

Ellon Wheels Park Group.

This document can be read in conjunction with application for the Asset Transfer Request for the lease of Lower Gordon Park, Ellon for Ellon Wheels Park Group.

This document has been written in a way to support use of software, hopefully making it easy to read.

SECTION 4

4.1 Need for the proposal

The asset will be used to accommodate a wheel park area. A combination of cycle pump track, BMX/Skate park and a road bike circuit.

Vision – To build a multi-sport ,multi-ability wheeled sport facility in Ellon that is accessible to all.

We believe there is a requirement for sporting facilities in Ellon that are out with the normal team sport areas already provided in Ellon.

-To work in collaboration with others (public/ private/3rd sector) in the community to provide facilities for the people of Ellon who want to do more than the mainstream team based sports. Built to excellent quality and designed for multiple wheeled active sport disciplines and multiple skill levels. A vibrant area and facility that has been missing in Ellon and is a need to help develop our youth.

- Ellon Town Community Development - To make Ellon “unique”

– A selling point, bring in others to come and spend the day in Ellon on their bikes, boards, scooters and skates. Bring income to the local shops and businesses/ enterprises. Money spent in town flips 5/6 times and so helps local Ellon economy thrive. Part of the new future for Ellon.

-To do something different and exciting for our town. Provide a facility for use for all groups. Tie in with Breeze, Belles on Bikes, New Scots, new cyclists and experienced cyclists. Those just starting and need to develop confidence on bike and those who want to expand their technical abilities.

- Combine tourism, leisure and sport in one area.

-Provide training facilities for cycle and triathlon clubs and help those clubs provide more events and develop and grow.

-To provide a facility where women specific sessions can be run.

4.2 Benefits of the proposal

The Ellon Wheel Group considers that the Wheel park facility will bring many benefits to the local community.

Overall demand

The demand is clear from the higher than normal response to the community survey in the feasibility study. Other similar projects usually attract 300 responses. Banchory Skate Park (recently approved lease had 530 responses) and Ellon had 874. We also have 26 letters of support from school, community groups, local businesses and organisations, Police Scotland and several Council services. Letters of support were received from Ythan Sports Community hub, Ythan Community Council, Ythan Valley Rotary, Ythan Trythan triathlon club, Refugee resettlement group (New Scots), Scottish Cycling, Breeze - Scottish Cycling, Slains Primary School, Ellon Community Council, Ythan Sports Hub Coordinator, Ellon Rotary, Ellon Boys Brigade, Ellon Civic Pride, Fortrie farms, Ellon Hillwalking Club, Lawrence Milne, Nestrans, The Coffee Apothecary, Scottish Adventure, Ellon Primary School, Scottish Cycling Coach, Aberdeenshire Council – Infrastructure Services, Formartine area manager, MSP Gillian Martin, Ellon Councillor Isobel Davidson, Ellon Police, Local Active Schools. •

Economic development

Currently the open space in Gordon Park is an informal grassy area and our project will upgrade this to a £750k wheeled sports hub which will meet the town's wheeled sports needs for the next generation. By acting as the lead in this project the Group hope to secure just over three quarters of a million pounds and the project will only proceed if this funding is secured. If secured this means the council will not have to consider any funding towards wheeled sports in Ellon for the foreseeable future reducing any call on the council's capital budget. In addition, by transferring the lower part of Gordon Park this removes the cost burden of the council maintaining the area within the boundary of the existing paths. The proposed facilities will be free of charge to use with the only costs being if individuals elect to be instructed or receive enhanced training and coaching. All schools will be given access at no charge. Anyone will be able to use the facilities for free which resonates with the council's equality and inclusion aspirations for offering accessible facilities. The schools will be able to use the area for bikeability sessions rather than having to rely on their own restricted areas in their playgrounds. The circuit provides a safe traffic free area where the children can learn how to ride in a road environment before heading out on open roads.

Environmental wellbeing

It also meets the council and Scottish Government's aspirations for facilities to move towards reducing our carbon footprint. This will be achieved in the construction process by using locally sources materials reducing the number of road miles as well as eliminating the need for local Ellon residents having to travel to other similar facilities in Aberdeen, Inverness and Edinburgh. The wheel park is also fits in with the Integrated Travel Town strategy for Ellon but providing safe traffic free facilities for those that want to learn or

relearn how to cycle before venturing out on the shared path network or onto the roads with other traffic. With the cost of motoring and the environmental impact of motoring increasing more and more people will look for cheaper ways to travel and by providing facilities such as this people can learn to ride bikes safely before venturing out on the open road. The facility will help create a culture where sustainable active travel is an integral part of society and improve the travel habits of the people in Ellon.

Public health

It is well known that obesity is a major issue in Scotland and by providing a wide range of sports that are open to everyone an active lifestyle can help reduce the issues around obesity. As well as physical fitness sport is strongly tied to mental wellbeing. Cycling, skating and scooting are well known to be a release from the day to day worries of life while you can concentrate on learning skills and feel the adrenaline of physical activity. Ellon has a range of well-established sports but not everyone is attracted to those. By allowing people to choose cycling, skating, scooting etc this park will help more people develop that active lifestyle. We plan to work in collaboration with others (public/ private/3rd sector) in the community to provide facilities for the people of Ellon who want to do more than the mainstream team-based sports. This facility provide a fun outside area for youths to meet friends and partake in exercise and learn skills in a non-competitive environment just riding bikes, or skating if they want. This facility will help to increase levels of participation in sport and activity that will in turn improve physical and mental health.

Social Wellbeing

The facility will be built to excellent quality and designed for multiple wheeled active sport disciplines and multiple skill levels. It will create a vibrant area and facility that has been missing in Ellon and is a need to help develop our youth, encouraging active lifestyles rather than hanging around and being attracted to anti-social activities through boredom. In the letter of support from Mark Young, Formartine Police Inspector, he states "There are many positives which would come from providing these facilities and they would have a positive effect on reducing anti-social behaviour and also improve the health and wellbeing of the local community" Women and girls and ethnic groups and socially deprived members of the community are not well represented in cycling. These facilities have had the support of the Breeze, Belles on Bikes and New Scots who are trying to redress this balance and will use these facilities to enhance what they are already doing. Breeze and Belles on bikes provide cycle training for women in a safe women only environment which can help bring more women out on bikes who may not be comfortable in mixed groups. The local cycle club have run initiatives such as coaching session for Syrian refugees and E-bike days to get beginners onto bikes. This facility will allow these initiatives to expand and grow. As the park will be free to use it is hoped that those who live in the more deprived areas in Ellon will use the facility. The Scottish government and Sustrans are already using Ellon to pilot the free bikes for all project in Ellon. This facility will allow these free bike to be used in a safe environment. Disabled access will be factored into the design process to make the new facilities as inclusive as possible. The facility will be safe for those with disabilities and additional support needs to engage and enjoy wheeled activities alongside their peers. The

cycle circuit will allow wheelchair racing on a flat surface. It will be inclusive and accessible to everyone.

Regeneration

This facility will help Ellon town community development – This is a unique facility– a selling point to bring in others to come and spend the day in Ellon on their bikes, boards, scooters and skates. In turn this will bring income to the local shops and businesses/ enterprises. Money spent in town flips 5/6 times and so helps local Ellon economy thrive. So, the facility will have an economic impact. This facility is something different and exciting for our town. It provides a facility for use for all groups and will encourage diversity in wheeled sports. Our project ties in with Breeze, Belles on Bikes, New Scots, new cyclists and experienced cyclists. The facility will allow ‘turn up and try’ events (like the successful E-bike day) to be run for those just starting and need to develop confidence on bike and those who want to expand their technical abilities. The design of the park will allow beginners and experts to hone their skills on bikes, scooters and skates. Because it is unique to have all these facilities in one place this will be part of Ellon’s ambitions to become a tourist attraction. There is a burgeoning adventure/ adrenaline sports tourism industry growing. Skateboarders for instance will regularly travel to areas to skate the parks that are clustered in an area, especially if they are well built and offer something different from other parks. The wheel group have been in discussions with other skate parks being built in Aboyne, Banchory and Dyce about marketing the area as a network of parks.

The Ellon’s popular pedal car race day run by the Rotary club and the cycle club could be run on this facility in the future. This will allow the main streets of Ellon to be open again on the Sunday morning and make it easier to run a very complex day of activities in a safe area with a great track where people will be able to see all the action. Discussions have started with the Rotary club on how this could be arranged.

The project will provide new training facilities for cycle and triathlon clubs and help those clubs provide more events and develop and grow. The cycle club runs youth sessions on a Saturday morning with currently 45 youths regularly attending. This number is restricted due to the lack of facilities and there is a waiting list for other youth to join. This facility will allow the clubs to increase the diversity of the coaching they do and allow them to grow.

Economic Benefits

The new Wheel Park will reduce the need for wheeled sports users to travel to Aberdeen/Inverness to access quality facilities thereby removing potential leakage to the city. A quality Wheel Park facility has the potential to attract local and regional events. Based on VisitScotland’s £87/ overnight stay costs consequent economic impact of attracting 500 wheeled sports users over a weekend. then it follows that $500/\text{£}87 = \text{£}43,500$ spend to the local economy. Skate Jam has been estimated at £40,000-£50,000 per weekend event. Six events a year might generate £200,000-£300,000/year. Given the scale of open space in and around the skate park there is adequate open space for accommodating large numbers of both participants and spectators on the surrounding public open space.

There are also no quality wheeled sports facilities in the North East of Scotland so Ellon has the potential to become an attraction for serious cyclists, casual users, BMXers, family skate sessions and disabled users.

Marks and Spencer Bank research indicates that the monthly spend per participant on Athletics is £22, Cycling £29 and Football £27. Based on these figures we estimate that locally there will be 1,200/month skateboarders spending £25/month (shops, cafes, pubs, sportswear). Their collective annual spend is estimated in the region of £360,000/year in the local economy. Combined their economic spend could be £650,000/year in the local economy. Returns on investment in sports programmes for at-risk youth are estimated at £7.35 of social benefit for every £1 spent – through financial savings to police, the criminal justice system and the community. This implies that spending on sports facilities of £750,000 in Ellon could result in savings on other budgets of £5.5m over the long term. Sport, aimed at youths at risk of criminal behaviour, can enhance self-esteem and reduce re-offending as a result of providing this exciting and easily accessible diversionary facility.

Addressing Health inequalities

Ellon Wheel Park project will address health inequalities by providing new sports facilities the opportunities for getting more physically active are increased. “Local communities can have a strong influence on people’s behaviour. Whole community approaches where people live, work and play have the opportunity to mobilise large numbers of people. Investments in community-level programmes such as parks, playgrounds, conservation schemes, walking clubs and support for local sports clubs can help to influence social norms around health and activity, and help to improve facilities and environments to enable people to become more active.” (Start Active Stay Active) Sport as a form of physical activity significantly reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke, obesity, diabetes, osteoporosis and cancer. Sport benefits our mental health treating clinical depression, anxiety, stress and schizophrenia and generally making people feel better. Sport can provide a tool for the NHS in the treatment of many conditions including drugs rehabilitation. It can also help to realise savings, for example a 1% increase in physical activity rates would save the NHS an estimated £3.5 million a year through reduced admissions for coronary heart disease, stroke and colon cancer.

Physical and Social Needs

Our new Wheel Sports Park will address economic, physical and social needs by creating facilities that are affordable and accessible by the local community at local level without having to travel to Aberdeen to access these. By providing at local level facility contributes to the economic impact that attracting sports teams and groups will have and by staging major sports events will have an economic spinoff for Ellon’s local businesses.

Although there is a wealth of sporting opportunities available in and around Ellon, most facilities and clubs require a fee of sorts to join or take part in their particular sport. The Ellon Wheel Park group take pride in ensuring that our wheel park facility will be FREE to use – thus helping out the particularly underprivileged locals who simply cannot afford gym memberships or to pay fees often affiliated with martial arts classes, football training etc.

The physical and mental health (especially exacerbated by COVID) benefits of outdoor activity are huge. Getting youngsters engaged in socialising again and away from screens is crucial in maintaining a healthy balanced lifestyle. A new Wheel Park facility will offer that, not just for those who physically take part in the sport, but also those who wish to spectate.

We've seen a significant rise in families heading to the local park – youngsters with parents making it a great day trip out for everyone involved.

Wheeled sports fall under the category of 'extreme sports' in many ways and as such, has a particularly appealing aura about it. Getting youngsters hooked on this is a much more invigorating, purposeful and enjoyable experience that can help discourage them from taking up other habits such as drinking and drugs, vandalism and crime. Police Scotland are particularly focused on the importance of diversionary activities as a way of reducing criminal and anti-social behaviour. The Banff and Buchan Community Planning group have acknowledged this as a key priority and this project is specifically included in the revised Area Plan under the 'resilient communities' workstream.

Improving the area and giving a decent, low-maintenance and well-kept facility will encourage the local people to keep it up. It will help attract more visitors and increase tourism to the area.

The new wheel park will contribute to making communities and people are protected and feel safe and it will have a strong role to play in achieving this outcome. The Culture and Sport Evidence (CASE) programme, studied published evidence on the varied benefits of sport. Key findings included:

- Young people's participation in sport improves numeracy by 8% on average over others
- Underachieving young people who take part in sport see a 29% increase in numeracy skills and a 12 to 16% rise in other transferable skills.

- Returns on investment in sports programmes for at-risk youth are estimated at £7.35 of social benefit for every £1 spent – through financial savings to police, the criminal justice system and the community. Links to other policies and strategies The provision of a new Wheel Park also links positively to the following policies and strategies:

- Healthy Easting, Active Lives (HEAL), a long-term programme operated by the NHS, the Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership

- The "Live Life Well" strategy, delivered by the Live Life Aberdeenshire arm of Aberdeenshire Council.

- Aberdeenshire Councils "Active Young Lives" programme featured in its Locality Action Plan for the Banff and Buchan area.

- Aberdeenshire Councils Area Plan for Formartine which stipulates a series of actions around promoting and supporting activities for the young within its Community Resilience programme

- Let's Make Scotland More Active

- Scottish Government's 2014 Legacy Plan
- Scottish Governments Fifteen National Outcomes
- Reaching Higher; Building on the Success of Sport21
- Preventing Overweight and Obesity in Scotland; A Route Map Towards Healthier Weight - Start Active Stay Active
- Take Life On

4.3 Restrictions on the use of the land.

There have been some questions raised about restrictions of usage :

Parking

There is no intention by the group to provide additional parking for the Wheel Park. The wheel park is there to help people develop a culture of using bicycles and active travel. The park is designed to fit in with the ethos of Ellon's Integrated Travel Town status and we will encourage people to walk, cycle, scoot or skate to the park on the website and on the park signs. Car parking is available nearby in a number of locations near the center of Ellon which should increase footfall to local businesses.

We will encourage people to use other car parking if they are visiting Ellon and to walk, cycle, scoot or skate through the town to get to the park. we would like visitors to use the other shops and cafes in Ellon to attract more footfall. for even larger events there have been some discussions about running a mini bus shuttle service from the park and ride (that has been done successfully for the pedal car race already)

A recent car park survey, carried out when Ythan Cycle Club were coaching 45 youths at Gordon Park, found that there we 51 free parking spaces within 300m of the park. On street parking and private parking such as the Aldi car park were not considered in these numbers.

There was a concern raised about existing car park issues at times such as school drop off and pick ups. The group do not think these times will be when the park is being used so it would not contribute to these congested times.

Drainage

A concern was raised about potential flooding. As per the SEPA map of the area Gordon Park is not on a flood plain. The park will be designed with drainage which will take away any build up of water. French drains have been included in the initial design. More detailed groundworks surveys have been included in the tender applications and will be carried out before any construction starts. The project wants to maximise the usage availability of the park and a quick drying well drained area is key to that.

Floodlight

Floodlighting has not been considered at this stage of the application. The group are aware of other discussions ongoing regarding lighting in Gordon park and future inclusion of lights will require a lighting strategy for the whole of Gordon park. There have been some initial discussions about future floodlighting to maximise the time the park could be used with consideration of; solar powered lights, paid for use lights and curfew timed lights.

4.4 Risk Analysis

It is understood that some people will not like the change of use of the facility and their concerns have been raised during the feasibility stage and the planning application stage.

There is a concern that there will a loss of greenspace. The park is currently a flat area with some biodiverse planting areas. The wheel park will landscaped with grass areas around each of the zones to minimise the concrete and tarred areas of the skate park, pump track and circuit. There will still be large grass areas within the perimeter of the circuit and any biodiverse wild planting areas which are disturbed will be replanted. It is the intention that the Wheel park will include wild areas near the boundaries. this will encourage diverse flora and fauna and also serve as a natural barrier between walking areas and the cycle circuit.

Because of the expected increase in use of the park it is assumed there will be an increase in the noise levels around the area from children enjoying themselves at the wheel park. It is understood that some nearby residents may resent this. Both sides of the area in the park have either trees or a large hedge which will help deaden the noise levels from within the park. We have designed the wheel park so that the noisiest area (the skate zone is at the centre of Gordon Park away from the houses on either side.

There have also been concerns that such a facility will attract rowdy youths and those that want to indulge in anti-social behaviour. The Park is not seen as a total solution to the already existing anti social behaviour issues in Ellon, but It is hoped that a park such as this will direct some people to more positive behaviour patterns and give them opportunities to engage with sport. the local police have seen this as a positive step to help the youth in Ellon.

We have engaged with the local police and received a supportive email from Mark Young, Formartine Inspector

“There are many positives which would come from these facilities and they would have a positive effect on reducing antisocial behaviour and also improve the health and wellbeing of the local community.”

We will continue to engage with the police throughout the next stages of construction and into the operation of the park.

As per other skate and pump track parks we intend to have a notice board with instructions for respect for users, the park and others in the area. The actual wording hasn't been detailed yet but we will look at what others have done in this regard to look at best practice.

Some people have expressed their concern about the loss of the area for the Ellon Round Table Gala day. The Wheel Park group have had discussions with the Round Table and this was not an issue. Some of the attractions could be laid out on the tarred circuit and would be an improvement. There was also a point raised about the loss of space for the firework display and bonfire. That is also under discussion with the Round table and there is a 40m wide grass area within the circuit where the bonfire could still be held.

4.5 Capacity to Deliver

Project management

will project manage to completion. has project managed Inverness Skate Park, Raigmore Skate Park (also Inverness) and Kelso skate park. He managed Hawick and Boat of Garten Pump Tracks, Watermill All abilities Cycling Track (near Nairn) and Inverness Pump Track. is a Project Manager with previous experience of commissioning and overseeing the construction of similar sporting facilities. This will ensure that the project is managed within timescales, to the appropriate quality and within budget. The Project Manager will also coordinate matched funding applications, and assist in final lease negotiations with the Aberdeenshire Council. He will also manage the tendering and procurement which was in line with the Council's regulations. The Ellon Wheel Park Group and key stakeholders will oversee the Project Manager.

The design and building phase of the project will be entirely cash positive, there is no intention for the group to carry loans. If the money is not available from funders then the project will not proceed.

Post-contract award, a Work Plan with timelines and outputs will be created and the project progress assessed against this plan. Monthly progress meetings will be held with the Project Management Group and the Project Manager,

The sequencing of works will be:

Level entire site and groundworks

Install drainage as required for whole site.

Lay sub bases, and level area

Construct skatepark to specification provided

Commission loose furniture, equipment and signage.

For the operational phase of the park the park will be mainly free to use for the general public with certain activities such as coached sessions being paid for by booking through a website. There will also be events which help generate income required for ongoing maintenance of the park and future development. Discussions have been held with Ythan Cycle Club and Trythan Triathlon club for those paid sessions to be run as a regular weekly

income for the park. e.g. current coaching cost per person will increase to include a cost for the use of the park.

The volunteers from the clubs can generate income by putting on specific sessions for schools, other clubs and groups. The coaches are all British Cycling Or Triathlon Scotland qualified. We have also offered free sessions upon occasion. Each type of group will be discussed on merit. For instance, we may want to offer session to specific underprivileged or under represented groups.

This is a mode of operation that has worked well in the past and has allowed the club to helps specific groups and has been able to raise funds when required.

Events such as the popular Ellon Pedal car race can be held on the circuit. Discussions have already started to use the wheel park for future pedal car races to avoid having to shut down the centre of Ellon. The 2022 Pedal car race is also raising funds for the park.

Since the park is three separate zones we do not anticipated there will be issues between casual usage and programmed use. Programmed use times will be documented on the website and there will be signage at the park to advise if certain restrictions are in place. We expect the coaching and events will become familiar to regular users and they will want to join these session.

As stated the park will be available for all and wil hopefully encourage those with disabilities to use the park. The area will be accessible, there are disabled parking spaces nearby. The circuit in particular will be able to be used for wheel chair racing or as a safe are for blind cyclists on tandems. Ythan Cycle Club has a strong history of working with disabled people and they are keen to increase that at the new park.