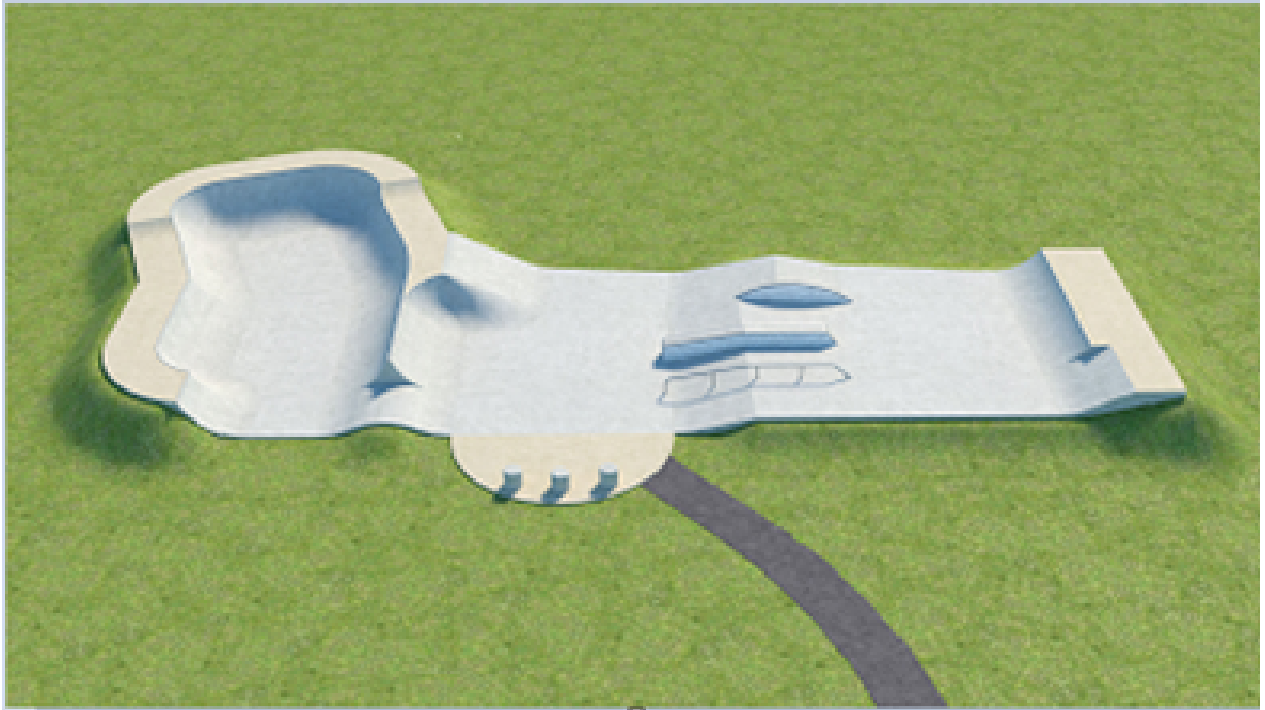




**North
Northamptonshire
Council**



**R3- North Northamptonshire Council
Bassetts Skatepark Community
Engagement Report**



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1. Introduction

This report has been produced to show how the community have been engaged in the process of the revamp of the Bassetts Close skatepark. It is intended to demonstrate how the Council has considered the issues that have been raised by the community to proceed with this project.

2. Background

The skatepark at Bassett's Close Park is very dated and of poor quality, it consists of 1 metal ramp and 2-3 small concrete ramps, this can be seen in *Appendix 1 Current skatepark images*. The equipment is not challenging, so skaters have taken to making their own equipment which is unsafe for everyone to use.

The skatepark project started in 2013 when local skaters contacted the Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) asking for the council to revamp the existing skatepark, at that point the only funding available was S106 of £21,446. Through a petition (link below) which was signed by 169 supporters and much perseverance via various emails and newspaper coverage from the supporters of the skatepark further capital of £40,000 was allocated to this project in 2014 by BCW and the group were encouraged to apply for further funding as the average skatepark costs around £100k upwards.

Petition link: https://www.change.org/p/wellingborough-skate-park-bassetts-skate-park-is-a-mess-we-need-a-new-one?recruiter=false&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=share_petition

The current skatepark is well used and there is a high demand in Wellingborough for a good quality skatepark facility especially with skateboarding now an Olympic sport. The support and demand in Wellingborough for a skatepark has been clearly demonstrated by the 100 plus emails received in support of the planning application submitted last year, through campaigns by supporters of the skatepark and via direct emails sent to the projects team in the past few years.

There are several benefits of a skatepark, some are listed below:

- Health and wellbeing - due to social, physical activity and play
- Physical activity for children and young people particularly those not involved in traditional team sports
- A safe and challenging space for wheeled sports to participants to develop their skills
- Skateparks provide a safe alternative to "street skating"
- All age groups can enjoy skateparks
- Skateparks support vibrant healthy communities, just like other sports facilities
- A positive environment for young people where they can forge friendships

Having had restrictions in place during COVID keeping people indoors it is even more important to encourage more people to get people back outdoors improving their health and wellbeing. Providing good sporting facilities within the community is very important.

3. Consultation and community involvement

Following the allocation of funding the project did not progress any further until 2019 when work was undertaken to engage with members of the public regarding the skatepark.

Therefore, in January 2019 poster and press release requested comments on revamping the skatepark. This poster was put up in various venues (see *Appendix 2 & 2a*) a press release was also publicised on all council social media platforms and the council website asking for input on revamping the skatepark. The Council received around 15 responses from skaters who were very keen to revamp the skatepark at Bassetts Close Park, no other responses were received and no issues regarding the current skatepark were raised. The council therefore continued with the project and investigated design for a skatepark with current funding.

A meeting was scheduled in April 2019 for anyone interested in the skatepark to attend, to discuss ideas and look at potential skatepark design ideas. A press release was sent out via council social media and emails were sent to the local schools from this St Barnabas Primary School offered the school as a venue for the meeting.

3.1 Consultation Meeting April 2019

The meeting was held at St Barnabas Primary School where some possible designs for a skatepark with a current funding of £60K and other designs if we had a larger budget for £110-120K were presented.

The meeting was presented by Alex Jordan from skateparks project who is an independent body offering advice on skateparks, about 20-30 people attended including residents, skatepark users and the head teacher at the school.

The skatepark users were very excited about the designs and were eager to help with developing the designs and getting further funding if possible. Some of the residents raised issues that they had with the current skatepark and its location so close to the school and some felt that the money should be used on improving other facilities in the park.

3.2 Issues raised at meeting

There were several issues brought up at the meeting the main ones were:

- **Wider Park Improvements** - money should be spent on the other items that need improving in the park, fencing, play equipment, street furniture and bins
- **Location** - relocate the skatepark within the park or to another park, it is currently too close to the houses and school, the smell of smoke and bad language is being carried into the school playground
- **Anti-Social Behaviour** issues due to the skatepark being in bad condition, people sitting under the ramps and the area being dark secluded area at the back of the park with no surveillance or lighting
- **Council/Wellingborough Norse** – More regular cleansing of the site is needed

3.3 Community group

At the meeting the council encouraged the skaters and residents to form a Bassetts Close Park community group to work together with the council to improve the park and the skatepark, with the community group it would be easier to work together to make decisions and put across concerns

and ideas by all. Details of Nene Valley Community Action organisation to help them set up a group were provided by the council however this was not undertaken by residents or skaters at this time.

4. Council Addresses Issues raised in meeting

4.1 Wider park improvements

Following the meeting and the comments made regarding the need to improve other facilities in the park, BCW instructed The Environment Partnership (TEP) to investigate what improvements were required at Bassett's Close Park, the report identified the following as being needed:

- Updating some play equipment and adding junior equipment, including new safety surfacing in some areas.
- More frequent cleansing and grass cutting of the site.
- Fence improvements to restore the original fence to keep the historic aspect of the park.
- The installation of bollards was suggested at the eastern entrance off West Villa Road.
- Street furniture updated and replaced where needed.
- Skatepark to be updated.

From this report the council was able to establish what improvements to the park were needed to bring the park to a good standard to do this further funding would be required.

4.2 Further Funding

Following the TEP report, further decline of the skatepark and ongoing demand for the skatepark, a further capital bid was put in for the skatepark and wider park improvements at Bassett's Park. This resulted in a budget of £150,000 being available to spend on the skatepark and play equipment and a further £58,554 on various issues raised in the report.

A good skatepark cost a minimum of £100-140k (*estimated costing in 2019*) this would provide a good size park that can be used for all ages.

4.3 Improvements made to the park

The Council has now added new outdoor gym equipment to the park, extended the junior play area with new pieces of equipment and safety surfacing, additional toddler equipment and replaced safety surfacing under various pieces of equipment, repaired and repainted the perimeter fence to the park and replaced some street furniture/signs within the park to improve the park as a whole. The skatepark is the only element of the work identified by the TEP and as part of the project that needs to be completed to provide a good quality park.

4.4 Location of the skatepark options

One of the issues raised at the meeting in April 2019 was the location of the skatepark being very close to the St Barnabas Primary school playground. The school was concerned about the people near the skatepark smoking illegal substances and the smells going onto the school playground and foul language being heard by the children as the skatepark backs onto the school playground.

Some of the houses backing onto the skatepark reported that they were often graffitied due to being at the bottom of the park. They would also prefer the skatepark being moved from the back of the park to a better location in the park or to another park.

The council looked at the options to either relocate it to another area of the park or move to a different park in Wellingborough. Both options were explored and considered by Council details can be found in supporting documents 1 & 2, advice from skatepark companies and other guidance such as the criteria below were considered to identify if a site was a good location:

Accessibility – How accessible is the skatepark? Can people get to the park easily? Good bus links, shops nearby?

Visibility - How visible is the site? Is it easy to monitor for vehicles passing by, people walking?

Activity – Is the site busy does it provide other facilities as this encourages more people to use the skatepark, does it attract different ages of people to the park as with various ages this attracts more people to skate, are there other facilities nearby schools, youth centres?

Comfort- Are there shops nearby, are there trees for shade in the summer, places to sit, water fountain etc

A report considering the sites using these criteria was taken to BCW's Senior Management Team (SMT) to consider with three options:

Option 1: Keep the skatepark in the same place and revamp

Option 2: Relocate to a different area of Bassett's Close Park

Option 3: Relocate to Croyland Park

The recommendation was to relocate the skatepark within Bassett's Close Park, to a more **visible**, busier area of the park that can be seen from the road by onlookers for natural surveillance.

In addition, some of the funding currently available was allocated to Bassett's Close Park by BCW some of it through S106 funding some of which could be lost if not used on the skatepark.

After considering all the options SMT made the decision to keep the skatepark within Bassett's Close Park and relocate it to a more visible area of the park away from school and houses.

4.5 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues

Issues of Anti-social behaviour (ASB) from the skatepark was brought up in the meeting, the locals found problems with people sitting under the ramps, broken bottles near the skatepark and people loitering around the skatepark. The council contacted Community Support Officer Deborah Henderson to find out if there was any concerns they had with ASB in the park and were advised '*Aside from the anti-social behaviours such as graffiti and alcohol this area has very few reported incidents*' Therefore the council did not see any reason why the skatepark would cause any further issues within the park, but to make sure the new design had no areas of hidden spaces under ramps for people to hide and loiter under, and to provide additional bins within the new skatepark. *Full details can be found in ASB/crime report*

4.6 Cleansing the site

The council asked Wellingborough Norse who maintained the site at this time to monitor the site to make sure the site was cleansed as often as they could with bins being emptied more regularly and if needed additional bins be provided.

5. Next engagement steps

Following a review of the comments received and options the council decided to proceed to the next stage and undertake further work on the option to move the skatepark to another location in Bassetts Close. Therefore, the next stage was to obtain a draft design for the skatepark to do this the council procured Bendcrete Leisure, who produced a design which could be delivered within the budget of £120k.

5.1 Skaters Working Group

To help with the specification for the tender of what the skatepark needed we invited a group of skaters to come and discuss with the council on what equipment, design etc was needed to have a good skatepark for all types of users and all ages. This meeting was held at the council offices in January 2020 and there were around 10 skaters that had been involved in the skatepark from when the posters had been put up in 2019. This meeting allowed us to develop a good specification for companies to submit a tender and produce design based on what was needed, which then could be modified by a larger group to make it useful for all with minor changes. The tender went out in late September 2020 and was awarded to Bendcrete Skateparks in January 2021. The tendered design can be seen in appendix 4.

5.2 Further Design Consultation

Once the tender had been awarded the Council intended to hold a design workshop at the park or near the park where skaters and residents could come and look at design and other works planned for the park, however due to COVID this was not possible therefore the design was released via social media in January 2021 for input from the public on what they thought of the skatepark. This was also an opportunity for people to contact the council if they were interested in becoming part of the Working Group who would finalise the plans before they are submitted to planning. Various members of the public wrote to object to the skatepark all the issues raised are shown below and were considered as below.

5.3 Summary of Comments received

From the consultation undertaken in 2021 there were various comments/concerns raised by the public a summary of comments are in the table below:

Comment	Issues Category	Resolution
Too close to school, anti-social behaviour, across from sport field, noise heard from school	ASB/ Location/Noise	A noise report was instructed, police were consulted regarding ASB and other locations were explored within the park
Drug and alcohol use	ASB	Contact made with the Police to discuss issues and find a resolution

Removal of old ramp	Further works	Funding set aside to remove the old skatepark of £15k once the new skatepark is built
Loss of field space for school use	General use	The enclosed grass space for schools to use will be unaffected
Broken glass and rubbish	ASB/cleansing	Facilities team will be checking to make sure bins are emptied and if any further are required will be provided
Graffiti	General park issues	Additional lighting & CCTV in the skatepark which is included in the new design would deter people from ASB/graffiti
Loss of green space	General use	Reinstating the current skatepark area to grass will give back the grass area the new skatepark
Small park	Location	Options were considered as per the criteria identified in this report and it was decided to relocate the skatepark in a better location within same park.
Sitting under ramps	Design	The new skatepark would be designed to not have areas people can sit under
No consultation	Community	The council has undertaken some consultation with the community and has considered all the issues raised this is shown in this report. Local residents and users have also been consulted on the planning application.

6. Design Group Meeting – Feb 2021

From the online consultation on the design a online meeting was arranged (due to COVID Restrictions) with all interested people to finalise the design for the skatepark with the design company Bendcrete, Wendy Davies led this online zoom meeting, the meeting was for people who were interested in helping with the design and it was stated that other issues would not be discussed at this meeting. Around 16 skater's males and females of all ages, a Councillor and 2-3 residents logged into the meeting.

All were very helpful in finalising the design which had taken on board the comments from the previous consultation. People liked that the design which has no areas where people could hide under ramps etc this would allow everyone to be seen making it safer and cause less ASB issues. There were some minor changes to be done to the design to allow usage for all types of skaters, BMX's, scooters etc and to allow for more experienced people to have a space without getting in the way of beginners. *Appendix 4* shows the Tendered & Final design following changes made from the design meeting.

7. Bassetts Close Skatepark Group (BCSG)

The Council was been informed in June 2022 that the skaters have set up a Bassetts Close Park skatepark group (BCSG) to gather more support to help this project proceed, there are 4-5 main members of the group.

They have created a private Facebook group named 'Wellingborough Skatepark Community'. In less than 24 hours after the page was live, they already gained 138 members who have interest in the park and are willing to offer support. A you tube video has been published showing the commitment of the group the link is below:

<https://youtu.be/DfxBRWvzIZw>

The group have also made efforts to tidy the current skatepark up by painting over the graffiti with paint purchased by a member of the group below are images of works completed. All members have been in contact with the council for many years pushing for a skatepark to be replaced and have worked on the specification and design of the new skatepark. They are very keen to help tackle the ASB issues at the park in any way they can. These are members of the public in their 20's offering their help to support and maintain the skatepark.



The group were approached by an executive for local Labour group, who would be prepared to request a digital budget to advertise skatepark campaign on their Facebook page. The interest attracted within a week shows the support and need that Wellingborough has for a good skatepark. A poster shown in *Appendix 5* has been designed by the group which they are distributing and putting up in various locations

The group has been emailing in throughout the years to check on the progress of the skatepark and are prepared to help where necessary to ensure a facility is provided.

8. Summary

This report shows the community engagement that the council undertaken, how it has taken on board the comments made both in the past and as part of the previous planning application and investigated how to overcome many of these issues.

This will be small skatepark for beginners to intermediate skaters and those looking to develop their skills unlike the large skateparks like Radland's, therefore will not have many skaters at one time. Once skaters become advanced, they tend to move on to larger skateparks with more advanced equipment. This skatepark will help encourage younger and female skaters to develop their skills in a safe environment.

The council has liaised with many people from all sectors to help with issues and concerns raised by residents to see how these can be resolved or mitigated.

Some residents want the skatepark moved from Bassetts Close Park due to it being a small park, but the size of Bassetts Close Park does allow for the skatepark to remain with green space available for dog walkers, picnics and event space. Removing the current skatepark once the new one is built and reinstating it to grass would give back green space lost. The new location allows for the skatepark to be moved away from St Barnabas school and houses the closest back garden is over 50m away from the skatepark to address the concerns of local residents.

Freemans School have expressed their concerns for the disruption this may cause their students through the noise and students looking out the window at skaters, therefore the council had a further noise survey produced which found that the noise level will not be higher than that caused by the busy road between the school and park. The school has high windows and there is a road and fence in between school and park which makes the visibility of the skatepark from the school restrictive and would not affect the children. Most skateparks are used in the evening or at weekends and not during the day.

9. Conclusion

This report demonstrates how the community have been engaged in the process of the redevelop the Bassetts Close skatepark and shows the changes that have been made to address the issues raised by the community to progress this project to the re-submission of a planning application. This report also shows the strong support that there is for this exciting and important community based/minded project.

Appendix 1 Current state of the skate park, very dated equipment, not safe very safe to use in desperate need to be updated to give Wellingborough a better facility.



Close proximity to the school the playground is right next to the school, children can smell and hear the unpleasant

Equipment being made by the skaters to give them more to do this is dangerous and someone can be seriously hurt, this is due to dated equipment at the park



This picture on the left shows the skate park at Rushden, a good example of a skate park that has all the equipment needed for a nice size park for all ages to use.

Bassett's Skate Park



**Would you like to see a
new skate park in
Wellingborough?**

**Some funding has
become available**

**To move forward we need
local support so get in
touch!**

**Your
ideas
needed**

Borough Council of

Wellingborough

Please contact us at

projects@wellingborough.gov.uk

01933 231912

News release

Communications 01933 231 836

communications@wellingborough.gov.uk

Date: 15 January 2024

Come along to a public to discuss the future of town's skate park

The Borough Council of Wellingborough is working with key partners to hold a meeting for residents who would like to support the campaign to revamp Bassett's Skate Park.

Representatives from the Skate Parks Project, NVCA Nene Valley Community Action group, the council and St Barnabas School will be delivering the event on Wednesday 24 April from 7pm at St Barnabas School. Residents from across the borough are invited to come along and speak to representatives about the project.

The local community has enjoyed the Bassett Park Skate area, for more than a decade but the public facility now requires a major upgrade. The council are keen to revamp the skate park and has committed section 106 funding for this purpose, the S106 funding contributed by developers towards community and social infrastructure, to redevelop the skate park; however, further funding is required in order to deliver a first-rate facility, so the skate park area is accessible and enjoyable to all age groups.

Ward councillor, Valerie Anslow, said: "The renovation of the skate park at Bassett's Park is long overdue and this will be a popular amenity for the young people of the town."

Ward councillor, Jonathan Ekins, said: "This facility has been crying out for an upgraded re-vamp for a number of years, I support and welcome the Councils commitment in providing excellent sporting amenities for the Boroughs younger residents.

"This is another way the Borough's younger generations' can get the exercise and enjoyment of outside activities to improve on their wellbeing and health."

To find out more please contact the project team at the council on:

projects@wellingborough.gov.uk

—ends—

Notes to editors:

- For more information about this news release, please contact 01933 231 836 or email Communications@wellingborough.gov.uk
- The Borough Council of Wellingborough's mission statement is:

Making Wellingborough a place to be proud of

Our priorities are:

- P**romoting high quality growth
- R**educing crime and anti-social behaviour
- I**mproving life chances for young people
- D**elivering efficient and responsive services
- E**nhancing the environment

Appendix 4 Skatepark design and elevations of how it will loo within Bassetts Park

Image 1 Tendered Design

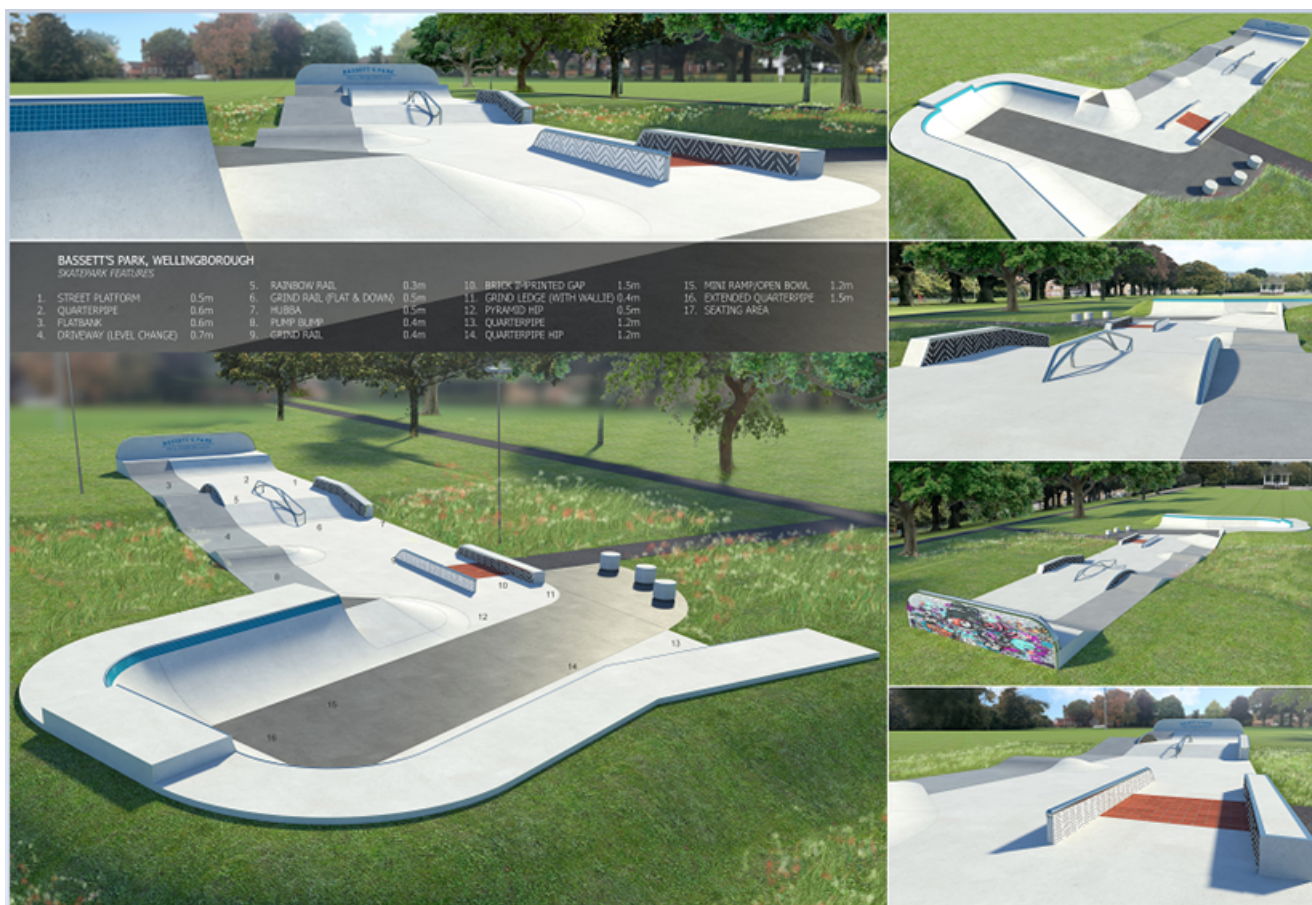
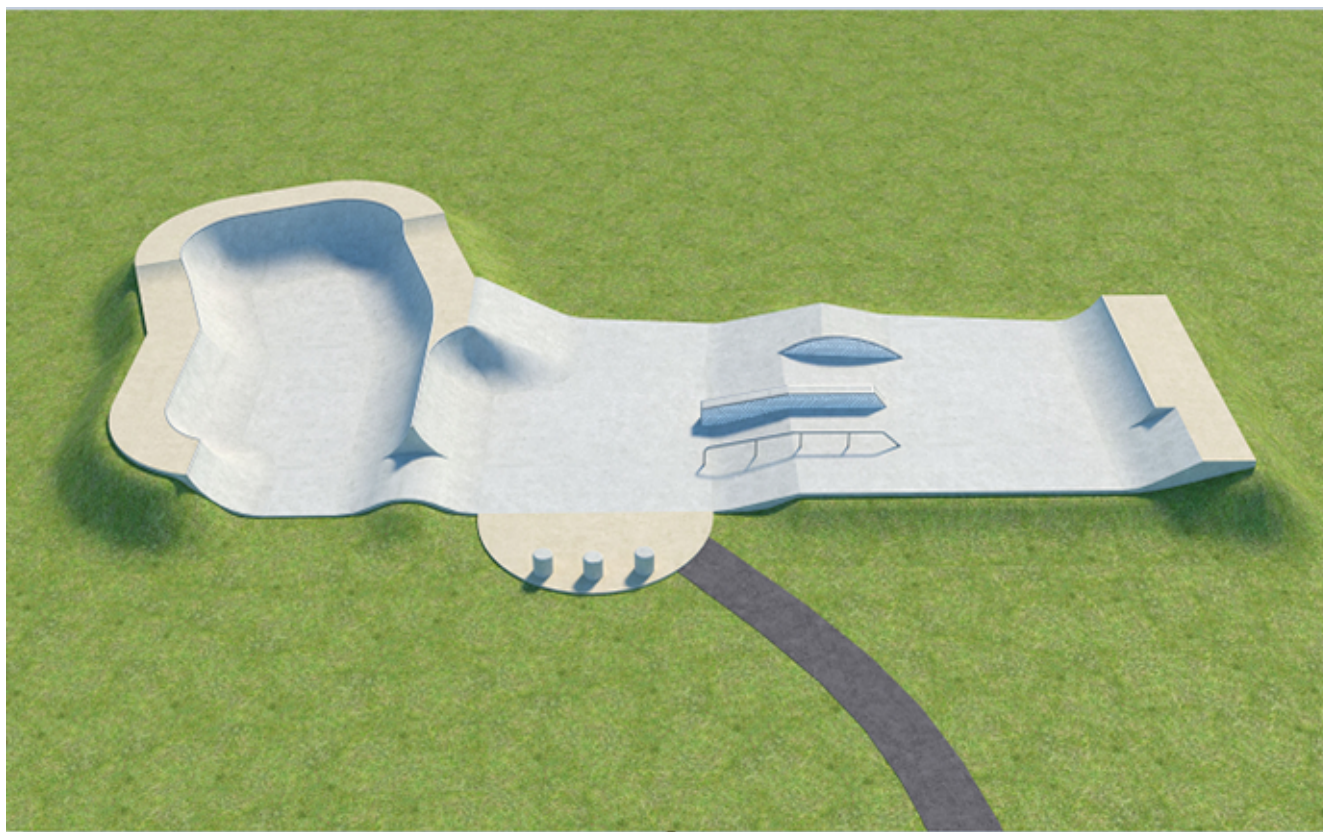


Image 2 Final Design



Appendix 4 Skatepark design and elevations of how it will loo within Bassetts Park

Image 3 View from Westfield road



Image 4 View from main path from main gate



Appendix 4 Skatepark design and elevations of how it will loo within Bassetts Park

Image 5 View from back of houses



Image 6 View from Bandstand



WELLINGBOROUGH SKATE PARK GROUP NEEDS YOUR HELP!



WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE A NEW SKATEPARK IN WELLINGBOROUGH?

**WELLINGBOROUGH SKATEPARK COMMUNITY ARE CAMPAIGNING
FOR A NEW SKATEPARK IN BASSETS PARK. WE HAVE THE
FUNDING, THE DESIGN AND THE INTEREST OF THE PUBLIC BUT WE
NEED VOICES!**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP AND GET INVOLVED, PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO:
PLANNING.BCW@NORTHNORTHANTS.GOU.UK**

**YOU CAN ALSO FIND THE WELLINGBOROUGH SKATEPARK COMMUNITY GROUP
ON FACEBOOK FOR UPDATES, NEWS AND INFORMATION REGARDING THE
PARKS PROGRESS.**

**THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ AND WE HOPE THAT YOUR
SUPPORT CAN HELP US THROUGH THIS FINAL STAGE.**

THANKS - WELLINGBOROUGH SKATEPARK GROUP