



CAMPUS POOL SKATE PARK

COMMUNITY ASSET CASE STUDY

IN BRIEF



Name: Campus Pool Skate Park

Overall cost: £300,000

Type: Conversion of a disused swimming pool into an indoor skatepark with a reception area, skate shop and café

Sport England contribution: £75,000

Type of organisation behind: a Community Interest Company – Transition Skate CIC
Sports: skateboarding and scootering
Website & social media:

Other significant funding:

- Big Issue business loan £80,000
- West of England Growth Fund £25,000
- Social Investment Business Fund £8,000
- Campus' own funds £10,000 (£3,000 of which from crowdfunding).

campusskateparks.co.uk

PEOPLE AND PLACE

Category

ONS Urban / Rural

Top tier classification	Urban
Second tier classification	City and Town

Geographical setting

Location description:	An urban location in the suburbs of Bristol
Local Authority Population	454,2131 ¹

Local Authority and Region

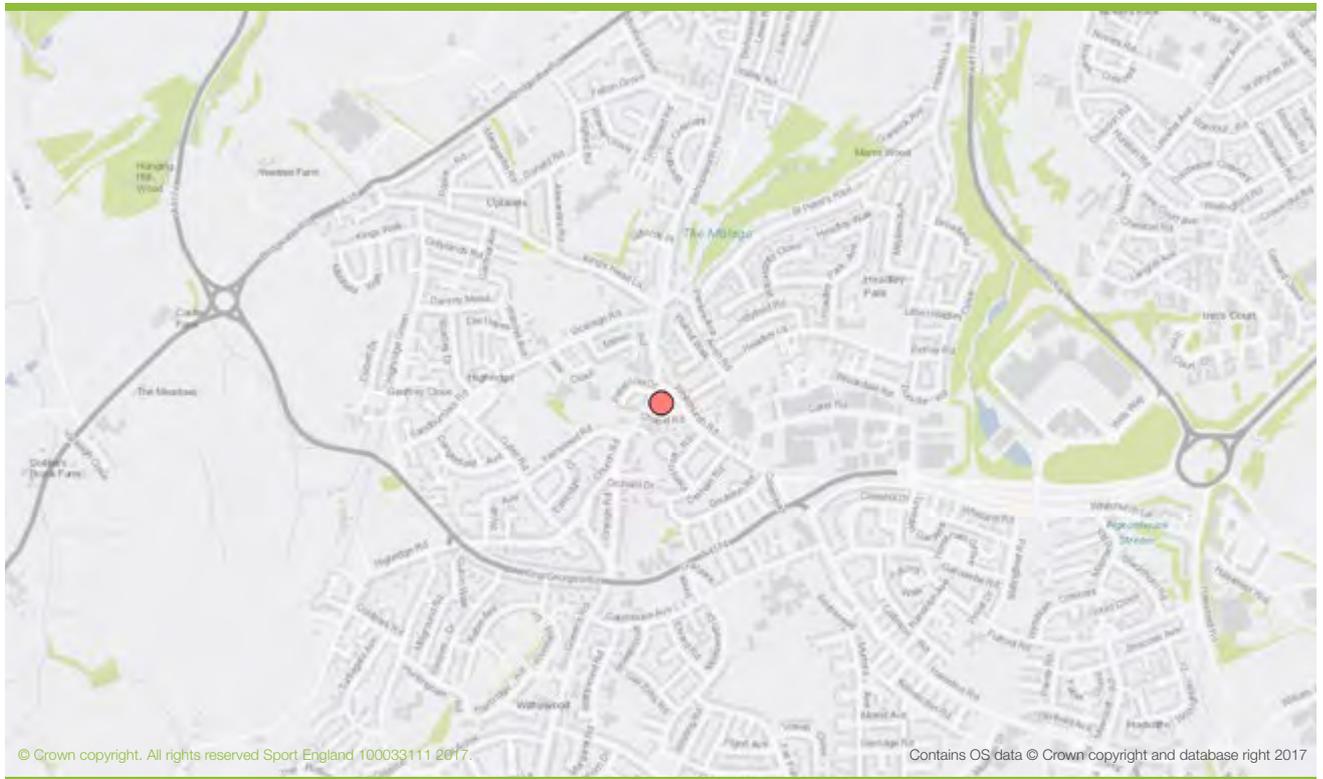
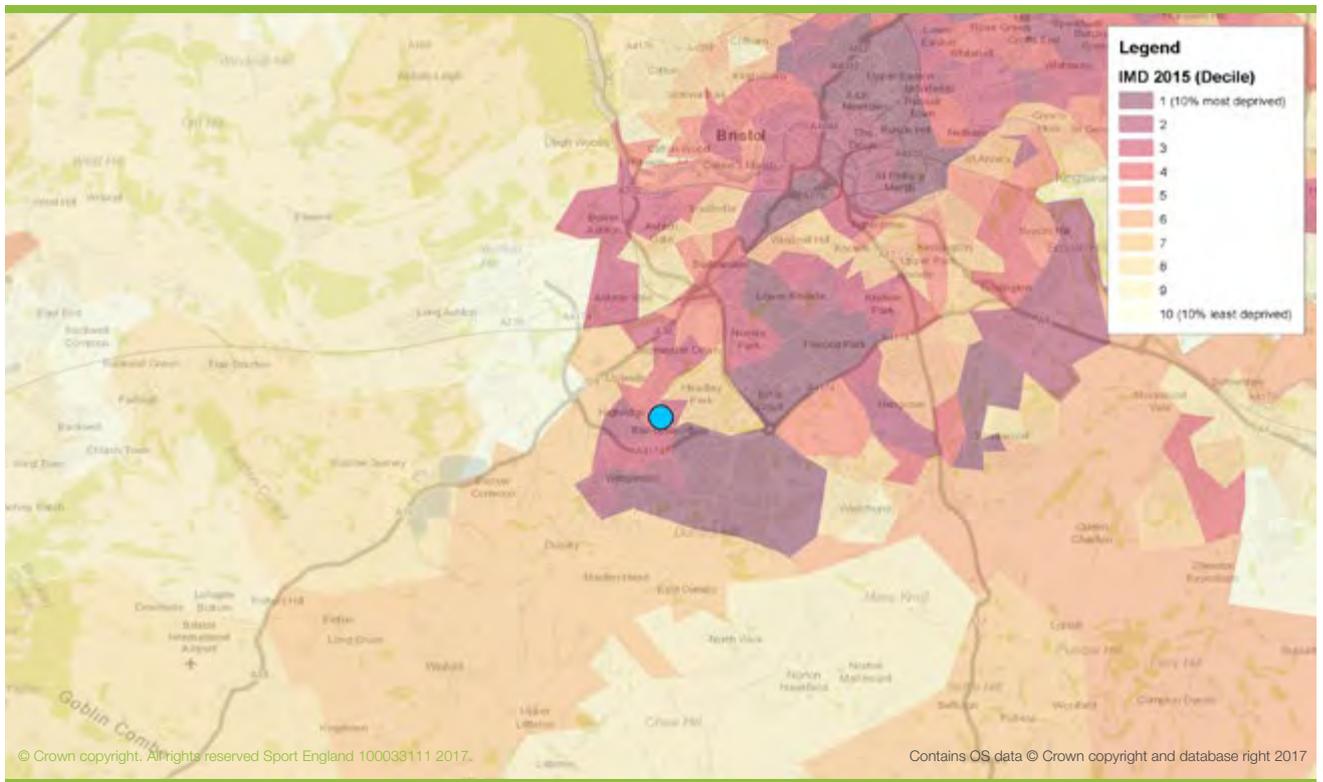
Local authority	City of Bristol
Region	South West

IMD

LSOA ranking position	8,989 ²
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1 Source: Mid-Year Population Estimates 2016, ONS

2 Each LSOA is ranked out of 32,844 LSOAs in England; where 1 is the most deprived



RESOURCES



PROJECT COST:

Total project cost: £300,000

Purpose: Conversion of a disused swimming pool into an indoor skatepark with a reception area, skate shop and café.

SPORT ENGLAND CONTRIBUTION

Inspired Facilities Fund: £75,000 to build the café.

OTHER GRANT FUNDING

- **£25,000** from the West of England Growth Fund to create employment opportunities

OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCE

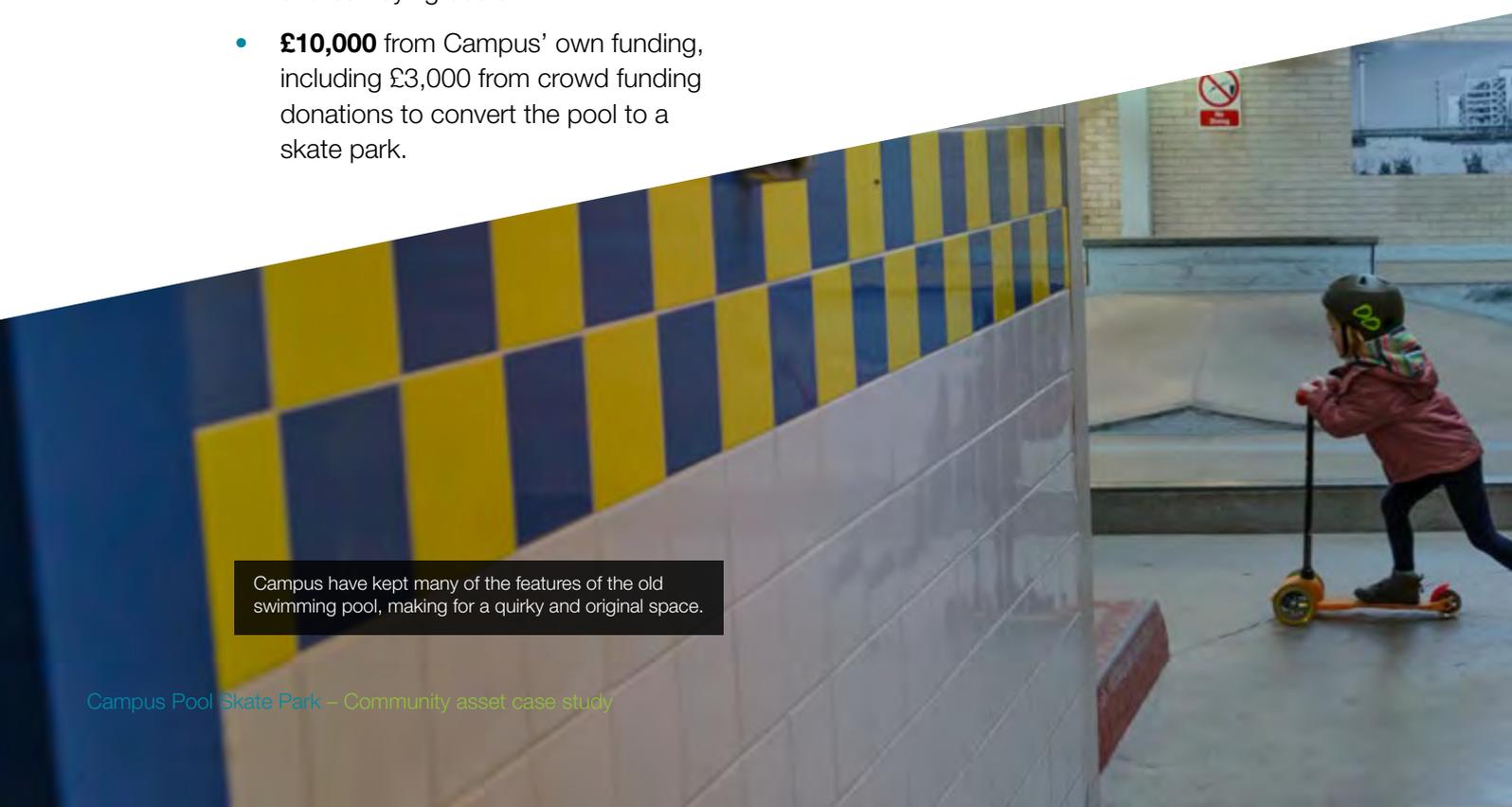
- **£80,000** as a Big Issue Business Loan to convert the pool to a skate park
- **£8,000** from the Social Investment Business Fund for professional services and surveying costs
- **£10,000** from Campus' own funding, including £3,000 from crowd funding donations to convert the pool to a skate park.

OTHER SUPPORT

Most significant: The community asset transfer by the council of the swimming pool building to Campus on a 25 year lease. Significantly, this includes a continuing commitment by the council to maintain the outside of the building and car park, something most asset transfers do not include.

Local authority: Campus received considerable support from Bristol City Council, primarily through a local councillor. Cllr Richard Eddy helped brokered a partnership with the Friends of Bishopsworth Neighbourhood Group and was instrumental in the consultation process and selection of Campus to run the facility (from a short list of six potential users).

Political: Councillor Eddy was committed to the swimming pool, which had closed in 2012, not falling into neglect. He wanted to ensure that young people could keep using the pool was instrumental in helping to steer Campus' proposal through the planning process.



Campus have kept many of the features of the old swimming pool, making for a quirky and original space.



Professional: During the planning stage five organisations provided commercial expertise in design, build management, production of a fundraising video, graphic design and documentary work. This totalled £13,000. The ISG contractor (quantity surveying construction organisation) facilitated bid writing, worked on a pro bono basis as part of their corporate social responsibility delivery.

Local Community: The local community was very supportive. Although there were some concerns about young people congregating, drug use and anti-social behaviour, the two-year consultation conducted by Campus helped secure overwhelming support from the community and key stakeholders. One feedback survey showed a 96% approval.

Revenue to support delivery: Although precise figures are not available, sources of income come from:

- Memberships and attendance fees
- Skate board merchandise and equipment sold at the venue and online
- The café.

“ONE OF THE OTHER OPTIONS FOR THE COUNCIL WOULD HAVE BEEN TO BUILD FLATS OR HOUSES ON THE LAND AS THERE IS PRESSURE ON HOUSING IN SOUTH BRISTOL. I WAS ADAMANT THAT THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A BAD IDEA,”

COUNCILLOR RICHARD EDDY



THE JOURNEY



KEY EVENTS AND MILESTONES

Date	Event
2007	Initial Saturday youth club delivery
2011	Rented skate park on a college art site was formed
2012	Application for asset transfer of the disused swimming pool
2013	Campus opens first permanent venue – a wooden-ramped skatepark in Bristol
July 2015	Campus opens its second venue, The Campus Pool skatepark and shop
November 2016	The café opens

FIRST IDEAS

The initial impetus for Campus as a whole was a gut feeling - Tim Nokes, Director, said that he:

“JUST WANTED IT TO HAPPEN, FELT LIKE THERE WAS A NEED. IF THERE WERE CLIMBING CENTRES AND CANOEING CENTRES THEN WHY SHOULDN'T THERE BE A SKATEBOARDING CENTRE?”

The Pool is the second indoor skatepark in Bristol managed by Campus.

FIRST STEPS

The Spark: The two directors ran a Saturday youth club using portable ramps for Bristol Council for four years. As part-time youth workers / educationalists they knew that there was potential to engage disadvantaged young people and felt there was a need for an alternate youth provision. A trial skateboard session on Saturday mornings whilst at a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) showed what could be achieved.

Knowledge of the audience: The only other indoor skatepark operated mostly as a nightclub and through their other work the directors were confident there was demand. Participation figures and accounts showing a profit on the first venue they ran informed them that the Pool could be a success and the model sustainable.

The location: The first site was an old art space rented for £300 per month. *“It looked like a squat”*, but served to be a good testing ground. The Pool was spotted by the Campus directors on the council website. They felt it was perfect as it was already a social space in the heart of a community.

FORMATION

After 18 months Campus *“had the confidence”* to set up a Community Interest Company, following advice from Social Enterprise Works in Bristol. This allowed them to *“move and get decisions made quickly, be business minded and dynamic”*, whilst maintaining core values of a voluntary and community sector organisation. Although they had managed and fundraised for projects, they had never run a facility.



CAPACITY BUILDING

Campus have largely developed on the job, gaining experience as they have grown. A non-executive director, Daniel Oliver, was appointed to provide some advice and support:

“I SHAPED THE BUSINESS CASE IN FUNDER LANGUAGE. SHARPENED THE LANGUAGE, PROVIDED ANOTHER SET OF EYES”.

DANIEL OLIVER, CAMPUS NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

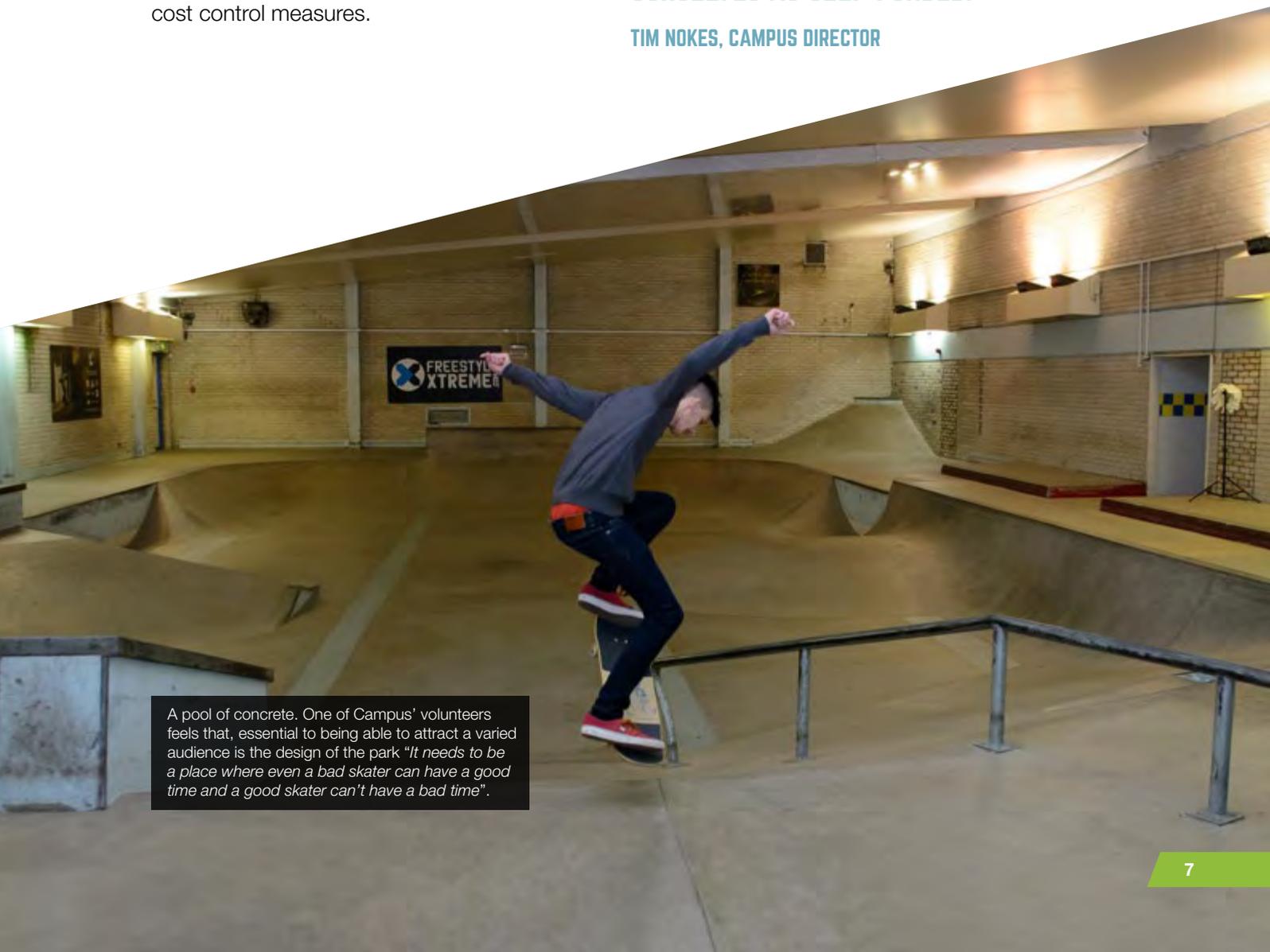
Initial provision for the pool meant it was overstaffed (mainly due to unfounded concerns about anti-social behaviour) and high costs meant that cuts were made in cost control measures.

FUNDING

An initial application to Sport England was rejected but is viewed positively in hindsight as Campus had to borrow money from Big Issue Invest. This meant they were more business-like, took step such as correcting the staff make-up and, despite losing money in the first year, they learned how to run the business properly. With their new-found confidence they broke even in year two. A subsequent funding application to Sport England was successful and now their financial model is not reliant on grant funding:

“IT WORKS! THE KEY FUNDERS DON'T PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE AND WE SEE OURSELVES AS SELF-FUNDED.”

TIM NOKES, CAMPUS DIRECTOR



A pool of concrete. One of Campus' volunteers feels that, essential to being able to attract a varied audience is the design of the park *“It needs to be a place where even a bad skater can have a good time and a good skater can't have a bad time”.*

DEVELOPMENT

Campus' directors, Andre and Tim, first enquired about the disused swimming pool in 2012 after seeing it being advertised on the council's website. At the same time a local councillor, Richard Eddy, was gathering a 10,000-strong petition to stop the community from losing use of the site and to mobilise local people to redevelop it into something else.

The Campus directors undertook an extensive two-year community consultation. It was largely thanks to this, support from the local authority and Councillor Eddy's advice and backing, that Campus' community asset transfer and planning application were successful.

The Pool opened in July 2015 following securing £80,000 from Big Issue Invest to convert it. Subsequently a community café was added, which has provided a new income stream, as well as a place where people gathered and strengthened links to the community. The café is described by Andre as the crucial element in expanding what is offered and brings the community together:

“THERE WAS NOWHERE IN THIS AREA TO GET A GOOD CUP OF COFFEE. WE GET A LOT OF YOUNG MUMS, DO A TODDLER TAKEOVER EVERY MONDAY, WITH A TODDLER MUSIC GROUP AT NO CHARGE. WE'RE NOW TALKING TO A COLLECTIVE OF PEOPLE FOR AN OPEN MIC NIGHT AND MUSIC EVENTS FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS,”

ANDRE SIDEL, CAMPUS DIRECTOR

The community café has “*drastically improved the business*” and now exceeds skate park and shop income streams.

BUSINESS PLANNING

Although they were hitting their income target for commissioned work from schools in their first facility, by the time they had opened the Pool this work had dried up. The business plan was adapted and more emphasis was placed on income from the shop and café, which now sustain the business.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The main institutional support came from the local authority.

THE FUTURE

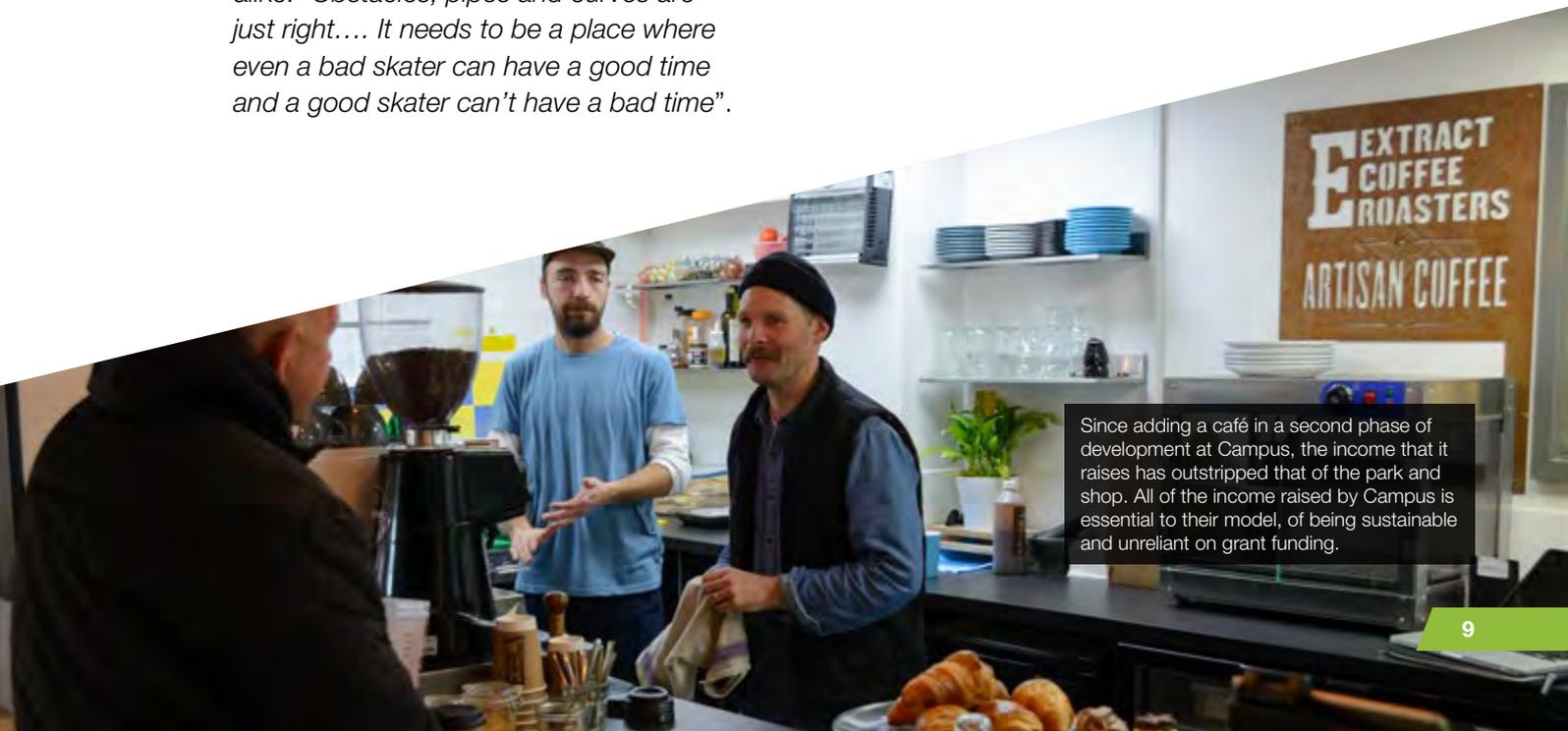
Campus want to develop more space for community use and more income streams to boost sustainability. To achieve this, Phase 3 will be the development of meeting rooms and office space which Campus want to be self-funding and include dual use of some areas. They would also like to open another centre outside Bristol.



A 'Toddler Takeover' enables the wider community to enjoy the facility.

USP

- **Partnership with the local community:** Jonathan and Alex both volunteer at Campus and feel that the skatepark's environment is unique in welcoming people of all ages. Jonathan says: *"It's a place where the staff have the passion for the activity but as youth workers understand how to support young people, build their confidence and improve their skills"*.
- The space is used by various community groups. During one of our visits to the Pool a group of young mums were sat in the café whilst their children skated in an after-school session. One of the mums told us that they come as there are no other sport centres within walking distance of their home or the local school. The mums described their time at Campus as "relaxing" adding: *"We can sit, have a chat and a coffee while the kids are skating. They have their freedom then. There are no other places to hang out as a family"*.
- **The right offer for the sports audience:** Campus volunteer Jonathan said how important it was to have a well-designed skatepark to attract the customers that they'd targeted – experienced and inexperienced skaters alike: *"Obstacles, pipes and curves are just right... It needs to be a place where even a bad skater can have a good time and a good skater can't have a bad time"*.
- **Attracting other customers:** The café is crucial in drawing in a non-skating audience. This includes parents and toddlers, who value a space that isn't offered elsewhere, a toddler and parent group on site and the friendly atmosphere.
- **Embedded into local communities through re-use:** Campus' non-executive director, Daniel, highlights the way in which the organisation has successfully taken a derelict community space formed a community hub and also created local employment: *"The city council weren't maintaining or selling [the pool]. Now you have the café and the parent interaction. It's a place where people feel ownership and pride. Campus have a good employability model - volunteering, part-time employment and then employment elsewhere"*.
- **Cred, identity and income:** Campus established a brand of skate clothing which provides a focus for identity for local young people, credibility for the venue and also a unique income stream.



Since adding a café in a second phase of development at Campus, the income that it raises has outstripped that of the park and shop. All of the income raised by Campus is essential to their model, of being sustainable and unreliant on grant funding.

IMPACT



USAGE

- Unique users: 3,903 different people since July 2015 (doesn't include people using the café).
- Gender: 240 female members (6.1%).
- Age range:
 - 2 to 57 years old using the park and a broader age range using the café
 - 2,001 members are under the age of 18.

(Better data collection is planned through potential use of [Skate Board England's](#) database.)

OTHER LOCAL IMPACT

Community

A Neighbourhood Partnership well-being grant of £3,000 helps ensure affordability for young people living locally in deprived areas with 100 free annual memberships to young people in the BS13 postcode, reducing their entry fee to £3 from £5 for two hours skating. The Skate Park matched the offer with another 100 memberships. Campus help other groups, such as the Jehovah Witness church and gym next door who can use their car park.

Initiatives

Toddler takeover (toddler and parent), open skate session, other community group use and private bookings.

SPORT ENGLAND OUTCOMES

Through our funding we aim to nurture projects which address the five health, social and economic outcomes set out in the [Government's Sporting Future strategy](#). We feel that Campus strongly supports two of these outcomes in particular; individual development and social & community development.

Campus' approach prioritises personal outcomes over sports participation. As one of the directors, Tim Nokes, says:

"IT'S DIFFERENT FROM TEAM SPORTS. IT'S ABOUT ACCOMPLISHMENT AND BETTERING YOURSELF, BUT NOT FOR THE SAKE OF TROPHIES OR MEDALS. IT TEACHES PEOPLE TO LAUGH AT AND MAKE A FOOL OF THEMSELVES AS EVERYBODY WILL FALL OVER AND THEY WILL JUST HAVE TO DEAL WITH THAT."

The skatepark also provides 200 free annual memberships to young people from local deprived areas, reducing their entry free from £5 to £3.



OTHER STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Dan Oliver, Campus' non-executive director, feels that the Pool skatepark contributes to all of Sport England's outcomes:

Health and wellbeing: "Health and wellbeing [is generated] where people can sustain a way of life and create a peer group. In skateboarding you have to challenge yourself and do this yourself. The work with the girls groups and work with these young people is also important."

Community development: "[Campus is a] valid community brand. The community feel it's a space of their own and positive role models around".

Economic Development: "Campus has also helped to put south Bristol on the map a bit more. Historically it's the poor side of the city where the tobacco docks were and people don't tend to come here unless there's a reason. The skatepark is a destination and it brings people to the area and helps change their perception about this part of the city."

Participation – target groups: "physical activity is intrinsic to Campus".

One volunteer said that the Pool attracts:

- Young people who may otherwise be intimidated at outdoor parks
- Girls – both in girls' only sessions and open sessions

There has also been work with the local media to try and attract more women to the space; and work with young people and people from more disadvantaged neighbourhoods is very strong, through a reduced entry scheme in particular.



"We can sit, have a chat and a coffee while the kids are skating. They have their freedom then. There are no other places to hang out as a family".

TIPS FROM ACRONOVA

Be entrepreneurial and business-like:

Campus' directors have been forced to be entrepreneurial and take risks, "*and be comfortable taking them*", such as taking on the additional building. Andre Seidel, Campus director says: "*The most important thing was to learn about financial planning, preparing for bare bones staffing, unpicking the overheads. This was all new to me. I should have learned to relax earlier on as we are still here and that's a big success*".

Recruit volunteers yourself: Creating their own volunteering opportunities rather than relying upon external agencies such as educational providers, is crucial to their desire to maintain autonomy: Daniel Oliver, Campus' non-executive director says: "*We don't want to engage with FE colleges and so developed our own volunteering opportunities. Every business needs capacity and if there are young people who want to develop then they will*".

Be flexible: Initially Campus replicated the delivery model in place at the existing site when the Pool was taken on. However, they realised that they needed to be open more hours and have now extended opening.

Test and phase: Campus put a huge amount of effort into making sure they weren't duplicating existing provision. This was particularly important when budgets were getting tighter (with £100m more council cuts in the next five years). The consultation exercise took over two years to ensure support and relevance. They also didn't try to do everything at once, phasing the development of the Pool e.g. the café was a later addition, made once the skatepark and shop were up and running.

WHAT THEY WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

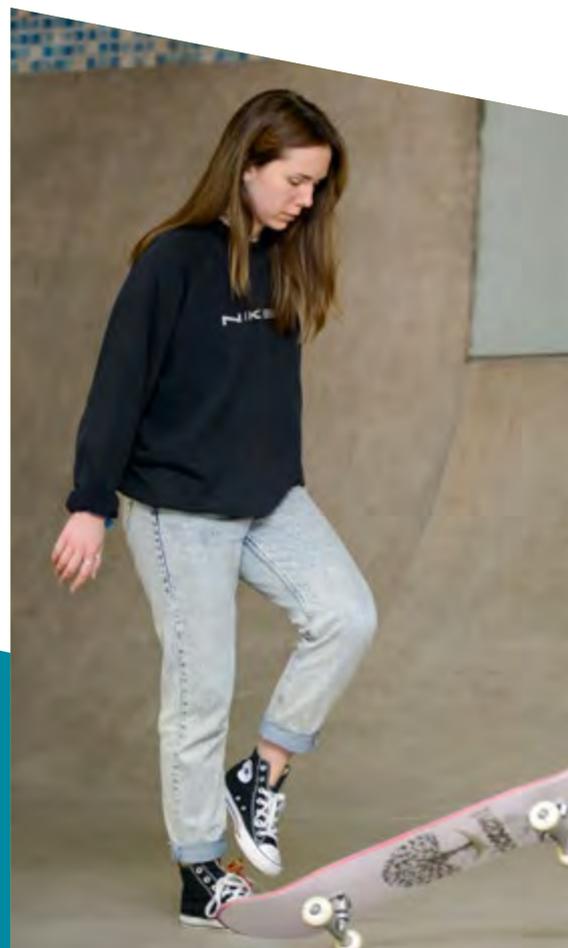
Not much. They feel that it was less enjoyable before the café opened which has brought non-skaters into the building.

BENEFITS OF BEING A CIC

The Community Interest Company formation has provided some advantages – helping to meet Campus's desire to have a commercial approach but with a community commitment. The partnership with the council has also been critical to success (maintaining the building, Councillor support for the development and funding).

SOME LEARNING FOR SPORT ENGLAND

Campus suggest that we should encourage organisations to take on business loans and develop other income streams – it makes them get to terms of how to run their facility more quickly.



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sportengland.org