

SkateboardGB



Skateboarding

Design and Development Guidance for Skateboarding
Creating quality spaces and places to skateboard

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FOREWORD

Skateboarding, in one form or another, is practiced in every part of the country and by a diverse range of people. From its beginnings in the 1960s it has maintained its core values and popularity. From a means to get from A to B, to competing in the Olympic Games, due to its accessibility it has grown, evolved and become an integral part of many people's lives and an important feature in our public spaces.

The role of Skateboard England and Skateboard GB is to maintain the essence and strengths of skateboarding and to further harness and grow this potential. This suite of guidance brings together information and expertise from across the sector to provide essential support to anyone thinking of developing their own space, place or facility.

By providing advice and pointers on everything from how best to engage with your community to the most appropriate materials and ways to build, we will create more and better places to skateboard.

James Hope Gill,
CEO Skateboard England
and Skateboard GB



Sport England recognises the record and further potential of Skateboarding to create more opportunities for people to be physically active and its considerable reach and impact from street to podium. By nature, Skateboarding responds to community needs and aspirations and this guidance sets out an approach for a more coordinated and holistic approach to the design and operation of skateboarding facilities and provides the conditions and opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds and abilities to be more active in their everyday lives.

This suite of information is intended to guide community user groups, Local Authorities and other organisations interested in the promotion and development of skateboarding.

Tim Hollingsworth, CEO Sport England



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1. SKATEBOARDING BENEFITS

Skateboarding- Affordable, Accessible, Cultural, Diverse

Skateboarding has been in the UK since the early 1960s and has progressed through several stages, including commercial skateparks (late 1970s), wooden ramps (1980s), street-based riding (1990s and 2000s) and the re-emergence of skateparks (2000s) as open access facilities.

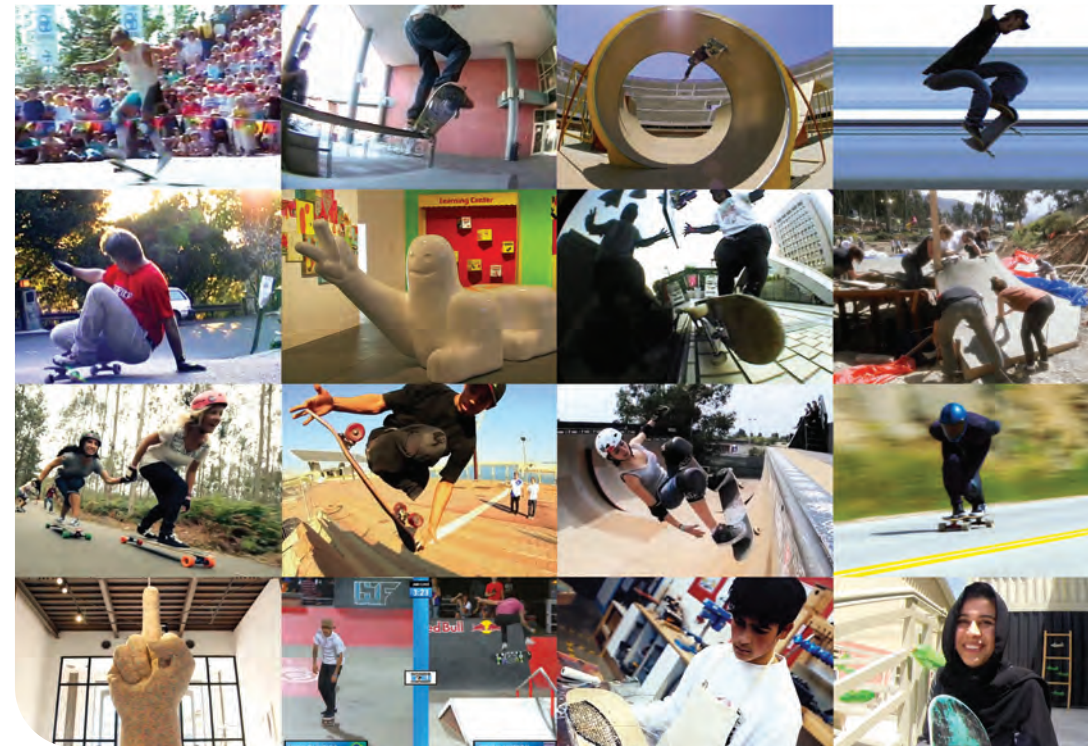
Today, it is widely practiced by 750,000 practitioners across just about every village, town and city nationwide. These riders are extremely diverse in age, socio-economic background and ethnicity and bring with them a rich range of cultures and lifestyles.

For some, skateboarding is a central defining part of their lives, often over several decades, while for others it is more of a casual activity, or a way to get from A to B. Some skaters are highly competitive and skateboarding will feature in the Tokyo Olympics, Paris 2024 and (almost certainly) Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

In the UK, there are well-established official governing and representative bodies such as Skateboard GB, Skateboard England and Skateboard Scotland (see also Appendix 3: A brief history of UK skateboarding).

Skateboarding (and the associated activities of BMX, roller skating, WCMX, scootering, etc.) has traditionally been undertaken by a wide range of riders, many of whom may not otherwise engage in sports activity. There are a number of reasons for this, chief amongst which are:-

- **Affordability:** Skateboards themselves cost £30-£150 and often need little maintenance or other equipment. In addition, most outdoor skateparks are free access facilities. This makes skateboarding easy, both to take up and to continue with.
- **Accessibility:** As with other 'participant sports' (surfing, cycling, parkour, BMX, etc.) individuals can ride without the need for team mates, training schedules, match fixtures or pitch / court bookings. Riders typically set their own achievement goals, without having to rely on winning, competitions, matches, etc. for a sense of satisfaction. Just roll up, ride and enjoy.



- **Culture:** Qualities and labels like 'cool', 'alternative', 'sub-cultural' and 'rebellious' are often associated with skateboarding, frequently attracting riders who are deterred from more organised or institutionalised kinds of sport. Other skateboarders are more mainstream, sporty, techie and brand-conscious. Either way, skateboarding has a broad cultural landscape, appealing to riders of varied approaches and attitudes.
- **Diversity:** Skateboarders and other skatepark users are often highly varied in age, gender, ethnicity, bodily ability, socio-economic background, etc. This inclusivity in turn allows more riders to feel able to engage in their chosen activity and engenders a general feeling of inclusivity at skateparks.

Physical activity – a powerful tool

Outcomes and benefits

Many local authorities are working to encourage more residents to engage in physical activity more often. There is a lot at stake. Potential outcomes that can be achieved for local communities through enabling more regular participation in sport and physical activity include:-

- Improved health and wellbeing
- More effective management of health conditions
- Higher levels of self-esteem
- Reduced prevalence of mental health conditions, including anxiety and depression
- More opportunities for social interaction and the fostering of community cohesion
- Local economic growth through job creation and place-shaping

Physical activity levels represent an overwhelmingly strong determinant of good health and wellbeing, playing a preventative role for young people and helping people better manage existing conditions.

Low levels of physical inactivity amongst the UK population are responsible for one in six deaths in the UK, with the cost to the nation estimated to be approximately £7.4 billion per year. Physical activity is a route to better health, stronger bones and muscles and greater self-esteem and a means of preventing more than 20 chronic conditions, some cancers, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and depression (Public Health England 2019).

Sport England’s Active Lives Children and Young People Survey highlights how just 17.5% of children are meeting the Chief Medical Officer’s guidelines of more than 60 minutes of activity a day, every day of the week (Sport England 2018). Similarly, research by Youth Sport Trust indicates that only 40% of girls and 54% of boys aged 11-18 enjoy physical activity, with enjoyment levels decreasing with age (Youth Sport Trust 2018).



More broadly, approximately 1 in 3 men and 1 in 2 women are not currently undertaking enough physical activity. The impact of reversing these trends would be significant for society and individuals; greater participation means a significantly lower risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, osteoarthritis, depression and dementia amongst other conditions (NHS 2018).

Physical activity is also increasingly identified as having a preventative role in addressing serious violence, with the government recently investing in projects that facilitate participation in sport at a time when instances of youth violence are growing (Home Affairs Committee 2019). Sport England recognised that providing opportunities for young people to participate in physical activity, as part of a wider public health approach to prevent violent crime, enables the development of relationships, social capital and resilience. Consequently, it invests over £10 million in projects that use sport to support crime reduction and has also pledged to increase investment in sport and physical activity for children in hot spot areas (Sport England 2019, DCMS 2019).

With physical activity a strong determinant of good health and wellbeing, many councils are exploring innovative ways to encourage more people to do more physical activity. Within the context of reduced budgets and the increased need to address the socio-economic implications of inactivity, it is important to identify new ways of reaching more people and getting them active in activities that suit them.

As the Local Government Association recognises, physical activity and sports also play a vital role in wider community cohesion, by engaging all sections of the community, breaking down barriers that may exist between them, and helping to dispel myths and negative stereotypes (LGA 2019).

Enabling role of Local Authorities

Research undertaken by the London School of Economics outlines the key barriers to participation in sport (LSE 2015). The most common barriers identified include the cost of accessing provision, a lack of opportunities within an individual's immediate area and a desire to participate in more 'informal' sports. For those with disabilities, the availability of appropriate facilities or equipment is also a key barrier to participation (Youth Sport Trust 2018).

Councils are uniquely positioned to take steps to address such barriers and enable people to live longer, healthier and happier lives (LGA 2017). As planning authorities, landowners and providers and commissioners of sport and health-related services, and by taking a leadership role in coordinating a place-based vision of sport and physical activity alongside partners and residents, councils can realise this untapped potential, whilst also delivering on broad local authority ambitions such as investment in local services, reduced expenditure and other outcomes.

To address barriers, increase participation and secure desirable outcomes, there is a need to think more innovatively about ways of enabling people to live more active lives. Increased provision of accessible and free facilities for more informal activities - such as skateparks, skateable spaces and skate spots for skateboarding - is one way to meet demand for an activity that, where managed correctly, is both currently under-served and recognised to be impactful for people and places.

With interest in skateboarding likely to reach new heights following the Tokyo Olympics, where skateboarding is featuring for the first time, the exploration of ways to unlock the potential of skateboarding within our communities is timely.



Skateboarding: untapped potential

Skateboarding today

There are around 50 million active skateboarders worldwide and 750,000 in the UK. With Tokyo Olympics set to showcase skateboarding in the Olympic Games for the first time, skateboarding is likely to become increasingly popular in the number and diversity of riders. This provides a new opportunity to release the activity's untapped potential within our communities.

And what potential skateboarding has! Across the world, the alternative and creative nature of skateboarding is recognised as a joyful way to encourage greater social interaction, tolerance and social capital within communities. Skateboarding is a subculture with strong connections with photography, film, fashion and music, underpinned by an entrepreneurial 'do it yourself' spirit. Whilst some consider skateboarding a sport, many skateboarders would argue that it is so much more than that – and it is that additionality that attracts many young people that councils might otherwise have little chance of connecting with.

Today, hundreds of thousands of skateboarders are exploring the UK's parks, streets and squares, as well as an increasing number of skateparks. After an initial series of mostly commercial facilities came and went in the late 1970s, skateparks – purpose-designed facilities for skateboarding – have now re-emerged as one of the pre-eminent locations for skateboarding. A skatepark, above all, is much more than just a sports facility. It is an active and diverse social space, allowing riders and non-riders alike a place to meet, chat and hang out.

Learning to ride and converse at a skatepark leads to increased sense of independence, autonomy, social skills, self-confidence, friendship and peer group status. All of this promotes social cohesion, allowing diverse people of all different backgrounds the opportunity to develop substantial and meaningful relationships, and so can make a major contribution to the well-being and prosperity of our communities.

Benefits and outcomes

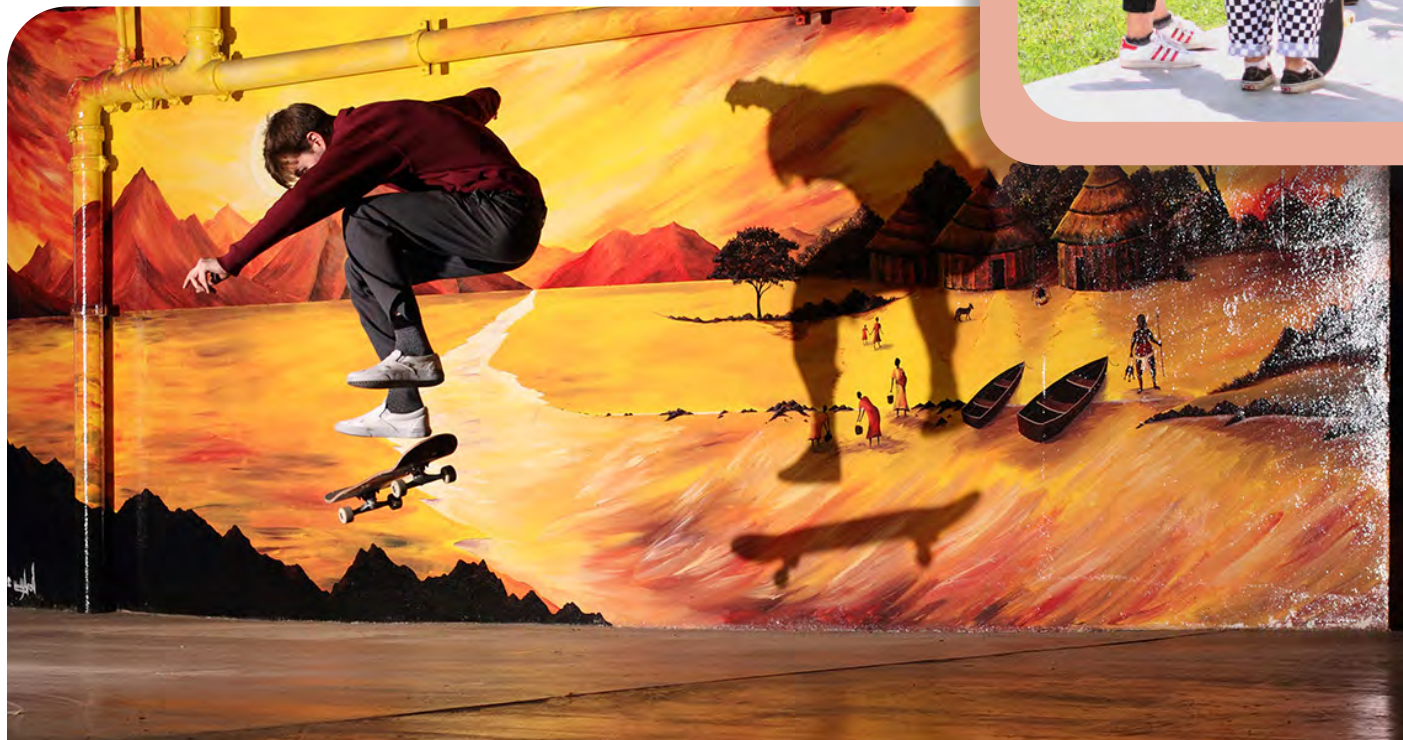
Skateparks, alongside riding in public spaces and streets, offer a range of different benefits both to their riders and to the wider community, and which numerous reports and academic studies (Borden 2019) have identified as including:-

- **Physical and mental health:** Skateparks generate massive physical and mental health benefits, often among those who otherwise might not be active. These benefits range from introducing young children to sport as a playful activity, to engaging teenagers who might otherwise be unattracted to team sports, to twenty-something millennials and Generation Z'ers expanding their sense of community, to middle-aged riders looking to keep active, alert and socially-connected.
- **Disability:** A recent and significant trend in skateboarding and related wheeled-activities has been the rise in 'adaptive' riders using skateparks and other skate terrains. Users include those who are blind, visually-impaired, deaf and/or are challenged with a range of physical and mental disabilities. WCMX – riding wheelchairs specially adapted for ramps and skateparks – has become especially popular. Several professionals are adaptive skateboarders, and skateboarding and WCMX may well be part of the 2024 and 2028 Paralympics (Berrics 2019).



The diverse nature of skatepark users creates significant and meaningful bonds both within and across different social groups. For example, at any one time a medium-sized skatepark might well incorporate young boys on scooters, girls on bicycles, teenage boys street-skateboarding, millennial women on quad roller skates, and older BMX riders and skaters in the bowls and pools, plus many other variants. Ethnicity, social background, gender, sexual identity can also be diverse, among a community that is constantly observing, talking, and learning from each other.

- Arts and creativity; Because riders are always looking for the new possibilities in how they engage with their terrain, skateboarding is inherently creative as an activity. It consequently fosters individuals who are also interested in photography, film, art, fashion, graphic design, industrial design, music, creative writing, etc. The correlation between creativity and skateboarding is so great, that two schools in Kent (The Far Academy, Whitstable) and Sweden (Bryggeriet, Malmö) now even use skateboarding as the central pillar of all their secondary-level education.



- **Entrepreneurship:** Skateboarding teaches riders not to be afraid of failure, to take risks and to get going with their own ventures. Consequently, skateboarding has a very large number of companies, manufacturers and brands associated with it, many of which are small-scale local enterprises. Many skateboarders will set up local brands selling their own decks, clothing, magazines and other skate-related merchandise.
- **Professionalism:** For some riders, skateboarding is a route to a career, perhaps even as a professional athlete (skateboarding will be at 2020, 2024 and 2028 Olympics and beyond). Other riders work with one of the many skateboard-related brands, competing at local, regional and national levels, and / or becoming well-known through social media.





The FAR Academy

- **Citizenship:** Becoming involved in the procurement and/or community administration of skate shops has led many skaters from being community outsiders to engaged citizens, people who are actively involved in how their local space is operated and organised. In addition, in many local areas the provision of a skatepark has led to significant reductions in incidents of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. For example, in Dorchester, a new skatepark led to a 45% decline in anti-social behaviour (BBC 2014).
- **Out-reach:** NGOs, social enterprises and charities are increasingly utilising skateboarding to engage with hard-to-reach youth, recent immigrants, socially isolated adults and others who find themselves outside of community cores. Skateparks are often a central part of this process, providing places to meet, skate and converse.





Skatepark consultation event with local riders

- **Public space:** Rather than excluding skateboarders from public spaces, some enlightened cities and land-owners have realised that skateboarding can be readily incorporated into shared, multi-purpose domains, sometimes called 'skateable spaces'. These inclusive public places welcome all city dwellers, with immediate cultural, social and economic benefits.
- **Tourism:** Because no two skateparks are exactly alike, those skateparks with unique and/or high quality designs will attract visitors, some of whom travel hundreds of miles, or even internationally.
- **Urban regeneration:** Some skateparks, like F51 in Folkestone, have been conceived and constructed as part of wider urban regeneration projects, helping to redevelop a whole neighbourhood or part of a city.

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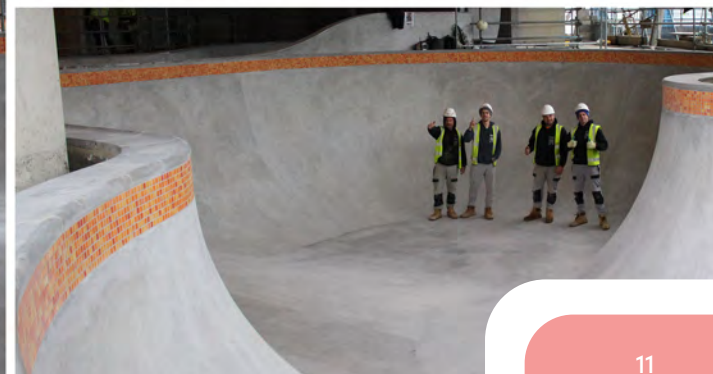




Community project skatepark on a Native American reservation 'Skate or Die'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch>



Nottingham public space activated by skateboarding



Multi-million pound, multi-storey F51 skatepark under construction in Folkestone

2. SKATEBOARDING AND SKATEPARKS

Riding terrains

Most UK skateparks are situated outdoors and are constructed from a variety of materials including concrete, metal, composite and timber. Indoor skateparks tend to be constructed from timber. It is generally recommended that outdoor skateparks should be constructed in concrete because the material boasts a better and safer riding surface, significant durability with minimal maintenance, lower noise pollution and customisability of design. Skateparks typically incorporate one or more of the three main types of riding terrain.

Street

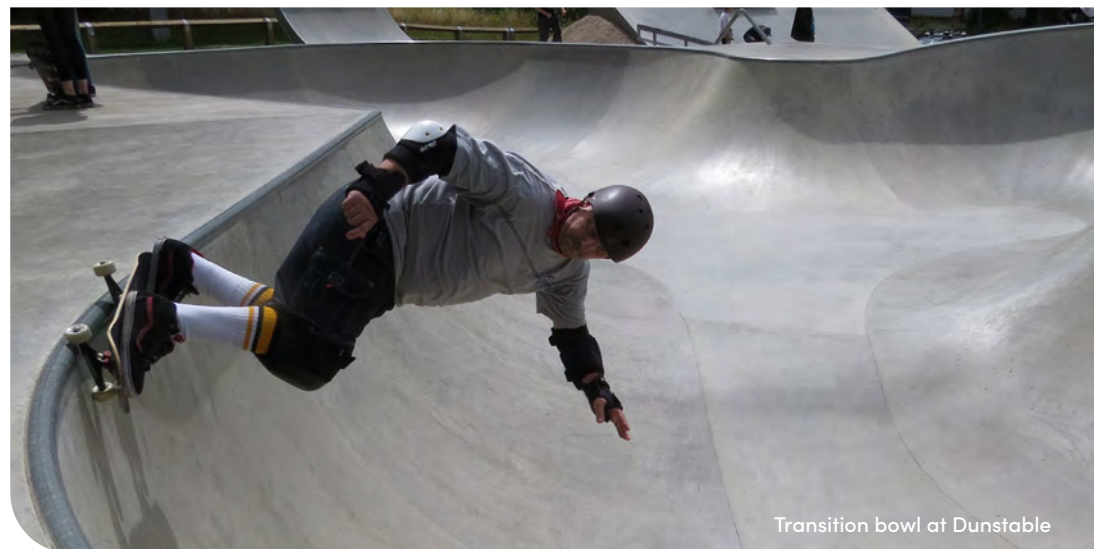
Street courses – sometimes known as street plazas – are designed to emulate normal urban streets and places, with a range of steps, flat-angled banks, ledges, rails and other features arranged on flat ground. Other features can include pole jams, pyramids, manual pads, hips, Jersey barriers, Hubbas, Wembley gaps, Euro gaps and fire hydrants (see Appendix 2 glossary).

Depending on size and layout, street courses can often be ridden by more than one rider at a time. Beginners, intermediate and advanced riders alike will often use these areas.

Commonly, street course areas require longer spaces, so that riders can session features in a run with time to set themselves up for tricks and roll-out. This is how street skaters tend to approach riding in an urban environment. A street course forms the basis of the Olympic 'Street' event.



Street section at Acton skatepark



Transition bowl at Dunstable

Transition

Transition areas of skateparks are typically made from bowls, pools and other features which are curved in cross-section, allowing riders to ride up, down and in between the side walls. A bowl or pool is often a stand-alone feature measuring 1m - 4m deep, with 'coping' in the form a metal rail (bowls) or specially shaped stone (pools) embedded in its surrounding edge. 'Vert' transition is where the bowl or pool wall reaches vertical. Normally, a bowl or pool is ridden by one rider at a time, for a brief run lasting around 30 seconds. Depending on their design, depth and size, bowls and pools may be more suited to intermediate and advanced riders.

Other transition features can include mini-ramps and quarter-pipes (1m-2m tall) and elements shaped like a taco, volcano, snake run (similar to a bobsleigh track) or mogul landscape.

Transition terrain, in contrast to street areas, these can fit into smaller and more confined spaces; for example a small bowl or mini-ramp could fit into a 10m x 10m space whereas a simple street run will require 25m x 3.5m upwards to function properly. The organic nature of transitions mean that they can be designed to work around tight corners and awkward spaces. Transition terrain forms the basis of the Olympic 'Park' event.

Flow

These areas of skateparks are typically a hybrid of street and transition elements, arranged in a fluid and open style. Depending on size and layout, flow areas can often be ridden by more than one rider at a time. Beginners, intermediate and advanced riders alike will often use these areas.

This type of terrain typically features in contemporary skatepark facilities. The new generation of skateboarders enjoy both styles of riding, switching between different disciplines during a session.

Other terrains

In addition to these three main terrains, skateparks can also include:-

- **DIY:** In some areas, skaters have designed and constructed their own do-it-yourself (DIY) terrains. These range from semi-permanent, elaborate and world-famous facilities to highly temporary, small scale and local endeavours.
- **Freestyle areas:** Perfectly flat areas, suitable for intricate technical tricks.
- **MegaRamps:** A highly specialised combination of elevated launch ramp, large gap and ultra-high quarter-pipe. These are typically constructed only for professional competitions or spectacular entertainment events, and so far none have appeared in the UK.
- **Pump track:** Undulating paths, often in a circular or track-like arrangement around which a rider can continuously 'pump'.
- **Snake run:** A winding track with transitions on either side, usually flowing downhill into a bowl or reservoir.
- **Skateable space or shared surface:** Not strictly a skatepark at all, but an open public space (park, square, street, etc.) deliberately designed to allow for skateboarding to take place.
- **Slalom courses:** A gently sloped path (or flat path with additional launch ramp), with a series of cones for slalom racing.
- **Vert ramps:** Large above-ground half-pipes, c3m - 5m high and topped by a high-level platform. Typically used only by highly skilled transition riders.



Open flow bowl at Lewes skatepark

Above all, it's the quality of the design and construction of the skatepark – rather than its overall size or number of features – that is most important. The most successful skatepark is one that has been well-designed and attuned to the needs of its local riders, and has been skilfully and carefully built with experienced people. A common by-product of a well-designed and much-loved skatepark facility is a riding community that self-polices, looks after and cares for the space. In particular, concrete outdoor facilities are designed to last for many decades, and therefore the quality of design and construction must be built-in at the front-end.



A short-lived DIY skatepark



Newhaven pump track

Riders

As their name suggests, skateparks are often focused at the needs of skateboarders. In fact, many skateparks are used by a variety of different wheeled devices, including:-

- Skateboards
- BMX
- Other bicycles
- WCMX (adapted wheelchairs)
- Scooters
- Roller skates (traditional and in-line)

Each of these equipment types has subtly different requirements, which a good skatepark provider will be able to incorporate in their designs.

It is important to realise that a skatepark is not a toddler playground. Although very young children may enjoy skatepark slopes and shapes, particularly at less busy times, skateparks are primarily intended for skilled users, plus those actively gaining these skills. Skilled riders often move at high speeds, with attendant risks of collision and injury. Parents of younger children sometimes need to be reminded of this aspect of skatepark protocol through signage and other means.

Community spaces

Skateparks are not just sports facilities, but significant community spaces, and therefore often include a high quality of landscape design for their immediate setting and surroundings, in which the community can exist and develop. A good skatepark should ideally therefore provide and/or be near to:-

- Places for riders to wait for their opportunity to ride, and/or to rest
- Safe and/or observable places to leave bags
- Places for non-riders to sit and observe
- Lighting for riding and non-riding areas
- Signage for protocols and rules
- Tool station, and/or place to store brushes
- Litter bins
- Water fountains
- Bike racks
- BBQ and picnic facilities
- Shaded areas
- WiFi
- Café
- Toilets
- Public transport
- Car parking

The most elaborate skateparks may additionally include:-

- On-site skate shop for sale and hire of equipment
- Storage (especially for equipment used for beginner lessons)
- PA system
- Awnings for shade and weather protection over riding areas
- Space for temporary spectator sitting and filming at events
- Electricity and water supplies (for maintenance and events)
- Associated retail opportunities (restaurants, clothes retail, etc.)
- Other sport facilities, such as climbing walls, trampolines, parkour equipment, etc.



Highly serviced Dubai skatepark with shading canopy

3. SKATEPARKS: SIZES AND EXAMPLES

Skateparks come in a wide range of sizes, designs and prevalence. Indeed, like golf courses, no two skatepark facilities are exactly alike, with each offering a near unique combination of challenges and opportunities for its riders. As the international governing body World Skate states, *'the idea of skateparks being unique in design enhances the progress and creativity of skateboarding'* (World Skate 2019).

Costs for skateparks vary greatly depending on size, ground conditions, materials and the riding features. As a ballpark figure, an outdoor concrete skatepark costs approximately £400 per m² for its design and construction. Indoor skateparks, usually using wood for their riding terrains, are more variable in cost, depending on the type of building construction, lease arrangement, etc.



Skateparks can be broadly categorised into the following groups:-

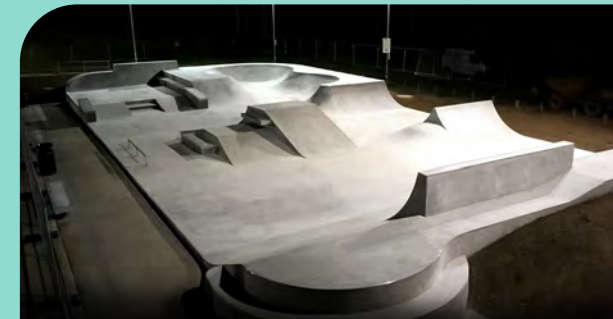
Micro



Small



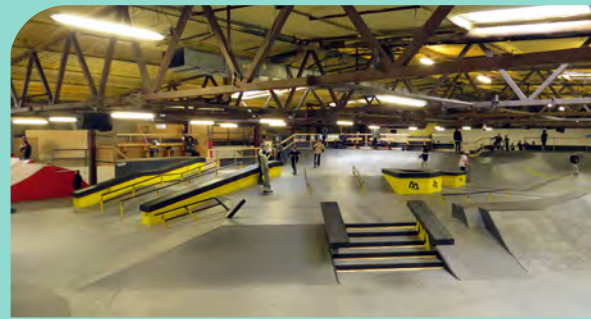
Medium



Large



Regional and National



International



Micro: up to 150m²

A micro skatepark will typically feature a minimal number of small ramps, bowls or street obstacles to skate, dependent on budget, design and requirements of local users, catering for limited styles of skateboarding. 1 to 5 users at any one time. Approximate cost £50,000 - £100,000.



Warmley skatepark



Small: 150m² to 500m²

A small skatepark will typically feature a minimal amount of ramps, bowls or street obstacles to skate, dependent on budget, design and requirements of local users, catering for limited styles of skateboarding. 5 to 20 users at any one time. Approximate cost £100,000 - £175,000.



Cogan skatepark at Penarth, integrating artwork and sculptural shapes



Medium: 500m² to 1000²

A medium skatepark will typically feature a small selection of ramps, bowls or obstacles to skate, dependent on budget, design and requirements of local users, catering for several styles of skateboarding. 20 to 50 users at any one time. Approximate cost £175,000 - £300,000.



Harwich skatepark



Large: 1,000m² to 3,000m²

A large skatepark will typically feature a good range of ramps, bowls and street obstacles to skate, dependent on budget, design and requirements of local users, catering for several styles of skateboarding. 50 to 100 users at any one time. Approximate cost £350,000 - £800,000.



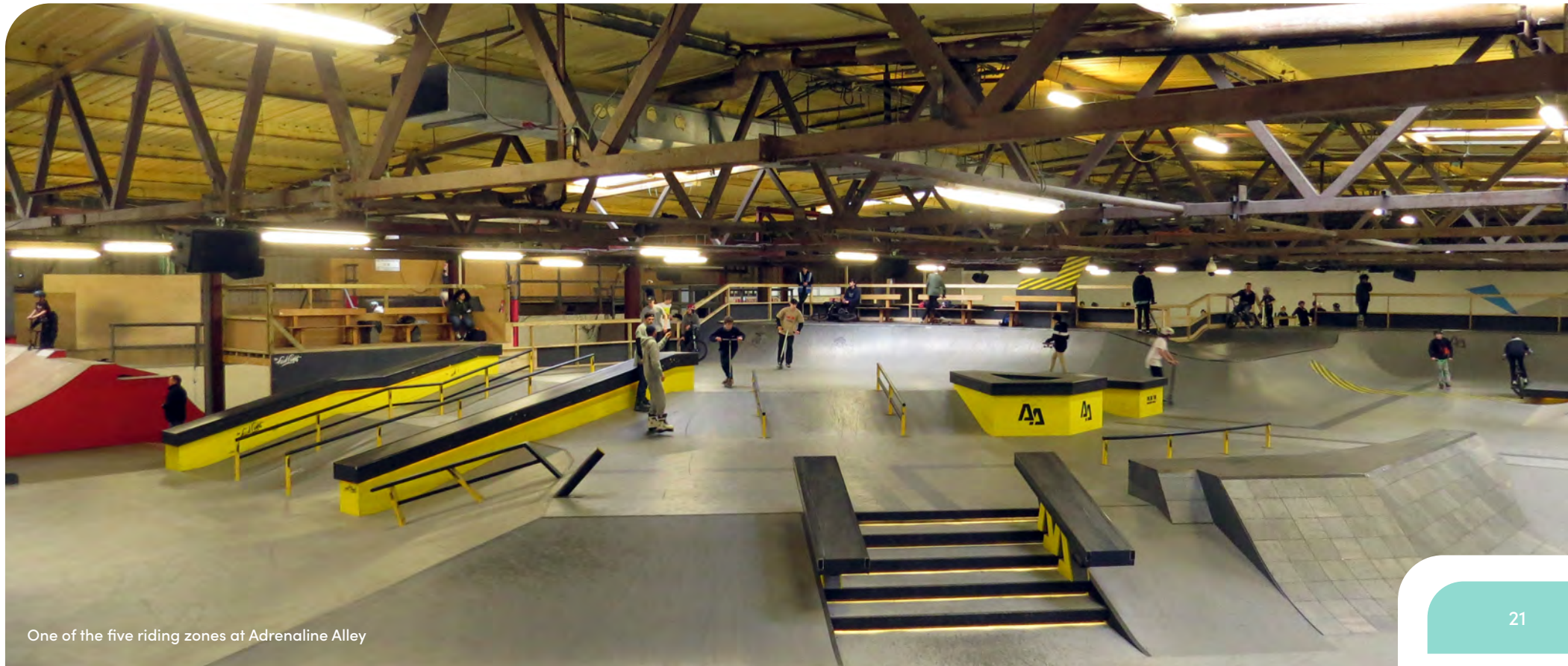
Concrete waves, Newquay



Concrete waves, Newquay

Regional and national: 3,000m² to 5,000m²

Regional and national skateparks will typically feature a very wide variety of skateable terrains, catering for all styles of skateboarding. They typically feature large transitioned areas, half-pipes, bowls and street obstacles suitable for high level championship competitions. They will typically be indoor venues to allow all-year skateboarding in a dry and safe environment. Should include suitable facilities for athletes and spectators and meet the competition criteria for the specific disciplines they intend to serve. Over 100 users at any one time. Approximate cost £800,000 - £2.0+ million.



One of the five riding zones at Adrenaline Alley

International: over 5,000m²

Similar to a national skatepark, but with an even greater variety of skateable terrain, including some very large, complex or unique features. Approximate cost over £2 million, dependent on buildings, size, ground conditions, materials and riding features.

Each of these skateparks has its own strengths and weaknesses and you cannot determine what is best for your community until you fully understand what your options are and have talked to both local riders and an experience skatepark provider. A small skatepark with a limited feature set may well suit the needs of a few local riders, and a number of these facilities around a town or borough will make a significant contribution to many neighbourhoods. Conversely, a large skatepark with a variety of features will accommodate more riders, many of whom will be willing travel for an hour or more to ride there. One or two of these skateparks will make a significant contribution to a city as a whole, and will have lasting benefits for riders of all levels.



4. SKATEPARKS: PROCUREMENT

This section describes the most important stages and elements of the skatepark procurement process. Each project is, of course distinctly different and faces a diverse set of individual challenges, and most projects will not necessarily follow this route exactly.

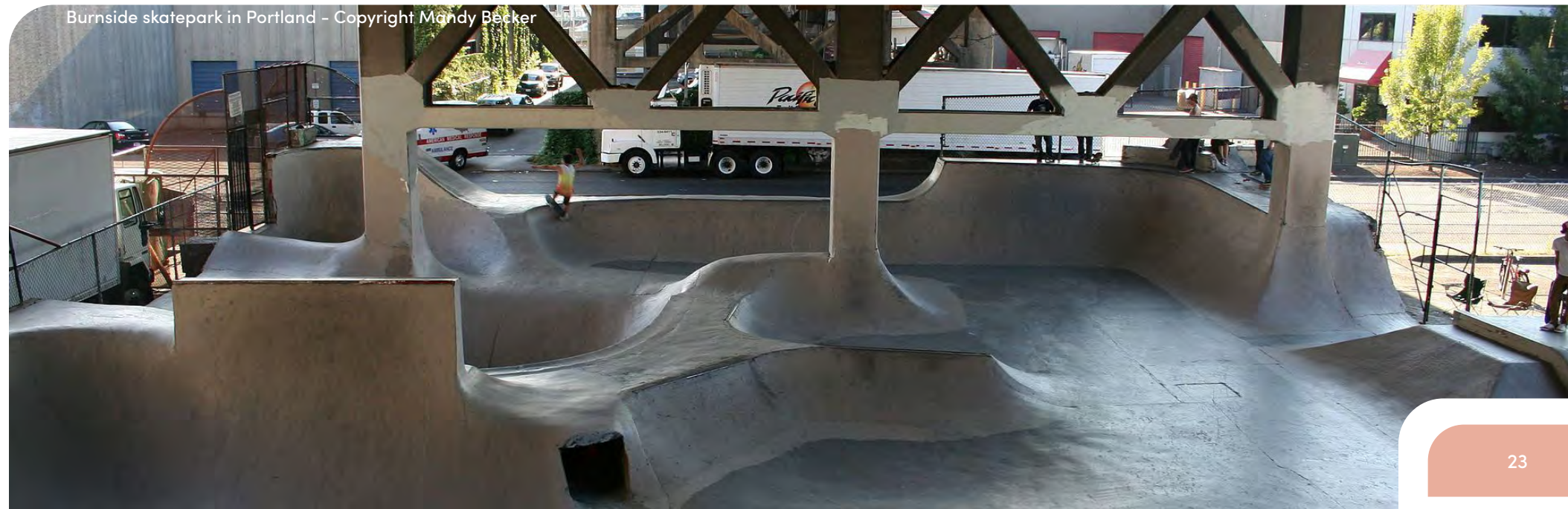
Partnership

The art of skatepark design and construction is highly specialised and the process of getting a high-quality skatepark is uniquely complicated. This process should be negotiated carefully and demands the support of experienced individuals.

The UK skatepark industry has matured over the last decade, with the emergence of a small number of design and build companies owned and run by riders themselves. These contractors have been inspired by their international counterparts, such as Dreamland and Grindline in the USA, and by the construction of truly ground-breaking projects such as Burnside skatepark in Portland, Oregon.

The rise of rider-owned and rider-run skatepark companies has been crucial to skatepark construction. Nobody is better placed to design and build a skatepark than an experienced skateboarder, and ever since riders have become involved, the quality of skateparks around the world has risen exponentially. Amazing skateparks breed amazing skateparks.

Due to the understandable relative lack of experience and manpower in many councils and community groups, skatepark builders have become much more heavily involved in bringing projects to fruition. With many years of experience in the field, these contractors have become extremely knowledgeable regarding the processes involved and are increasingly using this expertise to provide support and advice.



Burnside skatepark in Portland - Copyright Mandy Becker

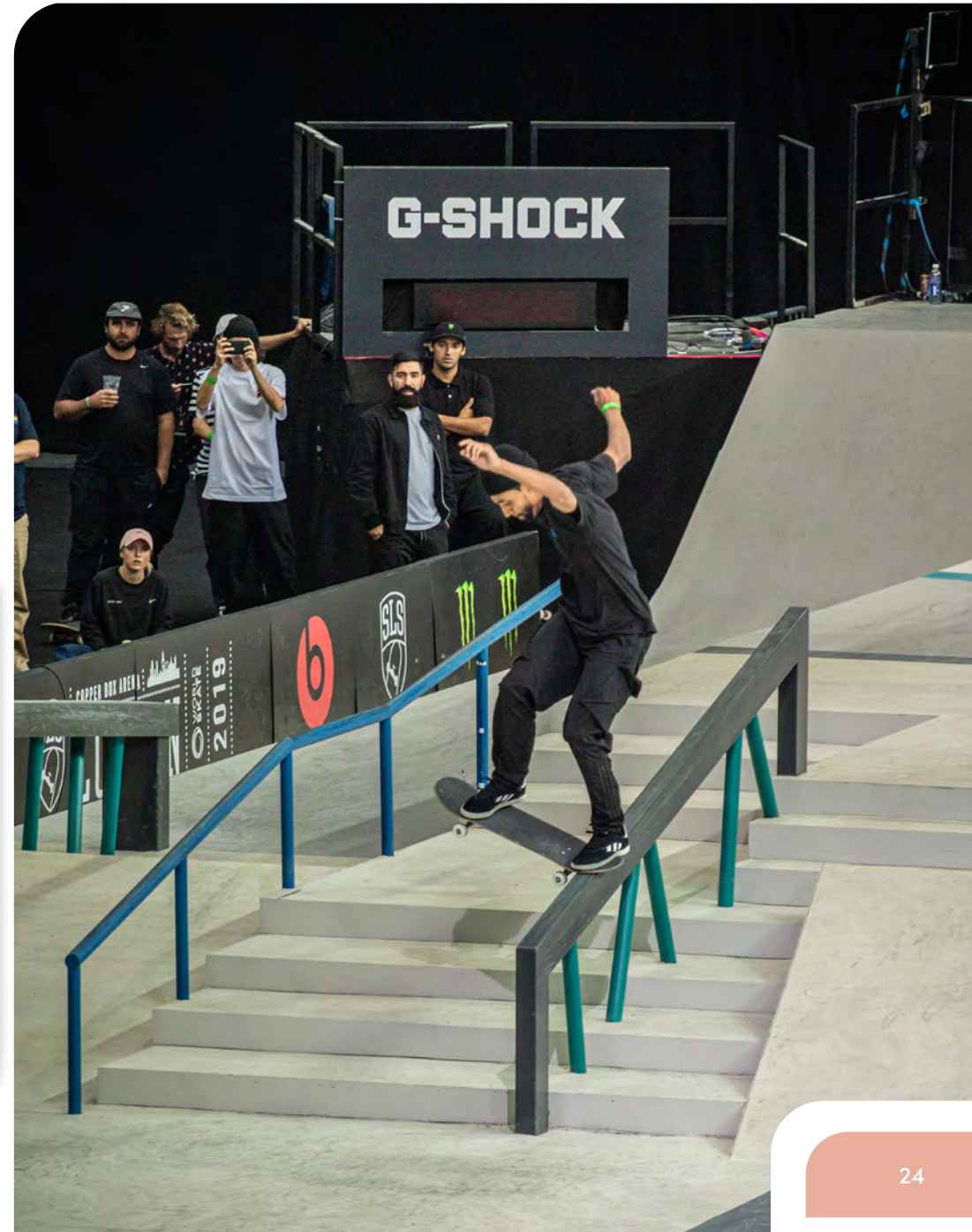
Often, these changes have inspired a radical rethink of the tendering process and a new way of working, a reversal of the old procurement model. Rather than employing a skatepark company to just design and build a skatepark, councils or community groups now typically work with contractors much earlier on in the skatepark process and tender for projects up front. This model allows the skatepark company to work closely with the council or community group, providing support in project consultation, design, planning and fundraising as required.

This support has proved invaluable and is a fast-track route to success. The council or community group commits to the contractor, while the contractor in turn has a responsibility to make the project happen. In short, the contractor works as a speculative partner, helping to both develop the project and to build it once planning and funding are in place. This is a mutually beneficial relationship working towards a common goal.

Identifying need

The idea for a skatepark facility may come from many different directions, a group of keen local riders approaching the council or a community group, parents starting a campaign for wheeled sports facilities for their children, a council looking to replace an existing facility, or a social enterprise group looking to meet community needs.

- Existing provision: What other skateparks (if any) are nearby? How close are they, are they within walking distance for young people? Are they outdated, non-compliant with safety guidelines, or simply at the end of their serviceable life?
- Demand: How many young people live in the vicinity and how many of these individuals ride some form of wheeled sports device? Approach the local schools and youth club to determine this. How many other riders are there of different ages and riding types? Social media and local consultations are often good ways to reach these user groups.



Consultation

If you are a local group of riders, then, once you feel confident there is a real demand for wheeled sports in the local area, you should form a campaign group to represent the needs of the wider community. It is imperative that you make contact with the local council to communicate the demand for the project. The majority of UK skateparks are built on council-owned land and it is generally the council that will ultimately take ownership of the facility with responsibility for and insurance and maintenance. Importantly, the council will usually wish to be involved in the tendering process.

Overall, community/stakeholder support is essential to the success of a skatepark project, and this support needs to come from:-

- local riders
- local residents
- the council
- community groups

Commonly, there are also a number of other stakeholders in the process, such as the local planning authority, Environment Agency, utilities companies, etc. Running a well-publicised community consultation event is potentially the most effective way of making contact with people and exploring the way forward. Also consider setting up a Facebook page and/or Instagram account to provide online presence and point of contact. Creating an online poll or questionnaire can help to evidence numbers and opinions.



Location

Choosing the best location for a skatepark can often be one of the most challenging and important decisions in the process. The wrong location may negatively impact upon planning permission, cause significant issues for construction, discourage riders from using the facility, or encourage anti-social behaviour. Ultimately you will need to enlist the help of an experienced skatepark contractor to properly assess the preferred site location. There are some important factors to consider.

Access

How easy is it to get into the location site, is there suitable access for construction purposes and at what cost? How close is the proposed location to hardstanding? Does the topography of the land and the type of ground allow for a trackway or a stone haul road? What are the reinstatement requirements once construction has been completed? These questions must be considered early on because they may be cost prohibitive.

Ensuring accessibility for the riding community is equally important. The future success of the project depends on people being able to sensibly get to the facility. In short, can enough people, from a range of difference ages and backgrounds, all easily get to the proposed site?

Safety

Is the proposed site safe? If the proposed space is hidden away at the bottom of a field or screened by trees, this can reduce natural lines of sight and encourage anti-social behaviour. It often makes sense to locate a skatepark in a central location, presenting the facility as a beautiful piece of rideable architecture. It should be a community space that encourages people to come into town, park or other accessible location, and once there to use the local facilities, promoting secondary spending and being seen as an asset to the neighbourhood.



The surrounding landscape

It is important to seriously consider the topography of the land. Do the levels on the site readily allow for skatepark construction? For example, if the slope is too severe, it may mean that the groundworks are cost prohibitive. This can be more formally assessed with a survey.

Are there trees close to site? If the trees are protected, this may mean the site is unviable. There are guidelines in place when building close to protected trees. Even if the trees are not protected, it is important that a facility is constructed beyond the overhanging tree canopy, this is both a safety consideration and a construction concern. As trees grow, the root systems will seek out water in and around the concrete, which can lead to cracks in the facility.

Does the proposed location sit at a low point in the surrounding ground or near to water? It is essential to check the water table and understand whether drainage of the space might become a problem, prior to committing to a design.

The UK government offers a useful online resource that allows you to undertake a basic flood risk assessment (Flood map 2019). It may also be necessary to undertake a geotechnical survey, which will help you understand the ground conditions and how effectively the site can drain. These ground conditions may dictate the style of park that can be built in the site. Ideally, it makes sense to choose a flat (or near flat) grass field location. This way you are working with a blank canvas. Concrete skateparks work best when they are tied into the landscape by bringing the grass space up to the edge of the facility, so that it flows with the rises and falls in the space. Building with the land will enable the facility to look as if it has grown out of the ground, reducing the need for handrails and their ongoing maintenance costs. When skateparks are landscaped in this manner, they are much more aesthetically pleasing, taking on a sculptural look. Grass areas are also normally easier to drain and access.



Conflict of activities

Is the skatepark near to any other facilities, such as football pitches or play areas, which may lead to unwanted interaction through stray balls, very young children, etc? RoSPA commonly recommend locating a wheeled sports area be at least 20m from the nearest sports pitch. This would be the same for a children's play area. This distance can be reduced with fencing, but this is not ideal and presents extra costs. Separation of activities should be treated seriously as it can also affect insurance of the space.

Noise

Fields in Trust recommend that a wheeled sport space should be at least 30m from the boundary of local residential property. This is a minimum distance and should be looked at carefully. The project can be halted during the planning process, or even potentially removed after construction, if noise is considered to be a serious environmental health issue.

It is preferable to locate a skatepark at least 50m - 80m from housing, as this maintains a sensible distance while allowing for informal supervision. In most instances, it will be necessary to commission a formal acoustic survey in order to satisfy planning requirements.

Services

Whilst a site might look suitable, there could potentially be a multitude of services buried in the ground. The presence of electrical service cables, gas or water pipes might mean that a site is not viable. The presence of services should therefore be checked and located early in the process.

Land ownership

It essential to ensure that permissions are in place to allow a project to happen. Does the council own the land and support the project? If the land is not owned by the council, can the project legally be built in the proposed location?

Detailed below are some of the factors that should be considered when assessing a proposed location for a skatepark. Ideally, this location should be supported by all of the stakeholders (council, community groups, local riders, residents) to be successful. The facility should be seen as a public space, available to all and a great addition to the community.

Once you have considered a location or number of locations, this would be the moment to approach a contractor for a professional opinion. Choosing a location is probably the most important decision in the process and it must be done RIGHT. With the benefit of experience in successful planning applications the contractor can ensure this happens efficiently and effectively.



Skate Nottingham

Considering potential partners

Skatepark projects are best suited to a contractor/partner who is fully prepared to support the Council and community group throughout the process. Choosing a contractor early on can be determined by undertaking an up front tender / quotation process. The chosen partner should be prepared to help the council and community group draw up an informed and site-specific design, negotiate the planning process, work with all stakeholders to ensure appropriate consultation and help identify and apply for funding opportunities.

Having an experienced and committed partner on board means the process will run more smoothly, efficiently and effectively. The contractor can draw on all their experiences in delivering skateparks from start to finish, while avoiding the numerous and common pitfalls and which can so easily stall the skatepark process. At present there are a small number of experienced and quality skatepark builders in the UK. Please contact Skateboard England for an up to date list.



Tendering

A well built concrete skatepark will last for decades and, as such, the decision on selecting a contractor must focus from the start on the quality of construction. Council tenders are commonly 80% - 100% focused on quality. The council and community group should seek references from shortlisted companies and follow them up, and should also visit at least one skatepark from each tendering contractor so that direct comparisons can be made.

A tendering council should offer companies the opportunity to visit the skatepark site and ask important questions about the project. The tender should include a design element so that companies can demonstrate their creativity and skillsets in their submission, so council and community group can compare and contrast design proposals. Tenderers should be required present their designs and explain their proposals in a formal setting. Tendered proposals should include a programme of works, breakdown of costs, method statement, specification and all the required health and safety documentation. At this stage, tenderers should make it clear who is going to be undertaking the construction works, to avoid the potential of sub-contracting the build to a third party. Demonstrating that the company has the skill sets and resources to undertake all elements required should be considered.

Tenders should meet the aspirations of a council or community group at that point in time. However, these aspirations may develop during the consultation and design development process and this should be clearly stated to all tenderers. The winning contractor will have the opportunity to design and build a skatepark, subject to planning permission and funding being achieved. Post tender, the council can confirm the tender decision with a letter of intent. A letter of intent formalises the will of both parties to strive for a mutually advantageous outcome to the project. Please contact Skateboard England for an example of a tender document.

Design standards

Quality of design is critically important to the success of a skatepark. The entire process relies on a design idea that brings to life all the hopes and dreams of the people involved. With design comes great responsibility. It is essential that the designers are highly experienced and should be riders themselves; without this first-hand experience it is impossible to understand, meet and stretch the aspirations of the stakeholders. With skateparks, the devil is in the detail, it is the little things that can make or break a facility.

Fundamentals

- **Simplicity of space:** Simple functional spaces look better and ride better. Less is more when it comes to skateboarding.
- **Flow flow flow:** Focus on flowing lines that link up through the entire facility. This is the most important part of riding in a park. Ensure that lines in the space are numerous, fast, fun and free-flowing.
- **Zones:** Create discrete spaces within the skatepark. This allows greater numbers of riders to use the facility at the same time and safely.
- **Negative space:** Encourage flat rolling space, this is greatly desired by riders. Let the facility breathe.
- **Elements:** Ensure there is enough roll-in and roll-out space between features. If not, they won't work. Ensure they work in conjunction with each other. Only a rider will know this.
- **Masterplan:** Think carefully how the features fit together. Some shapes just won't connect. Don't use blending to make things fit. Link elements seamlessly and effortlessly.
- **Quality over quantity:** Ensure the facility does a few things perfectly. Do not try to cram too much into the space. Don't allow the space to become a Jack-of-all-trades but master of none.
- **Progression:** Always look to challenge riders, even if it's only through one specific feature.
- **Landscaping:** Wherever possible bring the landscape up to the facility and vice-versa. Blending the park with the land removes the need for handrails and gives the space a beautiful aesthetic.
- **Colour and texture:** Bring the facility to life with touches of colour, different materials and shapes. Create a high-quality look and feel. Design facilities that everyone can be proud of. Concrete is for life - you only get one chance to get it right.
- **Unique qualities:** Do something different to the other nearby skateparks. If the next nearest skatepark is all transition terrain, then perhaps your skatepark should focus on street and flow.

The following guidelines are relevant:-

- British Standards Institution (2019), BSEN 14974:2019 Skateparks. Safety requirements and test methods. This applies to skateparks for public use intended for the use of skateboards, other roller sports equipment and BMX bikes. It specifies safety requirements and requirements for testing and marking, information supplied by the manufacturer, information for users, as well as for inspection and maintenance to protect users and third parties from hazards.
- British Standards Institution (2007), BSEN 12193:2007 Light and lighting, sports lighting. The European standard that deals with sports lighting to ensure good visual conditions for players, athletes, referees, spectators and CCTV transmission.
- Fields In Trust, Guidance for Outdoor Sport & Play (2018). First published in the 1930s, the Guidance is based on a broad recommendation that 6 acres of accessible green space per 1,000 head of population enables residents of all ages to participate in sport and play; 75% of local authorities adopt this or an equivalent standard. Updated in 2015 to reflect policy changes including the National Planning Policy Framework, and includes recommendations on the provision of amenity and natural green space. English, Scottish and Welsh editions are available.
- The Equality Act 2010. The Act provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all, and protects people's characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. It replaces the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, often referred to as DDA.

Outdoor skateparks: why concrete?

Skateboarding started out in the beach cities and suburbs of California in the 1960s. In the 1970s, Californian skaters started jumping fences and riding drained concrete swimming pools. The skaters were instantly attracted to the smooth surface, curves and corners that these pools offered. One pioneering group were the 'Dogtown' skateboarding community in Venice Beach, Los Angeles (see the documentary Dogtown and Z-Boys).

While many things about skateboarding have changed since the 1960s and 1970s, concrete remains the riding surface of choice for the significant majority of skateboarders. The advantages of concrete for outdoor skateparks include the following:-

- Allows for a seamless riding surface with no fixtures and fittings, unlike modular ramp structures.
- Enables riders to generate more speed because it is solid and dense and, when built properly, allows for an ultra-smooth finish.
- Requires very little maintenance over its lifetime, unlike modular ramps structures that will need thousands of pounds of ongoing investment and resurfacing.
- Will not rot, and is a more suitable material to use given the UK climate.
- The quietest riding surface, minimising any noise issues.
- Allows the designer to create bespoke facilities tailored to the local riding community's needs.
- Can be finished into shapes that are cannot be readily replicated in wood or Skatelite.
- Minimises the need for handrails, which would lead to on-going maintenance costs.
- Can be blended with the existing topography, enabling a more aesthetic overall landscape design.
- According to RoSPA, has significant safety benefits over modular ramp structures.

The Tony Hawk Foundation - set up by Tony Hawk, the most successful and influential pioneer of modern skateboarding, to promote high quality skateparks worldwide - states that:-

Prefabricated ramps are ideal for temporary, private or residential applications, such as a backyard ramp, but have demonstrated a pattern of failure when used as municipal [outdoor] facilities. This cannot be emphasized strongly enough: a steel, wood, or polymer-surfaced material is not an adequate material for a municipal skatepark. Concrete is unequivocally the only material you should be considering.

This view is also supported by RoSPA's David Yearley, the most experienced and respected safety inspector in the UK and the lead expert across Europe for wheeled sports facilities.

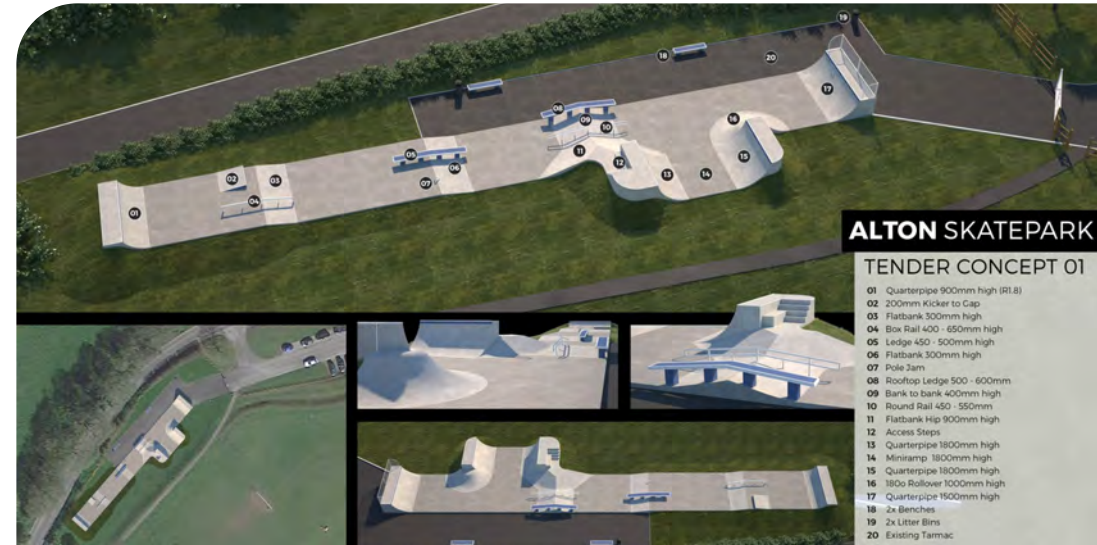


Concrete skatepark construction

Planning permission

The planning permission process is the most robust form of public consultation you can undertake. Planning permission enables you to build your skatepark in an agreed location, within a 3-year timeframe.

Ideally, the chosen contractor should support the council and community group with this part of the process. The planning documentation required is often complex and detailed. The contractor will have experienced this process many times and can apply this knowledge to support the group and complete the necessary paperwork. The contractor will commonly provide visualisations, a design and access statement, and respond to consultees and public commentary during the planning consultation period.



A pre-application can identify the precise requirements of the planning authority. This would normally include:-

- Description of the proposal
- Site address and location plan
- Site plans and photographs
- Floor space
- Accessibility
- Land ownership
- Details of consultation with neighbours and local community
- Details of materials to be used for the build, and proposals for landscaping and any ancillary equipment
- Vehicle access and hardstanding
- Lighting
- Proposed designs (including block plan, sections and elevations)
- Design Access Statement (explanation of how a proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and demonstration that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users)

Depending on site specifics you may also be required to provide any or all of the following surveys or assessments:

- Arboricultural survey
- Biodiversity survey
- Ecological survey
- Structural survey
- Visual impact assessment
- Transport assessment
- Flood risk assessment
- Hydraulic calculations
- Land contamination assessment
- Geotechnical report with trial pits and soakaway tests
- Coal mining risk assessment
- Environmental statement
- Acoustic survey

Your chosen contractor should be able to help ascertain what information will be required in order to progress a successful planning application. Where necessary, they can identify specialist companies to provide technical reports, surveys and assessments.

Funding

Once the project has achieved full planning permission, or when you are close to reaching this stage, you can formally apply for funding. You can research potential funding opportunities and build relationships with potential funding organisations but, in order to stand the best chance of succeeding with your funding applications, make sure that you have completed all other tasks up front. This way funders can see that you are serious, organised and have a worthwhile and realisable project to support.

There are a lot of potential sources for funding but not every funder supports skatepark provision. You should work hard and smart at the same time. Know your funder. A chosen contractor should not only help to identify potential funders, but also to review and support a council or community in applying. There is an art to writing skatepark funding applications; this is something learned through experience and by seeing which funding applications have been successful and which ones have not.

Sources of funding vary greatly between different projects, and can include:-

- ACT Foundation
- ASDA Foundation
- Aviva Community Fund
- Bank of Scotland Foundation
- BBC Children in Need
- Biffaward
- Big Lottery Fund, and Awards For All:UK
- Coastal Communities Fund
- Comic Relief Local
- Community Foundation
- Community Safety Partnerships (Wales)
- Co-op Local Community Fund
- Cory Environmental Trust
- Councils (county, city, town, district, borough, parish etc.)
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP)
- Crowd funding
- Disability Grants

- Fields in Trust
- Foundation Scotland
- Foyle Foundation
- Grants4schools
- Greggs Foundation
- Groundwork
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Landfill Communities Fund
- Learning Through Landscapes
- Local charities
- London Marathon Charitable Trust
- Lord's Taverners
- Morrisons Foundation
- National Lottery
- One Family Foundation
- Peoples Health Trust
- People's Postcode Trust
- Playing fields associations
- Regional and metropolitan authorities
- Sainsbury Family Trust
- SITA Trust
- Sport England (Community Asset Fund, Inspired Facilities and Small Grants)
- SportScotland
- Tesco Bags of Help
- The Key Fund
- The Robertson Trust
- The Trust House
- Veolia Environmental Trust
- Waitrose
- Wooden Spoon
- WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental)
- Youth Opportunity Fund

More information on many of these organisations is available on the website of the Association of Play Industries (API) at www.api-play.org/resources/funding/.

Indoor skateparks, which typically charge entrance fees and operate as non-profit social enterprises, may also be able to access other funding towards their set-up costs.

Please note that Skateboard England and Skateboard Scotland, unfortunately, are not currently in a position to offer funding for skateparks. The Tony Hawk Foundation does not usually support skateparks outside the USA.

Construction

Once a project has been successfully funded and planning permission has been granted, construction can begin. This can be the most exciting phase so far, the moment when all that hard work becomes real.

- Most construction works begin with written confirmation of a formal order. This triggers the commissioning of a suite of engineering drawings. This is the essential information needed for construction works, relating to general arrangement, drainage, steelworks, build-up and landscaping.
- Prior to starting, the client (usually the council) would be given a programme of works and along with a finalised pre-construction Health and Safety Plan and a detailed Build Method Statement.
- Construction will then commence on an agreed date and will be tied into a contract between both parties.

During the construction period there will be various milestone events as detailed in the programme. This will be tied to a payment schedule and valuation dates. After construction has been completed, a RoSPA/safety inspection takes place and, once passed, the facility is formally handed over to the client and opened for use. Once completed, the facility is given over to the community which has been designed to serve. It will be in service for many decades, and this ongoing history starts here. Many councils and community groups hold a grand opening event to celebrate all the hard work that has gone before.



5. GOOD EXAMPLES AND CASE STUDIES

Skateparks play a fundamental role in providing accessible spaces for skateboarders to learn and develop skills, as well as valuable opportunities to exercise, socialise and be creative. Yet many skateboarders also venture beyond skateparks to seek out new challenges within the urban environment around them. This is nothing new. A constant trend evident throughout the history of skateboarding is the skateboarder's desire for freedom and exploration.

To maximise the provision of skateboarding spaces and secure the maximum socio-economic benefits of skateboarding, it will be necessary to facilitate the provision not just skateparks, but also skateable public spaces in our towns and cities, by which we mean public spaces which positively welcome and cater for a diversity of uses and people, including skateboarding and skateboarders. Such spaces should entice skateboarders and respond to their desire for exploration and engagement with the urban terrain. They should also be designed in such a way as to mitigate the common concerns that other users of public spaces have in relation to skateboarding in our public spaces; excess noise, damage and safety.

Right now, there are relatively few instances of this kind of urban space. But those that have been created are extremely successful and are welcomed by a wide range of city dwellers. Below are a few examples. Collectively, they demonstrate the key principles underpinning the transition from a 'design it out' to a design it in' approach to planning for skateboarding. They highlight some of the challenges of managing seemingly conflicting land uses, demonstrate the complex processes through which more progressive solutions are found (notably through communication and testing), and indicate different ways to consciously integrate skateboarding within public spaces.

Skate Malmö, Sweden



Skateable sculpture in Malmö

Malmö in southern Sweden is a post-industrial city using skateboarding for reinvention, global recognition and local impact. This strategy has been so successful that it is often seen as the most progressive place in the world for skateboarding today. This approach is the outcome of close cooperation between authorities, skateboarders and other organisations through the 'Skate Malmö' partnership, the initial driving force being an organised and passionate group of skateboarders who were keen for change and willing to cooperate.

The partnership works to deliver skateparks and street skatespots that encourage participation in skateboarding amongst the city's citizens and visitors from afar, while also delivering on the local authority's strategic ambitions. The local authority identifies spaces that require activation and are potentially suitable for skateboarding, commonly being spaces with surfaces that are smooth to satisfy skateboarders and reduce noise, appropriately separated from any nearby homes and neighbourhoods experiencing socioeconomic challenges.

Specially commissioned skateable sculptures have also sometimes been installed in these spaces, which in turn providing new public facilities, activate dead space and help deliver world class events.

Another focus is the hosting of events, such as top tier skateboarding competitions organised and co-funded by the local authority and a range of partners, or the Pushing Boarders symposium, a 2019 celebration of skateboarding that involved academic talks, films and the annual Skate Malmö Street event.

Through this kind of active engagement with skateboarders and other citizens, and via a proactive approach to events-led regeneration, the local authority has developed an understanding of the design principles that enable effective management of varied uses within public spaces. The legacy of the strategy is a number of high-quality and well-used facilities and a reputation as a global forerunner in the use of skateboarding to revitalise and reinvent public spaces.

The impacts are also felt within the city itself. There is no more extraordinary example of the contribution of skateboarding to Malmö's local civic life than Bryggeriet Gymnasium. Located in a former brewery in a post-industrial area of Malmö, Bryggeriet is the site of the city's first indoor skatepark, closely followed by the opening of a secondary school which uses skateboarding as constant, engaging thread within its curriculum and facilitating the development of creative skills including film, photography, design and play.



Skateable sculpture in Malmö

Skate Melbourne, Australia

Melbourne today is a world-renowned skating destination, which is somewhat surprising given that in the past the city actively tried design out skateboarding, creating outrage among many residents and a substantial backlash from skateboarders. The city's Skate Melbourne strategy (City of Melbourne 2017) is a direct response to this conflict, providing the communication and design tools needed to deliver skateboarding spaces.

Recognising skateboarding as a growing activity in an increasingly dense city, the plan aims to better integrate skateboarding into Melbourne's urban fabric, ensuring that there are suitable spaces to meet the varying needs of skateboarders, while ensuring multi-functional public spaces.

The strategy is evidence-based and was shaped through consultation with residents, providing opportunities to gather the concerns and aspirations of skateboarders and other users of public space. The starting point was recognition of these concerns, such as excess noise, the potential for collisions and accidents, damage to the public realm and the unpredictability of skateboarding.

Equally, the consultation process sought to understand the suitability of existing provision and what skateboarders in the city needed. This included smooth surfaces, strong materials, interesting and diverse obstacles, and a sense of both safety and being welcome. The evidence gained through this consultation - and which continues today through the medium of a Skate Advisory Group - provided the foundation upon which to deliver an informed strategy to deliver more skateboarding spaces. Central to this was the development of criteria to support the process of identifying spaces that could be suitable, or entirely unsuitable, with criteria including the extent to which sites are close to complementary land uses, whether there is an evidenced need for additional facilities, and how accessible and safe sites are for skateboarders.

The local authority also established a toolkit providing guidance on the potential scale of individual projects, outlining what can be delivered within limited space and for a specific budget. Spaces delivered can range from small shared spaces to dedicated skateparks. The longer-term management of skateboarding spaces is also considered to be key.

Enabling the delivery of skateboarding spaces is the integration of skateboarding - or the planning for the activity - within various areas of the council's work, including planning policy, council-led renewal programmes and planning for capital works.

Ensuring that the integration of skateboarding and other uses is sustainably managed, the city also encourages signage and other forms of communication to indicate where skateboarding is and is not permitted, along with the use of 'preferred times of use' to manage public space at peak periods and 'preferred routes' for skateboarders to safely access facilities.



Rue Léon Cladel, Paris

Located close to the Stock Exchange in Paris, rue Léon Cladel was an under-used side street that required activation, particularly after the end of the working day. Following a 2012, £190,000 intervention, lead by artist Raphaël Zarka and skatepark designers Constructo, the street now provides a dynamic public space where the green concrete flash demarcates skateable space, while the surrounding area remains accessible for pedestrians, many of whom find the skate action a welcome addition.



Rue Leon Cladel, Paris, Balargue Park Attack- Cladel
<https://www.youtube.com/watch>

Rådhusplassen, Oslo

From 1979 until the early 1990s, skateboarding in Norway was essentially banned on grounds of health and safety. Today, however, skateboarding in Oslo is well-funded, encouraged and a common sight in the city. One place that readily demonstrates this significant turnaround in attitudes is the Rådhusplassen alongside the Oslo City Hall. This skatespot, although not designed for skateboarding, is very well-suited to skateboarders' specific needs, offering a long, wide strip of flat ground that is smooth, free of restrictions, separate to pedestrian thoroughfares, yet also in enjoying high public visibility. The use of this space was negotiated by the Norsk Organisasjon for RulleBrett, and is particularly popular on the annual 'Go Skateboarding' day.



Rådhusplassen, Oslo

Landhausplatz, Innsbruck

Designed by LAAC Architekten and Stiefel Kramer Architecture in 2011, Landhausplatz is a multi-functional plaza containing four historic monuments, seating, event space and, due to its near-perfectness for skateboarding, skateboarders from Innsbruck, Austria and beyond. Its popularity among skateboarders initially led to conflict with other users of the space, but this situation was quickly addressed through dialogue and the subsequent creation of a map, setting out exactly where skateboarding is and is not permitted.



Landhausplatz, Innsbruck 'DC am Landhausplatz' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

Tampere, Finland

Some of the post-industrial 'ghost zones' in Tampere, southern Finland, were a magnet for drug taking and other forms of crime. Utilising the DIY spirit of the local skateboarders, collectively known as Kaarikoirat or 'ramp dogs', the city is using skateboarding to revitalise these urban spaces. Just as importantly, the city's partnership with its local skateboarders is enabling the local authority to attain its ambition to engage with young residents and to reduce unemployment. Finland has become hugely proud of this socially beneficial skateboard scene, even promoting it to prospective tourists, with 'Visit Finland' sponsoring the skateparks and other terrains created.



Tampere skateboarding in a promotional tourist video 'Tampere Skatecity' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOXKAwjBtTs>

Riverside Museum, Glasgow

The Riverside Museum of Transport and Travel, designed in 2011 by renowned architects Zaha Hadid Architects, overlooks the River Clyde in Glasgow and is surrounded by public space with smooth surfaces and lots of obstacles that draw in skaters. Although not intended for skateboarding, it quickly became a celebrated local skatespot.

While unofficially sanctioned, there were nonetheless some complaints when skateboarders rode around the museum entrance. Instead of banning the activity, the institution worked with local skateboarders to identify and develop a specific space for skating, located to the museum rear and away from key pedestrian routes. The result is the creation of a space particularly suitable for skateboarding, alongside and integrated within the existing public realm.



Riverside Museum, Glasgow 'FLIPSIDE // Scottish Skateboarding Documentary', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruoaG4L5u7c>

Hungerford Bridge, London



Hungerford Bridge, London © Søren Nordal Enevoldsen/ SNE Architects

Although never constructed, this 2013 design by SNE Architects for the Southbank Centre in London shows how a skateable space could make a significant contribution to the public realm. Suggested as a fallback replacement for the renowned adjacent Undercroft skate space, then under threat of redevelopment, the design - unlike the ultra-smooth surfaces and exaggerated forms of a traditional skatepark - uses paving slabs, bricks, granite and other materials associated with everyday streets. The design also incorporates street-elements such as seating, ledges, stairs, banks, rails and other features tuned for skateboarding, and so welcomes skaters, BMX-riders, street artists and the general public within one inclusive space.

Buszy, Milton Keynes

In Milton Keynes, landscape architect Richard Ferrington and skater Rob Selley, working with Andrew Armes of the city architecture and planning department, consulted with local riders as to what kind of skateboarding terrain they would like to see. The result was a world first: the 2005, £100,000 Buszy facility, near the city rail station, that looked less like a skatepark and more like typical urban streets. Still highly popular today, it consists of stone ledges, grind box, flat-ground and Hubba (a stairway with adjacent inclined ledge, named after a famous 1990s skatespot in San Francisco), none of which was announced as being deliberately intended for skateboarding.



6. SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

National Governing Bodies

Skateboard England

National Governing Body for skateboarding in England and Wales

www.skateboard-england.org

Skateboard GB

National Governing Body with responsibility for Olympic skateboarding

www.skateboardgb.com

Skateboard Scotland

National Governing Body for skateboarding in Scotland

www.skateboardscotland.com

Skateboard NI

National Governing Body for skateboarding in Northern Ireland

www.facebook.com/pages/category/Organization/Skateboard-NI-156264501102688/

Resources

The Skateparks Project

UK skatepark directory and free independent advice and support for councils and communities seeking to build a public skatepark.

www.skateparks.co.uk



Glossary

backside	riding with the skater's back facing the bank or transition	Euro gap	bank with a step section leading up to a second bank or the deck
bank	angled non-curved riding surface	extension	higher section of a transition wall
bowl	like a pool, but with metal coping rather than stone coping and tiles	fakie	riding back a bank or transition backwards
carve	riding at high speed in a continuous manner around a bowl or pool	fire hydrant	feature mimicking an American fire hydrant
coping	round-bar metal (bowls) or pool style stone (pools) placed at the top of a transition wall	flat	flat areas of rideable surface, either in a street course or between transition walls
cradle	over-vertical feature shaped like a half-sphere or eyelid	flat bar/flat rail	flat (or cylindrical) metal pole section placed parallel to the ground and 1ft to 2ft in height
death box	shoebox-sized gap at the top of a pool wall, emulating a swimming pool filtration vent	flow bowl	larger transitioned skatepark area skatepark, often blended with street course features
deck (skateboard)	skateboard riding surface	foam pit	deep reservoir of foam pads to land into safely while learning tricks, often found in indoor skateparks
deck (skatepark)	standing / waiting area around the skatepark riding surfaces	found space	see street
DIY	do-it-yourself skatepark or skate spot constructed by skateboarders	freestyle	technical tricks performed on flat ground
downhill	high-speed riding down mountain roads and other steep inclines	frontside	riding with the skater's front facing the bank or transition
driveway	two banks joined by a flat section	full-pipe	transition feature which forms a complete circle in section
drop-in	entering a bowl, pool or pipe from the transition coping	fun box	variable combination of banks, flats, ledges, rails, etc.
escalator	increase or decrease in the height of a transition wall	goofy	riding with the right foot at the front of the skateboard
		grind	move where the skater balances on their trucks in a grinding movement along coping or other edge

grind box	movable box-like feature, often edged with right-angled steel	mini-ramp	small half-pipe, usually 3ft to 6ft high and without any vertical surfaces
grip-tape	sandpaper-like covering to the upper surface of a skateboard deck	modular skatepark	constructed from pre-fabricated ramps and other features, placed on flat ground
half-pipe	two quarter pipes facing each other, usually 6ft to 10ft high with flat ground in between	ollie	move where the rider stomps on the tail of the skateboard to produce an upwards jumping movement
handrail	normally placed alongside a set of steps	pole jam	small, angled section of metal pole
hill-bombing	high speed riding down steep urban inclines	plaza	see street course
hip	protruding corner formed by two banks or curved walls	pool	like an empty swimming pool, often with tiles at the top of the wall and stone pool-style coping, and typically 4ft to 12ft deep
Hubba	angled ledge with a flat top, often alongside a set of stairs	pump track	continuous undulating path
jam	informal skate competition and / or celebration event	pyramid	four-sided banked ramp with a flat section at the peak
Jersey barrier	feature mimicking the modular barriers employed to separate road traffic lanes	quarter pipe	transition feature shaped like a quarter of a circle in section
kickflip	rotating the skateboard 360° along its longitudinal axis	rainbow rail	long curved rail that comes out of the ground at both ends
kickturn	levering the skateboard up onto its rear wheels, and turning 180°	regular	riding with the left foot at the front of the skateboard
launcher/kicker	small wedge-shaped bank used to launch the rider into the air	roll-in	curved entrance to a bowl or pool, allowing easier access
ledge	fixed box-like shape, often edged with right-angled steel	safety gear	helmet, knee and elbow pads, plus also mouth guards, wrist guards and hip pads
manual pad	low and wide box-shaped feature	set	combination of stairs, e.g. four-set, six-set, etc.
MegaRamp	a highly specialised combination of oversized launch ramp, gap and quarter pipe, and usually only created at professional spectacular events	shared surface	see skate space

skate dot	small stand-alone skateable feature, often placed in a park or urban setting	trucks	metal devices joining the skateboard wheels and deck, and providing turning capacity
skate spot	small location identified by street skaters as being rideable, located in an urban setting	vertical (vert)	transition which reaches vertical
skatepark	area purpose-designed for skateboarding	vert ramp	large half-pipe, normally above ground and 10ft to 14ft high
skate shop	retail outlet selling (and sometimes hiring) skateboards, clothing, safety equipment and other merchandise	volcano	volcano-shaped feature, often with a flat top
skate space	urban space which has been deliberately designed to accommodate skateboarding among other uses	wall ride	vertical wall section placed next to a bank or transition
skitching	holding on to a motorised vehicle to gain speed	waterfall	steep floor transition joining the shallow and deep sections of a pool or bowl
slalom	racing through a series of cones	Wembley gap	see Euro gap
snake run	bobsleigh-like feature shaped like a snake		
spine	two-quarter pipes meeting back-to-back and sharing a common metal coping		
stairs/stairset	set or stairs or steps		
street	skateboarding terrain in real urban environments, not purpose-designed for skateboarding		
street course	skatepark section designed to resemble streets		
switch	riding backwards		
taco	feature shaped like a taco-shell, usually 3ft to 6ft high		
tiling	ceramic tiling placed at the top of a pool wall		
transition	wall of a bowl, pool, pipe or other feature which is curved in section		

Social Skate Projects

The UK skateboarding scene has developed a number of world-leading social skate projects that seek to empower people through skateboarding. They work to make skateboarding more accessible, to equip skateboarders to participate and lead in conversations on the use of public space, and to critically examine issues of diversity and inclusion both in skateboarding and wider society.

These projects operate both in the UK, and internationally. The list of projects is growing all the time, and includes:

- Ben Raemers Foundation - benraemersfoundation.com
- City Mill Skate - citymillskate.com
- Concrete Jungle Foundation - concretejunglefoundation.org
- Doyenne - doyenneskateboards.com
- Freemovement - freemovementskateboarding.com
- Girl Skate UK - girlskateuk.com
- Go Skate Project Hackney Bumps
- Long Live Southbank - llsb.com
- Motherboard SB - <https://www.motherboardsb.com/about>
- Pushing Boarders - pushingboarders.com
- Roll With The Girls Leeds
- Skatepal - skatepal.co.uk
- Skate Nottingham - skatenottingham.co.uk
- Skate Manchester
- Skate Southampton - skatesouthampton.com
- Shred the North - shredthenorth.co.uk
- The FAR Academy - farskate.co.uk



Photo by Norma Ibarra of Pushing Boarders, an international conference that brings together skateboarding charities, academics, activists and policy makers to examine the social impact of skateboarding.

A brief history of UK skateboarding

Skateboarding first began in the USA sometime during the late 1950s, when frustrated surfers rode basic skateboards which they made from hard metal or composite wheels, trucks adapted from roller skates, and narrow wooden decks. In the UK, this new phenomenon was excitedly reported on by British Pathé news and British Movietone, and enthusiastically adopted in surf-focused St. Ives in Cornwall and Langland Bay in South Wales, as well as by cosmopolitan riders in London.

Skateboarding's next big wave came after the adoption of polyurethane wheels in 1973, more sophisticated metal truck designs and increasingly wider skateboard decks. From 1976, a slew of commercial concrete skateparks opened across the USA, beginning with Florida's SkatBoard City and California's Carlsbad. Some of the new skatepark features were inspired by surfing, such as the continuous wave-walls of snake runs, while others, such as pools and half-pipes, were based on real swimming pools and drainage infrastructure that skaters had been riding across America.

UK skateboarding was now taking off, fuelled by Skateboard! magazine and the BBC 'Skateboard Kings' documentary on the American scene. During 1977-78, new commercial skateparks also started to appear, including Earth'n'Ocean (Barnstaple), Watergate (Cornwall), Rom (Essex), Skatestar (Guildford), Kelvingrove Wheelies (Kelvingrove), Skate City, Harrow, Rolling Thunder and Mad Dog Bowl (London), Malibu Dog Bowl (Nottingham), Skateworld (Wokingham), Skateopia and Arrow (Wolverhampton) and others in Livingston, Plymouth, Southport, Southsea and Stevenage.

Most of these, however, were closed by 1980 (insurance and commercial viability were the main issues), and skateboarding fell into something of a slump, kept alive by a few die-hards mostly riding on the few surviving skateparks and on above-ground, stand-alone ramps called 'half-pipes', typically around 3m - 5m high and made from wood. Notable examples were constructed at Farnborough, Hastings, Swansea, Warrington's Empire State

Building and London's Latimer Road and Crystal Palace. RAD was now the pre-eminent magazine, while a second series of Skateboard! also helped keep the scene alive.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s skateboarding underwent a massive shift, moving away from a few dominant US manufacturers and the difficult challenges of half-pipes (AKA vert ramps) to a plethora of smaller companies focused on much more accessible street-based riding. In contrast to the advanced gymnastic moves of half-pipe specialists, the new breed of street skaters deployed the 'ollie' move (kicking the tail of the board downwards, making it jump back into the air) to turn everyday city objects, pavements, ledges, benches, handrails, steps and planters, into a new playground of pleasure.

Released into the streets of just about every town and village across the country, places like Milton Keynes, Oxted, Ipswich, High Wycombe and Cirencester became as famous for street-skateboarding as Bristol, Edinburgh, Cardiff and London). Enthusiastically promoted by Sidewalk magazine and captured by cheap camcorders, skateboarding developed rapidly into a full-blown Generation X subculture, with its misfit participants, distinctive clothes, obscure language and alternative occupation of city spaces all casting it as a rebellious even counter-cultural entity.

At the same time, however, skateboarding was also starting to change once again. By the end of the 1990s, the spectacular cable TV-oriented X Games and the incredibly popular Tony Hawk's Pro Skater video game series, plus a generally growing realisation that skateboarding could offer powerful entrepreneurial, artistic, socio-cultural and health benefits, all combined to transform the attitudes of skateboarders and non-skateboarders alike. In particular, new Generation Y skaters no longer demonstrated the overtly anti-commercial suspicions of their forebears and even actively embraced retail brands as part of skateboarding's nascent mainstream identity.

All of this can be seen in the world of skateboarding that has developed over the last decade. In particular, during the 2010s skateparks have re-emerged as a pre-eminent location for skateboarding, which hundreds if not thousands of these being constructed by councils as free-access facilities across the UK, ranging from small ramp-based ventures to elaborate wonderlands such as Concrete Waves in Newquay and F51 in Folkestone. Many of these skateparks include features suitable both for street-oriented and transition (pools and bowls) riding. They are also used by BMX, scooter and roller skate riders as well as skateboarders.

At places like the Undercroft in London and Rom skatepark in Essex, skateboarding has led debates over matters of public space and architectural heritage, with both these places securing widespread public and institutional support. Indoor skateparks like Factory (Dundee), Transition Extreme (Aberdeen) and Adrenaline Alley (Corby) offer extensive community outreach programmes, while organisations like The Far Academy, SkatePal, Free Movement and Skate Nottingham similarly engage with hard-to-reach youth, refugees and other disadvantaged members of society. There are also governing bodies, including Skateboard England and Skateboard Scotland. Skateboarding here has become a force for the good, helping to positively contribute to society.

Skateboarders themselves are also now becoming a much diverse bunch, spread across 750,000 riders nationally. Although females were a prominent part of the skate scene in the 1960s and 1970s, Patti McGee famously appeared on the cover of Life magazine in 1965, during the 1980s and 1990s the street-based scene was largely male dominated. By 2019, however, female riders are increasingly common, partly fuelled by female-only sessions at skateparks and the use of Instagram and other social media to make their participation more visible. The release of films like Skate Kitchen and the inclusion of skateboarding at the Tokyo Olympics and Paris 2024 Olympics, where men's and women's events will be given equal billing, will no doubt further strengthen this movement.

Skateboarders are also becoming more diverse in other ways. Always a meeting ground of different socio-economic classes and ethnicities, skateboarding is now fully embracing riders of different sexualities and identities, as exemplified by Skateism magazine and the Pushing Boarders symposium held in London during 2018. Arts, photography, filming, graphic design, music and entrepreneurialism are notable features of this rich cultural scene.

Simultaneously, mainstream brands like Adidas, Nike and Selfridges are engaging with skateboarding, while in turn skate-based brands like Vans, Supreme and Palace have become firmly established on the high street. And different types of riding - slalom, downhill, freestyle - continue to prosper alongside the more well-known street and skatepark-based styles.

Today then, UK skateboarding is maturing into a plurality of locations, attitudes, riders, riding styles and cultures. While many urban managers and office plazas still use 'skatestopper' devices to deter skateboarding, more positive attitudes towards are emerging, as people become aware of skateboarding's economic and cultural benefits and mindful of the need to encourage healthy activity among city dwellers of all ages. In cities such as Coventry, Hull, Nottingham, Glasgow and London, just as in Bordeaux, Brisbane and Malmö, public recognition for skateboarders has undoubtedly increased in the form of support for skate parks, skateable public spaces, skate-focused schools and city policy. It seems as though skateboarding is finally being seen in its true light: at once critical and caring, rebellious and entrepreneurial, non-conformist and mainstream, and so is a dynamic presence in cities worldwide.

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To find out more and to get the latest news and information about our various initiatives and programmes, please go to www.skateboard-england.org and www.skateboardgb.org

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