

Extract from Joint Strategic Committee - 1 December 2020

JSC/090/20-21 Extending natural habitat restoration: acquisition of Pad Farm

Before the Committee was a report by the Director for Digital, Sustainability & Resources, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as Item 18.

The report sought the Committee's approval for the purchase of Pad Farm, circa 45 acres of arable farmland in the Adur Valley for the purposes of preserving and enhancing the local natural environment.

Adur Council as landowner would develop plans in collaboration with the Adur Estuary Partnership to restore mudflat and saltmarsh habitat, undertaking tests and trials on managed realignment, consistent with the Adur Catchment Flood Management Plan, subject to successful applications for funding.

In seeking to take a stake, and restore natural habitat, Adur District Council was demonstrating leadership and foresight, recognising the multiple benefits of natural habitats such as natural flood risk management, biodiversity recovery, carbon storage and higher public amenity value.

The Committee noted that it was expected that the project would help develop the mechanisms for compensatory habitat payments from developers as well as other possible forms of investment, such as carbon storage.

The recommendations in the report were proposed by Councillor Angus Dunn, seconded by Councillor Neil Parkin and were unanimously supported by the Committee.

Decision:

That the Joint Strategic Committee

1. recommended that Adur District Council approve the purchase of Pad Farm at an overall cost of £324,000 (comprising a purchase price of £290,000 and up to £34,000 to cover the cost of acquisition including surveys, legal fees and stamp duty) funded by prudential borrowing;

2. delegated authority to the Head of Major Projects and Investment to agree detailed terms of the transaction and enter the contract for the purchase subject to a satisfactory legal and technical due diligence;
3. requested an update report within the next six months providing an overview of maintenance costs, along with a strategy for habitat restoration and an associated funding strategy;
4. agreed that the land would be held for the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural environment; enhancing biodiversity; and contributing to the Council's ambition of being Carbon Neutral by 2030.