

BUSINESS CASE – THE VIEWS SKATEPARK

1. INTRODUCTION

Fleet Town Council is seeking PWLB borrowing approval to fund the replacement of the former skatepark at The Views. The project is now actively out to tender, with the tender launched on 12 August 2025 for the design, supply, and installation of a new skate facility aimed at all levels of ability.

2. NEED FOR PROJECT

A recent independent safety inspection led to the closure of the current facility, highlighting urgent safety concerns. Community consultations and strong feedback underscore that simply standing still is not an option. The new skatepark is crucial to restore a key youth and recreation asset.

3. PROJECT SCOPE

The project will deliver a new, modern, and accessible concrete skatepark designed in consultation with local users.

Key features will include:

- Facilities suitable for beginners through to advanced users.
- Design to cater for all levels of ability, encouraging wider participation.
- Durable materials to reduce long-term maintenance costs.

Presentation from Young People is provided at Annex A.

4. COST AND BORROWING REQUIREMENT

The total estimated cost of the project is £300,000 including VAT.

Fleet Town Council proposes to fund the entire project through a loan from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). No other funding sources are being used, which ensures the Council can proceed without delay or uncertainty linked to external grants or fundraising.

The Council is seeking borrowing approval for £250,000 to cover the full cost of design, supply, and installation of the new skatepark.

5. AFFORDABILITY

Fleet Town Council has assessed the affordability of the borrowing and confirms that repayments can be sustained within its approved budget (see Annex B: Summary Budget and Forecast).

The Council proposes to take out a PWLB loan of **£250,000** over **15 years**. Repayments are scheduled at **£24,200 per year** (see Annex C: PWLB Loan Repayment Schedule).

The Council's **2025/26 budget already includes an allocation of £28,500** for loan repayments, which provides sufficient headroom above the required annual repayment. This ensures the borrowing is both affordable and sustainable within the Council's medium-term financial planning.

6. BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

The new skatepark will deliver significant benefits:

- **For young people:** safe, free access to a high-quality facility encouraging healthy, active lifestyles.
- **For the community:** a well-used public space reducing anti-social behaviour and supporting social cohesion.
- **For the Council:** investment in long-term infrastructure that is low-maintenance and environmentally sustainable.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Initial input into the project has been provided by local young people, who shared concept ideas that were included within the tender documentation. Fleet Town Council recognises the importance of wider community involvement and will undertake further consultation with residents and skatepark users during the detailed design phase, ensuring the final facility reflects local needs and priorities.

A detailed timeline of project development and engagement activities, from 2018 to present, is provided at Annex D. This demonstrates the consistent consideration of the skatepark project by Members and the progressive involvement of young people and residents in shaping the design and priorities.

8. DELIVERY AND TIMELINE

Key procurement and delivery milestones:

Stage	Estimated Date
Tender published	12 August 2025
Enquiry Deadline	8 September 2025
Tender Submission Deadline	15 September 2025, 12:00 noon
Decision / Award	~1 October 2025
Construction Start	~20 October 2025
Project Completion	31 May 2026, with potential extension to 31 July 2026

The start of construction is dependent on securing the PWLB loan. The Council is ready to proceed once borrowing approval is granted, but the exact commencement date will be determined by the timing of that process.

9. RISK AND MITIGATION

- **Funding risk:** There is a possibility that the loan application may not be approved. In such circumstances, Members may decide that the project should still proceed, requiring it to be financed from reserves. The earmarked reserve for Play Equipment currently holds **£130,500**, which would be insufficient to cover the full project cost. Any shortfall would therefore need to be met from the Council's General Reserves, which currently stand at **£570,729**. Loan funding remains the preferred and most sustainable option, with reserves considered only as a contingency.
- **Procurement risks (e.g., tendering delays):** mitigated via clear tender documents and external publication.
- **Delivery delays:** potential extension to 31 July 2026 is built into the contract timeline.
- **Community risk:** closure of current skatepark mitigated by expedited delivery timeline and visible communication.

10. CONCLUSION

The replacement of the skatepark at The Views is a vital community project that aligns with Fleet Town Council's strategic objectives and responds to strong local demand. The tender process is underway, supporting a timely and efficient rebuild. Borrowing from the PWLB is necessary and affordable, ensuring delivery of a safe, modern, and inclusive facility that will serve the community for the next 25–30 years.