

The decision regarding the skatepark ramp was carried over from the March meeting due to investigation of other materials. No information was received about the suggested product but information from Radiiramps is as follows:

The skatepark world has over the years tried a few different products; fibreglass, polycarbonate and perspex (plexiglass) in the search for a durable long lasting product that also meets the needs of the users - consistent grip, rolling speed and some "feel" to it. What we learnt was that there are very few products that can actually deliver the above. Most commonly, these surfaces were very slippery for one user or another (so good for skate but not BMX, or vice versa) and the friction burns were wicked. I do have personal experience of this actually, having ridden a perspex ramp back in the 80s - it was horrible... and the last company to offer fibreglass as a surface is virtually out of business at this point. So over time the field has narrowed somewhat to the following;

1. Mild steel plate
2. Birch Throughout plywood
3. Composite panels (Skatelite or Ramp Armour most commonly)
4. Concrete

The person who commented to you that the steel ramps were slippery is 100% correct. This is the least preferred riding surface and most if not all reputable suppliers won't offer you a steel plate riding surface these days. They will if you insist, but the cons far outweigh the pros unless you have a resident arsonist/pyromaniac and that is your main concern.

Almost overwhelmingly users will choose Birch plywood when asked as it is such a friendly material to the users; very consistent, great to crash on and relatively fast. It's also the cheapest but requires constant ongoing maintenance and scheduled replacement, so there is a long term commitment needed in order to keep any plywood ramps fresh.

Composite panels such as Skatelite Pro are longer lasting than plywood and slightly faster under wheel. You'll see this product most commonly on free to use council skateparks. Very hard wearing but quite expensive.

Concrete is a different proposition as you can be a little more creative with the shaping as it's all hand finished. Hence you tend to see more elaborate bowl/cup shapes and so forth in concrete. Design is crucial though as once it's done it's done - rarely do you see concrete firms coming back to make alterations. This is where fabricated ramps have the upper hand. If you have the space and the budget though, concrete is probably the best long term solution although not my personal preference if I'm honest.

My suspicion would be that you'll find a large demand for a skate ramp in town if it's made clear that it'll be of a different design and riding surface. Usually, you can narrow down a little used facility to an imperfect design, or a surface that's either too slippery or too rough. Or both of course.

Survey

An initial survey was circulated (results attached) to gauge the initial thoughts of the residents, 63 people responded. The comments relating to the skatepark were interesting as several suggested a pump track alternative, similar to North Petherton. Others commented on the design of the current ramp and the grind rail and the challenges users would face. This would seem to support the comment that if a facility is underused it is likely to be down to the design.

Options

Repair the current unit and agree a contractor based on the quotations listed below. Currently the Herras Fencing and weights are costing £1.50 per week plus VAT.

Company A: Greenways

After our phone conversation the other day I have now been out with the qualified playground inspector and came up with what needs to be done to make the ramp safe and secure.

10 panels need replacing, secured with correct bolts. The bigger job however is the undercoat lining. This will need to be taken up and replaced completely increasing the cost.

£15,929.25 inc VAT

A lower price of **£2,850** was provided to make good the unit as a short term fix.

Company B: GB Sports

Surface repairs and maintenance to Skate Ramp. Removal and disposal of existing steel riding surfaces, retro fit additional fixing members into floor structure, cut to size and fit new galvanized steel riding surfaces to remove unnecessary joints/misalignment, upgrade and increase surface fixings.

Central Funbox – remove existing loose/broken fixings and reset threshold joints. Replace and upgrade and increase surface fixings throughout.

Central ledge box – cut to size and fit new 9mm ply substrate and fit galvanised steel side/end panels – upgrade fixings.

1000 Avdel break stem mono bolts (consumables)

£6,100.80 inc VAT

Company C: Radiiramps

To carry out any and all repairs to skatepark in order to make safe and satisfy recent safety report, **excluding handrail issues.**

Resecure all loose panels using appropriate fixings - rivets, screws and/or stitch welding as required.

Correct unacceptable gaps in riding surface panels by way of metalworking/welding as required.

Supply and fit replacement cladding panels where missing to central grind ledge.

Replace any and all missing fixings over entire structure.

£3,995.00 (not VAT registered) Total including labour and all materials

Or

Remove the current unit and start the process of consultation with user groups and form a working party with members of the council and residents to identify funding to enable an improved area for a variety of user groups – skateboarders, skaters, BMX and scooters. A second survey could be released to build on the research already undertaken.

Please note as previously stated, these repairs must be considered short term and very much on an emergency basis. I would **estimate a future lifespan of only 1-2 years.** Welding is the least preferred method to repair steel surfaced ramps as there tends to be some distortion & movement in line with climate and temperature change over the seasons. That said, it's strong, perfectly safe/fit for purpose and will pass inspection as quoted from photographs, we might have overestimated the work and consequently the final bill may be a little lower than this quote. I have looked at this from a worse case scenario perspective.

Budget

This problem has arisen due to lack of ongoing maintenance and external inspection. The unit has since installation been highlighted as not being to the necessary safety requirements regards barrier height and gaps between the bars. The situation has recently deteriorated following the external inspection in August 2020 and requirement to cordon the area off to public use – this also coincided with the covid restrictions. There was no specific budget to allow for ongoing maintenance placed in EMR for this so as a result the council have limited funds available to use.

Budget Available	Amount	Comments
EMR Play Equipment	£3,000.00	
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	£3,957.00	

The Parish Council need to decide on the most appropriate option regarding the skateboard park to avoid continuing costs of the fencing.

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