



Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board
14 April 2016

The Agreement with Surrey Wildlife Trust for the management of the County Council's Countryside Estate

Purpose of the report: *Scrutiny of Services and Budgets*

To scrutinise the agreement with Surrey Wildlife Trust for the management of the County Council's Countryside Estate, approved by the Cabinet on 22 March 2016.

Introduction:

- 1 On 22 March 2016 the Cabinet approved the agreement with Surrey Wildlife Trust for the management of the County Council's countryside estate.
- 2 David Goodwin, George Johnson and Mike Bennison of the Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways board have called-in this Cabinet decision for reconsideration by the Board.

Background:

- 3 The Cabinet's decision regarding the agreement with Surrey Wildlife Trust for the management of the County Council's countryside estate was published on 22 March 2016. The details of the Cabinet's decision extracted from the decision sheet, are stated below:

RESOLVED:

1. That the Surrey Wildlife Trust decision and recommendation be noted and endorsed.
2. That the Strategic Director for Environment and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning and the Director of Legal, Democratic and Cultural Services be required to work with Surrey Wildlife Trust to ensure the business plan is delivered.

Reasons for Decisions:

Approval of the recommendations will put in place a mechanism to make the management of the Countryside Estate more efficient whilst improving and maintaining the countryside, delivering improvements for visitors, reducing the Council's financial contribution to nil by December 2021, and agreeing the distribution of any surplus income thereafter.

- 4 On 31 March 2016, Democratic Services received notification that three Members (David Goodwin, George Johnson and Mike Bennison) of the Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways board had called-in this decision of the Cabinet. The reasons for the call-in are as follows:
 - a. The endorsement of the Surrey Wildlife Trust decision and requirement that the Strategic Director ensures the business plan is delivered prevents the possibility of any further scrutiny.
- 5 The following documents in relation to the decision made on 22 March 2016 are attached:
 - Report considered by Cabinet on 22 March 2016 (**Appendix 1**).
 - Cabinet Decision Sheet of 22 March 2016 (**Appendix 2**).
 - The call-in notice received by Democratic Services on 31 March 2016 (**Appendix 3**).
 - Extract from the minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 22 March 2016 (**To follow**)

The Call-in:

- 6 The Board is asked to consider the above evidence together with evidence presented at the call-in meeting in order to review the decision taken by the Cabinet.
- 7 The Board is asked whether or not it wishes to refer the decision back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.
- 8 If the Board decides to refer the decision back to the Cabinet for reconsideration, the Board's concern must be stated along with any proposed recommendations.

Recommendation:

That the Board reviews the decision of the Cabinet regarding the agreement with Surrey Wildlife Trust for the management of the County Council's countryside estate taken on 22 March 2016 and decides whether it wishes to refer the decision back to the Cabinet for reconsideration.

Next steps:

Should the Board decide to support the decision of the Cabinet; the decision will take effect on the date of the meeting.

Should the Board refer the decision back to the Cabinet, a meeting of the Cabinet must be held within seven working days. The Cabinet can then decide to amend the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.

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