

Memo

To:	Monitoring Officer	From:	Marcel Coiffait
Location:	Priory House	Location:	Priory House
Services/ Directorate:	LGSS	Services/ Directorate:	Community Services
Copy to:	Andrew Gordon – Head of Estate Management	Telephone:	x75637
Date:	14.11.18		

DECISIONS DELEGATED TO DIRECTORS

I have consulted the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery, Cllr Eugene Ghent on the following matter, with the result recorded at F below

A. SUBJECT MATTER:

Acquisition of 255.71 Acres of arable land at Church Farm Wrestlingworth

B. DECISION/OR INTENDED DECISION:

To authorise the acquisition and approve the terms in respect of the purchase of 255.71 Acres of arable land at Church Farm Wrestlingworth at a purchase price of

C. BASIS OF DECISION (GIVING FULL SUPPORTING EVIDENCE)

In accordance with the Council's Farms Estate Plan, the Council intends to acquire appropriate landholdings to replace land that is disposed of. In the financial year 2016/17 £8million was set aside in the capital programme to fund the acquisition of suitable land as and when offered to the market.

The market for the sale of farm land has been relatively quiet until recently, when a number of sites became available and were considered by the Council. Church Farm is one of those sites.

Interest in this site has been keen and the Council has had to move swiftly.

The Council's retained Land Agents, Bidwells, considered the site alongside the principles set out in the Farm Estate Plan and recommended that an offer to purchase was made.

On 16 October 2018 the offer to purchase was made. On 23 October 2018 the offer was accepted.

The Council's offer was accepted on the basis that, subject to all appropriate due diligence, the Council was ready to proceed swiftly, its funding was in place and the parties would work towards an exchange of contracts by end of November 2018.

The purchase of land at this price is a Key Decision and its value is such that it exceeds my level of delegated authority. The next Executive meeting does not take place until 4 December 2018, later than the date by which contracts for this acquisition are intended to be exchanged. It is too late to add this item to the forward plan for the December meeting and the Council must act in a timely manner if it wishes to be considered as a credible Buyer.

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D. AUTHORISATION

A decision by the Director is authorised:

because it is a matter of immediate urgency, the grounds of urgency being as follows:-

Failure to authorise the acquisition and approval of the terms for the purchase of this land prior to the December Executive meeting may result in the Council losing the opportunity to acquire this land; the market for the land is relatively strong and the Sellers will not accept an offer conditional upon approval being sought at a later Executive meeting.

AND

The Executive Member has delegated power to deal with the matter under paragraph 3.2 and 3.3 Appendix A Part 3E Page 64 of the Council's constitution.

E. BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional capital or revenue budget implications in the current or future years arising from the decision (in the event of budgetary implications please specify)

F. RESPONSE OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

The following Executive Member has agreed with the proposed decision:

.....
Councillor Eugene Ghent

Since the Executive Member was in favour of the proposed decision, it has now been taken and is being acted upon.

.....
Marcel Coiffait
Director of Community Services .

