

19th October 2022

Dear colleagues,

Letter of support for Cam Skate's Proposal for the Redevelopment of Donkey Common

Please accept this letter on behalf of Skateboard GB, The National Governing Body for Skateboarding. Our aims include encouraging the development of world-class facilities and helping community organisations build their capacity to deliver excellent skateboarding offers to people of all ages and backgrounds.

This letter is in support of Cam Skate's campaign and proposal for the redevelopment of the space at Donkey Common, Cambridge, which currently has outdated modular (composite plastic and metal) skatepark elements in desperate need of modernisation.

We would like to request a video call with City Council officers involved in parks, sport development and/or public realm at a day/time of your convenience, alongside representatives of Cam Skate.

Cam Skate have compiled a funding plan to redevelop the site, which is consistent with our [recent good practice guidance](#) developed with Crowdfunder UK. This sets out the need to work with the City Council, as the owner of the land, to submit a capital grant application to a landfill tax funder such as FCC. This only requires officer time to administer the application (which Cam Skate could write with our support). We would also like to draw your attention to [our partnership with Crowdfunder UK](#), which includes in-kind advice and support for skateboarding organisations like Cam Skate to apply for match-funding from organisations including Sport England, British Cycling and Aviva, meeting some or all of the project's capital costs via crowdfunding. However, all these match-funders would require evidence of your support (such as a letter of support from an officer or elected member).

Rather than a traditional skatepark, Cam Skate have proposed a ['plaza-style' redevelopment](#) for Donkey Common which has the following benefits:

- Because it replicates items of street furniture, it is much lower cost than a traditional ramp-oriented ('transition') skatepark and can potentially be developed collaboratively with local firms (construction and landscape architecture) supported by a skatepark specialist. The example cited by Cam Skate of the Glasgow Riverside Museum of Transport comprised skateable installations costing around £15,000, that were landscaped into an existing 'plaza' style space. Skate Nottingham are working to a budget of £17,000 for three modular (steel and concrete) skateable installations that will be placed within a mixed-use public space by the Broad Marsh development site. These capital contributions compare to a total cost of between £150,000 and £200,000 for a small-to-medium-sized traditional 'skatepark' facility - although it is important to emphasise that both examples were installed on existing concrete slab, pavement or tarmac surfaces.
- A plaza-style development would complement existing facilities for wheeled sports in and around Cambridge. Current skateparks in the area more closely meet the needs of the 'Park' discipline of Olympic skateboarding (ramps, bowls etc., rather than the street furniture found in the 'Street' discipline at the Games), whilst the proposal for Donkey Common would meet the needs of the 'Street' discipline in the Olympics, improving the city's wheeled sports offer in both talent progression and widening participation. And;
- As explained in Cam Skate's campaign, a plaza-style development can be better integrated within other public amenities, including green infrastructure, reducing the need for separation (either fencing or distancing) from other usage types. Scandinavian examples demonstrate

the potential for such a space to meet the needs of activities other than wheeled sports (for example, bouldering and other climbing disciplines, parkour, basketball and form of dance, such as capoeira).

We think this is an exciting proposal for a number of reasons. It complements and learns from other mixed- or multi-use public spaces in development in the UK, including City Mill Skate in the UCL East Campus within the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford, and the Sussex Street Project near Broad Marsh in Nottingham. It also builds on the recent success of nearby Ipswich, where local charity Skate Suffolk worked with Ipswich Borough Council, Skateboard GB and skatepark specialists Betongpark to transport and install two skateable sculptures in Ipswich skatepark, updating a much-loved but ageing facility, and re-using obstacles that had previously been created for the temporary pedestrianisation of The Strand, Westminster. Finally, it enables Cam Skate to develop as a local community organisation that can deliver high impact social inclusion projects alongside an events programme.

Skateboarding is a growing sport, with more than 750,000 active participants across the UK. It joined the Olympic Games for the first time in Tokyo last summer, when 13-year-old skateboarder Sky Brown became Britain's youngest ever summer medallist and BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year. Skateboarding has a strong record in attracting new (previously inactive) people into physical activity and, in particular, working effectively with young people from marginalised groups. A good skatepark can improve an area's talent retention and can increase the number of young residents who return to their hometowns in later adulthood to start businesses, families and to invest in their communities.

Over the last year, Skateboard GB has worked with more than 200 local skatepark projects. We would be very keen to work with Cambridge City Council and Cam Skate to progress their innovative proposal for Donkey Common at a critical time in many young people's lives. We understand that there have been discussions with Anthony French about a potential skateboarding strategy for Cambridge. We are currently working with MCR Active and Manchester City Council on outdoor and indoor action sports strategies, and are in talks with Local Government and/or community organisations in Nottingham, Ipswich, Southampton and the North East about developing city- or region-wide strategic frameworks, so would very enthusiastically support similar work in Cambridge, and have expertise and time available.

Please let us know any days and times that would be ideal for interested colleagues to organise a video call.

Yours sincerely,



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