Agenda item: **4**

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport
Date of meeting:	14 December 2012
Subject:	A BMX Track for Portsmouth
Report by:	Head of City Development and Cultural Services
Wards affected:	Hilsea
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To present the case for supporting the development of a regional standard BMX track within the city.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport authorise the next stage of the BMX project to explore the proposals to develop a BMX track on the land south of the creek near to Hilsea Lido.

3. Background

3.1 Following the inclusion of BMX racing in the 2008 Olympic Games and the participation of UK riders, the interest in the sport of BMX racing has grown significantly. Portsmouth has a large facility for the practice of BMX stunts (Southsea Skatepark) but no competition standard BMX track.

3.2 There have been ad hoc requests for a racing track in the city but in order to establish whether there is demand for and interest in sustaining such a facility, a feasibility study was carried out in early 2012. The study also investigated potential sites which could meet the minimum requirements for a regional track. The study showed considerable support for the provision of a track and also a body of individuals interested in becoming involved in its development and operation.

3.3 The model on which the proposed track would operate is that of the Gosport BMX Club, a wholly voluntary organisation, affiliated to British Cycling. The Gosport club raised the funding for the construction of the regional standard track and its later upgrade to national standard. The track continues to be managed by a body of volunteers.

3.4   The feasibility study investigated a number of sites, subsequently narrowed to 8, of which the land south of the creek near to Hilsea Lido emerged as the preferred option. As well as adding another activity to a developing sports hub, the site is easily accessible by road, public transport and cycle from both north and south, there is parking available and access to toilets. The track would be fenced to prevent access by motorbikes. Preliminary discussions with English Heritage, Planning Service and the Hilsea Lido group indicate that this site would be feasible.

3.5   If permission is given to take the project forward, a design and costings would be commissioned from a registered BMX track builder to take to public consultation. A capital bid has been submitted for £5,000 to carry out this and the other necessary preliminary works such as ground investigations, planning application and setting up of a Portsmouth BMX Club.

4.   Reasons for recommendations

4.1   The project offers an opportunity, at minimal cost to the Council, to develop a new facility offering opportunities in an emerging sport. The proposed location will be particularly accessible to young people in the north part of the city.

5.   Equality impact assessment (EIA)

5.1   Preliminary EIA completed

6.   Head of Legal, Licensing & Registrars' comments

6.1   There are no legal comments relevant to this report

7.   Head of Finance's comments

7.1   Preliminary works relating to the development of the BMX track, including site investigations and design works which will inform the public consultation are expected to cost £5,000. This will be financed from within existing cash limits.

………………………………………………
Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Head of City Development & Cultural Services

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
BMX Track feasibility study	Culture Services Office, Core 1, Floor 1

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport on 14 December 2012.

………………………………………………
Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport