



HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL

SANG GROUNDS MAINTENANCE – STURT ROAD DEVELOPMENT

Background

Consent for approx. 135 houses has been granted at Sturt Farm Haslemere.

One planning condition is that the developer has to provide a SANG – Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace – a mitigation package designed to ensure there is no significant impact on the Wealden Heaths Phase 2 Special Protection Area (SPA). The attached SANG management and delivery plan has been accepted and agreed with Natural England.

Implementation of work to create SANG, costing around £50k will be completed by the developer before the first residential unit is occupied – anticipated late 2020.

SANG maintenance

A suitable body is required to manage the SANG in perpetuity. There is a national body, The Land Trust, who often do this on behalf of developers, however the Town Council has been approached to see if it would be interested in taking over the management as it is well placed at a local level.

Key points to note:

- All SANG work to be completed before the TC take management over.
- An endowment of £287k to be provided to the TC to pay for ongoing management.
- WBC and Natural England have been approached and in principle are happy to accept that HTC are a suitable body to take on the work.
- HTC Legal fees to be covered by the developer (to an agreed maximum)

Maintenance and Costing

In November 2019 Council agreed to take over SANG management in principle but wanted a more detailed breakdown of costing of its maintenance.

In February 2020, Town Hall officers met on site with the Council's groundscare provider and representative of the land owner for a detailed site visit.

The design of the SANG area is deliberately designed to have little impact on the environment and to create a real sense of countryside in the city. Accordingly the maintenance will be deliberately 'light touch' (see appendix). The area is also designed to encourage and support wildlife and biodiversity.

On completion of the lease the Town Council will receive an endowment of £287,00 to pay for the maintenance of the land in perpetuity. Maintenance costs for the first year will be £1,680 + vat, to be reviewed after the first year but not anticipated to rise greatly.

There are also some items to be replaced every 10 years, dog bins, signs etc (see appendix), the cost of which will need to be covered from the endowment.

If £10k is taken out of the endowment to cover the first 5 years maintenance and the remaining £277,000 invested at 3% which is widely available for 5 year fixed investments it would, pay for maintenance and replacement items without any additional funds required from HTC.

Legal considerations

The Town Council's solicitor has looked at the proposal, heads of terms and lease and can see no reason why this should not go ahead.

RECOMMENDED: That Haslemere Town Council enters into a 999 year lease of the Sturt Road SANG site and maintains it as per the maintenance schedule out of the £287,000 endowment it would receive.