

REPORT OF **Head of Communities and Place**

To: **Full Council**

Subject: **PlayZones**

Date: **14th October, 2024**

Reference:

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

- To obtain member approval for the funding of three PlayZone schemes by reallocating Rural England Prosperity Funding and working in partnership with Active Torridge and various community organisations

1. INTRODUCTION

What is a PlayZone?

PlayZones are 20m x 30m safe, inclusive and accessible outdoor facilities (imagine Multi Use Games Areas) that bring communities together through recreational forms of football and a range of other sports.

There are four main groups facing the greatest inequalities. We want you to prioritise engaging with these groups within your place to provide opportunity and access to safe, inclusive and welcoming facilities.

- Lower socio-economic groups
- Women and Girls
- Disabled people and people with long term health conditions
- Ethnically diverse communities





2. REPORT

The Need

The most recent Active Lives survey (2022) recognised that Torridge is the most inactive area of Devon. PlayZones would help support changing this data for the better

The North Devon & Torridge Playing Pitch Strategy update recognises that there is a need for more outdoor sports facilities to help support local sports clubs and leisure providers. Last winter was the wettest winter on record and saw an unprecedented amount of sports unable to be played due to wet pitches. These facilities would help facilitate training for all age groups, protecting grass pitches

The Football Foundation (Sport England) is providing 75% of funding towards each site/project. This opportunity doesn't come along often and TDC is looking to utilise this funding but also identified key partners/stakeholder to support each project in certain areas.

Community Engagement/Identified sites

The project came with £25,000 Community Engagement funding which was allocated to Active Devon staff to carry out on our behalf.

Their report recognises that there is a demand for such a facility and in certain areas of Torridge

- 1 – Holsworthy (Stanhope Park)
- 2 – Bideford North and East The Water
- 3 – Great Torrington
- 4 – Winkleigh
- 5 – Northam

With further engagement and site identification, this has now been narrowed down to 3 suitable sites:

- 1 – Holsworthy (Stanhope Park)
- 2 – Bideford east The Water – Polyfields
- 3 – Great Torrington (Former Tennis courts site)

All of the above are TDC land and have recognised local organisations to support with the usage and capital funding.

Costs per site?

Approx £275,000 per site. Each site will be different depending on location and surface required. Desk top survey works are currently being undertaken by the Football Foundation and next steps involve meeting with design teams from the Football Foundation to understand works required at each site.

Stakeholders and financial support

The community engagement work undertaken has recognised a wide range of user groups that would support each facility. Active Torridge, in line with their 5 year business plan, have been identified as the suitable partner to manage each site, with TDC managing the maintenance in line with the current agreement with Active Torridge for its existing leisure facilities.

Financial contributors

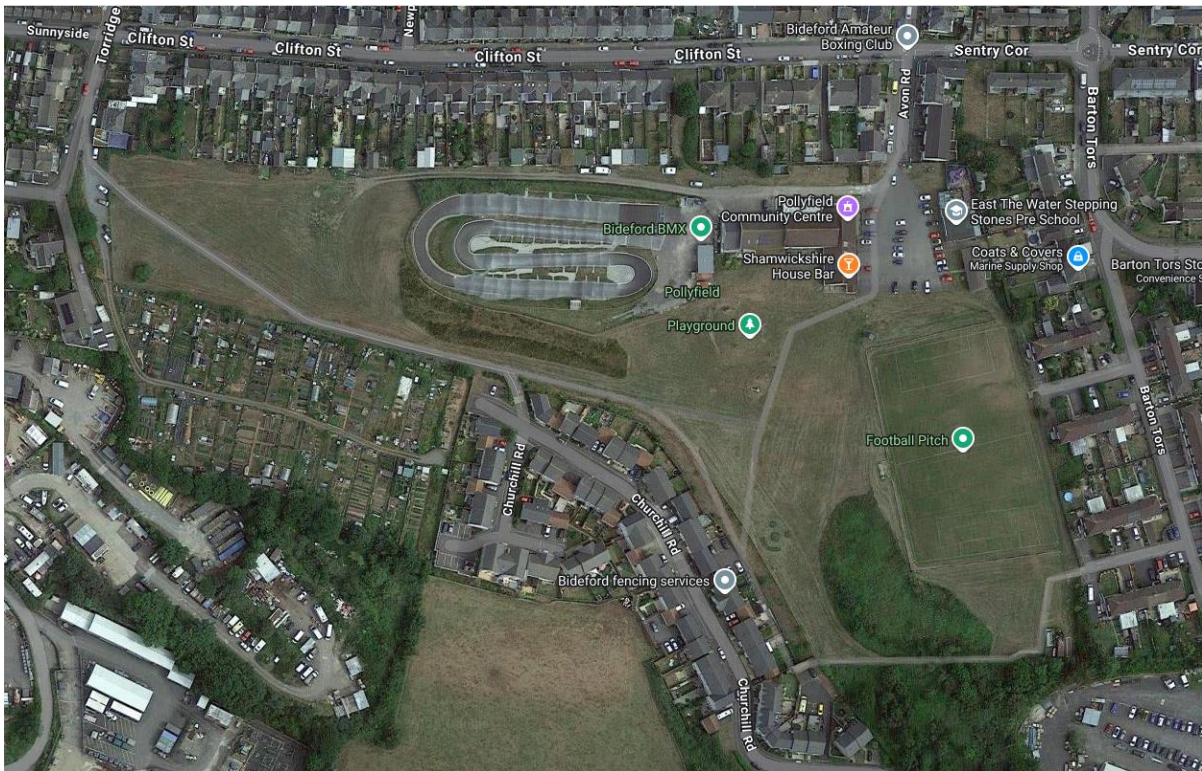
- Torrington Town & Lands - £17,187.50
- Torrington Town Council - £17,187.50
- Holsworthy Town Council - £52,000
- Bideford Town Council – TBC
- Bideford Bridge trust – TBC
- TDC - £105,000 - TBC

Identified Sites

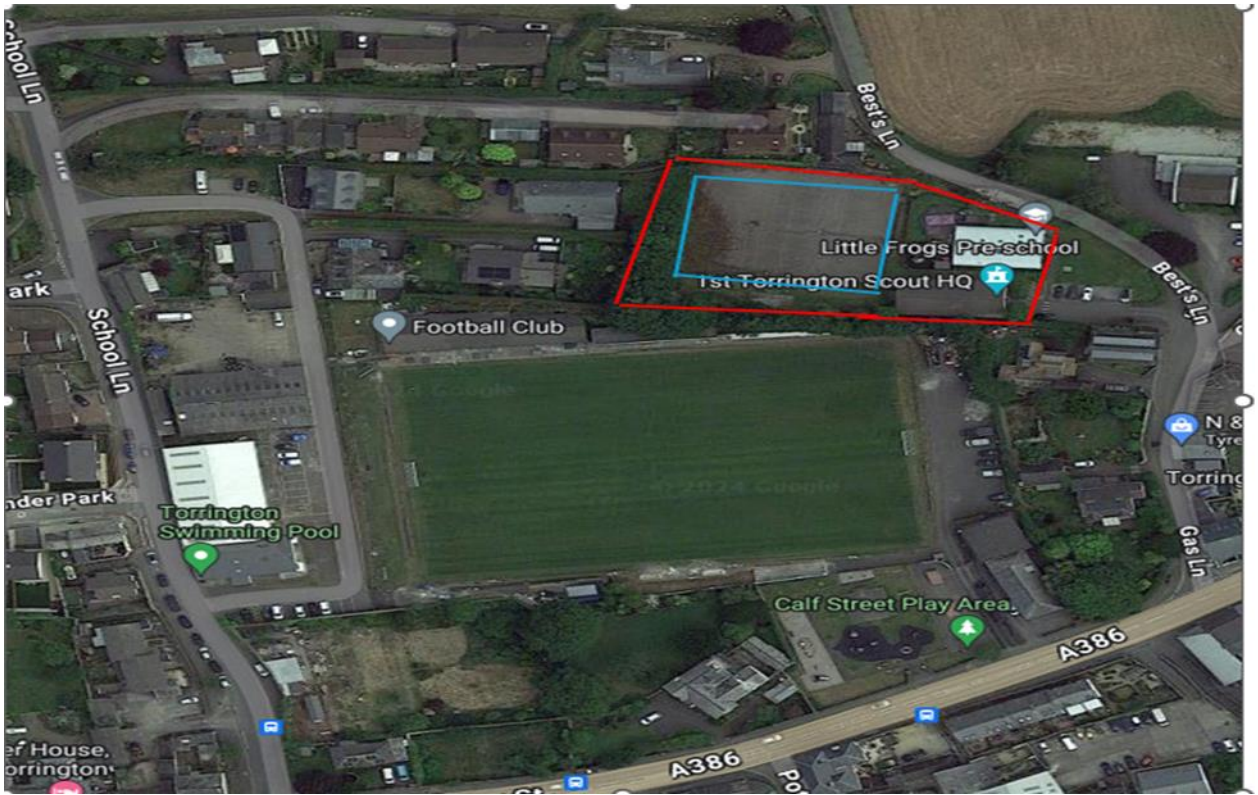
Holsworthy – Stanhope Park



Bideford East The Water - Polyfield



Great Torrington – former Tennis courts Site, Gas Lane



Rural England Prosperity Fund

The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) launched on September 3rd 2022, by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and was designed as a top-up to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. As with the main scheme, the rural top-up is available to eligible local authorities in England. It succeeds EU funding from LEADER and the Rural Growth Programme, which were part of the Rural Development Programme for England.

Torrige was allocated £995,347. Within our rural fund addendum, we need to show how we will split this funding over the 2 years of the fund – 2023/24 and 2024/25.

In October 2022, Council resolved to allocate the funding to the following priorities:

•	LEADER style grant fund	=	£650,000
	• Including 2 ring-fenced pots;		
	• Leisure and infrastructure	=	£100,000
	• Culture	=	£50,000
•	Community infrastructure investments		
	• Victoria Park	=	£150,347
	• Great Torrington Market Hall	=	£195,000
TOTAL		=	£995,347

The non ringfenced portion of the LEADER Fund scheme identified above (£500,000) has been delivered as a grant scheme to support rural businesses with net zero adaptation projects (in line with the intentions of the REPF) and to date, North Devon + on behalf of the Council has approved £286,777 of grants with a further £82,000 of application under consideration.

Breakdown of the Grant scheme below:



Current Status of applications as of 30.09.2024

£39,120.00	claims submitted / Paid
£163,395.62	GFA issued/returned / claim forms issued
£84,255.22	applications in appraisal/submitted
286,770.84	Total

Applications due in and applicants estimated values -

£24,000.00	Applicant 1
£23,000.00	Applicant 2

£35,000.00	Applicant 3
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£82,000.00	Total
£368,770.84	Total of applications already in the system at various stages + estimated of values of those who have indicated they are coming in - note there ma
£500,000.00	Original budget
£131,229.16	Total estimated remaining budget

Based on the rate of application, processing time and then project delivery and grant draw down officer think it unlikely that the full £500,000 grant budget would be exhausted before the end of the programme period (31/03/25).

The proposal to reallocate £105,000 from the grant budget will leave approximately £26,000 in the grant budget to support further applications. To augment that budget, TDC has the option of claiming an additional £27,155 from HOTSW for REPF Net Zero projects. It is likely that there will be £27,155 per local authority area and providing that this can be allocated this to projects that can complete and be claimed by TDC by 31.12.2024 (HOTSW deadline).

3. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

None at this point

Financial Implications

The Rural England Prosperity Fund by the Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Government has been confirmed for the financial year 2024 – 2025, with Torridge receiving its confirmed allocation. Beyond the 2024 – 2025 investment plan there is currently no certainty on this funding stream.

Human Resources Implications

Within existing resources.

Sustainability/Biodiversity Implications

None Identified

Equality/Diversity

Strategy delivery will need to ensure that it takes into consideration a range of social groupings and demographics in order to further equality and diversity, and creating opportunities for all.

Risk Management

- Funding realignment will also enable additional funding bids to be developed as a result of outcomes, potentially creating additional savings to Torridge District Council through support for Active Torridge activity as well as wider benefits to the economy and community.
- At 31/03/25 any unspent REPF funds will be returned to the Government.

Compliance with Policies and Strategies

This project delivers upon a significant range of local and national strategies and is in alignment with the Council's own strategic priorities.

Data Protection (GDPR) Implications

No personal data is being collated / collected.

Climate Change

Torridge District Council's Climate Emergency declaration and the government's Net Zero agenda will be at the forefront of plans and considerations. Opportunities for regeneration within a net zero agenda and also respecting the Devon Climate Emergency commitments is a key consideration for the delivery of all Rural England Prosperity Fund elements.

Lead Member Views

Cllr Piper to present views at committee

4. CONCLUSIONS

The PlayZones initiatives will provide much needed community sporting facilities across the district.

Utilisation of £105,000 of funding from the Rural England Prosperity fund for the delivery of the identified PlayZones support the rural communities identified and minimise the risk of returning unspent funds at the end of the programme period.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended:

That the Council support the delivery of the three PlayZone sites identified in the report.

That £105,000 is repurposed from the Rural England Prosperity Fund and allocated towards delivery of the three PlayZones (£35K per site)

That the Council works with Active Torridge to agree arrangements for the future management of the sites.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultations:	Date of Consultation – Officers Consulted – Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Governance, S151 Officer
Contact Officer:	Community Engagement Officer Head of Communities and Place