

**CABINET MEETING – 14 MARCH 2024**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I**

**Title of Report:** PlayZones

**Author(s):** Executive Director of Health Housing and Communities

**Purpose of Report:**

To advise Cabinet of an external funding opportunity to develop new sport and physical activity facilities across the city and to seek Cabinet approval (subject to successful funding application) for the procurement, and award of all contracts necessary to deliver the project.

**Description of Decision:**

Cabinet is requested to authorise:

- i) The Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Vibrant City and the Director of Finance, to accept the award of grant funding from the Football Foundation for Portfolio 1 and subject to further successful applications for Portfolios 2-5 and enter into any required funding agreements for the delivery of up to five PlayZones within Sunderland.
- ii) Approve the funding arrangements for the delivery of the PlayZones (including the provision by the Council of match funding) and approve any resultant variations to the capital programme.
- iii) Subject to the award of funding for any of the PlayZones being received authorise:
  - a) the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Vibrant City and the Director of Finance to procure and award contracts for the design and construction of each of the PlayZones such contractors to be procured by the Council through the Football Foundations framework on terms to be agreed by the Executive Director of Health Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance;
  - b) the Executive Director of Health Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance, to approve any subsequent variations to any contract awarded for the delivery of the PlayZones as may be required to ensure their delivery in accordance with the requirements of the funding arrangements subject always to the funding being available to fund the works.
- iv) Authorise the Director of Finance to enter into any letting arrangements for the PlayZones on terms (including the grant of rent concessions) to be agreed by the in consultation with the Executive Director of Health Housing and Communities and the Cabinet Secretary.

**Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?      \*Yes**

**If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework**

**Suggested reason(s) for Decision:**

The development of PlayZones will continue to support the ambition of the City Council's Active Sunderland Service area to enable and facilitate opportunities for everyone to be

as physically active as they can be. PlayZones will also make a positive impact on the strategic priorities of the City Plan and drive forward the Health & Wellbeing Board's priority of reducing inactivity. Pursuant to the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules respectively the procurement of works in excess of £500,000 and the provision of match funding require Cabinet approval.

**Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:**

The alternative is not to support the project, however in doing so, this would result in a reduction in the number of residents from areas of need, having access to local, modern and safe spaces to participate in sport and physical activity.

**Impacts analysed;**

Equality  Privacy  Sustainability  Crime and Disorder

**Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes**

**Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes**

**Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes**

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**

**PLAYZONES**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of an external funding opportunity to develop new sport and physical activity facilities across the city and to seek Cabinet approval (subject to successful funding application) for the procurement, and award of all contracts necessary to deliver the project.

**2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)**

Cabinet is requested to authorise:

- i) The Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Vibrant City and the Director of Finance, to accept the award of grant funding from the Football Foundation for Portfolio 1 and subject to further successful applications for Portfolios 2-5 and enter into any required funding agreements for the delivery of up to five PlayZones within Sunderland.
- ii) Approve the funding arrangements for the delivery of the PlayZones (including the provision by the Council of match funding) and approve any resultant variations to the capital programme.
- iii) Subject to the award of funding for any of the PlayZones authorise:
  - a) the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Vibrant City and the Director of Finance to procure and award contracts for the design and construction of each of the PlayZones such contractors to be procured by the Council through the Football Foundations framework on terms to be agreed by the Executive Director of Health Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance;
  - b) the Executive Director of Health Housing and Communities in consultation with the Director of Finance, to approve any subsequent variations to any contract awarded for the delivery of the PlayZones as may be required to ensure their delivery in accordance with the requirements of the funding arrangements subject always to the funding being available to fund the works.,
- iv) Authorise the Director of Finance to enter into any letting arrangements for the PlayZones on terms (including the grant of rent concessions) to be agreed by the in consultation with the Executive Director of Health Housing and Communities and the Cabinet Secretary.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 PlayZones are described by the Football Foundation (FF) as safe, inclusive, and accessible outdoor facilities that bring communities together to be active through recreational football and a range of other sports and activities. The programme aims to engage with local communities, to create modern activity spaces and help tackle inequalities in disadvantaged communities.

- 3.2 The difference between a PlayZone and a general multi use games area is that the PlayZone's location is targeted in areas of multiple deprivation, and the activity space is also bookable. When focusing on access to sport and physical activity opportunities there are four main groups facing the greatest inequalities which the new PlayZones will target and these are:
- Lower socio-economic groups in areas of deprivation
  - Women and girls
  - People with disabilities and people with long-term health conditions
  - Ethnically diverse communities.
- 3.3 What will PlayZones aim to target?
- a) **Support of key priority groups**  
The investment will focus on increasing opportunities for the following groups to be more active, Women & Girls, Disabilities, People with long term Health Conditions, Diverse Ethnic Communities and Lower Socio-Economic Groups.
- b) **Enable equal access for girls**  
Investment will ensure that every girl has the same opportunity, as every boy, to play football, both at their school and at a local club.
- c) **Targeted investment where it is needed most**  
The investment will be prioritised into communities that are most in need and where the greatest outcomes will be achieved.
- d) **Focus on community engagement**  
Community engagement is fully embedded within the processes and ensuring local groups are involved in project development and activation.
- e) **People to 'move more'**  
Supporting some of the most inactive Sunderland residents to take the first steps to more active lifestyles.
- 3.4 Having successfully worked with the FF to deliver the development of three Football Hubs (Parklife Programme) and the Active Through Football programme (Change the Game), the FF is keen to continue working with and investing in Sunderland to create new opportunities for residents to be as active as they can be.
- 3.5 As part of Sunderland's application to the FF, the city council is proposing to submit funding bids to develop 5 citywide. For a project to be viable and capable of success, the Council needs to evidence to the FF that any prospective tenants have the capacity, skills and willingness to be able to operate a PlayZone.
- 3.6 It is anticipated that each PlayZone will differ in terms of its design and construction costs, depending upon the ground conditions, and utility services. The FF have estimated that each PlayZone will cost between £200,000 - £250,000, which could realise a total city investment of £1.25 million if all five facilities were delivered. The FF is leading the capital investment programme, using investment from the Premier League, The Football Association (FA) and Sport England.
- 3.7 If applications are successful, the FF will provide up to 75% of financial support for the design and construction of each PlayZone approved with the Council required to contribute 25% match funding, either through its own, or other external sources. This

could potentially be up to a maximum of £312,500 as an aggregate sum over all five projects. Earmarked £50,000 of Public Health & £200,000 of Healthy City Funding of £250,000 is available as match funding for the projects., subject to the funding applications to the FF being successful. If more than £250,000 match funding is required, then the Council will explore the opportunities for securing external grant funding to support the projects.

- 3.8 As a requirement of the grant funding, the PlayZones must be delivered by the Council using the FF’s framework of preferred bidders. However, once constructed the completed PlayZone will be leased to an appropriately skilled tenant operating within the PlayZone location. The leasing arrangements will ensure that the tenant will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the PlayZone management including receiving income, managing expenditure, maintenance, the taking of bookings, reporting of performance and sports development as well as ensuring that any grant conditions specified by the FF are complied with. The Council will also reserve ‘step in rights’ in respect of the lease should any matter occur within the Playzone, which would place the Council at risk of claw back of any FF funding.
- 3.9 Once constructed and to assist with the future governance of the PlayZones, Active Sunderland will establish a citywide ‘activation network’ to ensure that the PlayZones are able to work together and share good practice. Key city partners linked to the Active Sunderland Board such as the University, College, Foundation of Light, Everyone Active, Leisure United and Streetgames will be invited onto the network and will be able to access the PlayZones for their own outreach activity programmes.

**4. Current Position**

- 4.1 In order to progress with the application process, ‘in principle’ match funding of up to £50,000 per PlayZone has already been secured from Public Health (£50,000) and Healthy City Funds (£200,00), subject to the FF awarding a capital grant.
- 4.2 The North Sunderland PlayZone (Portfolio 1) shown edged red on the plan, (Appendix 1), has received an offer of funding from the FF. This facility was identified as a regional ‘front runner’ project by the FF and following engagement with North Area Committee, the PlayZone will be built in Southwick. The site identified for redevelopment has already been leased to Southwick Neighbourhood Youth Project, who will continue as tenant once the facility is constructed.
- 4.3 In September 2023, all Ward Councillors were updated with regards to the PlayZone opportunity and asked to support with identifying proposed PlayZone locations and respective community groups who could take on responsibility for the asset once it was completed. This process has now been concluded and the PlayZone locations that will be taken forwarded into the application stage are as follows:
- **Portfolio 1** - North Sunderland
  - **Portfolio 2** - West Sunderland
  - **Portfolio 3** - Coalfield
  - **Portfolio 4** - Washington
  - **Portfolio 5** - East Sunderland.
- 4.4 The table below shows an indicative timetable for each project portfolio.

	<b>Portfolio 1</b>	<b>Portfolio 2</b>	<b>Portfolio 3</b>	<b>Portfolio 4 &amp; 5</b>
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<b>Match Funding secured in principle</b>	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
<b>'Place' identified</b>	Completed	Completed	Completed	Wash – completed East - completed
<b>Organisation identified to operate PlayZone</b>	Completed	Completed	Working towards	Wash – working towards East – working towards
<b>Appoint prospective Tenant</b>	Completed	Completed	Working towards	Wash – working towards East – working towards
<b>Final application submitted</b>	Completed	April 2024	June 2024	Autumn 2024
<b>Football Foundation Funding awarded</b>	Offer received	May 2024	July 2024	Autumn 2024
<b>Planning Approval (where appropriate) granted)</b>	8 March 24	Autumn 2024	Autumn 2024	Early 2025
<b>Works commence.</b>	Spring 2024	Early 2025	Early 2025	Spring 2025
<b>Works completed.</b>	Summer 2024	2025	2025	2025

## 5. Reason for the Decision

5.1 The development of PlayZones will continue to support the ambition of Active Sunderland to enable and facilitate opportunities for everyone to be as physically active as they can be. PlayZones will also make a positive impact on the strategic priorities of the City Plan and drive forward the Health & Wellbeing Board's priority of reducing inactivity. Pursuant to the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules respectively the procurement of works in excess of £500,000 and the provision of match funding require Cabinet approval.

## 6. Alternative Options

6.1 The alternative is not to support the project, however in doing so, this would result in a reduction in the number of residents from areas of need, having access to local, modern and safe spaces to participate in sport and physical activity.

## 7. Impact Analysis

7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed for the PlayZones project with the outcome having a positive impact on targeted groups and those people with protected characteristics identified in Section 3.2.

## 8. Other Relevant Consultations

### 8.1 Co-operative Values

8.1.1 This project supports the values of a co-operative Council, as it promotes equality in terms of the facilities located in the most deprived areas in the city.

### 8.2 Financial Implications

8.2.1 The FF have estimated that each PlayZone will cost between £200,000 - £250,000, which could realise a total investment of £1.25 million across the city. The FF will provide up to 75% of financial support for the construction of each PlayZone with the Council providing up to 25% match funding. £250,000 of Public Health & Healthy City Funding has already been approved as match funding, subject to the funding

applications to the FF being successful. Should the maximum amount of match funding be required then external funding opportunities will be explored in the first instance in order to meet the remaining £62,500.

- 8.2.2 The funders have confirmed that the City Council contribution will be a maximum of 25% of the each PlayZone, the grants will be prorated accordingly. The costs will be managed at an individual PlayZone level.
- 8.2.3 Once constructed, responsibility for the ongoing costs of operating and maintaining the PlayZones will be the responsibility of the tenants in accordance with the terms of their individual leases.
- 8.3 Legal Implications
- 8.3.1 The Council will ensure that any contracts awarded for the delivery of the project comply with the requirements of the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015 as appropriate.
- 8.4 Procurement Implications
- 8.4.1 As a condition of accepting the funding, the capital works need to be undertaken by means of an exclusive Call off Contract, with the contractor appointed under a national Football Foundation Framework Agreement, that will include the Call off Terms and Conditions included in the Football Foundation Agreement. The FF have confirmed that the contractor for the north region is Cleveland Landscapes.
- 8.5 Property Implications
- 8.5.1 The completed facility will be leased to appropriately skilled organisation who will take over the operational running of the asset and will be responsible for all liabilities in respect of the site. The delegations sought within this report with regards to the granting of leases are consistent with the delegations already available to the Director of Finance under the Council's delegation scheme and are therefore sought for completeness only.
- 8.6 The Public
- 8.6.1 Community consultation will underpin both the design of the PlayZones and the sports development plan once constructed. The project engagement plan and will include consultation with a consortium of partners, local residents and prospective tenants who have the willingness to operate a PlayZone taking on the operational risk.
- 8.7 Risk Analysis
- 8.7.1 The risks surrounding this plan are summarised below:
- Failure to secure the allocated funds and other funds to support phased developments, within the tight timescales. This can be mitigated through early consultation with the FF and national governing bodies of sport (NGB's).
  - Failure to drive forward the necessary partnership working to ensure projects succeed. This will be mitigated through formalised agreements combined with ongoing consultation and discussions.
  - Failure to identify any ongoing maintenance requirements by the prospective tenant as they take over operation of the site. This can be mitigated by the development of a sustainable plan which Tenant's will have to comply with to ensure the PlayZones are maintained once constructed.

## **9. List of Appendices**

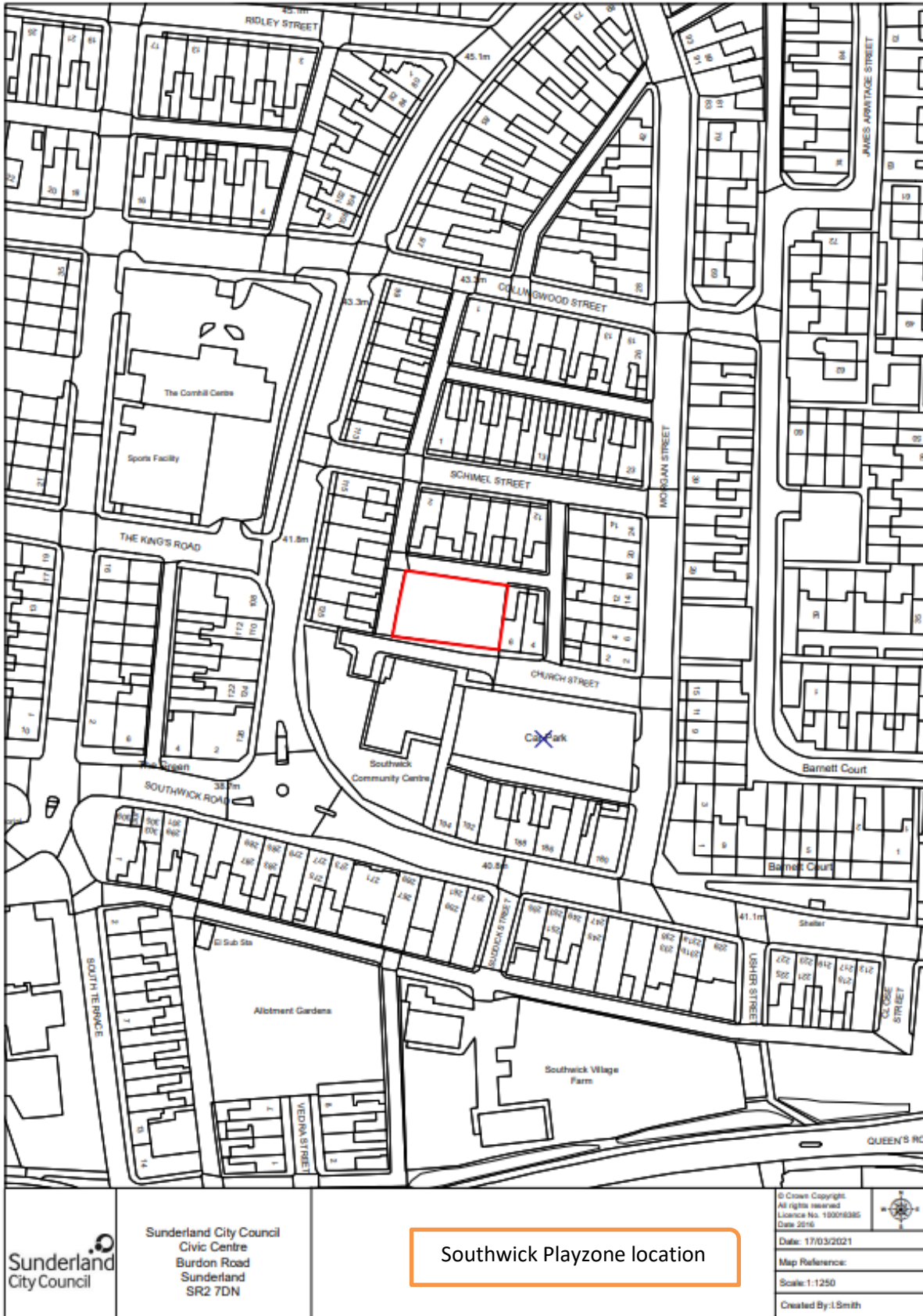
9.1 Appendix 1 – Location of the Southwick PlayZone.

**10. Background Papers**

10.1 There were no other background papers relied upon to compile this report.



# Appendix 1 – Location of the Southwick PlayZone



Sunderland City Council

Sunderland City Council  
Civic Centre  
Burdon Road  
Sunderland  
SR2 7DN

Southwick Playzone location

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Date: 17/03/2021

Map Reference:

Scale: 1:1250

Created By: J.Smith

