

Jersey Skateparks Association

Consume
11 Halkett Street
St Helier
Jersey
JE2 4WJ



Deputy Kirsten Morel
Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel
States Greffe
Scrutiny
Mourier House
St Helier
Jersey
JE1 1DD

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Dear Deputy Morel

NEW SKATEPARK ECONOMIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS SCRUTINY PANEL REQUEST FOR WRITTEN SUBMISSION

We thank you for your letter regarding the above and are extremely grateful for the opportunity to communicate our thoughts directly with you on a matter that we're so passionate about.

The idea of a world class skatepark being designed, built and opened in Jersey is indeed a very exciting one! Aside from benefiting those who are already enthusiasts, skatepark facilities have been shown to encourage an active, outdoor lifestyle in any one of several all-inclusive individual activities that enable young people to thrive. Several representatives of key agencies that have shown support for the building of skatepark facilities across the island include:

- Children's Commissioner
- Chief Inspector of Police
- Director of Public Health
- Jersey Youth Services
- Mind Jersey
- Honorary Police
- Probation Services

This is summarised in Figure 1.

The staged investment proposed in your letter lends itself perfectly to what we see as an intuitive and natural growth towards the world class facility that has always been the ultimate collective goal. We would really like to get to work on opening some of the 'satellite' parks in the short term, using some of the funding that is proposed to become available in 2020. These smaller facilities will benefit the project as a whole, by showing the young people that 'things are happening' for them, getting more people involved in the sports (people of all ages - parents will use the parks, alongside their kids); thereby attracting more attention, a stronger following from a new generation, and even more opportunity and reason for a major, world class facility when the latter portion of funding becomes available in 2021. The satellite parks require far less specialist knowledge and equipment than the primary facility at Les Quennevais and can be put in place much faster and at a far lower cost. We believe all of the expertise required for these satellite parks, on the scale that we envisage, already exists locally and each one will only require a modest portion of the proposed funding in 2020, keeping all of those pounds local!

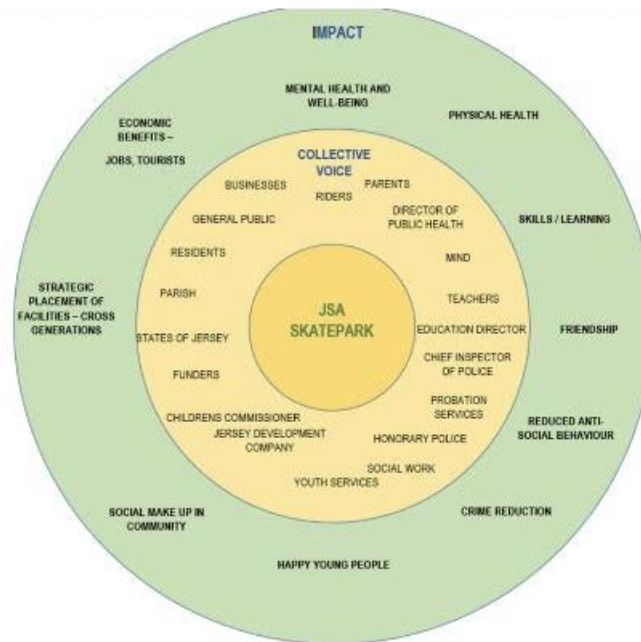


Figure 1 – The Collective Voice and Impacts of the New Skatepark

A key benefit of having skatepark facilities is a social one; it may well be the place to show off your latest tricks, or your new scooter, but it's also a place that people can feel accepted when the home is hostile - an edge that is not as easily catered for by the more traditional, or team sports. Studies have shown that provision for young people is sorely lacking within the island, despite the perceived affluence, and that St Helier is in need of more as a priority. Skatepark facilities that are always available - at no cost - provide an exciting, constructive, creative outlet for many young people who simply don't have one.

There are not many parents who would advocate more 'screen time' for their children; a skatepark provides an alternative to the sedentary lifestyles that are very quickly becoming a major cause of serious illness and the bad habits that are starting at a younger age with each generation. We need to encourage kids to move, and give them a reason to do so.

Another reason for having skatepark facilities is that it will bring tourists to the island. Now that this type of sport is mainstream and widely accepted throughout the developed world, families with children will choose to visit Jersey, based on our facilities. Among the JSA committee members alone, we have visited skateparks across Europe, the Americas, Australia and Asia. Even small public spaces that welcome riders attract travel; I personally have driven - with several compatriots - to Barcelona, just to ride the amenities surrounding MACBA (Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona), which has become a Mecca for skateboarding and featured heavily in countless global skateboarding publications and films.

Jersey's high profile as an affluent member at the top table of international finance and as the jewel in the crown of British tourist destinations needs to be given a boost towards being a fabulous and stimulating place to live for Jersey residents - especially young people. Jersey has the capability to do so, and even to overtake, in this key part of island life. At present, we feel this is a weakness that is sorely felt by many residents. Skatepark facilities are not wild-eyed futuristic thinking, they're already in most average towns and cities, but Jersey really needs to catch up. High quality skatepark facilities will be a great contributor to taking a step closer to achieving a well-deserved higher standard of modern living for young local families and residents.

Skatepark facilities can add to the environment in which they are created; they needn't be a blot on the landscape. We fear the current 'Black Cage' of New North Quay - along with what we see as unfairly harsh local press reports. This has severely blighted the vision of what a skatepark looks and feels like to many residents, but with clever design and incorporating nature, a skatepark can be created as a peaceful, zen-like amenity that promotes calm, creativity, ambition, self-esteem and skills

that are as respected as those of top athletes in more traditional sports. In fact, we have our very own, Jersey born, Alex Coleborn representing Great Britain at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games in the Freestyle BMX event. Alex himself was forced to leave the island to pursue his career due to a lack of facilities in Jersey.

Other creative and individual outlets which capture young people spring from skatepark facilities and the widely accepting creative culture surrounding it, often among those for whom actually riding the park may not be their natural gift. A major local exhibition at the Arts Centre in July 2019, called 'Skateboarders', and shot by local photographer Danny Evans, was the culmination of a creative skill that was first sparked as a skateboarder, and has developed into what is now a successful profession and business. Just last month, several local skateboarders travelled to Croatia to take part in a skate film festival, during which, local film producer Luka Pinto was exhibiting his work.

These are just a few of the fantastic and exciting benefits and opportunities that the New Skatepark can bring to island. We feel these are very well aligned with the Ongoing Initiatives, Common Themes and Common Strategic Policies of this government, in particular, those relating to health and wellbeing and children and young people. We also believe we have been working in a very modern and forward thinking manner with both politicians and officers of the Government of Jersey. We feel this is absolutely necessary as this government moves forward and delivers the needs of the public and our island. We sincerely hope that the partnership we have built with the Government of Jersey that has been essential to progress this project thus far continues and the project is delivered successfully.

We are always open for discussion and would be delighted to answer any further queries you may have or provide any assistance that we can. If this is the case, please don't hesitate to contact the Jersey Skateparks Association by email to jerseyskateparksassociation@gmail.com or telephone on 07829 914961.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl Payne', with a stylized, flowing script.

Karl Payne
Chairman – Jersey Skateparks Association