

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting:	Cabinet
2. Date:	9th February, 2011
3. Title:	Rother Valley Country Park Update
4. Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

This report provides a progress update on the short term lease agreement with OAK Holdings to manage Rother Valley Country Park (RVCP).

6. Recommendations

- (1) That Cabinet notes the progress and improvements that have been made since OAK Holdings (Rother Valley Country Park Ltd) took on the responsibility for managing Rother Valley Country Park**

7. Proposals and Details

This report provides a progress update on the short term lease agreement with OAK Holdings to manage Rother Valley Country Park (RVCP). The agreement included the TUPE transfer of all Park staff and was signed on 7th May 2009. The term of the agreement is 7 years, with an end date of 6 May 2016. At the time of signing it was intended that the short term agreement would be replaced by a 250 year lease agreement once the YES project was operational.

The agreement documentation includes:

- **An Interim Management Agreement (IMA)**, which outlines how the Council expect the Park to be managed
- **An Output Specification** that provides details on how the Council expect the park to be maintained and establishes the basis for performance management
- **A Business Plan** that provides details on the vision and improvements to the park
- **A Short Term Lease**, which establishes the terms under which the park is being leased

Under the IMA the Park is managed through a steering group made up of 3 representatives from the Council (Cabinet Member and two officers) and 3 representatives of OAK Holdings. This group makes strategic decisions about the development of the Park.

The first phase improvements identified in the Business Plan include:

1. Improvements to water sports facility
2. Improvements to the café and courtyard
3. Introduction of a miniature steam railway
4. Extend range of events
5. Development of existing services including education packs, fitness walks, ropes and high walks, BMX trail, improve fishing pitches
6. Development of a caravan site
7. Eco Lodges

OAK estimate that the total cost of these developments will be in the region of £1.5m

OAK have made progress on all of the first phase improvements (see Appendix A, Rother Valley Country Park, Progress Report January 2011), with the exception of numbers 6 and 7. However the first phase improvements were scheduled to be delivered during the term of the current lease agreement and therefore the delivery of the final two improvements is not overdue.

From an RMBC management perspective there has been a good working relationship with OAK (Rother Valley Country Park Limited) and whilst there have been some issues relating to the production of performance management information officers are of the opinion that RVCP has been managed on behalf of the Council in accordance with the agreements that were put in place.

8. Finance

The agreement is such that the Council benefits from a year on year budget saving by way of a reducing management fee.

The Council's budget for RVCP was £407,000 and this has been used to pay a reducing management fee as follows:

Year	RMBC Management Fee	RMBC Saving
2009/10	£407,000	£0
2010/11	£350,000	£57,000
2011/12	£310,000	£97,000
2012/13	£145,000	£262,000
2013/14	£65,000	£342,000
2014/15	£0	£407,000

9. Risks and Uncertainties

As a result of the agreement the Council has benefited by transferring the operational risk for the Park to OAK Holdings

Should the agreement be terminated for any reason RVCP would pass back into the Council's responsibility and it is likely that at least the original budget plus relevant inflation would need to be reinstated. However this may be dependent on the levels of income being achieved at RVCP at the time of termination.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Corporate Priorities: The agreement meets the Council's priorities of *Rotherham Achieving, Rotherham Alive and Rotherham Proud*

Achieving – The provision of improved facilities contributes towards the success of RVCP by improving and widening the opportunities it provides to residents of the borough and beyond to engage in outdoor sport and physical activity opportunities.

Alive – The agreement and its related improvements will contribute to increases in active participation and towards improving health and social wellbeing while at the same time improving quality of life.

Proud – Through the development and improvement of a significant community resource that is for the wider community benefit.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Report to Cabinet, Wednesday, 11th March, 2009, Rother Valley Country Park, Lease to OAK Holdings.

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