



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	BMX Track at Ormeau Park
Date:	11 September 2014
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director, Parks and Leisure Department
Contact Officer:	Fiona Holdsworth, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Services Manager

1.	Relevant Background Information
	<p>The BMX Track in Ormeau Park had been constructed in the 1980's due to demands for facilities to accommodate what was then a 'new' sport. Since that time no further upgrade of the track has taken place and the facility has not kept pace with changes in cyclists' expectations and the developing sport's standards. BMX, as a discipline within cycling, is now an Olympic sport with development plans and programmes at the Dublin track leading to Ireland's first ever BMX world champion last year.</p> <p>Issues had been raised with the Department about the condition of the track, the need to modernise it and in particular the importance of improving the standard of the surface.</p> <p>Therefore as part of the parks routine maintenance programme the Community Park Manager proposed to improve the condition of the track during the 2013/2014 financial year to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- address concerns that the standard of the track needed to improve- ensure the continued safety of the existing track for users, addressing any identified risks (See Appendix 1. Risk Assessment from BMX Ireland 30/11/13 of the track.)- rectify public interference in the track surface e.g. making jumps.- meet the recommendation to improve the facility in the Green Flag action plan.

	<p>After consultation with BMX Ireland and Property Services a plan was drawn up to undertake modifications to the track to upgrade it. The plan was to remodel the track layout removing any hazards identified and reducing curve angles, this work was to enable the track to receive a governing body certificate for safe use.</p> <p>The track was to be in the same footprint as before but pulled into a more appropriate shape. The track was to be constructed of clay, (no drainage works were proposed) which when modelled was to be stone dressed with a digger and then dust placed on top. In 2014-15 it was proposed to surface the corners in bitmac.</p> <p>Work began on site in January 2014 using parks staff and the existing hire of machinery contract. Costs were mainly inclusive of staff time and equipment hire within existing maintenance budgets.</p> <p>It was estimated that most of this work would be undertaken by Parks staff as part of a winter development work programme. There was a substantial amount of additional work undertaken because of the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the amount of recyclable clay material on site for remodelling was less than calculated. To compensate therefore surplus free, material was sourced from other sites. - wet weather resulted in material having to be deposited nearby and then transported into the site by digger. - due to poor weather some larger track machinery with operators had to be hired. <p>Due to budgetary constraints the work was suspended in February 2014 and the site left in a safe condition. It was planned to finish the track modelling work in April 2014, finally applying a top coat of stone and then dust which would be compacted.</p>
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2.	Key Issues
	<p>During a review of the works necessary to complete the project and ensure a more sustainable track, the Park's engineer recommended that a terram membrane is installed to ensure adequate drainage to the facility. This will add to the initial cost but will reduce maintenance and increase the lifespan and durability of the facility.</p> <p>The Belfast City BMX Club have written to thank the Council for the works so far, stating that this is the first redevelopment of any BMX track in Northern Ireland for 25 years and that it is a great boost to the BMX fraternity. Currently all the riders in Northern Ireland have to travel to Dublin to practice and race. The upgrade of the facility will enable the site to be used for local fun days, community outreach, sports development programmes and coaching sessions.</p>

	<p>Following on the completion of the track surface, the Belfast City BMX Club have now formally requested that the Council would raise the standard of the facility to enable the running of safe competitions. (Appendix 2. Letter of request from the BCBMX Club)</p> <p>The Belfast City BMX Club and BMX Ireland would be keen to help with fundraising for a Phase 2 of further works, if required / permitted. The additions would include the formation of a national 'start hill', a safe start gate, the provision of tarmac on the corners, an anti-vandal proof container and some ancillary services e.g. electricity and water. The organisations would be willing to work with Council officers to advise on requirements and provide other assistance.</p> <p>To support the investment, it is proposed that a 5 year sports development plan should be developed by Belfast City BMX Club with appropriate performance indicators. This will ensure that sustainable sports development work leads to increased participation and community ownership of the refurbished facility.</p>
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3.	Resource Implications
	<p>Financial To finish the first phase of this refurbishment providing the standard of drainage recommended by the Parks civil engineers would require £26,000. This will be funded from existing budgets.</p> <p>BCBMX have estimated the cost of the additional improvements they have requested in Phase 2 to be in the region of £25,000. However, a detailed proposal and costing will need to be developed and verified and a budget established. A further report will be brought to Committee on proposals for Phase 2.</p> <p>Human Resources Outreach, sports development and park staff will work with those using the facility when the works are completed to ensure the facility is well used and that local young people engage with this activity.</p> <p>Assets The upgrade works will transform the facility into a much improved community and sporting asset.</p>

4.	Equality Implications
	There are no equality or good relations issues at present.

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5.	Recommendations
	<p>Members are asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to agree to the completion of the works on the BMX track at Ormeau Park referred to as Phase 1 with associated budget of £26,000 allocated from within existing budgets• to grant approval for Officers to enter into discussion with BCBMX regarding proposals for further improvement works to the facility (Phase 2) to bring it up to a safe and recognised competition standard. The detailed proposals for the additional improvements will be resubmitted to Committee at a future date for its consideration.

6.	Decision Tracking
	<p>The Assistant Director Parks and Leisure will bring a further report to Committed on the Phase 2 proposals.</p>

7.	Key to Abbreviations
	<p>BCBMX - Belfast City BMX Club</p>

8.	Documents Attached
	<p>Appendix 1. Risk Assessment from BMX Ireland 30/11/13 of the track Appendix 2. Letter of request from the BCBMX Club)</p>