

**COUNCIL MEETING – 2ND DECEMBER 2021**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 5 (1)**

**FUNDING CONTRIBUTION FOR TICES MEADOW**

A report from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th October, 2021.

**SUMMARY**

Surrey County Council is seeking to purchase the land known as Tices Meadow (formerly Farnham Quarry) with funding contributions from other local authority partners, including the Council, to secure its future as a protected nature reserve for use by the community.

**The Council is recommended to** agree a contribution of up to £50,000 towards the purchase of Tices Meadow by Surrey County Council to be funded from anticipated capital receipts.

**1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 19th October, the Cabinet considered and approved [Report No. FIN2122](#) which set out the Budget Strategy for 2022/23, including details of the current forecast for capital receipts.
- 1.2. As detailed in the Report, the Council is expected to receive capital receipts from the Parsons Barracks scheme and asset sales in the latter half of the financial year. The level of anticipated capital receipts for the year is likely to be £1.25m at the lower end of expectations and £2.25m at the higher end depending on the timing of receipts.
- 1.3. The emerging policy position is to pool all receipts from the sale of all assets sold to support the Capital Programme in line with funding the Council's priorities (as published in the Council Business Plan) which will include the potential sale of any investment properties or other property assets.
- 1.4. As part of its consideration of the budgetary framework, the Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council that a contribution of up to £50,000 is made to Surrey County Council for the purchase of Tices Meadow to be funded from anticipated capital receipts.

## **2. TICES MEADOW**

- 2.1 The land known as Tice's Meadow (formerly Farnham Quarry) is a restored sand and gravel site owned and operated by Hanson Aggregates. The site area is approximately 55 hectares and was formally opened in May 2019 and is now subject to a 20-year aftercare and long-term Management Plan, pursuant to the Section 106 Agreement of the extraction permission.
- 2.2 The site has been restored to a nature conservation end use, with permissive public access along the northern boundary. It also afforded the opportunity to incorporate a realignment and enhancement of the River Blackwater by the Environment Agency. The restoration and long-term management is overseen by a Management Group comprising Hanson, Surrey County Council (SCC), Tice's Bird Group, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, and Farnham Residents Association.
- 2.3 Hanson put the site on the market in late 2019 but, despite several bids, the site remains unsold to date. Following a number of meetings with local authority partners it was decided to purchase the site to secure its future as a protected nature reserve for use by the community. The area is heavily used by Rushmoor residents despite the site not being in the Borough.
- 2.4 Longer term there remains the scope to create wider opportunities to link Tice's Meadow with SCC's adjacent lands at Tongham Pools.

## **3. PROPOSED FUNDING PACKAGE**

- 3.1 Following discussions with Hanson an agreement has been reached allowing SCC to purchase the site for £425,000 including tax and costs with contributions from other local authority partners including the Council. SCC will own the site and will be responsible for its management and liabilities moving forward. The funding package is proposed as follows (note the contributions shown in the table below were based on an assumed purchase value of £475,000):

Surrey County Council	£250,000
Guildford Borough Council	£50,000
Waverley Borough Council with Farnham Town Council	£75,000
Rushmoor Borough Council	£50,000
Hampshire County Council	£50,000

- 3.2 It is recommended that a contribution of up to £50,000 is made to Surrey County Council for the purchase of Tices Meadow as outlined above; to be funded from anticipated capital receipts. The estimated contribution from Rushmoor based on the lower purchase price of £425,000 is £45,075 (being 10%).

P.G. TAYLOR  
PORTFOLIO HOLDER  
CORPORATE SERVICES