



REPORT TITLE: SkillZONE Development and Funding Report

Scrutiny meeting	FRSC 15 th September 2023
Chair	
Presenting Officer	AM Clive Webber
Item Type	SkillZONE Development and Funding Report
Purpose of Report	Provide information on the development and funding for SkillZONE
Recommendations/ Action sought	
Forthcoming Decisions	None that we are aware of
Background Documents	See Appendices
Appendices	Appendix A – Income Report for 22/23 Appendix B - SkillZONE Evaluation Data
Contact Information	Madeleine Jarrett SkillZONE Manager

1. Executive Summary

SkillZONE is Gloucestershire's only interactive life skills village where people of all ages can learn how to keep themselves safe whether at home or in their community. We offer safety education and bespoke programmes for schools and community groups through a number of safety 'scenarios'

SkillZONE stands at the intersection of community safety and education, this report underscores the need for ongoing financial support to sustain impact. Together, we can safeguard our future generations and drive positive change.

SkillZONE is the South West's largest safety centre, we bridge gaps through collaboration and adaptability, working alongside other emergency services, voluntary sector, partner agencies and across county borders when required.

Our mission is to foster a culture of safety and empowerment through meaningful engagement and learning.

2. The current offer and future vision

We envisage a future where young people actively engage in safety education. The tailored facility addresses pressing issues like Road Safety, Water Safety, Fire Safety Education, Trespassing, Socio-economic challenges, sparking crucial conversations and life skills which will stay with children and young people for life.

Through dialogue and empowerment, we aspire to shape a safer society that celebrates unity and safety and we do this by transforming safety messages into actionable lessons that drive positive behaviour change. We aim to address pressing challenges and our local data shows our current challenges to be trespassing and water safety.

3. Funding for a sustainable future

The growth of SkillZONE hinges on successful partnership working that amplifies safety education. Collaborations with esteemed organisations like the Canal & River Trust, RNLI, Great Western Railway, Stagecoach, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Mid-counties Co-op and others provides sustainable funding that assists to future proofing SkillZONE. By investing in their 'scenarios' of expertise e.g. railway safety, we are able to foster good practices and keep SkillZONE current and relevant moving forward.

To counter anti-social behaviour and fire setting, we are developing an immersive 'abandoned building' experience that we are teaching about the dangers of 'Trespass'. We are also enhancing our 'Park' scenario to address youth violence and knife crime, utilising Virtual Reality for impactful scenarios. Developing these 'Trespass' and 'Park' scenario's to address these urgent challenges identified within our local community.

A conservative estimate for this transformation work would be £30,000 and we would look to seek funding from the Serious Violence Duty fund in support that would be available to us for many years to come. For further water safety education we are seeking to secure a £5000 grant from Canal & River Trust towards the costs of the development of a water safety scenario, including construction of a mock canal and cold-water shock experience.

Through similar partnerships, we will pioneer innovative approaches for Special Educational Needs safer travel initiatives. There is funding of around £5,000 from the 'Barriers to Mobility' project to support this.

These endeavours will require investment, but they are essential for lasting change. The current SkillZONE budget cannot meet this change on its own which is why the team work tirelessly to secure funding from local business, government grants, private sector collaborations, philanthropic donations, community fundraising, and third party hire of SkillZONE and a subsidised charge for our education programmes for financial stability and growth.

(See Appendix A - Income Report for 22/23)

4. Conclusion

SkillZONE stands as a cornerstone of community safety, imparting life skills that empower our young people living in Gloucestershire. Its strength lies in its ability to forge sustainable partnerships that extend beyond traditional education. This is achieved through collaboration, accountability and innovative thinking. We recognise that we are not only shaping safety education but also shaping the future safety landscape of our communities. With sustained financial support and strategic partnerships, SkillZONE will continue our transformative work, impacting lives and contributing to 'Working together for a safer Gloucestershire'. We continue to evaluate all our work streams and programmes allowing us to forward plan and think of new ways to educate in a unique way.

(See Appendix B - SkillZONE Evaluation Data)