

Report to: **Executive**
Date: **28 June 2023**
Title: **Allocation of Section 106 Funds for Recreational Facilities at, and Adjacent to, the Woolwell Centre**
Portfolio Area: **Community Services and Leisure – Cllr Victor Abbott**
Wards Affected: **Woolwell**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: **Upon the expiry of the Scrutiny call-in period**

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) To approve the allocation of £80,000 of S106 funds towards a pump track adjacent to the Woolwell Centre.**
- 2) To approve the allocation of £30,000 of S106 funds towards future improvements to outdoor play facilities adjacent to the Woolwell Centre.**
- 3) To approve the allocation of £51,100.34 of S106 funds towards a covered seating area on the western side of the Woolwell Centre, to serve the adjacent recreational facilities.**
- 4) The £161,100.34 is to be allocated from the S106 funds held by the Council for the mitigation of the impact of the “Land off Pinewood Drive” development, specifically for open space, sport and recreation improvements.**
- 5) In each case, the agreement of the specific details of projects to be delegated to the relevant Officer in consultation with the Ward Member, Portfolio Holder and Parish Council.**
- 6) Any substitution of alternative projects shall be delegated to the relevant Officer in consultation with the Ward Member, Portfolio Holder and Parish Council.**

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Through Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act, the Council secures funds for appropriate mitigation projects in respect of development. In this**

case the S106 funds relate to the provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities to meet the needs of new residents.

- 1.2. The Council has received £161,100.34 S106 funds in Woolwell from the “Land off Pinewood Drive” development for *“Improvement of play and recreation facilities at the Woolwell Centre or other identified facility. The detail of which to be agreed with the Ward Member and Parish Council”*.
- 1.3. The purpose of this report is to request the allocation of £80,000 of these funds towards a new pump track adjacent to the Woolwell Centre; £30,000 towards improvements to outdoor play facilities adjacent to the Woolwell Centre; and the remaining £51,100.34 towards a new covered seating area on the western side of the Woolwell Centre, to serve the adjacent recreational facilities.
- 1.4. It should be noted that the Council's Constitution dated July 2022 requires that authorisation of the expenditure of funds received from S106 agreements must be sought from the Section 151 Officer for amounts up to £100,000 by the appropriate Senior Officer, following consultation with the relevant Ward Member as a minimum. In this instance, authorisation is being sought via the Executive as the total sum exceeds £100,000. The Ward Member has expressed support for the three proposed projects.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Council own the public open space surrounding the Woolwell Community Centre which includes a play area, Multi-Use Games Area and amenity grassland. A plan and photographs are shown in Appendix 1.

Pump track

- 2.2. The proposal is to use £80,000 of the Section 106 funds from the development at “Land off Pinewood Drive” to construct a pump track on the land edged in blue on the plan in Appendix 1.
- 2.3. A pump track is a track for wheeled sports equipment which, when ridden properly, does not require pedalling or pushing, but rather a ‘pumping’ action to maintain momentum. The appeal of such tracks is that they can be enjoyed by all abilities, from small children up to experienced riders, and can be used by BMX, mountain bikes, skateboards, scooters and balance bikes. As a tarmac track, maintenance is limited, and it can be ridden year round unlike dirt bike tracks. Some example images of pump tracks are shown in Appendix 2.
- 2.4. South West Devon is particularly poorly served by such pump track facilities. There is currently no such facility in Plymouth or the surrounding area despite such facilities becoming increasingly commonplace in other cities and towns (two in Exeter, one in Newton Abbot, one in Chudleigh, one in North Tawton). Pump tracks are an excellent way for residents, primarily but not exclusively young people, to access a free to use facility which contributes to a healthy way of life, whilst building skills such as balance and coordination from bike riding/skateboarding. Pump tracks can particularly cater for young people who do not necessarily engage with team sports, with benefits from both physical activity as well as social interaction.
- 2.5. With an absence of such local facilities, residents miss out on the potential benefits from such a facility, while those that are already ‘wheeled sports enthusiasts’ need

to drive almost an hour to access such facilities. A new pump track would provide a valuable community recreation resource complementing the existing play and recreation facilities at the Woolwell Centre hub.

- 2.6. Initial informal consultation to gauge public opinion on the project has been carried out by the local Ward Member with overwhelmingly positive feedback, and the track design would be developed in consultation with the community. Initial dialogue with contractors has been positive, and they are particularly motivated to deliver the first pump track in the South West Devon and Plymouth area.
- 2.7. Bickleigh Parish Council indicated support for the project in their meeting on 23 February 2023 (Appendix 3), and staff at the Woolwell Centre have also expressed support, particularly the opportunity to generate income from increased café sales.
- 2.8. The next step will be to tender the project during the summer, and once a preferred contractor has been selected, to finalise the design with input from the local community.

Improvements to outdoor play facilities and covered seating area

- 2.9. It is expected that a further £30,000 of the Section 106 funds from the development at “Land off Pinewood Drive” would be used to carry out future improvements to outdoor play facilities adjacent to the Woolwell Centre.
- 2.10. It is expected that the remaining £51,100.34 of the Section 106 funds from the development at Land off Pinewood Drive” would be used towards provision of a covered seating area on the western side of the Woolwell Centre, to serve the adjacent recreational facilities.
- 2.11. All of the above projects are in relatively early stages of development, and it is proposed that agreement of the specific details of projects be delegated to the relevant Officer in consultation with the Ward Member, Portfolio Holder and Parish Council.
- 2.12. In recognition that project ideas might change or develop, it is proposed that alternative projects to those identified may be substituted subject to Ward Member, Portfolio Holder and Parish Council agreement (as well as compliance with the S106 agreement).

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1. The desired outcome is the provision of enhanced facilities for play and recreation to provide for both new and existing residents.
- 3.2. These outcomes directly align with the S106 requirements and the mitigation of the development from which the money was made available.
- 3.3. The outcomes will support the Strengthening Community Wellbeing theme of the Corporate Strategy. The relevant focus area is improving open space, sport and recreation, specifically Action CW1.5 delivery of projects to enhance outdoor public spaces.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1. If S106 funding is not allocated to these projects then they are unlikely to go ahead. This would mean that the community benefits of the projects in relation to sport, play and recreation, and their associated physical and mental health benefits, would not be realised.

Pump track

- 4.2. Initial discussions indicate that the project will be permitted development for the Local Authority, under Part 12 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015, however this will be formally confirmed in due course. The site itself is a good location for such a facility. There are no nearby neighbours (to be affected by noise), it is surrounded by similar recreational facilities, it has some previous use for wheeled sports (informal and some years ago), and is poor quality amenity grassland with no other obvious purpose at present.
- 4.3. It is expected that the project could be delivered quickly after awarding the contract. Maintenance of the facility will be limited given the nature of the construction.
- 4.4. It is expected that £80,000 will be sufficient to deliver the pump track project based on the costs of other similar facilities, and the fact that contractors appear particularly motivated to deliver the first pump track in the South West Devon and Plymouth area. If the funding proves to be inadequate to meet the tender costs, a number of options would be considered including value engineering, a District Council contribution towards the project, and grant funding, including crowdfunding.

Improvements to outdoor play facilities and covered seating area

- 4.5. Improvements to outdoor play facilities would be permitted development for the Local Authority, under Part 12 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015.
- 4.6. The cost of improvements to outdoor play facilities would be tailored to the budget available. It is possible that the S106 funds might be able to be matched with a District Council contribution towards the project.
- 4.7. Provision of a covered seating area at the Woolwell Centre would likely be subject to planning permission. The Centre Manager is leading on work to develop this project further, including identification of additional grant funding sources.
- 4.8. As this project would not be led by the District Council, any funds would be offered by way of a conditional grant which secures the Council's interest and the specific requirements of the S106 agreement.

5. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.1. That the Executive approves the allocation of £80,000 of S106 funds towards a new pump track adjacent to the Woolwell Centre; £30,000 of S106 funds towards improvements to outdoor play facilities adjacent to the Woolwell Centre; and the remaining £51,100.34 of S106 funds towards a new covered seating area on the western side of the Woolwell Centre, to serve the adjacent recreational facilities.

6. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	<p>Contributions are secured by planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to support projects that mitigate the impact of development.</p> <p>The Council has an obligation to spend the funds in accordance with the terms of the agreement.</p> <p>The proposed projects would be in accordance with the terms of the S106 agreement.</p>
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	Y	<p>The Council's Constitution dated July 2022 requires that authorisation of the expenditure of funds received from S106 agreements must be sought from the Section 151 Officer for amounts up to £100,000 by the appropriate Senior Officer, following consultation with the relevant Ward Member as a minimum. In this instance authorisation is being sought via the Executive meeting as the total sum exceeds £100,000.</p> <p>The S106 funds have been received and are available for expenditure. Tendering will ensure good value for money is achieved.</p>
Risk	Y	<p>Some S106 agreements have 'clawback' clauses allowing the developers to be re-paid the money if it is not spent within a certain timeframe. Thus there is a risk of communities losing out if money is not spent within the specific timeframes.</p> <p>The timescale for expenditure of the open space, sport and recreation funds from the 'land off Pinewood Drive' development is not until September 2032 so there is adequate time for projects to be developed and delivered. Timely expenditure of funds means new residents receive maximum benefits from infrastructure improvements.</p>
Supporting Corporate Strategy	Y	<p>The projects support the Strengthening Community Wellbeing theme of the Corporate Strategy.</p> <p>The relevant focus area is improving open space, sport and recreation, specifically Action CW1.5 delivery of projects to enhance outdoor public spaces.</p>
Climate Change – Carbon/Biodiversity Impact	Y	<p>The locations for the pump track and outdoor play improvements are poor quality amenity grassland. It is anticipated that there will be tree planting and areas of wildflower created elsewhere at the Community Centre site and other Council greenspaces in Woolwell.</p>

		The pump track project will encourage and develop bike skills and embed these in residents from a young age. Ultimately this may assist with reducing reliance on cars and associated greenhouse gas emissions.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	Y	<p>The nature of pump tracks are that they facilitate progression, catering from young/beginners/entry level to experienced riders, with variation of riding lines enabling enjoyment and expression to all.</p> <p>Some features within a pump track will be particularly suited for use by adaptive bikes or wheelchairs.</p> <p>Play area improvements can also be designed to be inclusive, catering for all abilities.</p>
Safeguarding	N	Not considered applicable.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	N	Not considered applicable. To be kept under review and local police to be made aware of the pump track proposals.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Y	<p>The pump track and play improvements will take account of relevant British Standards and relevant design guidance. Upon completion an independent Post Installation Inspection Report would be completed. Ongoing inspections would be undertaken thereafter.</p> <p>Provision of the pump track and play area improvements will provide opportunity for exercise and socialising with associated physical and mental health benefits</p>
Other implications	N	

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Plans and photographs of the public open space surrounding the Woolwell Centre

Appendix 2: Example images of pump tracks

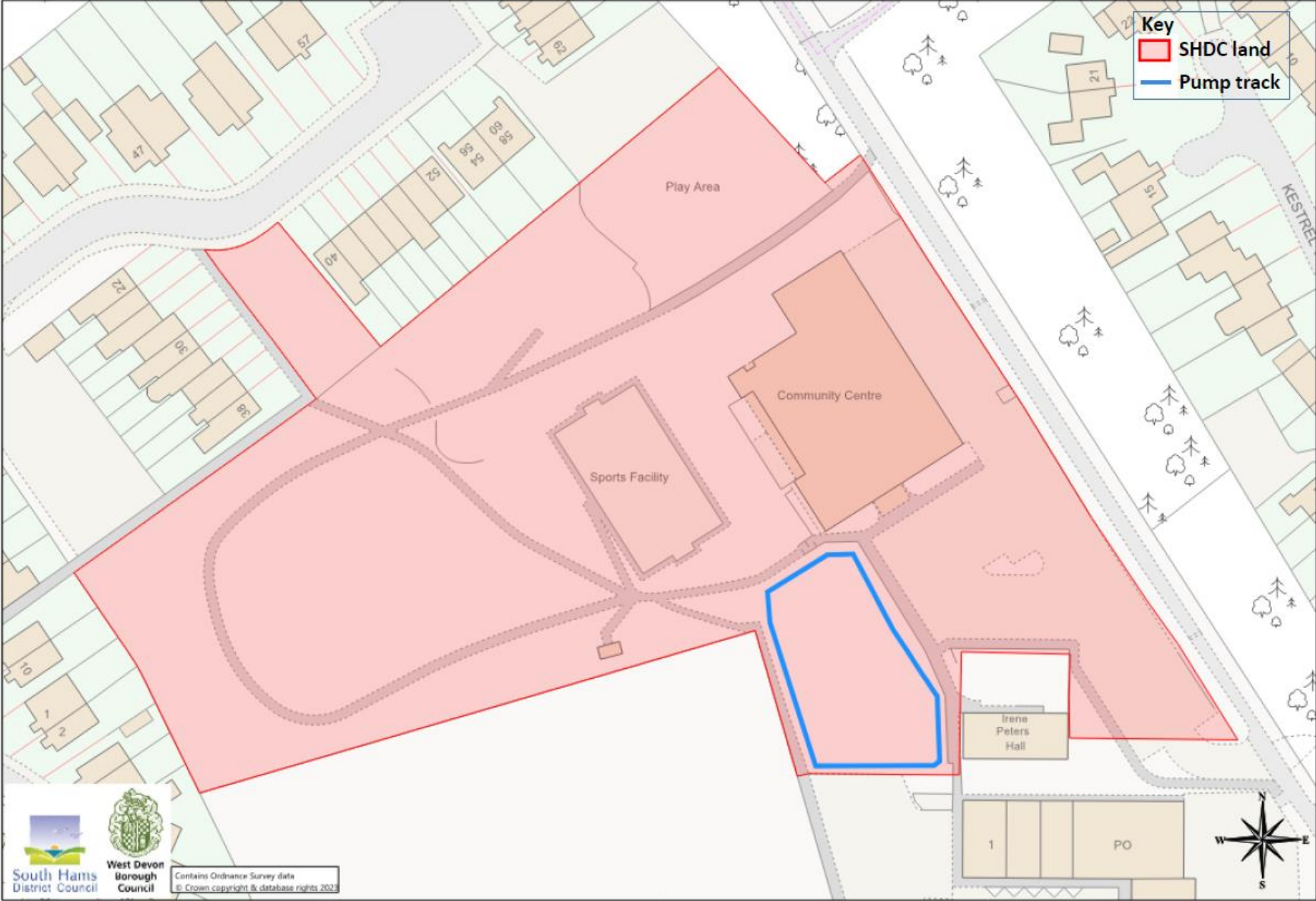
Appendix 3: Extract from Bickleigh Parish Council meeting minutes – 23rd February 2023

Background Papers:

None

Appendix 1 – Plans and photographs of the public open space surrounding the Woolwell Centre

The Woolwell Centre - Proposed pump track location



The Woolwell Centre – Proposed pump track location





Proposed area for pump track (taken from the south of the area, facing north/north-east)



Proposed area for pump track (taken from the north of the area, facing south)



Multi-Use Games Area



Youth shelter, pathways and amenity grassland/park



Amenity grassland/park



Unfenced play equipment



Fenced play equipment

Appendix 2: Example images of pump tracks



Chudleigh



Whimple



North Tawton

Appendix 3: Extract from Bickleigh Parish Council Minutes – 23rd February 2023

BICKLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL

The Council Offices, The Woolwell Centre, Darklake Lane, Woolwell, PL6 7TR

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parishclerk@bickleigh.gov.uk

Minutes of a meeting of Bickleigh Parish Council held on Thursday 23rd February 2023 at 7.30pm in the Woolwell Centre.

Present: Councillors Carole Spencer (Chair), Paul Blight, Brian Hill, Nicky Hopwood, Lindy Scott, Lynn Tamsett-White, Jackie Taylor, Larry Taylor

In Attendance: District Councillor Barrie Spencer, Mrs H Broughton (Clerk) and 1 member of the public.

2023 33 **Pump Track**

Cllr Hopwood said that she had received positive feedback for plans for a BMX pump track close to the Woolwell Centre, using S106 monies. The Woolwell Centre were supportive and staff are now first aid trained. South Hams District Council would own, insure and maintain the track. Councillors raised some concerns around anti-social behaviour and CCTV was suggested, perhaps asking the company installing solar panels in Roborough to donate cameras. **It was agreed that the Parish Council supported the project.**