

Get Your Skates On!

A guide to developing BMX & Skate Parks in your area



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A best practice guide to setting up skate & bike facilities in your area

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Introduction

Some people feel that BMX and skateboarding is just a phase which will go out of fashion and that young people will grow out of it. But let's face it ~ it's been around since the 1970's and shows no sign of losing its appeal. In fact it's growing more popular every year and it has been estimated that there are around 1 million BMX-riders, skateboarders and skaters in the UK.

Skate and bike facilities can provide a valuable outlet for young people's energy, who are often too old or too young for other more traditional facilities. Young people want to "hang out" and explore their growing freedoms with their friends and don't always want to be organised or attend formalised activities. Skate & bike parks can provide a facility which encourages young people to practice and develop their skills, socialise with their friends in a safe environment and help them to keep fit.

Skate and bike facilities, sometimes known as wheeled sports facilities, can encompass a wide range of equipment including: skateboards, BMX, mountain biking, inline skating, roller boots, scooters and snakeboards. There is also a wide range of disciplines that use wheeled equipment including: trials, freestyle, street, flatland, tricks, half pipe or vert, dirt jumping and mini ramp riding.

This guide has been compiled to provide a useful resource to assist people working to develop skate and bike parks in their area and was put together by South Gloucestershire Council and other partners who have been involved in setting up skate & bike parks in South Gloucestershire. This guide is primarily focused on developing permanent outdoor facilities; however you will need to consider many of the same issues if you decide to go down a mobile skate park or indoor route.

Our knowledge and experience is constantly growing as more parks are developed and we will endeavour to keep this guide as up to date as possible. Please let us know if you think we have missed anything out or if you would like to share your experience with others.

We hope you find this information useful and wish you well with your project.



Identifying and quantifying the need for a facility

From our experience the first calls for the need for a facility usually come from one of two sources: young people themselves, (voicing a need for facilities designed for them which allow them to play in safety without being moved on) or from adults requesting facilities for young people to provide a positive outlet for their energies rather than gathering together and causing a nuisance.

From these initial requests it is important to identify and quantify the need for a facility in the area to enable you to establish whether the project should progress. This is an essential part of making a case for your project, getting support and ownership for it from local residents, young people and in obtaining funding for it.

You might like to think about the following when you try to identify and quantify need in your area. Remember the more robust and reliable your information, the more likely your project is to succeed.

• What do young people want?

What would they like to see provided? (A physical facility or informal sessions, better access to other facilities, etc.) Can they suggest any potential locations or problem areas? How often will they use it and when? How will they use it? (for practising or hanging out with their friends, to watch others, etc.) What problems do they currently have and what do they think will resolve them?

• Number of potential users

How many children and young people (usually 11 – 18yrs old) live or go to school in the immediate and surrounding catchment area? Are developments likely to change this number in the future? How many local young people are interested in using any facility?

• Availability of other activities/facilities for young people in the area

What other facilities and activities (organised or informal) are there in the local area for young people and how easy is it for them to access them? How well known are they? When are they open/available? What age range do they cater for? Can young people get to them on their own, by walking, cycling or using public transport or are they reliant on adults to take them in a car?

• Distance and access to similar skate and bike park facilities in the wider area

How many other facilities are there in the wider area? How far are they? How well known/publicised are they? How easy are they to get to? How much do they cost? Who owns/manages them and how are they run? What age or skill level do they cater for? What type of equipment/facility do they provide?

• Local Identity Issues

This is an important issue that is often overlooked by adults who cannot understand why young people want another facility when there is one 2 or 3 miles away. Young people will travel to other facilities but they can often feel like outsiders, intimidated or unsafe and want a facility that they can call their own, easily access, be proud of and have ownership of. They will travel to other sites for a change of scene and to stretch their skills but will naturally use their local facility to practice and to socialise with their friends.

Useful methods to find out this information include: desk research, surveying children in local schools, youth centres or through other local groups; organising a petition; getting an article in the local paper to register interest; talking to your local councillor, MP or other agency etc. Start considering initial ideas about how a facility could be funded and who will manage it.

Getting a Group Together

In order to get your project going you will need a group of people to share the work involved. This could either be a group which is already set up and carrying out activities which fit in with your project, or a totally new group. Either way it is important that you have a clear idea of what you want to achieve and that the group and its finances are well managed.

Funders will ask you to provide such information with your constitution and bank statements to back it up. By setting up a distinct community group you may be able to apply for funding that is not open to your local authority or Parish Council.

It is essential that you involve young people, other potential users and representatives of the local community in the group. One method that has worked very successfully is to set up a "shadow board" made up of young people who work alongside the adult board and attend all of the meetings.

The group could be responsible for:

- Identifying and assessing potential sites.
- Applying for funding and organising fundraising events.
- Planning and assisting with or carrying out consultation.
- Planning, designing, developing and overseeing the proposals and its installation.
- Potentially managing the facility or monitoring and reviewing its use if it is managed by another body.

Writing a constitution

When bringing together a community group it is important to ensure that everyone in the group agrees on the group's objectives, which members are going to perform what tasks and that the group and its finances are well managed. This can all be detailed in a governing document, the simplest form of which is a constitution.

An organisation governed by a constitution has the most simple form of legal structure and is known as an "Unincorporated Association"

A constitution contains the following information:

- What the organisation is set up to do (objects)
- How the organisation will do these things (powers)
- Who will run the organisation (committee)
- How they will run it
- Internal arrangements for meetings, voting, looking after money, etc
- What happens if changes to the constitution need to be made
- What happens if the organisation wants to wind up

An example of a constitution is attached as Appendix 4

Setting up a Bank Account

When setting up a community group it's a good idea to open a separate bank account just for that group, this makes it clear how much funding that particular group has and demonstrates to funders that you are capable of managing your own finances.

Most banks have special accounts designed for community groups which are usually free or at lower rates than standard business accounts. Choose an account which requires cheques to be signed by two people but it's a good idea to have at least three people from the group authorised to sign cheques to avoid problems getting hold of enough signatories.

The Charity Commission can provide you with comprehensive information and advice including model documents. They can also advise you about registering as a Charity and can be contacted on 0870 333 0123 or go to www.charity-commission.gov.uk

Identifying potential site(s)

Local young people and residents are one of the best ways to help identify potential sites for your proposed facilities. Where do young people currently hang out, where do they feel safe or unsafe, are there any sensitive sites that should be avoided? Include your Local Authority and/or Parish Council, Police and any local Neighbourhood Watch groups at an early stage when you are identifying potential sites and any issues relating to them.

Be open to suggestions and draw up a list of **all** potential sites in your target area, identifying the advantages and disadvantages of each, rather than focusing on one site right from the very outset. This is helpful to enable you to consider all the potential options and implications for each site and to narrow down the list for further investigation.

Things you will need to consider include:

- Who has ownership and responsibility for the site?
- Distance from local residents' property and the potential for any nuisance to neighbours.
- Will the site be visible, so that people can informally monitor use for safety?
- Entrances and access routes on and off the site including access for emergency services and maintenance vehicles.
- Pedestrian, cycle and public transport links. Is there car parking available close by?
- Is the site big enough to fit all the equipment in the layout you would like?
- Landscaping and levels of the site.
- Condition of the site, potential for contaminated land and the need for any site remediation or preparation.
- Visual impact and noise levels associated with the proposed scheme in relation to its surroundings.
- Is the site protected or covered by any special covenants or restrictions?
- The cost of the site (if you are purchasing it) and any alterations that may be needed.

Working with the landowner

Having drawn up your list of potential sites, it is important to identify the land owner so that you can ascertain whether they would provisionally support your idea and to allow you to develop the plans and go out to consultation.

If the current occupier leases the land from someone else, ensure you also get provisional agreement/permission from the land owner. For example a Parish Council may maintain a local park but it might actually be owned by the Local Authority whose express permission will also be required.

It is also important to check with the Planning Department the designated land use for the site and whether any planning permission is required. (See management issues page 12 for more info)

Start thinking about who will have responsibility for what aspects of the site. This normally results in the negotiation of a lease between the relevant parties. (See management issues page 12 for more info)

It is essential to maintain regular contact with the landowner and local councillors and keep them fully informed at every stage in the project as they may have to field questions from local residents and plan for the impact of your project well in advance.

Community Safety Unit Checks

When you have drawn up your shortlist of potential site(s) it is extremely helpful to ask the Architectural Liaison Officer in the Police Community Safety Unit to assess the sites. They will look at the potential for crime and disorder and make suggestions for how these can be reduced or eliminated and will also consider the impact of your proposal on the site and its surroundings and make recommendations as to the best way forward and the advantages and disadvantages of each site.

This information will help you to design a better facility and will help to reassure residents that you have consulted, and are working in cooperation with, the police and may go some way to allay any fears that they may have.

Always incorporate any Police advice in your design and plans, and in the future management and maintenance of the facility. You may find the safer by design information in Appendix 8 useful.

The Community Safety Unit is a useful resource and they are always willing to offer advice and guidance in this area. The contact details for the team are in the useful contacts section at the back of this guide.



Design Issues

Outlined below is a list of things you might like to consider when you are planning and designing your facility.

Developing your ideas

Always involve potential and current users from across the range of disciplines in developing any facility for them, and get them thinking about what they would like; encourage them to draw up their own ideas and plans.

Discuss and consider the range of options open to you, the type of facility you would like to develop and the disciplines you would like to cater for. You might like to consider:

- Indoors or outdoors; supervised or unsupervised; free or fee charging.
- A static site-based facility or mobile equipment that can go to a number of sites.
- What disciplines and skills do you want to cater for e.g. Tricks, Trials, Jumps, Street, Competitions, BMX, Skate, Board or Bike.
- What type of materials do you want to use, e.g. concrete, metal, wood, dirt/mud jumps or new composite type materials

Most suppliers offer a free, no obligation design service which includes drawings & layouts, estimated supply and installation costs. This can be very helpful in generating further ideas and suggestions, and to use at consultation events and send to potential funders.

Visit other sites and talk to the people who manage them to look at different designs, layouts, materials and the advantages and disadvantages of each. It can also be useful to talk to people who have done something similar, to discuss some of the management issues and options open to you.

A facility that does not meet the needs of its users will not be used, is a waste of money and could become a focus for vandalism.

Equipment types, layout and surfacing

Always seek expert advice about the full range of surface types available and which would be best suited to your facility. Ask the users for their views, as they will have strong views on surface types, design, layout and construction.

When looking at equipment, layout, and surfacing you may want to consider the following:

- Reducing the impact of noise, through the choice of materials and construction method.
- Build-quality: ensure there are no uneven surfaces, buckling or sharp edges, joints are flush and that there are no edges or fixings which would affect the ride surface.
- Fixings: including the use of tamperproof fixings on all furniture and equipment; bolt equipment into concrete, and then tarmac the surface. This combination is more durable, will not sink and will reduce trip edges which make skateboarding difficult.
- Layout is a central element of the design, the enjoyment of the finished facility and the safety of its users. It is important to talk to users and professional designers to achieve the most appropriate layout. You will need to consider the natural flow and rotation around the facility and the equipment, as well as spacing between equipment and the location of equipment designed for different skill levels and disciplines. Also consider the orientation of the equipment to prevent dazzling caused by low sun.
- Maintenance, including the durability of the materials used and any fixings, access to spare parts, the ease and cost of any repairs and maintenance and any vandalism prevention methods you could incorporate.
- Also think about the back and sides of equipment – if it is fully boxed in this may prevent fires and litter under the equipment.

Surface Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Steel	Cheap to repair	Slippery in wet conditions and gets very hot in the sun. Failed joints can be dangerous with sharp edges occurring through wear. Noisy Rusts
Concrete (Pre-cast & freeform)	Durable and difficult to damage Quiet Cheap to maintain	Unforgiving to fall on Most equipment cannot be moved Most expensive
Wood	Good riding surface Quiet	Wears out quickly Easily damaged Slippery in wet conditions and can warp in wet weather
Composite Material	Good riding surface Weather tolerant	Can be burnt Costly to repair as often whole panel needs to be replaced. Prone to warping in severe weather conditions

Landscaping and planting

When looking at your site and any landscaping and planting, you may want to consider the following:

- Site levels and drainage (including any excavation, levelling and foundations that may be required and the natural drainage on the site) and any associated works that may need to be carried out.
- Trees overhanging the riding surface can be a problem if they drop their leaves or sap on to it, making it slippery and dangerous. Don't forget before you carry out any work on trees to consult the landowner and/or the Council's Tree Officer.
- Paths to and from the facility help to prevent mud on the riding surface, which can make it slippery and dangerous. Consider whether you need to provide more paths to improve and control access and to prevent shortcuts developing.
- Planting: be aware of the conflicting issues if creating an area of planting as a visual or noise barrier which could reduce the ability of the site to be passively policed. Thorny or prickly plants can be useful for discouraging "cut through" access routes, but make sure that they are not planted close to access routes or cause a litter trap.
- Reinstatement after installation and maintenance, including how contractors and emergency services will access the site.
- Consider if there are any services (drains, sewers, gas pipes, cables) near/under your site that could affect site preparation or installation.

Lighting

Although some users may be keen on having lighting at the site, this may not be practical, needed or desirable. You might like to consider the following before installing any new lighting for your facility:

- Existing lighting conditions at the facility may be adequate, especially for outdoor facilities where use can be seasonal with less use during dark winter evenings. There may also be overflowing light from nearby buildings or existing street or security lighting onto the facility that could be utilised.
- Some sites may be isolated from other facilities or buildings which may make connection to the electricity supply difficult or prohibitively expensive, although solar lighting may be used to overcome this.
- You may wish to use the lack of lighting to naturally restrict the hours of use.
- If you do install lighting consider the impact of lighting on any neighbouring properties and the use of a timer switch to try and regulate when the facility is used after dark.
- It can be a good idea to delay installing lighting until after the facility has opened. Its use can then be assessed and may save any unnecessary expense. Always consult with site neighbours before settling on any new or changed lighting scheme.

Fencing and Gates

Fencing and gating the facility are essential in preventing dogs and non users from accessing the equipment; for preventing litter and leaves from escaping or entering the facility; to enable you to close the facility for repairs and maintenance; and to manage opening hours or restrict hours of use.

When looking at fencing and gating you might like to consider the following:

- Fence height is normally site dependent and you will need to consider whether you require just a barrier or a full height fence that enables you to control the opening times, preventing access. Use the most robust fence you can afford to prevent vandalism and damage.
- Gates need to be lockable in order to secure the equipment if it becomes unsafe and they should be the same height as the fence.
- Your facility must have two gates to enable the bully gate system to be used.
- Self closing gates can help to slow down riders into and out of the facility but you will need to consider which way the gates open in respect of traffic flow and access control.
- You may also want to consider swing distance to prevent gates from being swung on & damaged and whether the gates can swing flat against the fence or be locked in an open position.
- Visually consider having gates in a contrast colour to the fence to help highlight their position to users.
- Consider maintenance access for vehicles if required. This may require a separate vehicle access gate or combination with one of the pedestrian gates.

Other equipment

When designing your facility, you may also want to consider how you could incorporate some of the following equipment to encourage responsible use of the facilities.

- Litter bins are essential and at least one should be provided as part of your facility. Ideally they should be lockable and fire proof. Lidded bins prevent litter from blowing around but users like open bins to aim at. Consult with users about litter bin options and their siting.
- Seating for users and people wanting to watch or supervise their children.
- A shelter for users giving them some cover from wind or rain showers. This could be incorporated into the underside of the ramps or be a separate shelter.
- Bike racks for securing bikes when they are not being used.
- Lockers/storage for backpacks, boots and boards when riders are using the facility. Cage style lockers enable contents to be viewed and can help to avoid inappropriate use. Users are normally expected to provide and use their own locks.

Signage

Your facility should have some signage which includes the following information:

- Access to the equipment including opening hours and which wheeled sports disciplines the facility caters for.
- Advice about the use of safety equipment including helmets and pads
- Expected behaviour – no shouting & foul language, no smoking, drugs or alcohol, no motorised equipment, no dogs, respect for neighbours, use of litter bins, etc.
- Location of nearest pay phone, toilets and first aid kit and what to do in the event of an emergency
- Suitable age range to use the equipment
- Contact details of site owner and for reporting maintenance issues and any accidents
- Sponsorship and funding logo's

For more information, ROSPA have produced a factsheet which is included as Appendix 7

Preventing anti-social behaviour issues



It is worth considering at every opportunity how you can design out any potential anti-social behaviour issues and crime from your facility. You might like to consider the following:

- Fully involving young people and the local community in designing the facility so that there is a sense of ownership. Users will often self police a facility, deterring vandalism and other anti-social behaviour that could damage or close a facility that they have campaigned for, been involved in and worked to develop.
- Investigating the sites for any anti-social behaviour history and talking to local residents, police and young people about the issues they have experienced and any ideas they may have for tackling them.
- Always consider purchasing the most robust equipment possible and using tamper proof fixings, this may be slightly more expensive initially but will provide savings in the long term when you spend less on repairs and maintenance.
- Getting expert advice from the Police Community Safety Unit, the Council's Community Spaces Team and manufacturers. Users may also come up with their own ideas to tackle any problems that could arise.
- It is good practice that facilities are located no less than 100m from the nearest residential property and 30m from any property boundary (although this can vary slightly depending on the site and any neighbours). You should also ensure that noise from the facility does not exceed 55 decibels to avoid causing a nuisance to local residents.

Negotiating a Lease

If you are not the land owner then you need to negotiate a lease which clearly sets out the extent of the area affected by the lease and who has responsibility for what. It is worth remembering that a lease can take some time to negotiate and a "tenancy at will" may be used to cover the facility in the interim. Don't forget to budget for legal advice.

A sample lease is shown as Appendix 3.

A lease should include some or all of the following:

- The area covered by the lease agreement
- Who the agreement is between (the parties involved)
- Lease period and any extensions
- Payments and any terms and conditions
- Responsibilities for upkeep, maintenance and repairs
- Access arrangements
- Insurance cover and liabilities
- Restrictions/exclusions on use and any covenants
- Termination of agreement and notice periods
- Re-instatement of site at end of agreement

Purchasing a site

Before choosing to purchase a site you will need to consider the following:

- The current designated land use of the site and whether you would need to put in a planning application for change of use or for your actual facilities and any associated works such as access, entrances and excavation.
- The total cost including any inspections, site preparation, legal fees and other professional advice and services you may require.

Planning Permission

Always consult and seek advice from your local planning office to find out whether your proposed facility requires planning permission.

The following could all influence whether you require planning permission:

- Designated Land Use of the site and whether it is in the green belt
- Any existing restrictions, conditions or covenants
- Whether the site is of archaeological, historical or ecological interest
- Access to the site and any changes to entrances and boundaries that may be required
- The height of any equipment and fencing
- The extent of any hard standing
- The cubic meterage of the equipment
- Whether you or your facility qualifies under the permitted development rule



Explanation/definition of Permitted Development

The Town and Country Planning Order 1995 (General Permitted Development)

Part 12

Class A - Permitted Development

A. The erection or construction and the maintenance, improvement or other alteration by a local authority or by an urban development corporation of

a) Any small ancillary building, works or equipment on land belonging to or maintained by them required for the purposes of any function exercised by them on that land otherwise than as statutory undertakers

Interpretation of Class A

A.2 The reference in Class A to any small ancillary building, works or equipment is a reference to any ancillary building, works or equipment not exceeding 4 metres in height or 200 cubic metres in capacity.

Interpretation of Part 12

For the purposes of Part 12 ~ "Local Authority" includes a Parish or Community Council

Maintenance and Health & Safety

- Ensure all equipment is manufactured and installed to meet the PAS 35 Standards.
- Always carry out a risk assessment, pre-installation for the facility and review and update annually or if anything changes.
- It is recommended that you get a ROSPA inspection of the facility carried out after installation and annually after that.
- Regular written and recorded maintenance checks of the equipment should be undertaken to check for damage and any other safety issues. This should be a minimum of weekly but for large facilities or those with heavy use they should be carried out more often.
- Always keep records of all maintenance and safety inspections and any accidents for a minimum of 21 years.

ROSPA recommend budgeting the following amounts for maintenance and repairs:

Steel 10 – 12% of capital cost per year

Timber 12 – 14% of capital cost per year

Concrete 5 – 10% of capital cost per year

ROSPA Inspection & Maintenance Information Sheet is included as Appendix 6

Insurance

ROSPA suggest minimum public liability cover of £2,000,000 should be obtained although £5,000,000 is recommended. It can be worth contacting several insurance providers to get the best policy and value for your facility. Always ensure that you inform your insurance company that you have installed equipment and of any changes that may occur later to the facility. They will want to see plans for your facility and details of your maintenance schedule. If the local authority, parish or group already maintains and has insurance for other play equipment then the cost of adding a skate park to the policy will be less than insuring a stand alone facility.

Ensure that you are clear about possible liabilities and who is liable with the landowner, lease holder or management.

If you are running supervised sessions or staffed events ensure your insurance cover and that of your contractors is adequate. It is also good practice to ensure that any staff have had a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check and have received training in child protection, health and safety and first aid.

Planning and monitoring the installation

Always plan the installation carefully with your suppliers to ensure their availability and the least amount of disruption to the site and its users and any neighbours. If possible avoid carrying out construction works during school holidays and during the growing or nesting season (if this is relevant to your site). Ideally any preparation works and installation should be carried out so that any construction hazards are minimised and any building works can be secured to prevent access by over keen young people eager to try out the new facility before it is safe.

Ask your supplier/installer to produce a method statement (safety & installation plan) prior to commencing the works. Check this carefully before allowing the works to proceed. Monitor the installation and raise with your contractors anything that you are not happy with promptly as it will be cheaper and easier for them to rectify while they are on site.

It's a good idea to take 'before', 'during' and 'after' photo's of your site and the installation for your records and to use at events and to show funders and sponsors.

Always carry out an installation inspection and health & safety risk assessment prior to opening the facility. ROSPA or your own insurance company may be able to provide this inspection but there will be a charge.

Monitoring the facility once it opens

Once use has settled down into a normal pattern, or after 6 months, it is recommended that you carry out a review of the facility to see how it is working and to see if you need to make any changes or add any new equipment or facilities. You could include the original project group, users, parents, residents, youth workers and the police.

It can be helpful to use your regular maintenance checks to monitor usage of the site and to check for signs of drug or alcohol use and any other anti-social behaviour that may require further investigation.

Regular discussions and co-operation with the police and listening to reports from residents and users can also pick up any issues early.

You may also like to carry out spot checks during the peak times your facility is open to get a true picture of its use and direct feedback from users.

ROSPA Skateboarding Safety Information Sheet is included as Appendix 5



Consulting on the proposals

This is one of the most important elements of the project to get right and to carry out properly. A lack of consultation, consultation that is rushed through or badly carried out can hamper the project and cause bad feeling and mistrust amongst young people and local residents.

The key to getting your consultation right is to plan it thoroughly and be as open as you can at all stages in the process. Get your information out early, (preferably before any rumours or hear-say develops) in a clear and easily understandable format and consult widely with anyone likely to be affected directly or indirectly by the proposals. For more information please see the sample consultation plan (appendix 2)

General Principles

Always keep a thorough record of who you have consulted with, when and in what format and ensure any correspondence you receive, both positive and negative, is kept in a safe place. You will often need this if you are applying for funding and decision makers and residents will want to see it as well.

Ensure everyone likely to be affected directly or indirectly gets a copy of your consultation information. A good way to do this is to look at a map and identify all the roads that neighbour your potential site(s) and work your way out, normally between 300m and 500m from the site. Don't forget any properties that are close to any access routes. For the sake of a couple of extra copies it's worth sending out information to the whole street as neighbours will talk and want to know why they have not been included or, even worse, feel that they have been deliberately excluded!

You may need to tailor your consultation methods to your intended audience and this is covered in more detail on the following pages.

Promote your consultation widely and invite comment by writing to residents, putting up posters and notices in local shops or notice boards or do press releases for local papers. Ensure you give an outline of the proposal, where it might be located, the deadline for comments and how to respond. Don't forget to put a contact number so that people can get more information.

Be open about what decisions have already been made and the timetable for future decisions. People will also want to know who will be making the decisions and how they can influence them.

Always let people know the results and outcomes of any consultation that you carry out. A useful format for doing this is to provide a summary which includes a description of what consultation you carried out, how many people responded, a summary of their views and an indication of what will happen next.

It is good practice to make the full results available on request but be careful to protect the identities and addresses of the people who responded.

Consulting with local residents and other interested parties

The key to consulting with local residents is clear communication so as to try and prevent the rumour mill from starting up and for residents to be given an equal opportunity for their opinions to be heard and considered.

You may need to adapt your consultation methods depending on the level of support or opposition to your proposals. You can use a wide range of methods to consult local residents including:

- Drop-in residents meetings
- Information leaflets and displays
- Questionnaires and focus groups
- Working with small groups of residents
- Public Meetings
- Presentations with Q&A session

In our experience we have found that drop-in residents meetings are more effective than holding public meetings, especially if there is strong opposition to a proposal. Public meetings can be intimidating for residents and for staff who have to face what can be an angry “mob”. We also find residents prefer to be able drop in at a time that suits them and to ask detailed questions in a one to one or small group setting. If you are holding a public meeting ensure you have a strong Chair-person, who is fully briefed and can make clear at the beginning of the meeting the expected behaviour of all those attending.

It is also important to inform, consult or involve other interested parties including:

- Various Local Authority departments
- Parish Council(s)
- Police
- Other Emergency Services
- Local Businesses
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Local Councillors & MPs
- Local Community Groups

It is essential to be fully prepared with all the information necessary to answer any questions and concerns that local people will almost certainly have. The issues that we have found are most commonly raised are listed below.

• **Consultation Issues**

Who has been consulted, how and when, potential for consultation bias, what decisions have already been made, when will other decisions be made, who will be making the decisions, who is leading the project, how can they influence the decision or take their complaint/issue further.

• **Site Issues**

Suitability of site, what other site(s) have been ruled out and why, what other site(s) are still being considered, distance from properties, access routes & entrances, emergency access, fencing & gates, visibility, landscaping and planting to screen any noise, impact on property values, conflict with other site users, visual impact, transport links and car parking.

• **Management Issues**

Monitoring and supervision, safety checks and maintenance, opening times & operating rules, health & safety issues, the cost of installation and future maintenance and who will be paying for it, what fundraising has already been done, who else are you applying to, disruption during installation.

• **User Issues**

Concern about the personal safety of children & young people and stranger danger, the target age range of users and the potential for anti social behaviour including vandalism, perceived or actual problems relating to drink & drugs, intimidation, bad language, litter, fighting and late night use and disturbance.

Consulting with potential users

When working with young people it can be invaluable to use people trained and experienced in consulting and communicating with them as the quality of the information and the relationship you build up can be much improved by a better understanding of the issues and concerns young people face.

Young people should be encouraged to become actively involved in all aspects of the project and the consultation process. They can get involved in a wide range of ways including:

- Drawing up their own plans and ideas
- Carrying out their own research
- Fundraising
- Planning, attending, taking part in and speaking at events and meetings
- Visiting and assessing sites and other facilities
- Involvement in the selection of a manufacturer and the final design and layout.
- Designing publicity material and displays
- Monitoring and reviewing the facility once it has opened

Young People can get very enthusiastic about a project but it can be helpful to have a reality check to manage expectations, helping to keep young people motivated and on board and to get the best possible facility at the end of the day.

- What do young people want versus what their actual skill level is – are they compatible?
- What is physically possible within the constraints of the site and budget?
- How long, and potentially bureaucratic, the process could be.



• Consultation Timescales

Consultation often takes longer than people initially think and the length of time it takes to plan and undertake should not be underestimated.

Below is an outline of how long it takes to carry out an average consultation which includes a consultation leaflet & questionnaire and at least one public consultation drop in session. Consultation with potential users normally takes place throughout the entire process.

• Planning & Preparation

It normally takes at least six to eight weeks to plan and prepare for your consultation

Week 1 ~ Draft and agree consultation plan and investigate best consultation methods

Week 2 ~ Draft copy, arrange dates and book venues, equipment & speakers

Week 3/4 ~ Agree copy and design consultation material (leaflet, questionnaire, display material, etc)

Week 4/5 ~ Get consultation material printed, prepare press releases, posters and mailing lists

Week 5 ~ Send out invitations to meeting and leaflets to residents and other interested parties, put up posters and send out press releases

Week 6 ~ Final preparation for event, double check arrangements and prepare answers to frequently asked questions, brief speakers

Week 7 ~ The big event!

• Consultation Period

It is good practice to allow a minimum of 4 weeks for people to comment and to give two weeks notice for any events. This will sometimes be longer if you are planning a series of events for residents, stakeholders, potential users, etc or if you are carrying out your consultation during school holidays. Always make sure that there is someone available to answer questions during this time.

Week 7 to 12 ~ Consultation Period open for comments, questions and events

• Analysing & Reporting the Results

This is very dependent on the number and complexity of the responses you receive and the detail you need to go into in your report. It can take a long time to analyse lots of responses and write a complex report.

Week 13 to 15 ~ Analysis of comments, letters, e-mails and questionnaires received

Week 15 to 17 ~ Preparation of consultation report

Week 17 to 19 ~ Draft and agree consultation summary

Week 20 ~ Feedback and distribute the results to young people, residents and other interested parties

As a result of the consultation you have carried out it might be necessary to change your plans. If the changes differ significantly from what you initially consulted on it may be necessary to go out to further consultation and to keep people informed.

You will need to consider whether to consult as widely as before and in what level of detail; considering a modified approach may be worthwhile. Some examples include:

- Setting up a broad based working party which includes members of the project team, young people, residents that are both supportive and against the proposal, local councillors and community groups.
- Working directly with a smaller group of residents and community representatives who are directly affected, to overcome their specific concerns.

If, following consultation, you decide to withdraw your plans for a particular site, let people know the reasons why and what other options you will now consider.

The Decision Making Process

As most public skate and bike parks are located on public land, someone will have to make the final decision to give or deny permission for your facility to go ahead. This might include several meetings or site visits and can take some time. It can be a good idea to involve young people in these meetings and to give presentations.

Some decisions could be made by a committee and you may be able to make a short speech/presentation in support of your project. This is often worthwhile as it demonstrates your commitment to the project if you are able to support and attend. Don't forget that any objectors to your proposal may also have the right to attend and speak against your proposal.

Listed below are the areas that decision makers will consider when they make their decision. It is essential that you have provided them with this information in a clear format to enable them to come to an informed decision.

Key Criteria for Decision Makers

- The identified need in the area.
- The level of support and opposition to a proposal in the area and details of the consultation that has been carried out.
- Suitability of the proposed site and any alternatives that are or have been considered.
- The proposed size, type, design and layout of the facility.
- The overall cost of the facility and the funding arrangements for it and any future maintenance and running costs.
- Health & safety and accessibility issues.
- Management issues.
- Impact of the proposals on its surroundings and any neighbours



How much can it cost?

Each facility is different and will have its own unique issues, design, equipment and layout. The costs outlined below are an example of a facility in South Gloucestershire that is managed by a Parish Council. This facility is in a public park and needed some site preparation and new access points before the facility could be installed, It opened in October 2004.

It is 25m x 13m in size and includes the following equipment:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 4no 1700mm high quarter pipe | 1no 1200mm high jump box |
| 1no 1400mm high quarter pipe | 1no 1400mm high flat bank |
| 1no 1500mm high volcano | 1no 900mm high driveway |
| 1no 1700mm high roll in | 1no 300-450mm high grind box |



Outlined below are the costs for this example which you may find useful as a guide but it is worth remembering that the size, design, layout, site preparation, materials used and the amount of equipment will affect the overall costs.

Consultation Costs

Design, print and postage of consultation material and feedback	£550
Production of display material for exhibition and event	£200
Room hire and refreshments for event	£100
10 Hours of detached youth work support	£150
	<hr/>
Total	£1000

Preparation, Installation & Equipment Costs (Capital)

Site Preparation (not including VAT)	£24,000
Installation & equipment costs (not including VAT)	£47,850
Fencing and gates (not including VAT)	£4,500
Post installation inspection (ROSPA qualified)	£375
	<hr/>
Total	£76,725

Annual Running Costs (Revenue)

Insurance costs (based on group having no other insurance in place)	£1,300
Maintenance and repair costs (ROSPA Recommendation)	£4,785
Inspection & monitoring costs (based on a weekly inspection)	£1,820
	<hr/>
Total	£7,905

Don't forget to budget for VAT, legal advice, administration and planning fees, if you need to negotiate a lease or make a planning application, and for any contingencies.

Sources of Funding

There are a number of different ways of raising the necessary funds to develop your facility including:

- Grants from local agencies including Local Authority, Parish Council, Health Authority, Police or Community Safety Partnership.
- Grants from government departments or agencies including the Regional Development Agency, Regional Government Office, Countryside Agency.
- National lottery funding including Awards for All.
- Sport England.
- Other grant making bodies, charities, foundations and trusts.
- Fundraising events such as car washes, car boot sales, raffles, quizzes and other events.
- Sponsorship by local companies.
- Planning contribution (\$106) as part of new planning applications for housing or other developments (talk to your Local Authority's Planning Department for more information)

You will normally have to provide potential funders with a range of information, depending on the funder, amount applied for, the size and complexity of your application including:

- Group Constitution or terms of reference, details of group membership.
- Accounts and/or bank details.
- Project plan, budget, costing and timetable.
- Equalities Statement.
- Health & Safety Information.
- Evidence of fundraising and amounts raised/expected and who else you have applied to

When submitting a funding application you may find the following checklist helpful:

- Do the funder's policies, priorities and application timetable match up with your appeal?
- Do they have any restrictions which may exclude you?
- Are you applying for the appropriate amount? (Average, maximum & minimum grant size, funding priorities and total grants budget of the funder)
- Have you filled in the application in full and included any additional information that is required? Have you met the application deadline?
- Is your application clear about who you are, what you are trying to achieve, who will benefit, how much you are asking for, what you will spend the money on, how much money you have already raised and how you will evaluate your project?
- Is your application legible and easy to read with the right level of information? Is it understandable with no jargon? Is it the correct length? Make sure it has no typos or spelling errors and is addressed to the right person.

You can find out about different grant making bodies and information about how to apply for grants from:

- Your local library (Yate Library holds this information for South Gloucestershire)
- Charities Aid Foundation – www.charitynet.org
- Association of Charitable Foundations – www.cibfunding.org.uk
- Charities Information Bureau - www.cibfunding.org.uk
- Charity Commission - www.charity-commission.gov.uk
- Directory of social change - www.dsc.org.uk
- www.funderfinder.org.uk
- www.access-funds.co.uk
- www.governmentfunding.org.uk

Sources of Information and Advice

South Gloucestershire Community Spaces Team

The Community Spaces Team design, install and manage a number of skate parks in South Gloucestershire and are an invaluable source of information about all aspects of skate and bike park planning, design, funding, installation and management.

Contact Name: Tina Rainey or Katherine Kearns, Community Landscape Project Officers
Tel: 01454 865876 **E-mail:** tina.rainey@southglos.gov.uk
01454 865877 katherine.kearns@southglos.gov.uk
Address: South Gloucestershire Council, Community Spaces Team, Broad Lane Offices, Engine Common, Yate, South Gloucestershire, BS37 7PN

South Gloucestershire Community Consultation Officer

The Community Consultation Officer can provide advice and support on how to carry out consultation on all aspects of your proposals.

Contact Name: Clare Nelmes, Community Consultation Officer
Tel: 01454 868154 **E-mail:** clare.nelmes@southglos.gov.uk
Address: South Gloucestershire Council, Broad Lane Offices, Engine Common, Yate, South Gloucestershire, BS37 7PN

South Gloucestershire Youth Service

The Youth Service can provide information and advice about working with young people, the issues that affect them and the best methods to include and involve young people in your project.

Tel: 01454 868540 **E-mail:** youthsupportunit@southglos.gov.uk
Address: South Gloucestershire Council, Riverside Court Building One, Bowling Hill, Chipping Sodbury, South Gloucestershire, BS37 6JX

Avon and Somerset Police Community Safety Unit

The Police Community Safety Unit can carry out checks or run an assessment on a site which will help to identify any issues and potential solutions for how to overcome them.

Contact Name: Sgt Kevin Wilkinson
Tel: 0117 9454119 **E-mail:** kevin.wilkinson@avonandsomerset.police.uk
Address: Staple Hill Police Station, Broad Street, Staple Hill, Bristol, BS16 5LX

South Gloucestershire Community Development Team

The Community Development Team can provide you with information and advice about setting up and constituting your group. They can also put you in touch with potential sources of funding and local groups that you might like to consult or involve.

Tel: 01454 865684 **E-mail:** community.development@southglos.gov.uk
Address: The Ridgewood Centre, 244 Station Road, Yate, South Gloucestershire, BS37 4AF

Safer South Gloucestershire (Community Safety & Drugs Partnership)

Safer South Gloucestershire can provide advice on all matters to do with community safety, drugs and anti social behaviour and they also offer grants and provide advice on funding to tackle crime and community safety issues.

Tel: 01454 868760 **E-mail:** community.safety@southglos.gov.uk
Address: South Gloucestershire Council, Parkman House, Lime Kiln Close, Stoke Gifford, South Gloucestershire, BS34 8SR

Appendix 1

Sample Project Plan

Appendix 2

Sample Consultation Plan

Appendix 3

Sample Lease

Appendix 4

Sample Constitution

Appendix 5

ROSPA Skateboarding Safety Information Sheet

Appendix 6

ROSPA Inspection and Maintenance of Play Areas Information Sheet

Appendix 7

ROSPA Signs for Play Areas Information Sheet

Appendix 8

Secure by Design Information

Contact for further information about this Guide

- Address: South Gloucestershire Council, Community Services, Broad Lane Offices, Engine Common, Yate, South Gloucestershire, BS37 7PN
- Phone: 01454 868154
- Fax: 01454 865819
- Internet: www.southglos.gov.uk/
- E-mail: community.consultation@southglos.gov.uk

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