

Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board
21st October 2015

The Agreement between Surrey County Council and Surrey Wildlife Trust to Manage the Countryside

Purpose of the Report: Scrutiny of Services and Performance Management/ Policy Development

This report updates the Board on the review of the Agreement between Surrey County Council and Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) to manage the County Council's Countryside Estate. A decision will be going to the County Council's Cabinet in November 2015, an outline draft of which is attached. This will set out the variations to the current Agreement and the monitoring process put in place to ensure the service is delivered to the agreed standards. The Board is asked to provide feedback on the proposed changes to the Agreement.

Introduction:

The Agreement with SWT to manage the County Council's Countryside Estate has run from 2002 with an end date of 2052. Following a review of the Agreement a number of changes are due to be taken to Cabinet in November 2015 for approval. The draft cabinet report attached outlines those changes.

The Variation to the Agreement will provide better value for the residents of Surrey and provide improved visitor facilities in the countryside.

Variation to the Agreement

1. Key to the variation to the Agreement is the premise that the Countryside Estate can generate an income which will allow the direct contribution from SCC to reduce to nil by 2021. SWT and SCC have agreed to work together to achieve this target and to this end a range of income generating ideas have been drawn up. These are now being worked up into business cases. These cases will underpin the rolling five year business plan which will demonstrate the process of getting to the nil contribution by 2021.
2. Following achievement of the cost neutral position for the Countryside Estate, the share of costs and profit from each of the income generating projects will be assessed on a case by case basis.

3. A further key variation is the changes to the Governance. This will include,
- The requirement for a rolling five year business plan.
 - The requirement for an Asset Management Plan and rolling five year Repairs and Maintenance Programme.
 - A revised Service Delivery Specification and set of Key Performance Indicators.
 - A new system to ensure that the Annual report is signed off by both partners.
 - A clear process for developing and approving the business cases and business plan.

Recommendations:

4. That prior to the report to Cabinet in November 2015 the Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board is requested to review the proposals and give feedback.

Next steps:

- There is a private meeting of the Countryside Member Reference Group on 2nd November at which the details of the income generating projects and draft business plan will be shared.
 - A report will go to Cabinet in November for the Approval of the Variations to the Agreement and the Business Plan for the Countryside Estate.
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Annex 1- Draft Cabinet Report, 24 November 2015