

CABINET RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS BOARD

THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL AND SURREY WILDLIFE TRUST TO MANAGE THE COUNTRYSIDE ESTATE (considered by Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board on 26 January 2016)

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet notes the Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Boards concerns around the agreement between Surrey County Council and Surrey Wildlife Trust to manage the Countryside Estate.

RESPONSE:

The response from EPEH Board and their reservations are noted and I have set out below a more detailed reply to the points raised.

The Business Plan is built around a large number of business cases that have been produced or are in development. Cases are being developed with SCC support to establish feasibility. Where investment is required the Team at SWT are looking at external investors to take projects forward.

The Business Plan will be monitored quarterly by SCC with an annual report to the County Council.

The aim of the five year business plan is to reach financial self sufficiency by 2021 and to determine the allocations of funds thereafter. The profit share for each project will have clear rules to ensure the investors receive a return and then to share further returns based on the merits of each project.

SWT have worked consistently with SCC over the last few months to produce the Business Plan. This has included staff reduction and restructure and employing a Commercial and Visitor Services Team, assessing outgoings to find efficiencies and ensuring sustainable and commercial management of the built property. A new Property Asset Management Plan has been signed off by SCC Property Services.

The existing termination clause in the Agreement for Services has not been changed and allows the County Council to terminate in a number of circumstances, including in the event of a breach of the terms of the Agreement. The Memorandum of Understanding and the revised plans attached to the Agreement clarify the way the agreement will be implemented.

Mike Goodman
Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning
22 March 2016

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