

RUBISLAW FIELD COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN: 24 April 2013 - Minute of Meeting of the RUBISLAW FIELD COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Laing, Chairperson; and Councillor Thomson; Mr G Legge (Aberdeen Grammar School); Mr J Hendry, Mr A Hamilton and Mr D McAllister (Aberdeen Grammar School Former Pupils' Club).

In Attendance: Neil Bruce, Service Manager, Culture and Sport, Education, Culture and Sport; Jo Conlon, Sports Policy and Partnership Officer, Education, Culture and Sport; Fiona Selbie, Senior Solicitor, Legal and Democratic Services; and Vikki Cuthbert and Stephanie Dunsmuir, Democratic Services.

APOLOGIES

- 1 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Ian Stanger and Andy Campbell.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 2 The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 19 March 2013.

Mr Hendry queried the statement on page 3 of the minute that the Education, Culture and Sport Committee was the parent Committee of Rubislaw Field Committee and that it therefore ratified any decisions taken. Mrs Selbie clarified that this was correct and that as the Council owned the field, any decisions in relation to issues such as the Agreement had to be ratified by the parent Council Committee – in this case, the Education, Culture and Sport Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

RUBISLAW FIELD AGREEMENT

- 3 With reference to Article 3 of the minute of its previous meeting, Neil Bruce advised that he had been in contact with Mr Hendry prior to the meeting but that it had not been possible to collate the required figures in time to circulate them with the papers. He advised that officers had collated figures in relation to the costs to the Council for football, rugby and cricket use of the field, and the hockey figures had now been received, but that officers were still looking into the costs of grounds maintenance.

The Chairperson asked if the FPs Club had been able to gather any of the required information, and Mr McAllister advised that he had a spreadsheet which he could share with the Committee on the understanding that the figures were noted to be in draft form. He asked if the Committee could look at the spreadsheet so that the FPs Club could be satisfied that they had the required information. He also asked if the Council officers

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could outline exactly what was meant by the term 'Best Value'. Mr McAllister then circulated the draft figures for consideration by the Committee and explained what they represented.

Mr Bruce advised that the figures did represent what the Council required, but asked if they could include qualitative information on the number of hours they represented. He added that it would be helpful for the FPs Club and the Council to agree the number of hours between them. Mrs Selbie also asked that the FPs Club consider including figures relating to the coaching outwith Rubislaw Field, (for example, interior training), as this data might not be available to the Council.

There was a discussion around the invoicing issue raised by the hockey club, and Jo Conlon advised that the men's hockey were now content that the invoicing problem was resolved. Mr McAllister advised that he had heard there was still an issue, and the Chairperson requested that the FPs Club representatives contact the hockey club to identify where there might still be a problem. The spreadsheet also highlighted a comment from the rugby section in relation to invoicing problems, and Ms Conlon explained that Sport Aberdeen provided usage information to the Council based on janitorial returns, which was then used to produce the invoice which the Council sent to the customer. The Chairperson noted that there had been other issues of this nature, and suggested that the problem raised by the rugby club could be looked into further by officers.

The Chairperson thanked the FPs Club for the comprehensive figures and asked if officers required anything further. Mr Bruce reiterated that it would be helpful to have the information on the number of hours used, but added that the figures were a good basis to work from. He asked if Mr McAllister could send the spreadsheet through electronically, as this would enable officers to input their figures into the same format, and Mr McAllister undertook to send the information.

The Chairperson requested that officers arrange to meet separately with the FPs Club representatives to agree a set of figures to form the basis of the report to the meeting of the Education, Culture and Sport Committee in May. Mr McAllister highlighted that the missing information relating to rugby and hockey should be relatively straightforward to retrieve, but that gathering the football data might prove difficult. Ms Conlon advised that the Council had the usage figures for football, and Mr Bruce added that the Council costs could be listed against those. He also added that the report could list where there were caveats, for example, where there might be disagreement between the figures or where information was missing. Mr Bruce also advised that it would be best to agree that information dating back further than five years was not included, other than the information relating to the stand.

Mr McAllister then asked if officers could provide an explanation on Best Value. Mrs Selbie explained that there was not a statutory definition of this term, but that it related to financial savings, and to the contribution of something to the life of the citizens of Aberdeen. She added that while the financial aspects were a helpful starting point,

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officers would also want to include contributions of a non-financial nature, for example, the work which might not happen without the personal input of the FPs Club. Mr Bruce added that it was about the demonstration of participation, progression and performance. Mr Hendry asked if the term was laid down in statute, but Mrs Selbie advised that she was not aware of this being the case. She explained that if the Council was to be audited, the auditors would be looking at the financial aspects for the Council, but also the benefits to the wider city, therefore it was important to include other information which contributed to Best Value, and not just financial data.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the draft information provided, and to request that Mr McAllister forward this data electronically to Mr Bruce; and
- (ii) to request that officers meet separately with the representatives of the Former Pupils' Club to agree on the figures which would form the basis of the report to the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 30 May 2013.

AOCB - GRASS CRICKET WICKET

4 With reference to article 3 of the minute of the previous meeting, and the discussion around the proposal for a grass cricket wicket, Mr McAllister reiterated the FP Club's wish that the matter be progressed quickly. He advised that it would be important to ensure that the project was taken forward prior to the start of the summer season; as otherwise, it would be another year before work could commence. He added that the work would need to commence around August with ground works over winter to ensure that the pitch was ready for summer. The purchase of sterile soil would also take some time. He also highlighted the safety issues caused by the current condition of the existing pitch.

Mr Bruce noted the wish for the work to be expedited, but stressed that as he had not received an official request outlining the proposal, he was unable to take any action. Mr Hendry advised that he had received a letter dated 27 February from the cricket club, and Mr Bruce and Ms Conlon stated that they had not received this letter. Mr Hendry then passed Mr Bruce his copy of the letter.

Mr Bruce advised that the matter would be for Ms Conlon and Gail Woodcock to consider, and suggested that the request be considered in the context of a report on the future maintenance and investment in the field which could be brought back to a further meeting of the Rubislaw Field Committee to be arranged following the Education, Culture and Sport Committee in May.

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their contributions and drew the meeting to a close.

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The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that a further meeting of the Committee be arranged following the Education, Culture and Sport Committee in May; and
- (ii) to note that a report would be prepared for that meeting which would consider the request from the cricket club in the context of a report which would consider the wider issues of future maintenance and investment in the field, as well as setting out how the Committee would take a co-ordinated approach to matters such as grounds maintenance in future.

- COUNCILLOR JENNIFER LAING, Chairperson