

**CABINET RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE
COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT TASK GROUP REPORT**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1 – The Strategic Director for Environment & Infrastructure should review the contract between Surrey Wildlife Trust and Surrey County Council. This review should include:

- All aspects of the contract;
- The development and measurement of more clearly defined outputs that ensure value for money;
- A review of the governance arrangements;
- The development of a communication strategy to promote the benefit of the partnership arrangements to Members of the County Council and Surrey residents and;
- That the Environment & Transport Select Committee reviews the Countryside Estate's asset management plan at a future meeting.

Timescale: report to Environment & Transport Select Committee – October 2013.

Recommendation 2 - The Strategic Director for Change & Efficiency reviews the management arrangements for the Council's Small Holdings and Farm Estate to ensure that they retain value and maximise economic returns.

Timescale: report to Environment & Transport Select Committee – October 2013.

Recommendation 3 – The Strategic Director for Environment & Infrastructure reviews and refreshes the approach to rural and countryside partnership working. This review should include:

- A revised register of all partnerships within the County, setting out the purpose of each organisation and financial contributions and representation from the County;
- That this register is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it continues to be relevant;
- That a culture of partnership (rather than direction) is encouraged and fostered within the County, to encourage dialogue and facilitation between the Council and stakeholders and;
- That Surrey County Council actively engages with the (new) Surrey Nature Partnership, with the County representative on this body being the Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment.

Timescale: report to Environment & Transport Select Committee – July 2013.

Recommendation 4 – The Strategic Director for Environment & Infrastructure reviews and refreshes the approach to the rural economy. This review should consider that:

- The County Council maintains policies, which enable residents to live and work in the rural community. This will require working with partners to facilitate both affordable housing and job opportunities (including apprentices);
- The County Council supports the development of the wood fuel industry in Surrey and encourages co-operation between the owners of smaller woods; and

- The County Council considers, where suitable, the prioritisation of the use of wood fuel in its own buildings, subject to approval of a business case.

Timescale: report to Environment & Transport Select Committee – July 2013.

Recommendation 5 – The Strategic Director for Environment & Infrastructure reviews and refreshes the approach to tourism. This review should consider that:

- Specific management plans are created for iconic locations in Surrey;
- Where appropriate, the Olympic Legacy is used as a catalyst for key decisions; and
- Objectives are agreed with the AONB to reflect the strength and potential of the brand for Surrey.

Timescale: report to Environment & Transport Select Committee – July 2013.

RESPONSE

I welcome the report of the Environment and Transport Select Committee and its task group and note their recommendations. The Cabinet Member will consider the task group recommendations early in the new Administration and make a detailed response at that time.

Mr John Furey
Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
26 March 2013