



# LIVI SKATEPARK

## ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS REPORT

### JUNE 2023



HISTORIC  
ENVIRONMENT  
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD  
EACHDRAIDHEIL  
ALBA

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1. BACKGROUND TO AND SCOPE OF THE ENGAGEMENT .....	5
1.2. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT .....	6
1.3. CONTENTS OF THE REPORT .....	6
<b>2. METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1. HOW WE ANALYSED RESPONSES .....	6
2.2. NUMBER OF RESPONSES RECEIVED .....	9
<b>3. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS 1-5.....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1. WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION TO THE SKATEPARK .....	10
3.2. PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR CONNECTION WITH LIVINGSTON SKATEPARK AND/OR ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION, STORIES OR MEMORIES: .....	11
3.3. DO YOU SEE LIVI SKATEPARK AS PART OF SCOTLAND' HERITAGE? .....	14
3.4. DO YOU THINK LIVI SKATEPARK IS SPECIAL? .....	18
3.5. PLEASE USE THE SPACE BELOW TO TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AND VIEWS ON LIVINGSTON SKATEPARK, AND/OR SKATEBOARD HERITAGE IN SCOTLAND:.....	21
<b>4. CONCLUDING REMARKS .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: CONSULTATION ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: ON-SITE PAPER SURVEY QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>27</b>

*'We are not all Deacon Brodie and Hibs casuals. We are not all Thatcher, heroin and AIDS. We are not all Auld Firm and Auld Reekie. We are not all the Glasgow Kiss and "T in the park".*

*We are not all Rez or the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Not Champions of Fire and the Old Course. Not just Muirfield and Gullane. Arran and midgies.*

*We are not all Murrayfield, Gala and Hawick. Ayr races. Knockhill. Peterhead prison. Mean Aberdonians. Fey islanders. Taggart. Rennie Macintosh.*

*We are all of these. We all matter. To have Livi hailed as an integral piece of our culture is not only desired.*

*It's needed.'*

(Response from Phil Beattie)

## Executive Summary

### Background

In 2023, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) undertook an engagement exercise in response to a request to consider designating the Livingston ‘Livi’ Skatepark as a listed building.

This skatepark was built in Livingston and opened in Almondvale in 1981.

Our engagement included an online survey undertaken in partnership with Skateboard Scotland.

We also visited the skatepark to photograph the site and to engage with people present at the skatepark.

### Analysis

The purpose of this report is to document the engagement we undertook, and to analyse the responses we received.

Our analysis seeks to understand the number of responses, and the range and breadth of views expressed during consultations. It identifies key themes emerging from the responses and the reasons behind these.

### Number and category of responses

557 responses were received to the online survey. There were two late responses. Comments from the late responses have been integrated into the qualitative analysis, but not the quantitative analysis as set out below.

As can be seen in the following table, the largest number of respondents were individuals. A small number of individuals commented that they were also part of a larger organisation. This included Skateboard Scotland, or as a member of a community council or the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

Respondent group	No. of responses	Percentage of responses
As an individual	549	98.56%
On behalf of an organisation, public body or charity	0	0.00%
As a private business, such as an architect	1	0.18%
Representing a community group	1	0.18%
Other	6	1.08%

Nine individuals were willing to discuss the skatepark with us during our site visit, and to record their responses to our questions through a paper survey. We also provided these individuals with a link to our online survey.

## **Analysis Overview**

Across all questions in our online survey:

- 98.92% see Livi skatepark as part of Scotland's heritage.
- 99.1% think Livi skatepark is special.

However, understanding the response to our online survey is not just about raw response numbers (quantitative), but also the variety and depth (qualitative) of comments we received.

The following key topics, themes and arguments emerged:

- The origins of Livi.
- Key individuals in its design and development.
- Livi as amongst the oldest and best skateparks in the UK.
- The important place of Livi in Scottish skateboarding, and other sports, in particular BMX.
- Livi in the context of the new town of Livingston.
- The worldwide renown of Livi and the many famous boarders and bikers who have used it.
- Livi as contemporary heritage
- What makes Livi 'special'.
- Livi and challenges for the future.
- Views on listing.

## **Next steps**

The analysis set out in this report will be considered during the course of our assessment for listing. Any proposed decision to list will be subject to consultation with the owner and local authority. Interested parties can follow progress with this case on our [Heritage Portal](#).

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background to and scope of the engagement

In June 2022, Historic Environment Scotland was invited by West Lothian Council to assess Livingston Livi Skatepark for listing.

The background set out on the HES Citizen Space [consultation portal](#) noted:

*The skatepark was designed by architect, Iain Urquhart and was opened in Almondvale in 1981. The skatepark was first extended around 1992 and again in 2013.*

We welcome comments received early on in the handling of designation assessments to ensure that we have a full and inclusive understanding of the significance of a place, and also ensure that we are aware of all of the circumstances of the case at an early stage. We recognise that heritage comes in all shapes and sizes and does not necessarily come with the age of a structure. To this end we consider all forms of the historic environment as having potential for designation. However, we do not normally list buildings which are less than 30 years old as there is insufficient historical perspective to allow a comprehensive assessment of interest.

This is the first time we have been asked to list a skatepark, and we were keen to hear from people who know and use Livi Skatepark, and/or have a view on its design, history and significance. To this end we recognise that expertise and knowledge lies with communities of practice, such as skatepark users. We were determined to engage with people who connected with the park and were able to share their knowledge with us, and to help inform us about the heritage of Livi.

During 2023, we therefore undertook the following engagement exercise to inform our decision-making on this case.

- We carried out an online survey in partnership with Skateboard Scotland, the official governing body for skateboarding.
- Skateboard Scotland kindly offered to highlight our online survey on their social media channels, ensuring a much greater distribution, across their members, skaters and other park users and associated networks.
- The online survey was open from 11 April to 18 May 2023 using the HES Citizen Space platform.<sup>1</sup>
- We promoted the survey through our social media channels.
- We visited the site on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> April to photograph the site for the National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) and spoke to users of the park. We shared a link to the online survey with interested individuals and also provided paper questionnaires to record the views of skatepark users (see Appendix 2).

---

<sup>1</sup> Historic Environment Scotland – Citizen Space:  
<https://haveyoursay.historicenvironment.scot/heritage/livi-skatepark/>

## **1.2. The purpose of this report**

When we receive relevant comments on a designations case at an early stage, we make use of this information as evidence to inform our assessment for listing.

We review the responses that we have received. Analysis of responses is necessary to capture and summarise the results.

We have undertaken the analysis of this engagement exercise ourselves.

The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis of the responses to the online survey and written questionnaires from our on-site engagement, to ensure transparency about the public consultation process.

The report will also provide a snapshot of contemporary views about the cultural significance of Livi skatepark at the point of significant change being proposed.

## **1.3. Contents of the report**

The report sets out the number of responses, and the range and breadth of views expressed during our engagement, including what parts of this carry material weight in the assessment for listing.

This analysis and reporting has considered each of the responses based on the principle of 'inclusion', respecting all the submissions equally without bias.

However, whilst all responses have been taken into account it has not been realistic to set out the qualitative content of every single response in equal detail, because of the volume of responses, and the length of report that would ensue.

We have therefore clustered responses to create summaries of the arguments being made.

Doing so helps to identify the key themes emerging from the responses and the reasons behind these.

If readers would like to read the responses to our online survey in full, we have published these (where we have the necessary permissions) in a separate report. That report does not publish the responses from on site engagement in the form of completed questionnaires, as we do not have the necessary permissions in place.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. How we analysed responses**

There are challenges to how to analyse responses to a public engagement survey. Our approach has been to address these where we can, and where we cannot, to openly acknowledge this.

First, by the very nature of a public call, participation in our engagement exercise was on a self-selection basis. We sought to reach out to communities with whom we

seldom have contact through collaboration with Skateboard Scotland. We used a combination of online and in person engagement to maximise participation.

Nevertheless, the sole sampling criterion for participation was interest in the topic. This is important and means that no full societal population generalisation can be drawn. The response does not represent a referendum on the subject. It merely represents a vehicle for gathering a snapshot of views from communities of interest, and also place.

Second, the online questionnaire was designed to help us understand how people value Livi skatepark, as the basis for gathering evidence on aspects of 'cultural significance'. In turn this assists us in assessing a building against the listing selection guidance we publish on our [website](#). However, many responses are far more wide ranging with various views spread throughout responses that need to be carefully identified and allocated properly. Not all of these opinions carry material weight in our assessment for listing. When analysing comments on whether respondents consider Livi to be special, we have therefore organised these to align with our selection guidance for listing, while acknowledging where other comments have been made which do not align with our selection guidance.

The responses to our survey ranged from those who simply completed the questionnaire with yes/no responses, to questionnaires completed with detailed responses within the questionnaire format.

A 'mixed methods' approach addresses the challenge that the quantitative data cannot stand alone and must be considered alongside the qualitative data, particularly as so many submissions provided qualifications and caveats to the more overtly measurable element, such as a yes/no response.

Third, the responses recorded during our on-site engagement cannot be fully compared with, nor integrated with, the responses received through the online survey. This is because the paper questionnaire was designed to be shorter, to be completed by hand, and to be more targeted towards skatepark users. The questions asked on-site using the paper questionnaire were therefore slightly different in nature to the online survey and are set out in Appendix 2. We collected only 9 completed paper questionnaires.

Given the low number of paper questionnaires collected, and the differences between the questions asked, we have not

- drawn out any statistical analysis from the on-site exercise
- integrated these responses into the wider tabular reporting of the online survey
- included these responses in some of the data analysis methodologies described below

Instead, we have reported on the responses received during the in-person engagement in the relevant sections of the data analysis below.

As we did not ask on-site participants' permission to publish their responses from the paper questionnaire, we have not quoted directly from the paper questionnaires in this analysis report.

The data analysis comprises three broad stages:

Stage 1: Review of material and data processing – organisation and cataloguing of the written evidence.

Stage 2: Analysis of evidence – using a researcher-led framework to understand all the qualitative responses.

Stage 3: Reporting – report on all responses received (where we have permission to do so), followed by detailed analysis (this report).

Stage 1 is primarily undertaken through the survey software to provide quantitative outputs. We catalogued the anonymised responses and constructed an Excel database for each survey question.

In stage 2, we used a combination of approaches to analyse the data. We read the responses to draw out common themes and topics. We also used an out-of-the-box Natural Language Tool Kit (NLTK) sentiment polarity model to collate adjectives used in responses to each question. We trialled use of a free online word cloud generator<sup>2</sup> to illustrate the top 20-30 adjectives of sentiment expressed by respondents for each question. This analysis, along with reading of each response, guided identification of key themes and clustering of responses to draw out illustrative examples of what people told us. The team also held regular updates to talk through emerging findings. This was an iterative process that has formed the basis for this report (Stage 3).

---

<sup>2</sup> [Free Word Cloud Generator](#)



## 2.2. Number of responses received

557 responses were received to our online survey.

We received nine completed questionnaires from our on-site engagement.

The analysis focuses primarily on the online survey **questions 1-5, and 6**.

Question 6–10 asked respondents to provide information about themselves.

**Question 6** asked respondents to indicate if they ‘are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation, business or community group.

As can be seen in the following table, by far the largest number of respondents were those responding as individuals (549).

Respondent group	No. of responses	Percentage of responses
As an individual	549	98.56%
On behalf of an organisation, public body or charity	0	0.00%
As a private business, such as an architect	1	0.18%
Representing a community group	1	0.18%
Other	6	1.08%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Those who responded ‘other’ were asked to specify their respondent group. Five of those who responded indicated that they were also connected in some way to a wider group, including office holders of the governing bodies of skateboarding in Scotland and England, a chair of a local community council, a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute; and as a parent of children who also use the skatepark.

**Question 7** asked those responding on behalf of an organisation, local authority or community group to provide the name. The responses provided named the following:

- Doms Architect
- Growing Up in Livingston Facebook Group
- Howden Community Council
- Skateboard Scotland.

**Questions 8-10** concern publishing preferences and personal data. We have not reported on these matters here.

### 3. Responses to Questions 1-5

This section covers the responses to survey questions 1-5 that relate to how people use and value Livi skatepark. These are the questions that are of primary relevance in respect of the assessment for listing.

#### 3.1. What is your connection to the skatepark

**Question 1** invited respondents to comment on their connection to the skatepark. T

Most of the respondents (76.48%) use/have used the park, while a further 21.9% of respondents describe themselves as casual observers.

Option	No. of responses	Percentage of responses
I use the park/I have used the park	426	76.48%
Casual observer (I know the site, eg. I live or work nearby)	122	21.90%
I've heard about it (eg. Television, social media, internet)	75	13.46%
This is the first time I've heard about it	3	0.54%
Other	40	7.18%
Not Answered	4	0.72%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>100%</b>

The following connections were noted.

John Love stated: *'the skate park was my idea'*. Meanwhile three respondents noted that they were related to Iain Urquhart, who designed and built Livi and Dean Swift *'was part of the design team as landscape architect'*.

Five respondents commented that they used to use Livi or spend time there in the past. For example,

*'This was where I grew up soon right after school I was there till its late as I could stay and on weekends spent all day there kept me and a fue off my palls off the streets and out off trouble' (Ben Lynch)*

18 respondents referred to either family members, partners, friends, colleagues or friend's children using or having used Livi in the past. For example,

*'My eldest son has skated there for MANY years along with most of his friends, I would go down with refreshments and sit to watch them all either on skateboards, BMX bikes, inline skates or with scooters' (anonymous)*

Two skateboarders commented on Livi's legendary status. For example:

*'I have skated for over 40 years, including the 80s when Livi was developed. It is really important in the context of the development of skateboarding not only in Scotland but the wider UK and reflects the soul of skateboarding' (anonymous).*

Four respondents indicated that they were interested in the park for professional or academic reasons, as a photographer and journalist specialising in skateboarding, as an architect specialising in designing spaces for skateboarding, as a historian of skateboarding, or for the purpose of postgraduate studies.

### **3.2. Please tell us more about your connection with Livingston skatepark and/or any other relevant information, stories or memories:**

Question 8 invited a free text response. There were 518 responses to this question.

A huge amount of information, stories and memories emerged from the responses provided.

The key topics and themes covered in responses were the following.

#### *The origins of Livi skatepark*

Two respondents mentioned a community development project at Craigshill, Livingston as a precursor to Livi. John Love recalled that, as chair of Dedridge Youth Council in the late 1970s, he received support from the Livingston Development Corporation:

*'after getting a youth centre built at Nigel Rise, I was asked what would we like next? This was a deliberate strategy to help keep young people off the streets and avoid gang culture taking root. A skate ramp made of different materials in a range of horizontal colours was constructed at Craigsfarm and this was supposed to determine the material for the skate park. Concrete wasn't one of the options lol.'*

Along with many other respondents, he identified Kenny Omond as 'a key player in helping to drive the creation [of Livi] along with the Livingston Development Corporation'. Colin Williamson also identified the late John Hoey as someone who 'helped develop Craigsfarm community development project in Craigshill...'

#### *Iain Urquhart's design and the build*

Several responses from relatives of Iain Urquhart, and close professional associates of his, recalled Iain Urquhart and the design of Livi.

Respondent Parisa Urquhart directed a 2020 documentary *Long Live Livi*, about its significance and impact. Parisa commented that in the documentary, pro skateboarder, Tony Hawk recalls how:

*'Scotland had one of the best skate scenes in Europe in the 1970s due to Iain and Dee Urquhart running the Scottish Skateboard Association, and then for Iain to design and build Livi skatepark was the icing on the cake - it attracted*

*the best professional and amateur skaters from around the world and many camped out in the park and skated Livi for weeks on end.'*

Tim Leighton Boyce was at the start of a career as a skateboard photographer and journalist. He recalled staying with Dee and Iain Urquhart in Edinburgh and helping them on research visits to southern England where Iain Urquhart discussed his thinking behind the design and his campaign to get it built.

Dee Urquhart-Ross, Iain Urquhart's widow, recalled:

*'Iain designed the skatepark for Livingston after we went on a trip to California to visit some of the parks there and I had to hang about quite a bit so got into skateboarding myself which I absolutely loved!'*

Steve Urquhart (Iain's nephew) quoted Iain Borden, Professor of Architecture and Urban Culture at University College London, who observed in a 2020 BBC Radio 3 documentary about the park:

*"Livi was a prototype for UK skateparks, the way that Iain Urquhart considered how it sat in the ground, and provided viewing terraces... you can tell from the long sections through the designs that he was thinking about that very carefully. Livi is the first skatepark where you've got a skilled designer, who's visited skate parks in the UK and in America, and who's spoken and conversed with and collaborated with lots of local riders, that's when the formula for what makes a good skate park comes together. And Livingston's the first to do that."*

'GD' commented on the construction of Livi, stating it was:

*'Built in a time where there were no standard or recommended construction techniques and knowledge available locally, in a way the architect had to research the subject and come up with his own solution, a radial cutter. Having worked extensively constructing skateparks the techniques are not really in use today and the 'Big bowl' in particular is a superb example of large transitions being poured well without the use of traditional pool tools or presumably any modern finishing aides.'*

Dean Swift observed that the Landscape Architects section of the Livingston Development Corporation was responsible for the surrounding earthworks and planting design and *'that the site was originally a tip for excess material from the town centre works....'*

### *Livi in the eyes of the world*

Several respondents were received from across the world including Switzerland, Poland, the USA (incl. Hawaii), Germany and Australia. For example, Mike Vuckovich from California commented that he heard about the construction of Livi in 1981 at a time when skateboarding was in decline and this gave the US skateboarding community hope for the future:

*"Livingston Skatepark gave us all—including the kids halfway around the world—hope at a time when our little world was on the brink of disappearing. It was a bridge to a new era and a new thinking that eventually brought the world the newest Olympic sport. Livi is legend.'*

There were numerous accounts of famous skateboarders and others who used the park, both local, national and international. The following were mentioned:

- Tony Hawk was mentioned by many respondents as a world-famous skater they witnessed skating Livi, including shortly after its opening.
- The Famous BONES Brigade, a world-class skateboarding team created in 1979 by Stacy Peralta and George Powell: the '*founders of modern-day skateboarding*' (Andrew Law)
- Other international pros and luminaries mentioned included Ray Underhill and John Cardiel, Steve Caballero (in the 1980s), Mike Vallely, Bob Burnquist, Bucky Lasek and Nicky Guerrero, and more recently Phil Shao and Raven Tershy.

Ricky T mentioned that Livi was also visited by the best BMX freestyle riders of the day such as 'Eddie Fiola, Mike Domingues and Bob Morales.' Mark McKee mentioned a visit by the famous BMX rider Harry Main.

Toby Paterson commented how visits from famous skaters '*did so much to influence and enthuse Scotland's vibrant skate scene and inspire new talent*'. Many of these exploits were recorded, either in print or on film.

An anonymous respondent commented on how young skaters started out at Livi before going on to greater things:

*'Stu Graham, Benson, Div, Ben Laden and more, all lads who pretty much started out at Livingston Skatepark and went on to be sponsored!'*  
(anonymous)

#### *Livi in the eyes of the skateboarding and biking communities, and the local community.*

There were many vivid memories provided of how respondents came to know Livi, to use it, and what the place meant to them.

It's impossible to mention every response but here are a sample that illustrate the range of uses and experiences.

*'Dropping in' to Livi for the first time (on a Livi Fun Day no less) was one of the most daunting, exciting and satisfying moments of my life.'* (Tom Worthington)

*'When I started skateboarding Livi was the only skatepark in Scotland. Getting there was always an adventure. I've shedded skin there, achieved great things there, & always left with a massive smile on my face. Livi is Scottish skating, simple as that'* (Jon Tait)

*'My most vivid memories will always be of the joyously anarchic annual Pure Fun Skate Parties down the years'* (Toby Paterson)

*'I have spent many days at Livingston skate park in my teenage years due to being part of the 'goth/emo' crowd we always got banned from the centre due to security guards being discriminating and the skate park (skatey) was where we could go and hang out and meet friends without being discriminated against'* (Patricia Buglass)

*'I grew up at the skate park along with friends who I still skate with to this day. It's the only thing that made us feel like a community and only safe place we had while others my age were drinking and using drugs.'* (Dianne)

*'...Livingston is a cultural back hole! Nothing for the youth to do, well until they find the skate park!'* (David Naysmith)

*'As a kid I spent every minute I could riding my bmx there. My daughter is just getting into skate boarding (boo!) and I'd love for her to get the same enjoyment there as I did.'* (Denis Moran)

*'Yes it's just concrete, but from these quarter pipes and ramps Blood, Sweat and Tears have been poured into passion and professional sportsmen have be[en] born.'* (Ryan Mackinnon)

People who completed the paper questionnaires during our on-site engagement visit provided further insight into how they use and value the skatepark.

- We asked how long they had been using the skatepark. The answers ranged from one day to 20 years. One participant used the park 3 days a week. Another participant said they used the park 4 days a week.
- Their uses were mainly skateboarding, but one participant mentioned scooting and climbing.
- Four participants made reference to socialising and spending time with friends. One said they loved the people and culture around the skatepark.

Several respondents mentioned Livi in connection with their profession. For example, Dr Fiona Macleod mentioned:

*'Having worked in Livingston as a doctor, any facility which encourages families from all backgrounds to get out and exercise and connect should be treasured, especially with history which gives pride in their community.'*

### 3.3. Do you see Livi skatepark as part of Scotland' heritage?

Question 4 invited respondents to answer the question above. There were 557 responses.

As below, over 98% responded 'yes'.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	551	98.92%
No	6	1.08%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

Respondents were asked a follow-up:

'Please explain why'.

There were 470 responses to this part of the question.

Of the six respondents who didn't consider Livi part of Scotland's heritage, the following arguments arise:

- 'Seems very exclusive not welcoming for the young or inexperienced. Also has lots of litter around it.' (anonymous)
- 'It is a pile of concrete with attracts anti-social behaviour. Yes, it's good for the kids but it is not a historic monument.' (anonymous)
- 'They are developed over time and this would discourage development. Heritage is about structure. A skatepark is about freeform creativity and freedom - the exact opposite of structure and heritage. I present as evidence the acceptance of graffiti as part of the structure, there is no heritage sites that enjoy graffiti as part of their structure.' The same respondent argued that 'government quangos should keep their nose out of skaters and council business. The last thing we want is an authority quango sticking their unwanted nose in. Councils across Scotland do a good job with skateparks and they are a popular FREE healthy resource. Improvements to skateparks are usually done in line with 1. local input and 2. professional park designers. There is no oversight or input a heritage quango could provide here.' (anonymous)

Amongst the majority who do consider that Livi is part of Scotland's heritage, the following themes predominate.



Figure 1 Word cloud of the top 30 adjectives expressing why respondents felt that 'Livi' is or isn't part of Scotland's heritage (the larger words denote greater frequency of use of the word).

We have drawn out below, the most common themes which appeared in responses and illustrated these with quotes.

#### *Livi as a 'first'*

Around 100 responses refer to Livi being a first in some way.

- *'The first of its kind and known worldwide'* (anonymous).
- *'The first Scottish skatepark'*
- *'First in UK, iconic'* (anonymous)
- *'One of the first of its kind, not only in Scotland but in Europe'* (Hugh Cameron)
- *'The first outdoor concrete skatepark...'* (anonymous)

Ian Deacon referred to Livi in the context of a legendary skatepark at Kelvingrove: *'but that got bulldozed so protecting livingstone is even more important'*.

Along similar lines, several responses referred to Livi as 'the oldest', or 'one of the oldest', and as 'original'.

#### *Livi as the 'best'*

Around 35 responses referred in some way to Livi as being 'the best' or amongst 'the best' skateparks. For example:

- *'It's the heart of skateboarding in Scotland, the history of its creation in a new town. Its still regarded as one be of the best skateparks in the world. It's brought enjoyment and hope to many over the years.'* (Hazel)

Seven out of the nine park users who completed the paper questionnaire during our site visit described Livi as the best skatepark compared with other skateparks that they knew or had used. Another said that Saughton Park in Edinburgh was a bit better because of its environment and the variety of skating for beginners.

#### *It's contribution to Scottish skateboarding, and Scottish culture more widely*

Many responses focussed on the contribution of 'Livi to Scottish skateboarding within the context of Scottish culture.

- *'The birth place of Scottish skateboarding'* (anonymous)
- *'For many years it held unofficial Scottish championships in the form of the Pure Fun Skate Party until newer facilities came on line in the mid 90's.'* (Andy Lincoln)
- *'An iconic site that charts the history and progression of the art form in it's concrete designs that's been used by generations of Scottish and international skaters. If you like it's the St Andrews 'Old Course' of skateboarding that deserves to be there for future generations.'* (Craig Fletcher)
- *'It shows the forward thinking present in our country. To me and many generations before and after me this is probably the most important landmark in Scotland! This was a Mecca for Scottish skaters for the many years we were marginalised and largely ignored by society.'* (Paul Shearer)
- *'In terms of historical, current and future social and recreational value, it is irreplaceable. I'm terms of design, it embodies a key moment in modernist history where influences from 1970's California profoundly enriched post war scottish modernism.'* (Paul Kerlaff)
- *'It is the heart and soul of the skate scene and the wider extreme sports scene.'* (Parisa Urquhart)



- *'Heritage implies a rooted connection to a site or space, and I think Livi has held Scotland down as a place to visit for tuned in skateboarders all over the world. It's legendary status adds to the sense of Scottish identity when meeting folks from scenes in other countries. The people it has produced also adds to this fact. It must be protected as it holds the hearts of many a Scottish skateboarder. As a site it may become a point of fascination for anthropologists, archaeologists and cultural explorers. Its roots can be explored through the layers of cracked concrete that are slowly chipping away. It is reflective of our cultural ambitions, our need to express ourselves and form communities of alternative states of thinking. It must remain for this significance to truly emerge. I believe it represents a pivotal point in politics and attitudes in Scotland. It holds the essence of the utopian ideals of the 60s whilst being the first park to be taken through the rough 80s of Thatcherism. (This really only constitutes the old park).'* (Campbell Barclay)

#### *It's contribution to Livingston*

- *'It changed lives for the better and fostered a unique identity for Livingston: something often very difficult to establish in a New Town.'* (Toby Paterson)
- *'I can't remember a time when the Skate park wasn't there. We have lost the trim track, pitch n putt and bike track from this area, we have to keep the places that make Livingston, Livingston.'* (Nicola Wood)
- *One of the perceived issues with the New Towns is the lack of a 'centre'. Livingston is no exception to this. But places like the skatepark have provided a place for people to come together socially.* (Stephen Roberson)
- *'I think the skatepark promoted Livingston, as many people travelled from other areas and when the town was still unknown; if you said you were from Livingston people would say "Ah the skatepark"'* (Angela Campbell)

#### *Livi as heritage*

Christopher Pepper commented on its 'great significance on a cultural heritage level but also in its physical characteristics':

*'The design of Livingston skatepark can be traced to backyard 'pool' skating popularised in California in the late 70s and 80s. Its design is reflective of the early beginnings of skate culture and it contains many unique features, most notably its dual bowl. The phrase often copied but never bettered can apply to Livingston skate park. It's design and architectural DNA can be seen in skateparks throughout the UK and Europe and this alone solidifies its place as a culturally and architecturally important asset to Scotland's modern heritage.'*

### 3.4. Do you think Livi skatepark is special?

Question 4 asked for a yes/no answer. There were 556 responses. Around 99% replied 'yes'.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	552	99.10%
No	4	0.72%
Not Answered	1	0.18%

Respondents were asked a follow-up:

'Please explain why'.

There were 443 responses to this part of the question.

For those who responded 'no', the following reasons were given (all anonymously):

- *'Doesn't have the same appeal as it used to'*
- *'To be special it needs to be accessible to all and its users need to be welcoming. Litter issue needs dealt with.'*
- *'It's a skatepark, no different to Saughton.'*
- *'it's bog standard'*

Amongst the majority who do consider that Livi is 'special', the following word cloud gives a sense of the themes which predominate.

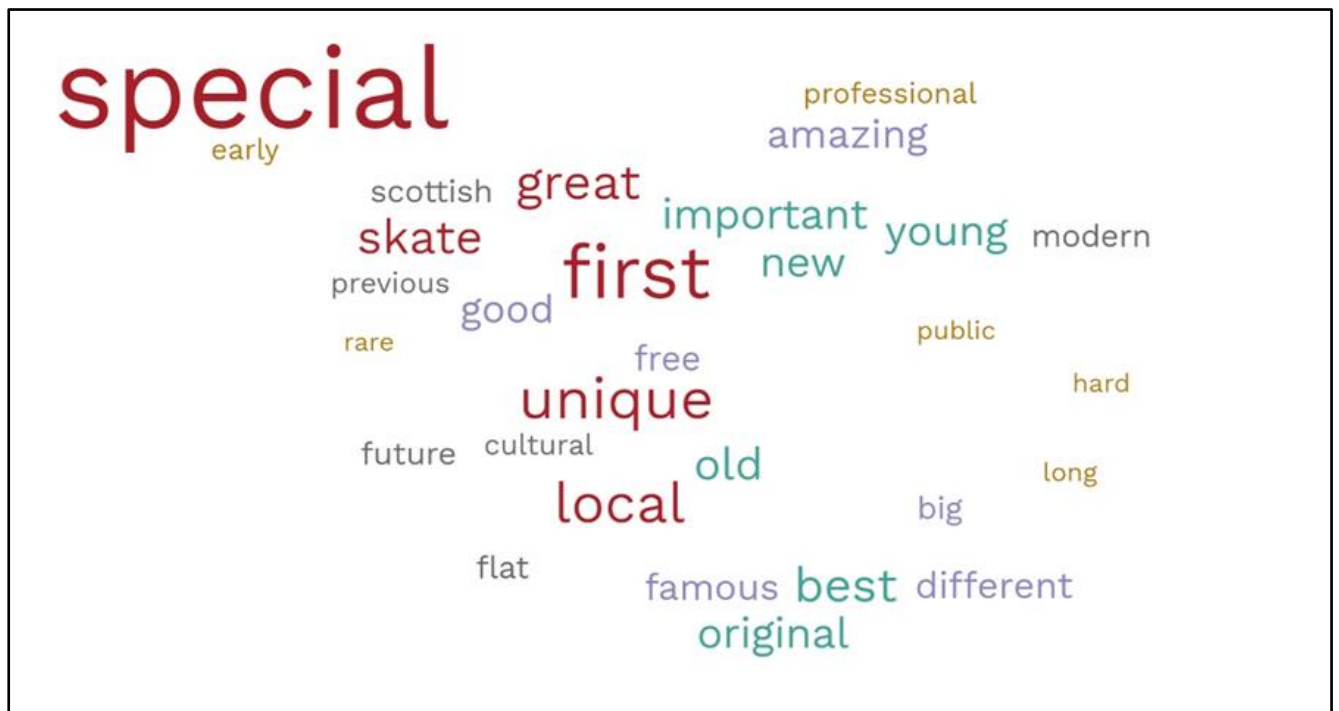


Figure 2 Word cloud of the top 30 adjectives expressing why respondents felt that 'Livi' is or isn't 'special' (the larger words denote greater frequency of use of the word).

We have drawn out below, common themes which appeared in responses, that articulate most clearly to how we define 'special architectural or historic interest' for the purpose of listing.

### *The design of Livi*

Around 40 responses made comments indicating that they considered aspects of the design of Livi as part of what makes it special. For example:

- *'Livingston is in some ways the most important skatepark ever built in the UK. On the one hand, it is one of the very best of the first wave of UK skateparks built during the late 1970s – with exemplary bowl and other features of a very high standard. On the other hand, it in many ways prototypes the second wave of skateparks that were to be later built during the 2000s – ie free to access, multi-purpose (skateboarding, bmx, rock climbing), landscaped and community-oriented.'* (Iain Borden)
- *'The design is so cool and even now a gnarly big bowl ride is hard to master even for pros. The locals rip big time it has a great spirit!* (Simon Gibson)
- *'Its size, variety, architecture and openness. Its larger than parks in nearby towns and cities. This is critical. There is space for a large number of skaters at any time. You can practice vert and street in the same space. Its design is stunning. It cannot be compared to the newer modular wooden and steel parks that you see popping up now....'* (anonymous)
- *'The original 1981 design is outstanding as an integrated area of bowls, hips and pipes. The surface finish in the 80's was super fast and it was definitely the best bit of concrete in the UK till the later 90's.'* (Andy Lincoln)
- *'Another specific aspect which makes Livingston special is the flat bottom design of the original bowl and half-pipe. Prior to Livi most, if not all, designs for bowls and half-pipes were based on a rounded bottom. This is the case with the pool and bowl at The Rom in London, for example. This might have been the case with Livi. I believe the original designs did not have the flat bottom in the bowl. But Dee and Iain not only went to great lengths with their research visits to skateparks in the UK and USA, they were also very up to date because they were so deeply embedded in the skate world. So when the benefits of a flat bottom were realised and publicised, initially in wooden ramps such as a famous one at the Eurocana skate camp in Sweden, Iain revised his plans to incorporate the new design. Flat bottoms became a standard profile and the semi-circular profile disappeared, but this change coincided with a downturn in the popularity of skateboarding and so was initially visible in wooden ramp design. Nobody was building new concrete skateparks and Livi was probably the last to be built during that era. So for several years the most cutting edge skatepark in the world was in Scotland and people travelled from California and elsewhere to ride it.'* (Tim Leighton-Boyce)
- *'It is the architectural archetype for modern skatepark design'* (Andrew Graham)

### *Age and rarity*

- *'It's special primarily for surviving 42 years - built the year I was born. It's unique in its design, being one of the first purposes made facilities in the UK'*

*and it is also one of the most challenging skateparks to ride.'* (Martin Sweeney)

- *'The pre-2000s parts of Livi are build in a style you don't really see made these days. New skatepark design means Livi is already a rare breed.'* (Kevin Parrott)
- *'Skateparks in the central area of Scotland are few and far between, and most are small or unmaintained. Few are as well designed and historically important as Livingston.'* (Kevin Rankin)
- *'The original park is an incredibly rare example of a first generation skatepark that is still 100% functional 40 years after it was built. It's supported the progression of generations of skateboarders over that time and is genuinely loved.'* (Toby Paterson)

#### *Its contribution to its surroundings – 'setting'*

The following anonymous comments received relate to how the skatepark contributes to its surroundings:

- *'It helps livingston be unique, its a beautiful use of the space and should be cherished for the cultural touchpoint it is.'*
- *'Very special and the heart of Livingston'*
- *'...the only "safest" area in West Lothian that gives the public something to do'.*

Meanwhile, Scott commented:

*'Growing up in Livingston there were a lot of activity playgrounds, woodland trails and areas for youngsters to explore. As time has passed a lot of these have sadly been lost due to development of the town and Council cutbacks, but Livingston Skatepark has remained. Its' concrete ramps and bowls have felt like a constant feature of the town.'*

#### *Social historical interest*

Several respondents commented that they felt that Livi being 'free to use' was a major part of what makes it special. For example, Tim Leighton Boyce commented:

- *'The most important aspect, in my opinion, is that Livingston is free, open and unsupervised. It is now common in the UK and worldwide for public skateparks to be provided as a unsupervised amenity, but Livingston was built at a time when the assumption was that skateparks needed to be staffed in order to impose the wearing of helmets and other safety equipment. Councils were concerned by the risk and liability and either avoided making any decent provision for skateboarding, or built closed skateparks with staff and entrance fees. These controlled public skateparks could not survive the ups and downs in popularity and almost none survived into the eighties. Livi might have been no different. Iain produced plans for such a park, fenced, with buildings to house the attendants and so on. But he also fought a long, hard, but ultimately successful campaign within the Development Corporation for his visionary idea that making the park free and unsupervised was a critical aspect. Livi demonstrated to other public authorities worldwide that it was possible to provide such a facility without disastrous consequences. I believe that if it had*

*not been for Livingston's pioneering approach we might never have seen to routine provision of usable skateparks as recreational facilities.'* (Tim Leighton-Boyce)

#### *Association with people or events of national importance*

Many responses referred to the Livi's design by renowned architects Iain and Dee Urquhart, and the fact that many famous skaters and BMX riders from around the world have travelled from far afield to use Livi such as Tony Hawk, helping to put Livingston on the map. For example:

*'Legends in the sport from all over the world has been to this park. It's the equivalent of any big stadium in the skateboarding world.'* (anonymous)

#### *Other reasons for Livi being special*

There were many other reasons mentioned for 'Livi' being 'special' which do not clearly correspond to how we define 'special architectural or historic interest' for the purpose of listing.

Here is a small sample of the anonymous comments provided:

- *'Not only is it special as a skatepark but the cultural and community benefits to young people go far beyond the direct activity of skating. It's a space where young people feel they belong, where they can congregate without being perceived negatively and being moved on. Unique spaces like this are important for the happiness and well-being of our youth.'*
- *'It's saved a lot of people from wondering the streets doing nothing positive.'*
- *'This place will always hold a special place in my memories of a great sport and a nostalgic time during a troubled childhood with a lot of painful memories. Livi was always a nice place to think about.'*
- *'I lost my virginity in full pipe. it'll be a memory with me for the rest of my life.'*

### **3.5. Please use the space below to tell us more about your experience and views on Livingston skatepark, and/or skateboard heritage in Scotland:**

Question 11 invited respondents to provide more information on their experiences with and views on Livi, stating 'We welcome any information including links to online archival material, video, social media accounts etc.'

There were 231 responses to this question covering the following themes.

#### *Stories and memories*

Many respondents provided other stories and memories not mentioned elsewhere. Here is a small selection of the comments.

- *'Livi skate park was a safe space for people of mixed heritage at a time when racist abuse was rife in all other parts of cities. I have very fond memories of the park, the people that used it and the skateboard culture that did not see*

*my colour and tested me as one of them. Very important cultural and sporting heritage'* (Mesfin James)

- *'I broke my foot there. My son loved it. The community spirit of the skaters and BMX bikers was brilliant.* (Gail Fletcher)
- *'..There was always a quiet rivalry between skateboarders, bladers, and bikers, but, any time groups of individuals came looking to cause trouble, everyone there would band together to drive trouble away.'* (Scary Steve)
- *'I have seen the legendary Bones Brigade skate there. These guys were the best skaters of their day.'* (Chris 'the janny' Clark)

### *The case for listing*

10 responses supported any listing of the skatepark. The following reasons were given.

- *'I'd love to see it retained and restored'* (Elaine Wernsing)
- *'listing as heritage will help to preserve the life of the park'* (anonymous)
- *Listing it would put it on centre stage and Scots can become aware of it, visit it and be proud of it'* (Parisa Urquhart)
- *'Opportunity to promote the value of heritage listings to wider audiences and change the perceptions of heritage as 'old buildings'. It would help promote 20th century heritage as valuable, and demonstrate that something so well loved by today's communities as having value alongside older heritage that people may not have such connections with. Positivity for the sport and youth culture.'* (anonymous)
- *'List it'* (anonymous)
- *'I hope the park can gain heritage status. And perhaps be restored so others can continue to enjoy this landmark'* (anonymous)

On aspects of detail in relation to potential listing, Andy Lincoln observed:

*'the later Livi additions are not great and shouldn't be listed in my opinion. The suffered from poor build quality for the 92 part and poor design for the later part. Not listing them would give them a chance to be demolished and better facilities built to service Livingston skaters / BMXers. The original 81 park is the historic park which should be listed. Even that has a poor surface now and this needs correcting if it is to be enjoyed in the future.*

A small number of respondents expressed some concern about potential listing. For example, an anonymous respondent commented:

*'My only concern is that historic status may change it and its condition with unintended consequences. Skateboarding doesn't really have rules, just etiquette and a status like this might change things'.*

### *Aspirations for the park*

Many respondents took the opportunity to comment on the existing state of the park and suggested that it needs to be looked after.

*'If it is to be saved it needs regular maintenance so it is useable for future generations'* (anonymous)

Several respondents commented in particular on the state of the skating surface. For example, Rick Curran observed:

- *'the challenge for Livi is that left untouched then over time it is going to get further into disrepair, and even with fixing a certain amount of the cracks the general surface condition will deteriorate further. My personal feeling is that the whole skatepark should be carefully resurfaced by an experienced company to ensure a long lasting solution'*

One of the participants in the in-person survey noted that the regular skateboarders knew a lot about the upkeep of the park and the best surface management. They felt that the older surface provides more grip, though is more likely to cause cuts and scrapes as opposed to burns from smoother areas. Protective sprays over artworks could make the surface slippery.

Other anonymous comments included water ingress causing the 'right wall to become hollow'; and concern that the 'coping around the newer bowls is a disgrace and is not fit for purpose'.

Specific suggestions for improvements from anonymous responders included:

- Expanded car parking
- Trees removed from the vicinity to prevent drain blockages
- Entire parks area cleaned as part of the regular street cleaning service
- The parks original design was targeted at very advanced skaters, it should be slowly remodelled/extended to encourage more beginners/intermediates

A small number of respondents, including one participant from the in-person survey, expressed concern about proposed development adjacent to the skatepark and its potential impacts.

### Links to online information

Many respondents provided links to information sources online about Livi. These are listed in the table below where they are open access.

Description	Link	Provider
Photo album	<a href="https://www.flickr.com/photos/misterworthington/albums/72157622118212064">https://www.flickr.com/photos/misterworthington/albums/72157622118212064</a>	Tom Worthington
Steve Caballero	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CCwMHZ4gFcX/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D">https://www.instagram.com/p/CCwMHZ4gFcX/?igshid=MzRIODBiNWFIZA%3D%3D</a> <a href="http://www.abriefglance.com/abg-news/the-steve-caballero-interview_25th-anniversary-of-the-vans-half-cab-shoe.html">http://www.abriefglance.com/abg-news/the-steve-caballero-interview_25th-anniversary-of-the-vans-half-cab-shoe.html</a>	Cameron Broughan
Photography archive with RaD magazine	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/readanddestroy/">https://www.instagram.com/readanddestroy/</a>	Tim Leighton Boyce; Paul Sunman
Interview about Livi	<a href="https://be-mag.com/article/insight-pure-fun-blade-party/">https://be-mag.com/article/insight-pure-fun-blade-party/</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/@purefunblade7635/videos">https://www.youtube.com/@purefunblade7635/videos</a>	Duncan Barton
Various	<a href="https://youtu.be/Fbhce5bxrnE">https://youtu.be/Fbhce5bxrnE</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/KYVI1WGG75M">https://youtu.be/KYVI1WGG75M</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/urLax6og3DE">https://youtu.be/urLax6og3DE</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/GAAn6Yn_hZs">https://youtu.be/GAAn6Yn_hZs</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/h37XouQeJfl">https://youtu.be/h37XouQeJfl</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/LAqwbWe9hjl">https://youtu.be/LAqwbWe9hjl</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/a04jMcPJmvo">https://youtu.be/a04jMcPJmvo</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/C7QFZWsk04Y">https://youtu.be/C7QFZWsk04Y</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpkUu-ucL1M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpkUu-ucL1M</a> <a href="https://youtu.be/6AvTNOwjtBo">https://youtu.be/6AvTNOwjtBo</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4HmPM7ol_E">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4HmPM7ol_E</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VfUam0tRCr8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VfUam0tRCr8</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noGzTfjsnP">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noGzTfjsnP</a>	John-Ross Morland; Craig Fyfe; Graeme Price; Daniel Muir; Kevin Parrott; Mrk McKee; Scott
BBC coverage	<a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/10D08VCM1zPLMwsrJpCvj9j/the-kids-saving-an-80s-skatepark-with-some-help-from-tony-hawk">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/10D08VCM1zPLMwsrJpCvj9j/the-kids-saving-an-80s-skatepark-with-some-help-from-tony-hawk</a>	Alex Smith; Jason Longstaff
Pure Fun Skate Party 2018	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UV0Be3a7YMM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UV0Be3a7YMM</a>	Ben; Craig Fyfe
Eddy Fiola BMX	<a href="https://images.app.goo.gl/aQBQYZEWjp9XbkjC9">https://images.app.goo.gl/aQBQYZEWjp9XbkjC9</a> <a href="http://www.radbmj.co.uk/forum/index.php?topic=154180.0">http://www.radbmj.co.uk/forum/index.php?topic=154180.0</a>	Ricky T
Long Live Livi film on BBC	<a href="https://vimeo.com/393974528">https://vimeo.com/393974528</a>	Parisa Urquhart
Press article (2023)	<a href="https://www.mailplus.co.uk/edition/news/scotland/272587/why-i-believe-this-graffiti-covered-patch-of-old-concrete-is-as-culturally-important-as-edinburgh-castle?collection=13997&amp;&amp;contentLayout=Your%20Scotland">https://www.mailplus.co.uk/edition/news/scotland/272587/why-i-believe-this-graffiti-covered-patch-of-old-concrete-is-as-culturally-important-as-edinburgh-castle?collection=13997&amp;&amp;contentLayout=Your%20Scotland</a>	



Olympics torch relay	<a href="https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Summer_Olympics_torch_relay">https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Summer_Olympics_torch_relay</a>	Mark McKee
BBC Radio 3 programme	<a href="https://soundcloud.com/listentosteve/curves-and-concrete">https://soundcloud.com/listentosteve/curves-and-concrete</a>	Steve Urquhart
Alex Craig video	<a href="https://blog.slamcity.com/hmin-bam-video-by-alex-craig/">https://blog.slamcity.com/hmin-bam-video-by-alex-craig/</a>	Nikk Horne
Poweel Peralta video	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4w77MN75TEs&amp;t=912s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4w77MN75TEs&amp;t=912s</a> <a href="https://www.whenwewasrad.co.uk/index.php/2008/04/28/livingston-fun-day-septmber-1988/">https://www.whenwewasrad.co.uk/index.php/2008/04/28/livingston-fun-day-septmber-1988/</a> <a href="https://www.whenwewasrad.co.uk/index.php/page/6/">https://www.whenwewasrad.co.uk/index.php/page/6/</a> <a href="https://www.whenwewasrad.co.uk/wp-content/images/67/rad-magazine-67-page-030.jpg">https://www.whenwewasrad.co.uk/wp-content/images/67/rad-magazine-67-page-030.jpg</a> <a href="https://www.whenwewasrad.co.uk/index.php/2008/04/28/livingston-fun-day-septmber-1988/">https://www.whenwewasrad.co.uk/index.php/2008/04/28/livingston-fun-day-septmber-1988/</a>	Anonymous
Esquire article about Iain Urquhart	<a href="https://www.esquire.com/uk/culture/a34617191/livingston-skate-park/">https://www.esquire.com/uk/culture/a34617191/livingston-skate-park/</a>	
Instagram reels	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CTVb9eqKGq2/?igshid=ZWlzMWE5ZmU3Zg==">https://www.instagram.com/p/CTVb9eqKGq2/?igshid=ZWlzMWE5ZmU3Zg==</a> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/reel/CqdKtWaKD07/?igshid=ZWlzMWE5ZmU3Zg==">https://www.instagram.com/reel/CqdKtWaKD07/?igshid=ZWlzMWE5ZmU3Zg==</a> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/CTSwnEnKIsh/?igshid=ZWlzMWE5ZmU3Zg==">https://www.instagram.com/p/CTSwnEnKIsh/?igshid=ZWlzMWE5ZmU3Zg==</a>	

## 4. Concluding Remarks

We were very pleased that so many individuals, groups and organisations took the time to respond to our engagement about Livi skatepark and would like to thank everyone for their contributions. This was based on our attempts to engage with skateboarders and park users, by working with Skateboard Scotland, visiting Livi on a number of occasions and demonstrating our keenness to learn from others about their heritage. We would also like to thank the people we met at the park, who stopped to talk to the ‘people with clipboards’, and kindly shared their knowledge with us.

We received a huge amount of interesting, and valuable information to inform our assessment of Livi for listing.

## Appendix 1: Consultation Online Survey Questions

We noted in the overview for the survey the following:

'Listing the site would not prevent it being used as a skatepark. It would ensure that its importance is taken into account in future decisions about its management.'

Q1	<p>What is your connection to the skatepark?</p> <p>If you've chosen other, please provide more details</p>
Q2	<p>Please tell us more about your connection with Livingstone skatepark and/or any other relevant information, stories or memories</p>
Q3	<p>Do you see Livi skatepark as part of Scotland's heritage – yes/no</p> <p>Please explain why</p>
Q4	<p>Do you think Livi skatepark is special – yes/no</p> <p>Please explain why</p>
Q5	<p>Please use the space below to tell us more about your experience and views on Livingston skatepark, and/or skateboard heritage in Scotland</p> <p>We welcome any information including links to online archival material, video, social media accounts etc</p>
Q6	<p>Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation, business or community group?</p> <p>If you have chosen Other, please specify here</p>
Q7	<p>What is your organisation, local authority or community group?</p>
Question 8-11	<p>Questions about how you wish your response to be handled.</p>

## Appendix 2: On-site Paper Survey Questions

A paper questionnaire was used to record the views of skatepark users who were present at Livingston Skatepark during our visit on 12-13 April 2023.

Q1	How do you use the park?
Q2	How long have you been using it?
Q3	How did you find out about it?
Q4	Do you use other skate parks? And if so, which ones?
Q5	If so, how does this one compare?
Q6	Question about post-survey follow up and if the respondent would be happy to be contacted
Q7	Please feel free to share any other comments you have about Livi skatepark