

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 7 JULY 2015

Title:

**WEYDON LANE FORMER LANDFILL SITE
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Simon Thornton]
[Wards Affected: Farnham Firgrove]**

Summary and purpose:

The Council has been exploring the scope and viability of undertaking works on the former Landfill site on Weydon Lane, Farnham to enable the site to be made available, for example, for formal recreational use.

At its meeting on 25 November 2014, Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee endorsed the short term management plan for the site and recommended to the Executive that a Special Interest Group (SIG) be established to assist the Portfolio Holder in reviewing future options for the site. At its meeting of 6 January 2015, the Executive agreed that a SIG be formed.

This report presents the Portfolio Holder's proposed Terms of Reference and the process for assigning Members to the Weydon Lane SIG.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

This report relates to the Council's **Environment** priority; monitoring contaminated land is an important duty that the Council performs.

It also relates to the Council's **Leisure & Lives** priority, and the aim to "encourage residents to use the Borough's open spaces and countryside as an important recreational resource, and to work with local residents and park users to develop appropriate management plans".

Financial Implications:

A wide range of future costs may result, depending on the decision on future use of the site. The costs for the larger scale options are very significant, and the Council does not currently have a budget for these works. In the absence of external funding, most of the options (beyond short-term remedial works) are currently unaffordable.

Legal Implications:

Waverley Borough Council owns the Weydon Lane Former Landfill Site and has a duty of care to users of the land. The land was conveyed to Farnham Urban District Council in 1972. The terms of the conveyance deed require that the land should not be used for any purpose" other than that of a recreation ground or public open space...".

Introduction

1. At its meeting of 25 November 2014, the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered a report setting out potential options for the future management of the former landfill site at Weydon Lane, Farnham. The Committee endorsed the short term management plan for the site, and recommended to the Executive that a Special Interest Group (SIG) be established to assist the Portfolio Holder in reviewing all options for the site. The Executive subsequently agreed, at its meeting on 6 January that a SIG be formed.
2. At its meeting on 24 March 2015, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee was invited by the Portfolio Holder to review the draft Terms of Reference of the SIG.

Draft Terms of Reference

3. The draft Terms of Reference for the Weydon Lane SIG considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee are set out below:
 - a. To identify the scope of work, cost-range and time-scale required to bring the Weydon Landfill site from its present state to one at which its development for recreational purposes would be feasible.
 - b. To identify the options for such development, as well as the technical, environmental and planning challenges involved, and the cost range for each such option;
 - c. To identify the necessary timing and funding strategies that would be appropriate for the realisation of each development option;
 - d. To consult other stakeholders and the local community on the issues identified.
 - e. To report findings back to the Executive in September 2015 at the latest, alongside any recommendations for follow-up in the immediate term.

Membership of the SIG

4. In accordance with the Council's Special Interest Group Protocol, the Portfolio Holder for the Environment will chair the SIG and determine its membership. SIGs usually have a membership of 6 or 7 Councillors, with the ability to invite interested persons to attend certain meetings if required. A number of local interest groups will be invited to participate.

Observations from Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked the Portfolio Holder for giving them the opportunity to comment on the Terms of Reference of the SIG, and the Membership.

7. The Committee considered whether the terms of reference might include specific consideration of the potential for the site to be designated as Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS), which would enable it to attract developers' contributions to fund the remedial works required. However, it was noted that the Head of Planning had previously advised that this option had already been explored and that regrettably the site did not meet Natural England's criteria for SANGS.
8. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee therefore endorsed the proposed Terms of Reference for the SIG.
9. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee felt that further consideration of the membership of the SIG should be delayed until after the local elections and then taken up by the appropriate Portfolio Holder. However, the Committee suggested that as the land was a Waverley corporate asset, the membership of the SIG should be representative of the borough as a whole, and not just local Farnham members.
10. Consideration now needs to be given to the proposed membership of the SIG by the Environment Portfolio Holder, in liaison with the Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive endorses the proposed Terms of Reference and agrees that membership of the SIG be decided by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment in liaison with the Chairman of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Damian Roberts

Telephone: 01483 523398

Email: damian.roberts@waverley.gov.uk

Name: Rob Anderton

Telephone: 01483 523411

E-mail: robert.anderton@waverley.gov.uk