

Request:

1. What is the ownership status of the Preston Playing Fields - specifically the site at which North Shields Rugby Football Club presently occupies?
2. Does the council have ownership of the buildings and infrastructure currently utilised by North Shields Rugby Football Club? (This includes the Clubhouse)
3. Can the council disclose any agreements, costs and other relevant information regarding North Shields Rugby Football Club's use of the site at Preston Playing Fields? (Including whether the club leases the site from the council, how long the current lease will run for and at what cost this is?)
4. Can the council disclose the current estimated value of the land currently occupied and used by North Shields Rugby Club and the North Shields Rugby Club's clubhouse?
5. Can the council confirm whether the entirety of the site at Preston Playing Fields remains categorised as a 'Local Authority' site for community use?
6. Depending on the answer to Q5 (above) can the council confirm who has the authority to restrict or ban members of the public from use of the Clubhouse, facilities, fields and premises currently occupied by North Shields Rugby Football Club?
7. Can the council confirm what (if any) agreements currently exist between the Local Authority and North Shields Rugby Football Club?
8. Depending on the answer to Q7 (above) could the council please outline whether North Shields Rugby Football Club has any operational requirements or obligations under codes of conduct, equality legislation, equality policies and anti-discrimination policies?

Response:

1. The land at Preston Playing Fields is owned by North Tyneside Council. North Shields Rugby Club occupy land and buildings subject to a lease agreement dated the 3rd February 2015 for a period of 40 years, 1 month and 28 days (expiring the 30th March 2055).
2. No, these are the full responsibility of the rugby club in accordance with the terms and conditions of the above agreed lease.



Reference: FOI-331

3. This information is refused in answer to this request under section 21, information accessible to the applicant by other means.

The reason for this is that the lease is registered and accessible via the land registry on the UK government website here: <https://www.gov.uk/search-property-information-land-registry>

4. A valuation was carried out in 2020 which determined the value of the site to be de minimus. For ease of reference, any value that is below £20,000 is classed as being de minimus. This is due to various factors such as the use, the unexpired length of the term on the lease, together with a rental income applied to the lease being at a nominal value.
5. A section of the site at Preston Playing Fields remains in Council ownership and is available for use by the general public.
6. The rugby club are responsible in accordance with the above lease for the management of the land that is demised to them at Preston Playing Fields. This include the clubhouse and the facilities that are included within their lease boundary.
7. As per the above, the site that the rugby club is subject to the aforementioned lease agreement.
8. It is an operational requirement for the club to be affiliated with their National Governing Body, in this case the RFU. Each NGB has its own governance criteria to ensure that the club have effective and robust policies and procedures in place to enable it to run effectively and responsibly. For further details, the RFU can be contacted.

In addition to the above, please also see the attached plan illustrating the Council's ownership of the area in question.