

Date: Wednesday, 15 October 2025

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire, SY3 8HQ

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CABINET

TO FOLLOW REPORT (S)

- a **Scrutiny Item - Skateboard & BMX Pump Track Provision in Oswestry**
(Pages 1 - 6)
Further to the recommendations from the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee which were presented at the meeting held on 10 September 2025, members are asked to consider a report setting out the findings of the Portfolio Holder.

Lead Member – Cllr James Owen, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Leisure

Lead Officer – Claire Braddock, Overview and Scrutiny Officer

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Cabinet
15 October 2025

Item

Public



Skateboard & BMX pump track provision in Oswestry

Responsible Officer:		Steve Law	
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Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):		Cllr Roger Evans	

1. Synopsis

This report sets out the recommendation to support the requirement for a new Skatepark and BMX pump track in Oswestry and seeks an officer delegation to undertake a detailed option appraisal to identify a suitable location within Shropshire Council ownership.

2. Executive Summary

In support of the Council’s new direction and aligned to the Shropshire Plan supporting Healthy People, this report recommends supporting the recommendation of the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee following discussion of a petition presented to the Committee at its meeting on the 10th July 2025.

- 2.1. The report sets out the importance of the health benefits, and support for young people in delivering a site to best meet their needs in Oswestry
- 2.2. The report recommends supporting the principle of transferring land to Oswestry Town Council for use as a pump track and skate park, enabling the Town Council to invest in the development of the new facility and to take on its future management.
- 2.3. The report recognises the need and demand in accordance with the petition presented to *Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee*

- 2.4. The report details a recommendation for officers to undertake a detailed option appraisal exploring the best potential options for a facility in Oswestry in terms of local need, demographic and suitability. This will encompass
- A. Liaison with Oswestry Town Council (OTC) to ensure a coordinated approach to support the funding and operation of the facility
 - B. Undertaking a detailed needs analysis
 - C. Carrying out feasibility work to determine a location which can be developed for the intended use whilst providing a safe, accessible environment for young people.
- 2.5 This proposal aligns with the Shropshire Plan's 'Healthy People' priority and is listed as a formal infrastructure item in the Oswestry Place Plan (Ref 2260), reinforcing its strategic importance

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet accepts the need, demand and benefit of a skatepark and BMX Pump Track in Oswestry and will work to deliver a new facility in an appropriate location in partnership with Oswestry Town Council (contingent on the Town Council's support and funding.)
- 3.2 Cabinet instructs the Head of Property and Development to complete an options appraisal of available sites within the Council's ownership, considering the most appropriate and beneficial location, and bring back a report to a future Cabinet meeting with a final recommendation.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. **Risk narrative - Needs Assessment** – In order to ensure the needs are fully understood and met, consultation is proposed with stakeholders and potential users.
- 4.2. **Risk narrative - Site Selection** – Shropshire Council owns a number of sites within Oswestry that could potentially be developed for use as BMX / Skate Park Facilities. To ensure best value for the investment, detailed site evaluation is required.

- 4.3. **Risk narrative – Site Suitability** – There are a number of physical and technical requirements. Sites will need to be assessed to ensure they are capable of accommodating the facilities.
- 4.4. Youth engagement will be embedded through co-design workshops and ongoing feedback mechanisms to ensure the facility remains relevant and well-used
- 4.5. Risk table

<i>Risk</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>
Detailed needs not fully understood or met.	Consultation proposed with stakeholders and target users to ensure the specification is appropriate.
Optimal site not chosen	Detailed Site Evaluation
Chosen Site technically unsuitable	Site Suitability Assessment
Lack of engagement with young people leading to lack of utilisation of the facility	Stakeholder engagement in partnership with Oswestry Town Council
Inappropriate site selection compromises other plans or intended uses	Option appraisal will consider current and future uses or demands on the sites being considered
Chosen site is not accessible or inclusive	An Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment will be undertaken considering the needs of protected characteristic groupings and broader social inclusion impacts

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. Shropshire Council continues to manage unprecedented financial demands and a financial emergency was declared by Cabinet on 10 September 2025. The overall financial position of the Council is set out in the monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. Significant management action has been instigated at all levels of the Council reducing spend to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all reports to Members provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers and/or Portfolio Holders review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. All non-essential spend will be stopped and all essential spend challenged. These actions may involve (this is not exhaustive):
- scaling down initiatives,
 - changing the scope of activities,
 - delaying implementation of agreed plans, or
 - extending delivery timescales.
- 5.2. Shropshire Council is working to enable Parish and Town Councils to invest in their localities and take on and manage services and facilities to support their local communities.
- 5.3. Oswestry Town Council have provided a commitment to fund and operate a new facility provided Shropshire Council transfer an appropriate piece of land which can be developed for its intended use.

- 5.4. The intended option appraisal will provide a budget estimate for the facility to provide an understanding of the likely development cost.
- 5.5. The only cost to Shropshire Council will be the transfer of a parcel of land by way of a long lease. An appropriate valuation will be undertaken for the land and a transfer will be likely progressed at an undervalue as the disposal is likely to contribute to the promotion or improvement of economic, social, or environmental well-being of the area.
- 5.6. The proposed undervalue transfer complies with the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003, as the disposal promotes social and environmental well-being and falls below the £2 million threshold.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. Shropshire Council will support Oswestry Town Council in the options appraisal to identify a site which can be developed with sustainable principles in terms of its materials and future maintenance requirements.
- 6.2. The site will be assessed in terms of its ecological impact to mitigate any erosion or damage to the surrounding environment.
- 6.3. Access requirements will be considered to promote sustainable modes of travel to access the facility as part of the option appraisal.
- 6.4. The project will incorporate biodiversity net gain principles and include signage and education to redirect informal biking away from sensitive habitats

7. Background

- 7.1. At the 10th July 2025 meeting of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee petitioners asked the Council to pass over a suitable section of land to the north of Oswestry Leisure Centre to enable them to provide a biking and skateboarding facility for the town. Local residents who attended this meeting explained how popular biking is to the young people of Oswestry, as well as the valuable mental and physical health benefits that having a skatepark locally would bring.
- 7.2. The petitioners confirmed that planning permission was granted for a BMX / Skateboard facility on this site in 2008, however this had not yet been developed. They also understood that Oswestry Town Council have prioritised this as an action, have the money to complete it, and have been negotiating with Shropshire Council on the subject of this land for some time.
- 7.3. It is believed that the development of this pump track will relieve stress and damage to nearby ancient woodland and protected bluebells, as this area is currently being used by large numbers of bikers who are unknowingly damaging wildlife, such as a protected species of bluebells. The petitioner confirmed that these bikers are using

this woodland as they have nowhere else to go in the absence of a facility of this kind.

- 7.4. The petition itself states that Oswestry Town Council have the Capital receipt for this and would be fully funding it themselves, at no cost to Shropshire Council, other than the loss of land. Members heard from officers that this land, approximately two hectares adjacent to the leisure centre, is not currently being used. However, there may be a future need for expansion of the leisure facilities or car parking for the leisure centre, so the design and location of the pump track would need to take this into consideration. Equally if the pump track is not well used or falls out of favour the option to revert this facility back to Shropshire Council would be beneficial.
- 7.5. Members also heard from the petitioners that the local biking community would be enthusiastic in being involved in the running of this facility in some way.
- 7.6. Members discussed this request and were very enthusiastic as to the health benefits, and supportive of the opportunity to engage with young people in delivering a site to best meet their needs.
- 7.7. Whilst Oswestry Leisure Centre provides one option there are other potential locations around the town which should be considered before a final decision is reached.
- 7.8. Work has commenced on scoping the alternative locations to be considered alongside the Leisure centre site with planned stakeholder engagement.
- 7.9. The petition presented to the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 July 2025 demonstrates longstanding community demand, with planning permission granted in 2008 and amended in 2012. OTC has confirmed capital funding availability and prioritised this project.

8. Additional Information

- 8.1. Findings from the 2020 Oswestry Plan states that the development proposal for Phase 2 of the Oswald Park Leisure Centre development was one of the priorities for Oswestry, along with looking at future provision for more formal facilities, including, skate parks, BMX tracks etc
- 8.2. Within the Oswestry Joint Strategic Needs Assessment respondents highlighted the lack of activities and facilities for children & young people was a concern with 36% of respondents mentioning it.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. The provision of a new skate park and BMX pump track in Oswestry is strongly supported, recognising the significant health and wellbeing benefits for young people and the wider community. Engagement and empowerment of local youth by providing a safe, accessible space for outdoor activities.

- 9.2. Protection of sensitive local environments by reducing informal use of ancient woodland and safeguarding protected species.
- 9.3. Strong stakeholder engagement between Shropshire Council and Oswestry Town Council.
- 9.4. No direct cost to Shropshire Council, as Oswestry Town Council will fund and manage facility.
- 9.5. Next Steps:-
 - 9.5.1.1. October–November 2025: Completion of options appraisal and stakeholder engagement.
 - 9.5.1.2. December 2025: Cabinet report with final site recommendation.
 - 9.5.1.3. Q1 2026: Land transfer and commencement of development (subject to Cabinet approval and OTC readiness).

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

- Petition to Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee (10 July 2025)
- Oswestry Place Plan (Ref 2260)
- Oswestry Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2020)
- Historic Planning Permission (2008, amended 2012)

Local Member: *Oswestry Local Members*

Cllr James Owen

Cllr Duncan Kerr

Cllr Mike Isherwood

Cllr Paul Milner

Appendices