

# **New projects aims to develop individual sporting skill on surf, skate and snowboards**

**West Lothian schools will be among the first in the country encouraged to “get on board” with a chance to learn the highly individual sporting skills of surfing and skateboarding.**

Alongside the recently B-listed listed Livingston Skatepark, a major new wave pool surf resort means youngsters have surf breaking on their doorsteps without a trip to the coast.

And it is hoped access to these recreational sports will appeal to children who have no interest in traditional team sports.



An artist's impression of the Lost Shore Surf Resort which opens later this month at Ratho. Copyright Lost Shore Surf Resort.

The Education Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel heard that Active Schools – a partnership with Scottish local authorities and SportScotland – are currently working with the Scottish Surfing Federation (SSF) and Skateboard Scotland to develop a 'School to Surf' programme.

The programme is being funded by the SSF as a pilot aimed at establishing a pathway into the sport in advance of the opening of the Lost Shore Surf Resort (LSSR), a £60m facility being built in Ratho, which opens this month.

The LSSR, will be the most advanced wave pool in the northern hemisphere and represents the biggest investment in Scottish sport since the Commonwealth Games in 2014.

As one of the closest schools to the LSSR, Calderwood Primary School in East Calder was chosen to participate in an innovative programme that will use 'surfskate', or

skateboarding, to provide the foundation for a pathway to both surfing and skateboarding. Surf Skating mimics the sensation of surfing.

Paul Stark, CEO of the Scottish Surfing Federation told the Local Democracy Reporting Service: "The SSF is absolutely delighted to be providing this piloting programme to bring surfing into schools in Scotland.

"Thanks to the support of Active Schools, the Surfskate academy and the Lost Shore Surf Resort we have a programme that will inspire, encourage and provide a pathway for participation in surfing in Scotland."



No need to go to the coast. The surf is coming to your doorstep in West Lothian with the opening of the Lost Shore Surf Resort at Ratho this month. Copyright Lost Shore Surf Resort.

The programme is being fully funded by the SSF and will focus on 12 primary five pupils (six boys and six girls) who are non-participants in traditional sports.

In addition to the SSF and Skateboard Scotland, the pilot programme also includes involvement from Edinburgh Napier

University who are providing support to evidence the impact of the pilot programme in terms of objective measures how it develops balance and movement skills and subjective measures how these sports can build confidence and well-being.

The courses could be rolled out to more schools across the county. There is also potential to develop the scheme to include snowsports and cycling.

Snowsport Scotland, has expressed an interest in supporting the delivery of an integrated pathway for board sports in West Lothian. Snowsport Scotland have indicated a desire to support the delivery of participation sessions with a pathway into Nordic Skiing in a similar capacity through the use of wheeled skates. \*

This could potentially capitalise on West Lothian Council's investment in pump tracks and in the West Lothian Cycle Circuit, at Linlithgow which could provide a hub for such activities.

Councillor Moira McKee-Shemilt, the Livingston councillor who first proposed the town's Skatepark receiving the B-listed status it achieved earlier this year, asked if any of the school projects were linked directly to the facility.

Matt Costello, acting head of culture and sport, said no direct links had been established to the Livingston facility for the pilot. Given the nature of skateboarding there are no formal clubs at a local level, only the national body.

He added: "We have an infrastructure of skateparks and facilities in the area. Hopefully as the programme develops there will be further opportunity to develop links."

He said a mapping exercise of outdoor sporting facilities was underway as part of the Active Schools programme.

Mr Costello said, in a report to the PDSP: "With an

infrastructure of world-class skate parks, coupled with the investment in pump tracks, the West Lothian Cycle Circuit and the development of the nearby Lost Shore Surf Resort, West Lothian is well positioned to provide opportunities for increased participation in skateboarding.

“There is also potential to develop pathways to other associated activities in partnership with the three national governing bodies of sport highlighted within this report. Active Schools will continue to explore potential skateboarding activities and officers will develop an action plan in conjunction with governing body leads regarding a ‘board’ programme.”

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter