

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND TOURISM
22nd May, 2012**

Present:- Councillor Rushforth (in the Chair); Councillors Andrews and Wallis.

F1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24TH APRIL, 2012.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning and Culture held on 24th April, 2012, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous Cabinet Member meeting be agreed as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

F2. HERRINGTHORPE LEISURE SITE - COMMUNICATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE DECISION TO LEASE A SECTION OF THE SITE.

Further to Minute C85 (Herringthorpe Playing Fields) of the Cabinet, held on 19th October, 2011, approving the lease of a section of the Herringthorpe Leisure Site to Rotherham Rugby Club Limited, consideration was now given to a report presented by the Leisure and Community Services Manager that outlined the consultation process undertaken by the Council prior to taking this decision.

Following the Cabinet decision, separate but linked communications had been received by the Council expressing concerns in relation to the decision which included three petitions, or perceived petitions, and one handwritten, unaddressed and unsigned letter. The content of the communications had been detailed in the submitted report, and the actual communications were presented to the Cabinet Member for inspection.

Two of the communications expressed an objection to either the lease of a section of the Herringthorpe Leisure Site to Rotherham Rugby Club Limited or the principle of any commercial enterprise on Herringthorpe Playing Fields. One communication expressed an objection from the members and supporters of sports teams to leasing a section of the site to Rotherham Rugby Club Limited. Another communication expressed a perception that sports clubs had not been consulted prior to the decision being made.

The consultation process had been undertaken between 1st April and 31st August, 2011, including communications to local residents and regular site users and Area Assembly meetings.

Analysis of the communications and the signatures on the petitions had been undertaken and it was considered that of the 24 different sports clubs identified in the petition raising objections at not having been consulted, 5 had used Herringthorpe Playing Fields between 2009 and 2012. Of these 5 clubs, 3 had been regular users (minimum of 32 bookings over the 3 years) and 2 had not been regular users (maximum of 3 bookings over the 3 years).

There was uncertainty as it was difficult to clearly identify the clubs because of the way some clubs had signed the petition (e.g. 'Rother', 'Rotherham' and 'Rotherham Town'). Therefore, as far as it was possible to determine from the

information provided, 3 of the 24 sports clubs identified in the petition had used the playing pitches at Herringthorpe on a regular basis and they were all sent a letter as part of the consultation process.

Individual supporters of sports clubs were not consulted with directly, although it was possible that they could have been made aware of the proposal by the representatives/members of the sports club they supported.

Discussion ensued, and the following issues were raised: -

- It would still be possible for clubs to hire pitches on the Herringthorpe Playing Fields;
- There would be the net loss of one junior pitch on the Site, but there had been little demand for this facility;
- There would be many benefits for the voluntary and community sector following the lease of the land to Rotherham Rugby Limited, including access for schools and underrepresented and disadvantaged groups;
- The expressed purpose of the lease was for the development of rugby and other sport and recreation activities on the site.

The Cabinet Member noted the objections that had been expressed in the communications to the lease of a section of land, the principle of a commercial enterprise on the Site and the consultation process.

Resolved: - (1) That it be noted that the relevant sports clubs were consulted with as part of the formal consultation process based on the results of the analysis that had been undertaken.

(2) That the objections raised in the communications be noted.

F3. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Cabinet Member for Lifelong Learning and Culture take place on Tuesday 19th June, 2012, commencing at 10.00 am in the Rotherham Town Hall.