

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Review of Skateboarding By-Law
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 8 June 2010
Cabinet Member: Councillor Wiggins
CMT Member: Director for Development and Regeneration
Author: Gill Peele, Lead Officer for Growth & Prosperity Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Contact: Tel: (01752 (30) 4226
e-mail: gill.peele@plymouth.gov.uk
Ref: Your ref.
Part: I

Executive Summary:

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission (replaced by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board) approved in principle, on 2 July 2009, the establishment of a Task and Finish group to review the Skateboarding By-Law, with membership to be drawn from the Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The Council has been under increasing pressure to tackle the perceived breaches of the by-law and have received requests from both members of the public and Councillors to remedy the situation. A new by-law proposing a total ban was drafted by officers in 2008 but it was agreed that the issue be referred into the scrutiny process for consideration of the most appropriate action to take.

The Panel was provided with information on the current skateboarding by-law which includes the city centre, Broadway and Ridgeway .However it was the aim of the Task and Finish Group to focus upon skateboarding in the city centre, and specifically the area outside of the Civic centre reception

The current skateboarding by-law does not ban skateboarding and the wording is open to interpretation .

It states that 'no person shall in any of the designated areas skate, slide or ride on rollers, skateboards, wheels, mechanical contrivances or other equipment in such a manner as to cause danger or nuisance or give reasonable grounds for annoyance to other persons lawfully using any of the designated areas. It also means that the person affected by the act has to make a formal complaint to the Police.

The Task & Finish Group ,with a cross party membership, met on three occasions in October 2009, December 2009 and February 2010 and received representations either in person or written from a significant number of members of the public, young and old, local businesses, councillors, youth parliament, Highways, Police as well as many interested officers from different services within the council. The Task & Finish group also commissioned public consultation within the City Centre and also with frontline workers.

The Overview & Scrutiny Management Board met on 3rd March 2010 and resolved that ;

a) the Skateboarding Bye-law scrutiny report be approved and forwarded to Cabinet;

b) congratulations and thanks be extended to all who had contributed to this excellent piece of scrutiny;

c) consideration be given to enabling a photo-opportunity involving the Task and Finish Group members, police and skateboarders when the skateboarding signs were changed.

It was very clear from all the evidence, that skateboarding is not conducive to the plaza area adjacent to the Civic centre, nor in similar environments elsewhere in the city centre, because of the numbers of the public crossing the area to reach different destinations.

The panel noted the fact that there have been a minimum number of formal complaints to the authority and the police, but that there is a significant undercurrent of informal complaints about the activity not being suitable and causing anxiety to members of the public. This was confirmed by the results of the survey commissioned by the panel

The majority of the feedback from members of the public and witnesses supported the implementation of a total ban, but they went on to say that they would not support a total ban without a suitable alternative location being made available.

Feedback from the Police Service confirmed that a new by law, to totally ban the activity, would potentially involve a significant resource from both the Police and the Authority and it is unlikely therefore that it could be appropriately enforced and subsequently unlikely to have the desired effect. The legal framework for by laws is currently under review nationally, and may impact on local enforcement arrangements later this year.

The panel noted further feedback from the Police and unanimously agreed that they would not like the young people to be criminalised due to their participation in a sport of their choice.

The panel recommends the retention of the current by law

In the short term;

1.The panel recommends that the legal department review the words on the external signage in the area, to ensure that it appropriately informs people of the dangers of prosecution should they cause a nuisance, harm or damage in accordance with the current by law.

2.The panel recommends that a suitable alternative site be sought for urban skateboarding.

In the longer term;

1.The panel recommends that future design proposals for areas of the city centre consider communal use of space and to ensure that final designs take into account either the encouragement or deterrent of skateboarding activity.

2.The panel recommends that a further review takes place once the new Central Park Skateboarding Park and the indoor facility at Cattedown have had time to mature ,and when the future enforcement legislation is known; this review to be undertaken by the Lead Member for this neighbourhood under the Councils Localities Working arrangements.

Corporate Plan 2010-2013:

CIP 2 Informing and involving residents.

**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:
Including finance, human, IT and land**

In the short term minimum resources required for the replacement signage. Longer term options will be subject to further review

Other Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.

The Overview and Scrutiny task and finish review has taken into account health & safety issues for the members of the public and has embraced equalities by ensuring consultation with a full cross section of the public. There are no implications to note

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

It is recommended that Cabinet endorse the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Growth and Prosperity Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board;

The review and where necessary implementation of new signage can be undertaken relatively quickly and covered from existing Transport revenue budgets.

The design of public areas will be considered either through development proposals or as part of highway public realm works.

The provision of alternative facilities must be considered as part of the further review once the other facilities at Central park and Cattedown have had time to mature.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

A revised by-law with an outright ban on skateboarding has been considered and not recommended for the reasons provided in this report

Background papers:

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Skateboarding By-Law Scrutiny report Feb 2010

Sign off:

Fin	Dev F10 110 006	Leg	JAR /10/ 146	HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member:											

**Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
Task and Finish Group
Scrutiny Review – Report
February 2010**



Skateboarding By-Law

Plymouth City Council

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Commission (replaced by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board) approved in principle, on 2 July 2009, the establishment of a Task and Finish group to review the Skateboarding By-Law with membership to be drawn from the Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The Task and Finish Group will submit its findings for approval to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 3 March 2010.

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Growth and Prosperity Panel established a Task and Finish Group to review the Skateboarding By-Law in the city centre.
- 2.2 The Group received representations from a variety of witnesses.
- 2.3 Key issues and findings included that –
- there was not a complete ban on skateboarding under the existing skateboarding by-law;
 - the wording of the current by-law was open to interpretation as it stated that ‘no person shall in any of the designated areas skate, slide or ride on rollers, skateboards, wheels, mechanical contrivances or other equipment in such a manner as to cause danger or nuisance...’; it was highlighted that the word nuisance was very ambiguous;
 - the skateboarding by-law was produced by Plymouth City Council, however it was currently the responsibility of Devon and Cornwall Police to enforce;
 - the existing skate park at Central Park was to close due to the commencement of the Life Centre Project however there were plans for a replacement skate park to be built; consultation on a proposed site which would be situated in the vicinity of the current skate park was due to start on 11 November 2009;
 - the skateboarders should not be criminalised as they were partaking in a sport and had not caused nuisance elsewhere;
 - an area should be allocated in the city centre where the youths could skateboard;
 - skateboarders liked to have an audience;
 - problems may arise if the potential skateboarding ban imposed in the city centre coincided with the closure of Central Park skate park;
 - it was felt that some members of the public particularly the elderly feared for their safety and were intimidated by skateboarders that sped towards them at fast speeds;
 - deterrent measures to street furniture and paving would be very expensive;
 - the issue of the skateboarding by-law was raised by the chair of the Devonport, Stoke, St Peter and the Waterfront Area Committee;
 - it was important for the city centre to incorporate shared space working;
 - unregulated skateboarding in the retail and business areas of the city centre does not give a good impression of the city;

- it was difficult for the police to enforce the skateboarding by law 24/7 as police resources were focused towards higher priority crime;
- the Crown Prosecution Service would not take action against the skateboarders;

3 The Panel

3.1 The Task and Finish group had a cross party membership comprising the following Councillors

- Councillor Coker (Chair)
- Councillor Ball
- Councillor Martin Leaves

For the purposes of the review, the Task and Finish Group was supported by –

- Gill Peele, Business Manager for Development and Regeneration
- Anthony Davis, Service Support & QA Team Manager
- Kim Hayden, Project Assistant
- Mark Lawrence, Lawyer
- Helen Rickman, Democratic Support Officer

4 Scrutiny Approach

4.1 The Task and Finish Group convened on three separate occasions to consider evidence and hear from witnesses -

- 28 October 2009
- 3 December 2009
- 4 February 2010

4.2 Members of the Task and Finish Group aimed to examine and make recommendations on –

- the current skateboarding byelaw that was enacted in 2001, in order to ensure that it is operating in the most effective way.

The Work Programme Request (PID) is attached as Appendix 1.

4.3 At its meetings on 28 October 2009, 3 December 2009 and 4 February 2010, the Task and Finish Group considered evidence from witnesses, raised questions and considered answers and recommendations relating to the Skateboarding By-Law.

5 Witnesses

5.1 The Task and Finish Group heard representations from –

- John Williams – Cafe Roma Manager
- Sarah Harris – Youth Parliament Coordinator
- Kathy Davey – City Centre Street Operations Manager
- Mike Kendall – Amey Highways Management Coordinator
- John Drury – Anti Social Behaviour Manager
- Tom White – Head of Network Management

- Catherine Dilloway – Project Manager
- Karen Brimicombe – Portfolio Manager
- Councillor Stevens – Ward Councillor for Devonport
- Councillor Mrs Stephens – Ward Councillor for St Peter and the Waterfront
- Anthony Patten – University of Plymouth – Security
- Inspector Russell Sharpe – Devon and Cornwall Police
- Councillor Wiggins – Cabinet Member for Transport

Members considered written representations from –

- Barbara Duffy - Plymouth Age Concern
- Chris Patey – Playgrounds Officer
- Cathy Tasker – Services
- Nick Marker – Prime Delux Ltd
- Councillor Nicky Wildy – Labour – Devonport
- Councillor Sue McDonald – Labour – St Peter and the Waterfront
- Hannah Metson – Customer Services Programme Manager
- Inspector P Willingham – South Sector Neighbourhood Team – Devon and Cornwall Police
- Local skateboarders
- Civil Enforcement Officers

The Task and Finish Group also commissioned the following consultation –

- City Centre public consultation on skateboarding
- Civic Centre frontline workers

Responses from witnesses and evidence received from the survey commissioned by the Panel are detailed in Appendix 2 of this report.

6 Key Issues Arising from the Evidence

6.1 From the results of survey commissioned by the Panel the following key themes emerged.

6.1.1 Out of 104 members of the public surveyed regarding skateboarding in the city centre, 61 were against skateboarding, 24 were for it and 19 had no opinion upon the matter;

6.1.2 A clear majority, 72% of those who expressed an opinion were in favour of banning skateboarding from public areas in the City Centre. There was an equally clear majority of 74% of those who wanted a ban, were also in favour of providing an alternative site for the skateboarders, before introducing a ban. The customers surveyed were divided into groupings based on age, gender and whether they required assistance walking (walking sticks, wheelchairs etc.). An even split between age and gender was achieved in the survey and there was a significant number who required assisted walking. There was no statistically significant difference in the results from these groupings.

6.2. From the legal advice given to the ‘Task and Finish Group’, Members of the Panel were informed that -

6.2.1 Any attempt to enforce the existing bylaw would be difficult because of the requirement to prove that skateboarders were causing a nuisance.

6.2.2 The introduction of an outright ban would result in the criminalisation of the skateboarders.

6.2.3 The Crown Prosecution Service would not take action against the skateboarders and it was therefore the responsibility of the Council;

7 Findings

7.1 Based on the evidence the Panel had collected, it was believed the problems arising from skateboarding in the city centre would be addressed if –

- the wording of the current Skateboarding By-Law was amended
- the skateboarders were provided with an alternative site

8 Recommendations

8.1 In order to achieve the required outcomes, listed as ‘benefits’ in the Project Initiation Document, i.e. –

“The proposed ‘Task and Finish Group’ would enable a full debate between all interested parties before any conclusions are drawn”,

the following recommendations are proposed –

It is very clear from all the evidence, that skateboarding is not conducive to this area, because of the numbers of the public crossing the area to reach different destinations.

The panel notes the fact that there have been a minimum number of formal complaints to the authority and the police, but that there is a significant undercurrent of informal complaints about the activity not being suitable and causing anxiety to members of the public. This was confirmed by the results of the survey commissioned by the panel

The majority of the feedback from members of the public and witnesses supported the implementation of a total ban, but they went on to say that they would not support a total ban without a suitable alternative location being made available.

Feedback from the Police Service confirmed that a new by law, to totally ban the activity, would potentially involve a significant resource from both the Police and the Authority and it is unlikely therefore that it could be appropriately enforced and subsequently unlikely to have the desired effect. The legal framework for by laws is currently under review nationally, and may impact on local enforcement arrangements later this year.

The panel noted further feedback from the Police and unanimously agreed that they would not like the young people to be criminalised due to their participation in a sport of their choice.

1. The panel recommends the retention of the current by law

In the short term;

2. The panel recommends that the legal department review the words on the external signage in the area, to ensure that it appropriately informs people of the dangers of prosecution should they cause a nuisance, harm or damage in accordance with the current by law.
3. The panel recommends that a suitable alternative site be sought for urban skateboarding.

In the longer term;

4. The panel recommends that future design proposals for areas of the city centre consider communal use of space and to ensure that final designs take into account either the encouragement or deterrent of skateboarding activity.
5. The panel recommends that a further review takes place once the new Central Park Skateboarding Park and the indoor facility at Cattedown have had time to mature ,and when the future enforcement legislation is known; this review to be undertaken by the Lead Member for this neighbourhood under the Councils Localities Working arrangements.

Request for Scrutiny Work Programme Item

1	Title of Work Programme Item	Review of Plymouth Skateboarding Byelaw		
2	Responsible Director (s)	Nigel Pitt, Director of Development and Regeneration		
3	Responsible Officer Tel No.	Tom White, Head of Network Management Ext 4256		
4	Aim	To carry out a review of the current skateboarding bylaw that was enacted in 2001, to ensure that it is operating in the most effective way.		
5	Objectives	To consult with colleagues in the Police, ward members, Area Committees, other Council departments and other stakeholders and to investigate alternative options.		
	Benefits	The proposed 'Task and Finish Group' would enable a full debate between all interested parties before any conclusions are drawn.		
	Beneficiaries	Members of the public - Improved safety and potential new facilities Police - Ability to enforce byelaw		
6	Criteria for Choosing Topics	A number of complaints have been received from members of the public, has also been an issue raised at Area Committee meetings Potential risk to health and safety in 'shared space' Damage to street furniture Facilities for young people		
7	Scope	Three areas covered by the existing byelaw; City Centre, Broadway and Ridgeway		
	Exclusions	None		
8	Programme Dates	TBC		
	Timescales and Interdependices	Milestones	Target Date for Achievement	Responsible Officer
		TBC	TBC	TBC
9	Links to other projects or initiatives / plans	City Centre Area Action Plan, West End Regeneration/Shared Space, Corporate Plan (CIPs 1, 2, 6)		
10	Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel	Sustainable Communities/Growth & Prosperity OSP		
11	Lead Officer for Panel	Daniel Sharpe, Partnership Compliance Officer		
12	Reporting arrangements	TBC, once timescales have been agreed		
13	Resources	Staff time only (quantify by dept)		
14	Budget implications	Resources within existing budgets		
15	Risk analysis	Public perception, CCAAP/Shared Space, Coordinated Solution, Health and Safety		
16	Project Plan / Actions	Project Plan to be prepared by relevant officers and lead members of Task and Finish Group		

Appendix 2

Witnesses - Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel (City Centre Skateboarding Review)

Given below is a summary of the witness statements.

Sarah Harris – Professional Youth Worker & UK Youth Parliament Coordinator Participation and Staff Development Team – PCC

Comments from Members of Youth Parliament and the Plymouth Youth Cabinet.

The views stated below are our own and those of the young people that we are elected to represent. As individuals, we all have different opinions and the statements reflect this, so they may be contradictory.

- I find the skateboarders outside the Civic Centre to be intimidating and rude and I hate walking through them.
- The other day one of them almost knocked over my 5 year old niece and wasn't bothered that he had scared her.
- It's irritating that they think civic is theirs and they are a danger risk to us and themselves.
- It's prohibited outside the civic anyway and they cause a general nuisance.
- Saturday's are 'skater days' and it shouldn't be that way.
- We feel that the prohibition signs are there for a reason. Although there isn't really a serious risk to safety, there needs to be another well-lit area for them to skate so they can move on.
- They need somewhere with good lighting and a flat open space.
- Although some may be a nuisance, most don't want to cause a problem.
- You don't see people playing football and rugby in the city centre so why should they take part in their 'sport'!
- There is nowhere else for skaters to go.
- The signs aren't effective and something needs to be done.
- Our concern is that there is nowhere else to skate. They do need somewhere like a temporary skate park during production of the life centre. There should be easy access as well, near town.
- They will be annoyed if things are changed so there should be communication to see them through the changes. Don't just change the law and start arresting them. This will cause damage instead of building relationships with them.
- They need more space and it should be somewhere better lit
- They are skating right by a road and also on an area well used by the public. They're an obstruction and they are intimidating.
- There should be punishment for people that do cause harm
- When they are not harming anyone, then it's okay.

- The main implication is that there is not anywhere else to go. Some just genuinely want somewhere to skate and are quite nice.
- Where would the hypothetical 'new skate park' be and how much would it cost?
- It's a useless space outside the civic anyway.
- People that BMX / roller blade and take part in ball games would have to be banned too.

Mike Kendall – Amey Highways Management – PCC

- To date this year (from, 1st December, 2008), there has been no repair to any highway furniture, as a direct result of skateboarding activities.
- There has been some damage to a black granite seat, o/s the Edinburgh Woollen Mill, but this is as a result of vehicular impact, and not skateboarders.
- However we do suffer damage to the black granite seats from time to time, as these are used as riding rails by the skateboarders. This usually results in the black granite panels having to be re fixed to their supports. Damage to the edges of the granite has not merited replacement, to date.
- Since installation, we have replaced three black granite seat sections at a cost of £300 each. (This was a couple of years ago so costs will have increased)
- Average repair costs to fixings to granite is in the region of £350 per incident.
- I have installed stainless steel "Nibs" to one seat, as an experimental deterrent to skateboard damage, which has been successful. This work at the time amounted to £50 per nib, or £300 per seat (2 in each granite section).

Tom White – Head of Network Management – PCC

- The estimated cost of deterrent measures to city centre furniture and paving were expensive as health and safety measures had to be carried out. AMEY would be tasked to do the work if this was agreed.
- It was important for shared space to be incorporated for any future designs to the city.

Inspector Russell Sharpe – Devon and Cornwall Police

- The current skateboarding by law was very difficult to enforce as it referred to 'nuisance' which was hard to establish, if the by law was changed to a complete ban skateboarders would be criminalised.
- The police would enforce a skateboarding by law however Members were of the opinion that it would be beneficial for an alternative skating venue to be sought. It was difficult for the police to enforce the skateboarding by law 24/7 as police resources would be focused towards higher priority crime.
- Having spoken to young people who skated in the area, officers were informed that the skaters wanted a skate park nearby. In his opinion, skateboarders liked to be seen performing their tricks and stunts.
- The Crown Prosecution Service felt it was the responsibility of the Council to prosecute skateboarders breaking the skateboarding by law; Plymouth City Council representatives

considered it would cost between £70 and £100 for each prosecution.

Karen Brimicombe – Project Services Team, Corporate Support - PCC
Catherine Dilloway – Capital Programme Team, Finance Team PCC

- The skate park needs to be relocated as it sits within the development area for the Life Centre i.e. where car parking and the new entrance road will be located. It was part funded by Sport England funds and if not re-provided the grant would have to be repaid.
- The planning application for the Life Centre incorporated a new location for the skate park, on a corner of land to the north of the clock tower on the edge of the existing Mayflower Centre site. Feedback from young people, neighbourhood police and the Parks department identified that this was not the preferred location. This was due to the feeling that it would bring skate park users into conflict with other park users as a result of its proximity to one of the main pedestrian routes within the park and its position relatively close to the main entrance of the Life Centre. However users, both skateboarders and BMXers are keen to be involved in the design and delivery of the new facility, which will take place in the New Year.
- The existing skate park sits in the middle of the area required by the Life Centre Contractor for their site compound and storage. Once the Contractor has been appointed discussions will take place about the point in their programme that the existing skate park will need to be taken out of action and this will be communicated to users.
- Work is progressing on the delivery of the replacement skate park project and the programme is under constant review to see if the end date, November 2010 can be brought forward. An exhibition has been staged in the Central Park Pool recently with two consultation sessions being held where people could view a plan outlining the site currently being considered. The results of this consultation indicate that the relocation site is supported. Once the site has been agreed the council will employ a specialist team of designers who will work with park users to develop detailed plans for the new facility. The proposed site is larger than the existing site. This is because the skate park users aspire to a larger facility than the present one.
- The Council is aware of skaters concerns about not having a facility for some time once the existing skate park is closed. The Youth Service has a mobile ramp which it is looking to make available to skaters during this time. The Council has been working with Prime Deluxe Skateboarding Shop on plans it has to open up a not for profit indoor skate boarding facility in Cattedown which would help cover the gap in provision.
- The Youth Service has worked with Young People to submit a bid to the Youth Capital Fund for materials to build the ramp and health and safety training. This grant was recently approved and the indoor skate park will be operational from the middle of December.

Currently the Council is communicating in a number of ways to ensure that not only skate park users are informed but also that the wider public, many of whom use the park are kept up to date on developments. These routes include:

- Formal press releases from our communications unit via the local press
- Via a distribution list set up from the details of those young people that have attended the various consultation sessions and are known to the Youth Service,
- Notices put up at the skate park,
- Through the Prime Skate Park web site and their links to Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites
- Skateparkpages.co.uk has been incorporating information on the central park site

Mr John Drury - Anti Social Behavior Manager – PCC

- He felt the issue around skateboarding in the city centre was a land use issue; the skateboarders should be accommodated as they were taking part in a legitimate activity; the skateboarders liked to use furniture, steps and hand rails;
- The skateboarders used the city centre to skate as it was a safe environment in which they could be seen. The topography was also right as the city centre was flat; skateboarders are more likely to move away from the city centre if they were provided with a suitable site nearby;

Kathy Davey, City Centre Street Operations Manager – PCC

- She had been employed by the council for 14 years, 10 of those worked outside in the city centre on a daily basis; in the last 5 years she had been seconded to the City Centre Company;
- The City Centre Company employed wardens and on a daily basis they received complaints in respect of skateboarding and cycling in city centre but there were very few reported injuries from skateboarders in the city centre that she was aware of.
- From a personal viewpoint, she considered that perceptions were an important factor with regards to skateboarding in the city centre; she felt that the public feared for their safety and were intimidated by skateboarders that sped towards them at fast speeds.
- She had received phone calls from the 'First Stop Shop' from Councillors asking her to speak to the skateboarders. She considered the skateboarders to be very nice people who were enjoying their sport. On numerous occasions she had approached the skateboarders and highlighted to them the damage they had caused to street furniture and reminded them of the terror they inflicted upon elderly people.
- She believed that skateboarding should be banned to protect the public, however she felt that other facilities should be provided to the skateboarders such as a fenced off area in which they could skateboard safely and the public could enjoy watching them.

In response to questions raised, Kathy informed the Panel that –

- The current skateboarding by-law was difficult to enforce as the wording wasn't clear.
- She would support the idea of moving the skateboarders to a designated site in the city centre.
- People who walked on the pavement did not expect to see a skateboarding coming towards them.
- Skateboarders enjoyed skating on walls and seats; she felt it would be beneficial to simulate an area that included these objects.
- The Copthorne Hotel had experienced lots of problems with skateboarding so she felt it would not be beneficial to move skateboarders to that area of the city centre.
- The skateboarders who skated in the city centre were street skaters who would not like to skate inside; she believed they enjoyed the thrill of skating on the street where they were in view; skaters who skated in the city centre felt safer there than in the Central Park skate park;

John Williams – Owner of Café Roma

- He did not consider the skateboarders to be a problem as they were good children;

- There were other more important problems involving youths in the city centre that should be addressed first;
- The skateboarders should not be criminalised as they were partaking in a sport and had not caused nuisance elsewhere;
- He accepted the potential fear skateboarders caused to the elderly and the damage they caused to street furniture however he felt that the issue could be addressed by communicating with the skateboarders in order to make them aware of the potential problems they were causing;
- At weekends there were many more undesirable people in the city centre, such as gangs of youths who ran riot.
- It was important that the Council should work with the skateboarders rather than against them.
- In area should be allocated in the city centre where the youths could skateboard.

In response to questions raised, John Williams informed the Panel that;

- He considered that the issue with skateboarding was likely to be a problem throughout the country.
- If skateboarders were given a designated area to skate and didn't use it there would be a problem.
- He had been informed that Central Park skate park was too dangerous to use and skateboarders liked to have an audience.
- The skateboarders did not need more laws which would criminalise them; he felt that essentially they were good children who needed guidance.

Anthony Patten – University of Plymouth

- The university was private property however they encouraged public access by setting up walkways which also attracted some skateboarders.
- Any report of skateboarders on the University of Plymouth site was recorded and from November 2008 to November 2009 there were 40 incidents involving skateboarders recorded
- Skateboarders tended to hang around in groups of approximately 6-8 people.
- He did not perceive skateboarding to be a spectator sport.
- To prevent further damage to property pegs had been added to seats to stop skateboarders grinding along them.
- The University of Plymouth were keen to work alongside Plymouth City Council in enforcing skateboarding;
- There had been no injuries caused by skateboarding as of yet.

In response to questions raised, Anthony Patten informed the Panel that;

- The security staff at the university could only stop someone skateboards if they thought they were a student.
- The university lacked the manpower or the time to properly deal with the issue of skateboarding.
- He had also witnessed problems with cyclists.

Councillor – Kevin Wiggins – Conservative Plympton Dunstone

- He was not aware of any alternative venue in the city centre where a skate park could be incorporated.
- He did not want to curtail a reasonable activity that was spoilt for the majority by a few individuals.
- He agreed that signage needed to be revised to remind skateboarders of the possible consequences of their actions.

Councillor – Bill Stevens – Labour Devonport

- My view is that the current by-law is unworkable and should therefore be replaced as soon as possible.
- Most weekends see the huge majority of the area between the Guildhall and the Council House used by youngsters for skateboarding, often with little or no thought for pedestrians, many of whom are elderly or families. This is totally unacceptable behaviour.
- The damage caused to the street furniture is also terrible. That, and the huge amount of litter they drop, makes a high profile part of Plymouth look shameful.

Appendix 3

Written Statements - Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel (City Centre Skateboarding Review)

The Task and Finish Group received the following inputs:

Councillor – Nicky Wildy – Labour ,Devonport

- I do not wish to change anything. Generally I do not have a problem with skateboarders in City Centre. I Think members of public often demonise young people. Any further by-laws make more work for Police who have better things to do and also it is probably unenforceable. I do not want to criminalise young people who are engaged in a relatively innocuous sport.

Councillor – Sue McDonald – Labour Party St Peter and the Waterfront

- Skateboarders are becoming increasingly prevalent in the area between the Guildhall, Law Courts and the Civic Centre because of the scope of their activities, and at times, what appears to be an increase in numbers.
- It is my understanding that there is an element of display in skateboarding not only amongst themselves but to passers by and the public. For this reason, the provision of any facility, unless it is within the public gaze will not be used to it's widest extent and is therefore unlikely to displace the current skateboarding venue within the city.
- Visitors to the city have expressed surprise as they head toward the Hoe that skateboarding appears to be tolerated when sometimes people feel that they have been subjected to some rudeness and also feel that walking is less than safe.
- I'm told that there is damage to pavements and kerbs and also planters and low walls.

Cathy Tasker – Services for Children and Young People – PCC

- Many Young People don't want to be Skateboarding in the City Centre where local people are nervous of their causing an accident/injury. They have no choice currently because they cannot afford to get to Central Park skatepark. For those who can afford to get to Milehouse, the Central Park skate park will be demolished (to make way for the life Centre) and the replacement will not be built until November 2010.
- There is an indoor skatepark being developed through YCF monies bid for/by young people in Cattedown which is closer, however the young people will be charged at £4 per session.
- In addition, there is a mobile skate provision run by the Stonehouse Play Association which is currently rented out, with staff, to locality teams in the Youth Service and other organisations. This provision is well used by young people and would be an alternative to prohibiting the activity in the City Centre altogether. The young people currently using the City Centre could put in a bid (supported by youth workers) to secure its use in a designated area agreed by the scrutiny panel in or around the City Centre.

This will offset the need to criminalise the activity or young people who are-

- * Currently not breaking the law.
- * Achieving the Every Child Matters outcomes - Staying Safe and Being Healthy.
- * Fascinating many people using the City Centre, including young people who aspire to be fit, healthy and adept at sport.

In addition this meets several of our Children and Young People's Priorities including-

- No. 5 Enabling young people to have fun.
- No. 9 Improve opportunities for young people to make a positive contribution
- No. 10 Raise young people's aspirations.

Chris Patey – Playgrounds Officer – PCC

- We have currently got Skateboard ramps in the following locations, Chaddlewood Open Space, Peacock Meadow and Central Park;
- Central park is the largest of the three and is due to be closed soon. There are plans to reinstate the skate park after the building of the Life Centre however its location has still to be decided. Catherine Dilloway from Development is leading on the Skateboard project along with Nick Jones (Principal Parks Services Manager).
- We have no objections to new sites for skateboarding being created as long as there is sufficient funding in place for its maintenance and aftercare. We would always request to be involved in any new play /skate park development at the very beginning to ensure our service is not compromised.

Barbara Duffy – Age Concern Director

- I know this will be received after your first meeting of the Task and Finish Group but thought it may be useful in some way.
- I circulated an e-mail asking for comments from staff and older people who use our services. The main issues that came to me were that some older people had experienced skateboarders coming towards them at speed and this was very worrying/frightening to them. This was especially true in respect of people with some degree of sensory loss. There was a general feeling that skateboarders did need somewhere 'fit for purpose' to undertake this activity (rather than in a busy city centre area) such as a purpose built skate park.

Nick Marker – Prime Delux Ltd

- Regarding the potential bylaw targeting skaters outside the civic centre. We are aware that the civic centre has been a social meeting spot for younger generations who enjoy skateboarding for over 20 years. It is now a popular meeting spot for skateboarders and the friends of skateboarders.
- We feel it would be a shame to see these younger people be classed a criminals when they are merely enjoying a healthy activity. We strongly feel it would benefit Plymouth directly to promote and support such activities to younger people.
- The area next to the pond seems to be a very large area with little purpose. We feel it would be a great idea to section a square area with a curb height barrier to stop skateboards rolling in to pedestrians. It would be beneficial to offer street furniture in this area for recreational use and to reduce the need for skateboarders to use/ damage other areas of town.
- Once the council is seen to support healthy activities, it may be worth discussing methods to reduce minor upset due to the lack of such provisions. We strongly feel that by supporting the activity with suitable provisions would award far more daily benefits than issues for younger people and the general public in Plymouth. We would be very happy to provide an area design.

Hannah Metson – Customer Services Programme Manager PCC

Here are our findings, from talking to staff. Over the previous 12 months we have received between 1 - 5 customers verbally complaining each month about the skateboarders outside the Civic, and they have made the following comments:

- Skateboarders crossing their pathways (in front of pedestrians)
- Skidding along and along benches, concern over damage to benches, pathways, paving slabs and wooden and granite seats.
- Large groups gathering around the doors and cashiers side doorway.
- Skateboarders flying off their boards and falling to the ground.
- Knocking over the elderly
- Noise
- ALTERNATIVE suggestions from the public are to have skateboard parks in the CITY,

Inspector P Willingham - South Sector Neighbourhood Team, Devon & Cornwall Police

I am the Inspector who has responsibility for Policing Plymouth City Centre. I have for some time been engaged with the Council over the review of a Bye-Law, specifically Councillor Bill Stevens. I would wish to make the following observations:-

- * The Police do not receive many complaints from the public in relation to skateboarding in front of the Civic Centre. In fact we have received only one complaint in the past 12 months.
- * Skateboarding has not been identified as a 'Partners and Communities Together' priority through community engagement.
- * I have witnessed members of the public raising concerns reference skateboarding at Area Committee meetings. However, this is usually in response to the issue being on the agenda, rather than them bringing it as an issue which concerns them.
- * I acknowledge the fact that many young people do use the area outside of the Civic Centre to Skateboard and Cycle. This activity can lead to damaged street furniture and may be construed as dangerous to pedestrians.
- * The Police would support the renewal of a workable Bye-Law, but only as part of an inclusive problem solving process. Any response should not be purely enforcement based, but should include alternative venues and engineering/ designing out the problem.
- * I would wish to seek clarity as to the aims of prosecution and which authority would be responsible for enforcement.

Appendix 4



Skateboarding Review Public Consultation Consultation Survey Results

Client: Assistant Director for Development & Regeneration (Transport & Highways)
Release: Final
Version: 0.6
Date: 28/05/2010
Author: Jamie Yabsley / Tony Davis / Kim Hayden

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Document Control

Revision History

Release	Version	Date	Reason for Change
DRAFT# A	0.1	24/11/09	Initial draft
DRAFT# A	0.2	25/11/09	Additional work to document
DRAFT# A	0.3, 0.4,0.5	26/11/09	Additional work to document by Tony Davis / Kim Hayden
DRAFT # A	0.6	28/01/10	Supplementary Information further survey / responses received.

Distribution

This document has been approved by the following.

Release	Name	Post
Version 0.5	Gill Peele	Business Manager
	Tony Davis	QA & Support Manager
	Jamie Yabsley	Senior Project Officer
Version 0.6	Gill Peele	Business Manager
	Tony Davis	QA & Support Manager
	Jamie Yabsley	Senior Project Officer

1. Background

1.1 Introduction

The Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel met on Wednesday 28 October 2009 to review Plymouth's Skateboarding By-Law. One of the actions to come from this meeting was to carry out a small informal Public Consultation to gauge public opinion with regard to Skateboarders using public spaces in the City Centre for recreational skateboarding. The results of the consultation are to be available for the next meeting of the Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel on Thursday 3 December 2009.

The consultation is to be carried out by questionnaire in the city centre; with a target of one hundred samples across as diverse a cross section of the public as can be achieved. The questionnaire is not designed for the skateboarders; they will be the subject of a separate consultation carried out by the Youth Parliament.

The Public Consultation was carried out successfully during weeks 33 and 34 by Officers from the Plymouth City Council Development and Regeneration Department Business Support Team. The results are shown in section 2 of t and s.

Subsequent to the public consultation referred to above, the opinion of some Council Officers who are front line workers based in the Civic Centre was obtained. These officers were chosen because they and their customers have to pass through the area used by the skateboarders. These results are shown in section 5.

A summary of the consultation of both the Public and Council Officers is given in section 6.

2. Results – Public Consultation

2.1 Overview

This consultation exercise was carried out across two days at the beginning of November. The exercise was aimed at capturing the thoughts of the residents of Plymouth on skateboarding within the City Centre.

The survey was designed to only keep the customer for 30 seconds with the option for the customer to spend more time talking candidly if they wished to do so.

For this survey, the personal details were split as such.

Gender: Male or Female

Age: Over or under 30 – This was estimated by the surveyor.

Assisted Walking: Walking or not walking with aid

The questions for this survey were as follows.

We asked the customer if they had an opinion on skateboarding in the City Centre.

This question gave us a yes or no answer, a no meant the end of the survey and a yes was followed with the remainder of the survey as follows.

- Are you for or against skateboarding in the City Centre?
- Do you think there should be an outright ban on skateboarding in the City Centre?
- Do you think Plymouth City Council should provide an alternative site for skateboarders?
- If necessary do you think Plymouth City Council should build an alternative site for skateboarders?

At the end of the Yes or No responses the customer was asked if they had any specific suggestions or comments to make regarding skateboarding in the City Centre. These responses are shown later in this document.

Given the increasing number of charities and other companies trying to stop passers by it was a difficult task to get people to stop and speak for the fear of us trying to get money from them or to sell them something. This said, the majority of customers over 30 were willing to stop to give their thoughts and the under 30s were not so willing.

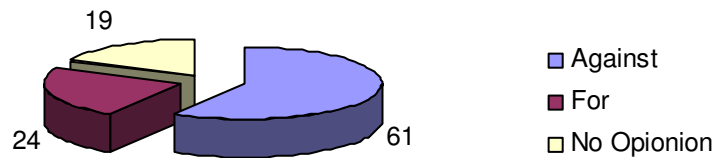
This simply meant asking and stopping more under 30s until we were happy we had a balance view.

2.2 The Results

The number of customers surveyed for this consultation exercise was 104.

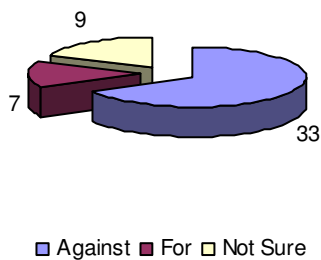
- 104 customers surveyed 49 were over 30, 55 were under 30, 51 were male and 53 were female and 11 relied on assisted walking.
- 61 were against skateboarding in the City Centre, with 24 for it, and 19 with no opinion.

Are you For or Against Skateboarding In the City Centre?

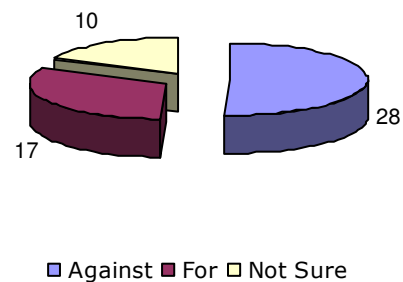


- There was no significant gender related difference.
- There was a small age related difference with more under 30's being for skateboarding than over 30's. However in both cases the majority were still against.

Over 30s For or Against Skateboarding in the City Centre

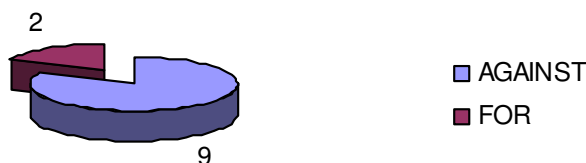


Under 30s For or Against Skateboarding in the City Centre



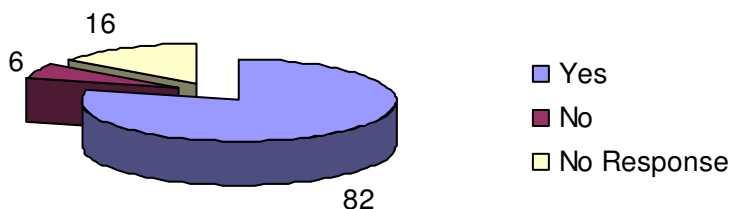
Are you For or against Skateboarding In the City Centre?

Response from the Assisted Walking Group Surveyed



Out of the 93 people who had a view about skateboarding in the city centre, 51 would be seeking an outright ban but an overwhelming 82 out of the 93 wanted an alternative site provided by Plymouth City Council. The chart below represents the number of responses.

Do you think the Council should provide an alternative site?



There is a very even split in the demographics of those that would like an outright ban of skating within the City Centre.

2.3 Open Feedback

Some of the open suggestions by customers, for alternative sites and suggestions in general were as follows

- Already have skate parks provided – not used
- Anywhere away from City Centre
- As long as not on or near war memorials
- As long as they don't bother individual
- Ban specific areas of City Centre only
- Central Location / On Bus Route
- Central Park
- West Hoe or The Hoe
- City Centre built for Skateboarders with so much concrete
- Must be close to City Centre
- Concerned about walking around town / with young children
- Concrete parks needed, metal parks are rubbish in the wet
- Don't want somewhere built that will cost too much
- Damage already done / alternative sight would not be used
- Damage to decorations, intimidation due to large groups
- George Park & Ride
- Use old Woolworths building
- Make it accessible and appealing for kids
- Must have somewhere to go
- Needs to be proper skate park
- No ban required as skateboarders have nowhere else to go
- No real skateboarding done, just messing about
- Not personally concerned / concerned for elderly
- Outside Civic Centre - nice open space
- Provide more parks in city
- Signs already ignored
- The flyover by Sainsbury's

These suggestions should be taken into account if Plymouth City Council decides to act on the issue of skateboarding.

2.4 Summary

The results of this survey show a clear majority, 72% of those who expressed an opinion, in favour of banning skateboarding from public areas in the City Centre. There was an equally clear majority 74% of those who wanted a ban, were also in favour of providing an alternative site for the skateboarders, before introducing a ban.

The customers surveyed were divided into groupings based on age, gender and whether they required assistance walking (walking sticks, wheelchairs etc.). We achieved a very even split between age and gender and surveyed a significant number who required assisted walking. There was no statistically significant difference in the results from these groupings.

Skateboarding Review



Excuse Me:- The Council is conducting a review of skateboarding in the City Centre.
Do you have a view about skateboarding in the City Centre

OK – What are your thoughts. Yes No → Thank you for your time.

Prompt:- Are you for or against.	For
	Against

Do you think there should be an outright ban in the City Centre.

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you think the Council should provide an alternative sight.

Yes	No
-----	----

Do you have any alternative suggestions.

If necessary do you think the Council should build an alternative site.

Yes	No
-----	----

Thank you for your time..

Age

<30	>30
-----	-----

Gender

M	F
---	---

Assisted Walking

Yes	No
-----	----

Appendix A
3.2 –Table of Survey Results

Responses >	Yes / Against						Total	No / For						Total	Not Sure						Totals
	Gender		Age		Mobility			Gender		Age		Mobility			Gender		Age		Mobility		
	Male	Female	Over 30	Under 30	Assisted Walking	Non Assisted Walking		Male	Female	Over 30	Under 30	Assisted Walking	Non Assisted Walking		Male	Female	Over 30	Under 30	Assisted Walking	Non Assisted Walking	
Survey Answers																					
Do you have a view about skateboarding in the City Centre?	44	49	46	47	11	82	93	7	4	3	8	0	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Are you For or against Skateboarding In the City Centre?	29	32	33	28	9	52	61	10	14	7	17	2	22	24	12	7	9	10	0	19	
Do you think there should be an outright ban in the City Centre?	22	29	30	21	7	44	51	22	20	16	26	4	38	42	7	4	3	8	0	11	
Do you think the Council should provide an alternative sight?	41	41	42	40	10	72	82	2	4	3	3	0	6	6	8	8	4	12	1	15	
If necessary do you think the Council should build an alternative site?	35	39	36	38	8	66	74	4	9	9	4	1	12	13	8	9	4	13	2	15	
Do you have any alternative suggestions?																					

Survey Statistics

Number of Persons Surveyed	104
Male	51
Female	53
Under 30	55
Over 30	49
Assisted Walking	11
Non Assisted Walking	93

4. Further Feedback from Staff Members of Plymouth City Council and Customers to the Civic Centre.

4.1 Introduction

The Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel met again on Thursday 3rd December 2009 to review Plymouth's Skateboarding By-Law. One of the actions to come from this meeting was to carry out another small informal Staff and Public Consultation to gauge opinions with regard to Skateboarders using public spaces in the City Centre for recreational skateboarding. The results of the consultation are to be available for the next meeting of the Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel on Thursday 4th February 2010.

The consultation is to be carried out by questionnaire/feedback. The questionnaire is not designed for the skateboarders; they will be the subject of a separate consultation carried out by the Youth Parliament.

The Consultation was carried out successfully by Officers from the Plymouth City Council Development and Regeneration Department Business Support Team. This document shows results that were obtained.

5. Results

5.1 Overview

This consultation exercise was carried out with the Civil Enforcement Officers across two days at the beginning of January, and the feedback from Customer Services was from the previous 12 month period. The exercise was aimed at capturing the thoughts of Visitors and Members of staff to the Civic Centre on skateboarding within the City Centre.

The survey was designed to only occupy the member of staff for 30 seconds with the option for the staff member to spend more time writing candidly if they wished to do so.

For this survey, the personal details were split as such.

Gender: Male or Female

Age: Over or under 30 – This was completed by the staff member.

Assisted Walking: Walking or not walking with aid

The questions for this survey were as follows.

We asked the customer if they had an opinion on skateboarding in the City Centre.

This question gave us a yes or no answer, a no meant the end of the survey and a yes was followed with the remainder of the survey as follows.

- Are you for or against skateboarding in the City Centre?

- Do you think there should be an outright ban on skateboarding in the City Centre?
- Do you think Plymouth City Council should provide an alternative site for skateboarders?
- If necessary do you think Plymouth City Council should build an alternative site for skateboarders?

At the end of the Yes or No responses the customer was asked if they had any specific suggestions or comments to make regarding skateboarding in the City Centre. These responses are shown later in this document.

5.2 The Results

For the purpose of this paper we have not documented the responses by gender, age or walking ability.

The number of customers surveyed for this consultation exercise was 15 Civil Enforcement Officers and staff located at the First Stop Desk within the Civic Centre.

- 15 responses were handed back from the Civil Enforcement Team of those surveyed 2 held no opinion and no further comments were noted.
- 13 responded in that they had an opinion on skateboarding.
- Only 1 person felt that there should not be an outright ban, 12 were for an outright ban on skateboarding in the City Centre.
- 8 of those who wanted to see an outright ban however, thought the Council should provide an alternative site and the other 4 felt that this should not be the case.
- Of those 8 who wanted to see the Council provide an alternative site also felt the Council if necessary should build one.

There is a very even split in the demographics of those that would like an outright ban of skating within the City Centre.

The responses/comments that we received back from Customer Services within the Civic Centre are that over the last 12 months they have received 1-5 Customers verbally complaining per month. However, these have not been formal complaints. The general comments have been added into the Open Feedback section.

5.3 Open Feedback

Suggestions by CEOs, for alternative sites and suggestions in general were as follows

- Marsh Mills Playing Field
- Millbay Docks
- Victoria Park
- Stonehouse Creek
-

General Comments from CEO's

- I feel they should have somewhere safe to skate, instead of in the City, damaging benches, bars etc causing concern to young children the elderly and disabled.

- Skateboarders should have a safe place provided by Plymouth City Council. Skateboards put their own lives at risk in car parks and on main roads.
- Against the damage they create

Comments from visitors to the Civic Centre

- Skateboarders crossing their pathways
- Skidding along benches , concern over damage issues
- Large groups gathering around doors / cashiers side doorway
- Skateboarders flying off their boards and falling to the ground (boards then flying in opposite direction)
- Knocking over the elderly – Although no further details given
- Noise Created

These suggestions should be taken into account if Plymouth City Council decides to act on the issue of skateboarding.

6. Summary

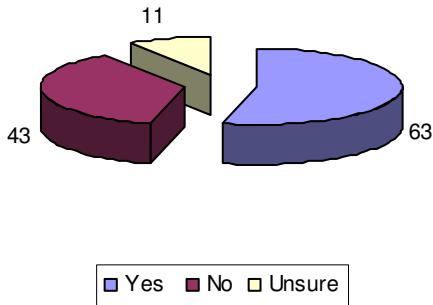
The results are conclusive in that of those asked whether they would want an outright ban on skateboarding

Within the City Centre the majority vote was yes but only in if another location was provided. This is the case for both the Public Consultation and the Council Officers who were consulted. This is shown in the pie charts below.

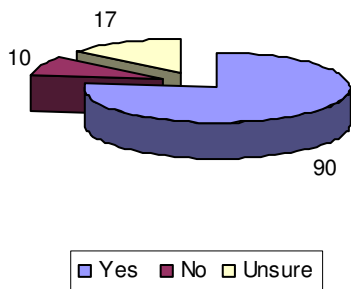
There is as always the usual health warning with public consultations. A random sample of 119 members of the public and Council cannot be considered definitive. However in this case we have such a clear outcome that we can use it as a good indicator.

This also agrees with the Police perspective in that in order for them to enforce a ban in the City Centre, Plymouth City Council would need to provide an alternative location.

Do you think there should be an outright ban in the City Centre?



Do you think the Council should provide an alternative sight?



...