of noise. Similarly the nature of the facility ensures that it will be used during daytime hours which will ensure that noise generation does not create a nuisance to nearby residents during the evenings.
29. Litter will require a management regime to prevent a nuisance being created. The submitted documentation states that litter bins will be installed along with daily litter picking. This will be secured via condition.

Security

30. Concerns have been raised about the future users of the facility along with the potential for crime and vandalism particularly through lack of supervision. The Council's Architectural Liaison Officer initially commented that this area of land is little used by children so I have no crime or reported data on which to make comment. The main issue is the lack of lighting on the site. He has also confirmed that it is important that the site has good natural surveillance from the road
31. The scheme does not include lighting as it is not intended for the facility to be used during the evening. The Architectural Liaison Officer has been informed of this and has confirmed that his initial comments were based on the fact that the site was to be used during the winter evenings, if this is not to be the case then lighting is not an issue. The lack of lighting ensures that the facility will not create an attraction for people during the evening.
32. It is intended to trim down the existing hedge along the west side of the car park to create a line of sight from the road. Additionally it is proposed to keep the hedge along Southport Road trimmed down to a relatively low level to ensure that the facility is visible from the road. These measures will ensure that there is natural surveillance to the facility which is a requirement of the Architectural Liaison Officer. It also reduces the potential for crime and vandalism by providing a visible facility.

Overall Conclusion

33. The application site is located within the Green Belt however the facility will provide an outdoor sports facility which will secure one of objectives of designating Green Belt and as such falls to be considered appropriate development. It is considered that the siting of the facility and the fact that the facility is only intended to be utilised during the day minimises the impact on the nearby neighbours. The facility will provide an alternative leisure facility within the Borough within the boundary of an existing park and a sustainable location. As such the proposals are considered to be appropriate for this location.

Other Matters

Public Consultation

34. The Parish Council have undertaken extensive consultation including consultation with Chorley Council, Lancashire County Council and Euxton residents. A consultation event was arranged along with workshops with skatepark design companies and a web forum was set up
35. Young people from Euxton have had input into the design of the facility and the facility can be utilised by skateboarders, bmx bike riders and inline skaters.

Non- material planning considerations

36. Concerns have been raised that the facility will result in the loss of a picnic facility which is well utilised during the summer months. Euxton Parish Council, the applicants, have confirmed that the facility will not occupy the whole of this picnic area retaining some of the available amenity space. Additionally the Council's Parks and Open Space Officer fully supports the proposal and has not raised the loss of part of this facility as a concern.

Planning Policies

National Planning Policies:

PPG2, PPG17, PPG24

Planning History

96/00047/CB3- Regulation 3 Application for extension of Yarrow Valley Park entailing provision of footpaths, car parks, picnic areas, fencing, signs, interpretation/way-marking signs, landscaping, steps and bridges. Approved April 1996

**Recommendation: Permit Full Planning Permission
Conditions**

1. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The approved plans are:

Plan Ref.	Received On:	Title:
	17 th February 2010	Location Plan
	17 th February	Dimensions and Elevations

Reason: To define the permission and in the interests of the proper development of the site.

3. Prior to the commencement of the development full details of the litter bins and management regime for litter collection shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the location and specification of the litter bins. The development thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and management regime.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and in accordance with Policy GN5 and DC1 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review

4. Prior to the commencement of the development full details of the proposed works to the existing hedgerows to the west, east and north of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing to the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include full details of the proposed pruning works, a timetable for the works and a management regime for the future maintenance of these hedgerows. The development thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the management regime.

Reason: To ensure that the site benefits from natural surveillance. In accordance with Policy GN5 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review
