

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> February, 2013</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Athletics Stadium Budget Savings, 2013/14</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Programme Area:</b>	<b>Environment and Development Services</b>

### **5. Summary**

This report seeks approval to close the Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium for general use in order to make savings needed to help meet budget targets for 2013/14.

### **6. Recommendations**

1 That Cabinet Member approves the closure of Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium for general use

2. That Officers enter into discussions with Rotherham Harriers Athletics Club in order to explore the possibility of establishing a license agreement to enable the stadium to continue as an athletics venue.

## 7. Proposals and Details

2013/14 budget savings proposals for EDS include the closure of the Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium for general use. This is necessary to achieve a budget saving of £60,000.

Herringthorpe Athletics Stadium was opened in 1960; it contains a 400 metre running track, grass pitch and facilities for field athletics including throwing and jumping, spectator areas and floodlighting. It also includes a building comprising changing rooms, showers, toilets and a room available for meetings and indoor activities. In the centre of the track is a football pitch that is regularly used for hire. The changing rooms also serve users of the adjacent Herringthorpe Playing Fields. A separate modular office building was installed recently, providing accommodation for stadium and Sports Development staff.

### Current and proposed stadium usage

	<b>Current Usage (2012/13)</b>	<b>Proposed Usage (2013/14)</b>
Rotherham Harriers Athletics Club,	<u>Summer</u> : evening training sessions: 2 per week, attended by up to 50 juniors and 20 adults. 6 club athletics meetings.	Explore potential for continuation under license
Rotherham Rockets junior athletics sessions	<u>All year round</u> : Saturday morning sessions - up to 25 participants. <u>Summer</u> : midweek sessions - up to 25 participants.	Cease, unless arrangements can be made with the athletics club
Schools	<u>Summer</u> : 3 schools use the stadium regularly in for P.E. and athletics <u>October</u> : Cross-country final attended by around 1200 runners.	Cease, unless arrangements can be made with the athletics club
Events & Activities (2012)	36 days of junior sports camps - 869 participants. 14 school sports events 'Race for Life' 'Mega Active' Summer Games for young people 3 other events	Cease, unless arrangements can be made with the athletics club
Stadium sports pitch (2012)	<u>Winter</u> : 4 evenings per week - football and rugby club training Saturday and Sunday football club fixtures One-off knock-out competitions. 14 pre-season football games	Cease, unless arrangements can be made with the athletics club
Changing rooms for users of Herringthorpe Playing Fields	<u>Winter</u> : 2 teams across 19 Sunday fixtures. Clifton School on 22 midweek occasions. Others on 3 occasions.	Employ games attendants to open up and supervise use of changing rooms. Additional cost approx

		£17 per 2.5 hour session.
Office accommodation	Stadium and Sports Development staff	Explore potential to retain as base for Sports Development staff

Closure of the track would put 4 staff at risk of redundancy.

Loss of the facility will impact on wider sports development activity as it is currently used to provide a base for the Sports Development team and accommodation for groups such as the 'Active Always' walking group. It would also impact on teams using Herringthorpe Playing Fields who would no longer have access to changing facilities and therefore alternative access arrangements need to be explored.

Rotherham Harriers Athletics Club is a key partner on site and in order to support their continued operation it is proposed that officers enter into discussions with them to explore the possibility of establishing a license agreement. A possible arrangement could be for the club to manage their own use of the stadium and to take responsibility for all related costs (e.g. electricity, water, etc). They would also need to take responsibility for all internal repairs and maintenance of the buildings that they would need access to and for the maintenance of the field area in respect of their use. The Council could then retain responsibility for the external repair and maintenance of the buildings, the running track and for general grounds maintenance work.

The club may also wish to explore the possibility of generating further income by facilitating hire of the site to other third parties.

A partnership approach with the Athletics Club would help to maintain the stadium site in good order until such time as the Council is able to take forward its plans to develop the whole of the Herringthorpe Leisure Site.

The net budget for the site, excluding costs relating to the ongoing maintenance of the external buildings, facilities and grounds maintenance and usage identified above, is approximately £60,000.

**Consultation:**

Appropriate consultation will be carried out with Unions and staff.

Discussions will take place with Rotherham Harriers Athletics Club in respect of a possible license agreement.

Current users will be informed of the proposed closure and where possible support will be given to identify alternative arrangements.

This has been discussed with the Council's Community Engagement Officer and the appropriate F1 form and Equality Analysis has been undertaken.

## 8. Finance

The projected savings from the above proposal will be approximately £60,000 in the next financial year. This will contribute to overall savings that need to be made by the Council in the light of reduced funding from central government.

## 9. Risks and Uncertainties

There is an overall risk to the Council's reputation in respect of its commitment to support improvements in health and wellbeing. This is because the closure of the site will remove access to sport and physical activity opportunities for a number of groups and individuals.

Loss of this budget and current business at the site may have an adverse effect on the Council's broader plans to develop the Herringthorpe Leisure Site at some point in the future.

It is likely that the reduced use of the site and the absence of a regular staff presence will lead to increased problems of anti social behaviour and vandalism

To date no discussions have taken place with Rotherham Harriers and as such it is not possible to determine their desire or capacity to enter into a license agreement. **If an agreement cannot be reached the stadium and site would be completely closed.** This would significantly increase the general deterioration of the site and mostly likely lead to greater problems of anti social behaviour and vandalism.

## 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The proposal has the potential to have a negative impact on Council's stated vision in respect of enjoying 'a healthy and active life' and in terms of the following statements relating to 'what we want to achieve':

- 'More people are physically active and have a healthy way of life'
- 'People enjoy parks, green spaces, sports, leisure, and cultural activities'

## 11. Background Papers and Consultation

Officers in Financial Services have seen the report and had the opportunity to comment.

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