

Outdoor Leisure

Recommendation:		
1. Council is requested to provide guidance to staff on how consultation and policy formation might take place.		
	Yes	No
Does the decision involve new expenditure?	Yes, eventually	
Is there an existing budget for the proposed expenditure (insert code)	N/A	
What procurement level is required?	N/A	
Are there equalities impacts / an equalities assessment required?	Yes	
Does this require a full council decision? (Reports for full council decision should still be sent to the relevant committee where possible.)	N/A	
Is there a background paper or papers? (provide links below).	Yes	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council has previously indicated an interest in providing outdoor recreation and leisure for a wider range of age groups than the current fleet of play areas addresses, but no schemes have come forward that have met with council's approval. 2. Amongst the reasons raised previously to reject schemes are the appropriateness of specific schemes, the desirability of locations, the cost, and the extent to which there is actually demand for the type of service proposed. 3. The range of facilities that have been raised in informal discussions include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Outdoor exercise / gym equipment – Council has previously received estimates from a provider of this equipment in relation to a site at Spittal, but has chosen not to proceed with this work. The feasibility of such an installation is not in doubt, but demand and the desirability of the location were perceived as significant issues. b) BMX track / pump track – The desirability of a BMX track and or pump track are frequently raised in discussions with stakeholders, but no significant work has been undertaken to scope out the demand, and or an appropriate location for such a facility. Large competition standard BMX facilities have significant costs and demand significant amounts of civil engineering, whilst pump tracks have an upper age limit. c) Wheelsports / skatepark facility – The addition of skateboarding and other wheelsports to the Olympic Games has given rise to additional funding opportunities via the sports governing body, and a range of options are available in terms of facilities, from large scale wheelsports facilities down to skate dots – skateable features or facilities integrated within a larger area of public space, in some cases up taking up little more space than a public seat. d) Bouldering / climbing facilities – Despite sports climbing being part of the Olympics the pathway from local facility to indoor climbing is not as clear. Some play contractors now offer bouldering like facilities as additions to play parks, but the link to sports climbing is less clear. e) Multi use sports space – Berwick has been offered a Playzone facility as part of a larger Northumberland County Council / Football Foundation project, but is in Portfolio 2 of the programme, and unlikely to be delivered before Financial Year 2025-26 since the project has not yet been costed. The risk of non-delivery because of a lack of community match funding has been flagged up as a significant risk in the report. 		

<https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s20120/06%20CSG%20Recommendations.pdf> Council did take part in the early part of the discussions around this project but opted to not commit further resources at the time.

4. Without clear evidence of demand, it is hard for officers to know which schemes should be prioritized. It is therefore proposed that council undertake consultation work, including face to face consultation and with the Voluntary and Community Sector, to enable demand to be better understood and to inform council decisions.

Issues arising from proposal

None.

Rationale for recommendation

Not applicable.