

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning and Culture
2.	Date:	6th December 2011
3.	Title:	Petition – Queen Elizabeth II Challenge
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

This report provides a response to the petition, received in November 2011, asking the Council to join the Fields in Trust's programmes and in particular identifying the Queen Elizabeth II Challenge.

6. Recommendations

- 1) **Officers carry out further investigations into the potential benefits of the QEIIIC in order to reaffirm whether or not it can support the Council's plan to improve sport and recreation facilities at the Herringthorpe Leisure Site**
- 2) **Officers report back to the Cabinet Member following the investigation in order to determine whether or not a submission to the QEIIIC should be made.**

3) Proposals and Details

A petition, in the form of 89 downloaded forms on which names, house numbers and post codes have been written, was received in November 2011. The forms have a printed statement, addressed to the Chief Executive, asking the Council to join the Fields in Trust's programmes and identify in particular the Queen Elizabeth II Challenge.

Whilst the envelope containing the forms did not contain a covering letter, it is assumed from earlier communications with members of the public that the subject of the petition is the Herringthorpe Leisure site, and it is therefore a request for the Council to make a submission to the Queen Elizabeth II Challenge (QEII) in respect of this site.

The Queen Elizabeth II Challenge (QEII) invites land owners to nominate outdoor recreational spaces (e.g. children's play areas, woodlands, bicycle trails and playing fields) for inclusion in the programme. Sites can be designated as a QEII Field in order to protect the site and gain access to designated funding.

Fields in Trust has confirmed that they are aiming to conclude submissions to the QEII in February 2012.

To date no submission has been made by the Council to the QEII in respect of the Herringthorpe Leisure Site as initial investigations identified that it does not offer access to the levels of financial support that are needed to develop the Council's plan for improved sport and recreation facilities at the site. The Council's Cabinet approved the plan in January 2010 and whilst it is still a long way from being fully developed, it includes the provision of a Grandstand for the Athletics Stadium, a number of all weather playing areas, and a range of other sport and recreation facilities.

The Council intends to operate these new and improved facilities as spaces that can be used on a pre booked and pay and play basis, and to manage and maintain them to the highest possible standards. The size, type and location of the facilities cannot be determined until such time as the necessary planning and consultation work has been undertaken. Unfortunately due to the current economic climate the plan cannot be progressed until the situation improves.

QEII funding streams include:

SITA Trust - The SITA Trust has created a £1 million fund available to Queen Elizabeth II Fields. The fund will be given out over two years (2011 and 2012) and has two strands:

- The Volunteer Support Fund will award up to a maximum of £5,000 for projects
- The QEII Major Works Fund awards up to £25,000 for projects that focus on delivery by volunteers, but will allow major works to be carried out by contractors.

Sport England - Protecting Playing Fields - The PPF programme provides grants from £20,000 up to a maximum of £50,000.

Officers are only aware of one source of funding (The Football Foundation) that may have the potential to contribute the sums of money necessary to deliver a project that is likely to cost in excess of £6m. The Football Foundation would only contribute to the elements of the project that relate directly to football and they would require the Council to make a significant contribution of its own. As the project is intended to develop a range of sport and leisure facilities, including football, and as the Council does not have the resources to meet the cost in any other way, it has been necessary to identify two development sites for sale, which will help to generate the necessary contributory funding.

Officers are continually searching for new funding opportunities and have expressed at various public meetings that they will listen to and work with anyone that may be aware of other potential sources that can provide the level of funds necessary to deliver the proposed project.

In addition, the initial investigations also concluded that due to the intended mode of operation of the new and improved facilities and the fact that it will not be possible to determine their scope and location for some considerable time, it is unlikely that the whole of the Herringthorpe Leisure site would be able to fulfil all of the minimum criteria for inclusion in the QEIIIC, in particular that which states that sites should be '... either established charitably, held by a sports club under the CASC regime or held as Public Open Space'.

However, in order to provide a proper response to the petition it is recommended that officers in the Leisure and Green Spaces Service carry out further investigations. The purpose of this will be to re-examine the potential benefits of the QEIIIC in order to reaffirm whether or not it can support the Council's plan to improve sport and recreation facilities at the Herringthorpe Leisure Site. This work would need to be completed in advance of the Fields in Trust's February 2012 deadline.

8. Finance

N/A

9. Risks and Uncertainties

N/A

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

N/A

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Cabinet Report, Wednesday, 3rd September, 2008

Cabinet Report Wednesday, 20th January, 2010

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