

Report from Skate Park Consultation 1st June 2010

The consultation carried throughout the community has shown a strong preference on both points of preferred location and the least disruption on the community for Homestead Park. (Please refer to attached results) This is also the preferred location by skate park specialists Ground Work UK. However this site has been said to be the 2nd preferred site from a policing point of view. The crime based assessment carried out by Gary Starkie of the safer community's team preferred Spring Street Field site as a 1st choice as it is in extreme need of redevelopment. There is no doubt that this area does need redevelopment and many questionnaires returned had comments in writing regarding this. This area had been eliminated from this project in the early stages following research on skate parks and the history of the ramp that was removed because of vandalism some years ago. It was reintroduced on request of Immingham Town Council when we requested funds be released for a public consultation to be carried out. If we were to put a skate park on this area measures would be necessary to make this area suitable for a skate park to ensure safety for users and prevent misuse.

Simon Fagg from Ground work UK was contacted for additional information regarding this so a decision could be made on the final and most suitable site. His response is below with more detailed information including potential additional costs.

From a safety point of view, the unbroken openness of Spring Street field represents something of an issue, due to strong winds. Ideally any skate park in this location would need mitigation measures to break up the airflow and reduce the negative and potentially dangerous effects of wind on the users. The best way to do this would be with a combination of large scale earthworks and planting, but this has the obvious downside of soaking up a large portion of any available budget on the earthworks and the difficulty of successfully establishing planting, especially if an adequate maintenance budget is not made available. While some spoil will be generated during the build process, vastly more would be required. To create an average 2m high bund around 3 sides of the facility could easily take 1000 - 2000 cubic meters of material, which at a rate of between £12 and £25 per m³ gives a figure of £25k. This would also need a large amount of supplementary planting to act as an effective windbreak, the net result of which would probably negate any advantages brought about by having better informal supervision than Homestead park. Obviously if this material was to be generated on site anyway costs would be significantly lower, but that would not be the case here.

While lighting would be advantageous to users on any of the sites, it is perhaps most necessary on the sites thought most likely to attract problems. a lighting scheme to include a safe access route could easily cost £10k - £20k.

If the facility was to require a high security fence (not recommended unless the site can be actively staffed and managed and is on private land) this could easily also run to £15k - £20k or more depending on size of the facility and grade of fencing used and reflecting

on the history of the previous skate park, fencing would be required to prevent vehicles being driven on the facility and damage caused by this fencing would be required at the spring street site.

To be successful as a skate park such a facility must attract a range of users from different ages and social backgrounds. Ideally it should be located in an area which is seen as neutral territory, so it doesn't become dominated by one particular group. Many (particularly young) skaters are from relatively affluent backgrounds and may not wish to, or be allowed to, visit what may be seen by many as an undesirable area.

While building the skate park on Spring Street Field may offer some benefits to that particular community, it is also highly likely to not be used by many skaters/BMXers from the rest of Immingham and the surrounding areas, as they have already expressed strongly that they do not feel safe in the area. If the majority of those involved in campaigning for the skate park do not feel able use it due to location then surely these points need to be considered.

I realise that the views of the police are going to be a material consideration in making any decision on a planning application, but I believe that if their preference is for Spring Street then this needs to be balanced against all factors and the view of those who the facility is actually being proposed for.

I realise that there are safety issues with Homestead too, and in an ideal world it would have better casual surveillance, but this in itself is only one factor, and one which can, to an extent, be argued against. Although the Spring Street site has more housing relatively close, there are less likely to be other users in the immediate vicinity itself (the play area at homestead is well used and the two facilities should actually compliment each other, by providing opportunities for a wide spectrum of age groups.

It is important that we respect the views of our community. It is clearly demonstrated that Homestead Park is the preferred location by the community and reflecting on all the information we have gained through reports and public consultations. It is obvious taking all factors of this project into consideration the site we should proceed with is **HOMESTEAD PARK**. This site will also reduce financial elements of this project because of existing features such as a gated entrance, natural wind shield and electrical supply. The land is in the ownership of Immingham Town Council the next stage would be to approach them as landowners and request their approval in principle to proceed with this project and then for plans to be submitted for outline planning permission again using the funds previously allocated for this project. If this is granted we can then move to full design and costing. The request to Immingham Town Council will be future dependent on agreed insurance and maintenance costs being agreed and One Voice contributing funding on a revenue basis for an agreed period. This funding will be included in the initial funding bids to ensure long term sustainability for this project.