

Executive – 7 March 2018

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)
Councillors Beale, Berry, Parrish, Mrs Stock-Williams and Mrs Warmington

Officers: Paul Carter (Assistant Director – Corporate Services), Tim Burton (Assistant Director – Planning and Environment), Joanne O’Hara (Wellington Heritage at Risk Project Manager) and Richard Bryant (Democratic Services Manager)

Also present: Councillors Aldridge and Coles

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 p.m.)

16. Apologies

Councillors Edwards and Habgood.

17. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 8 February 2018, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and were signed.

18. Declaration of Interests

Councillors Mrs Stock-Williams and Mrs Warmington declared personal interests as Members of Wellington Town Council and Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council respectively.

19. Executive Forward Plan

Submitted for information the Forward Plan of the Executive over the next few months.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

20. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clauses 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

21. Proposed Acquisition of Land at Norton Fitzwarren

Considered report previously circulated, relating to the proposed acquisition of an area of land at Norton Fitzwarren.

The Council had been working with the South West Heritage Trust (SWHT), Norton

Fitzwarren Parish Council (NFPC) and Historic England (HE) to secure the site which was a Scheduled Ancient Monument, currently on the HE Risk Register.

The site had important archaeological remains which were at risk due to the legal invasive farming techniques that had occurred in the past and was likely to take place again in the near future. The Council's aim was to acquire the site and remove it from intensive farming.

Further reported that the site also formed part of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and would provide open space to the community. There would also be education opportunities taking account of the ecological and archaeological interests on the site.

The total cost of site acquisition would be in the region of the figure included within the report. The funding for the purchase would largely be met by HE (80%) with the SWHT and the NFPC each making a small contribution. It was proposed that the remainder should be funded from the Council's general reserves.

The SWHT had indicated that they would be prepared to take on a 30-year lease on the site and help to find funding for a Conservation and Management Plan with applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Viridor Credits and other such bodies.

The Council would need to work with HE, SWHT and NFPC to work up an agreed management plan for the site. This would mean that the continuing maintenance of the site would not be the responsibility of the Council, thereby removing any continuing impact on Taunton Deane's Revenue Budget.

Resolved that Full Council be recommended to approve a supplementary estimate of the sum identified in the report to the capital programme for the acquisition of the land at Norton Fitzwarren, including the use of the required sum from the Council's General Reserves.

(The meeting ended at 6.44 p.m.)