

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker</b>	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
<b>Date:</b>	27 October 2021
<b>Title:</b>	<i>Invest in Hampshire: Tice's Meadow</i>
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services and Director of Corporate Operations

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### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to consider for approval a contribution of £45k from the *Invest in Hampshire* fund as part of a consortium of local authorities, led by Surrey County Council, to enable the purchase of Tice's Meadow, Aldershot.

### Recommendations

2. To approve a contribution of £45k from the *Invest in Hampshire* fund as a contribution to the purchase of Tice's Meadow, Aldershot.

### Executive Summary

3. This report seeks to set out the background to the request from Surrey County Council for support in the purchase of Tice's Meadow nature reserve. It explains the strong County Council interest in the Reserve on behalf of local Hampshire residents in Aldershot and the surrounding area. The £45k funding can be provided from the *Invest in Hampshire* fund. This purchase, enabled by a consortium of authorities, led by Surrey County Council, will enable a valuable nature reserve at the northern end of the Blackwater Valley to be secured as a nature reserve and for public access in perpetuity.

## Contextual Information

4. Surrey County Council, Hampshire County Council, Guildford Borough Council, Rushmoor Borough Council, Waverley Borough Council and Farnham Town Council have been negotiating terms to secure Tice's Meadow, and due diligence and legal processes are in hand. Working in partnership, the desire has been to secure the long-term future of this important award-winning nature reserve, which is a fully restored former quarry, for the wider benefit of the local communities.
5. SCC will acquire the land in its sole name and take on the full liability of the current 20-year restoration programme. They will also be leading and continuing the current day to day management group arrangements and are identifying and appropriate revenue stream to support that.
6. The land known as Tice's Meadow (formerly Farnham Quarry) is a restored sand and gravel site (55ha) on the far eastern boundary of Surrey County Council. The land lies outside the Hampshire boundary, immediately to the south and east of Aldershot. Its geographical location makes it of considerable amenity and landscape value to the residents of Aldershot. Tice's Meadow is currently owned and operated by Hanson Aggregates. The site was formally opened in May 2019 and is now subject to a 20-year aftercare and long-term Management Plan as part of the Section 106 Agreement of the extraction permission.
7. The site has been restored to a nature conservation end use, with permissive public access directly from Aldershot along the northern boundary, which closely follows the County Boundary line between Surrey and Hampshire. The restoration 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, SCC, Tice's Bird Group, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, and Farnham Residents Association.
8. Although Tice's Meadow lies within the geographical county boundary of Surrey, the amenity and landscape value of the site is of considerable importance to the residents of Aldershot, a Hampshire community. It also forms part of the ecology of the Blackwater Valley and is therefore of value to the residents of Hampshire but also to its landscape, flora and fauna.
9. Hanson put the site on the market in late 2019 but, despite several bids, the site remained unsold.
10. There is no intended change in the day-to-day management arrangements, which already involve HCC, or works identified in the approved Management Plan and S106 obligations. Any such changes would require an application

and consent from Surrey County Council. Hampshire is already an active partner in the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership.

11. Part of the site has an element of SANG (Sustainable Alternative Greenspace) potential, given the sanctuary nature of the site, along its northern boundary. However, this remains subject to ongoing discussion with Natural England to clarify the exact suitability of the SANG area. None of the Local authorities has specifically indicated an interest in purchase for SANG usage.
12. There is scope to create wider opportunities to link Tice's Meadow with adjacent lands at Tongham Pools.

### **Finance**

13. At a meeting on 25 June 2021 between politicians from all the interested it was agreed all would make a capital contribution to support the acquisition of the site (led by Surrey County Council) whilst retaining the existing primary management and local stakeholder group support arrangements.
14. Surrey County Council have agreed terms and a purchase price. Exchange of contracts is anticipated for early November, after a formal sign off by Surrey CC's Cabinet scheduled for 28th October.
15. Hampshire County Council's contribution has been agreed at £45k. It is proposed that this capital contribution is paid from the *Invest in Hampshire Fund*.

### **Consultation and Equalities**

16. No consultation or Equalities Impact Assessment was necessary for this purchase.

### **Climate Change Impact Assessment**

17. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience impacts of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.

## **Climate Change Adaptation**

18. The site forms part of the catchment of the River Blackwater and good management contributes towards the management of any severe flooding events and aims to maintain and enhance the biodiversity of the area.

## **Carbon Mitigation**

19. It is unlikely that Tice's Meadow can offer any further significant carbon mitigation.

## **Conclusions**

20. This report has outlined the value of Tice's Meadow to the residents of Hampshire and its wider value as part of the landscape and ecology of the Blackwater Valley. For these reasons it is appropriate to contribute to the capital costs of purchase, through a consortia led by Surrey County Council, and secure the site as a local nature reserve in perpetuity.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	yes

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

<b>Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents</b>	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

## EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

### 1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### 2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <https://hants.sharepoint.com/sites/ID/SitePages/Equality-Impact-Assessments.aspx?web=1>

Insert in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state:

(a) *why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or*

*will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions*