

Agenda Item 15
Report PR42/18

Report to	Policy & Resources Committee
Date	27 September 2018
By	Head of Business Services
Title of Report (Note)	Enterprise & Investment Task & Finish Group Update

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to note the on-going work of the Enterprise and Investment Task and Finish Group

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Enterprise and Investment Task and Finish Group (EITFG) has now been operating for over a year and this month, welcomed new Members in Robert Mocatta, Neville Harrison and Pete West.
- 1.2 The work of the group continues to focus primarily on the potential acquisition of Seven Sisters Country Park from East Sussex County Council by the SDNPA.

2. Update on Activities

- 2.1 Members will be aware that SDNPA submitted an initial proposal to ESCC on the potential acquisition in June following an independent condition survey, red book valuation and assessment of commercial potential. A further deadline for a detailed and costed proposal was set by ESCC for 29 August and SDNPA submitted a proposal on that date in the format they requested. A copy is attached at **Appendix I**.
- 2.2 On 6 September the EITFG held an introductory meeting with the Trustees of the independent South Downs Charitable Trust which established that they were interested in becoming involved in the development of the Seven Sisters proposals. They expressed an interest in partnering to help deliver the vision, subject to the outcome of the current evaluative work.

- 2.3 ESCC are interested in disposing of a number of countryside sites and now have various proposals on those sites from different interested organisations. The Council are now beginning a process of technical evaluation of the proposals they have received.
- 2.4 The first part of the technical evaluation was a series of clarification interviews held over Friday 14th and Monday 17th September 2018, where subject experts from ESCC, covering Health and Wellbeing, Ecology, Cultural Heritage, Finance, Economic Development, and Estates, questioned each organisation on the relevant aspects of their proposals.
- 2.5 A team from SDNPA led by the Chair of the EITFG attended one of those clarification interviews and explained our approach to potential acquisition of Seven Sisters Country Park, in line with the criteria developed within the Member Group. The presentation used is included as **Appendix 2**.

3 Nest Steps

- 3.3 SDNPA will continue to supply technical information in connection to the proposal to ESCC as they follow through with their process. We are also competitively procuring commercial expertise to help us produce the full business case and to develop exacting market comparisons and sensitivity tests.
- 3.4 A much fuller set of information on the proposal will be provided to Members at the Member Workshop before the NPA on 16th October, when there will be opportunities for a full discussion on all aspects of the proposal, the business case, and project timeline.
- 3.5 If ESCC keep to their current timetable, if SDNPA is selected as their preferred bidder and if the EITFG concludes that the business case demonstrates that there is a strong case for acquisition the proposal will then be subject to the authority's decision making processes culminating in a final decision at the full NPA.

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Appendices
1. ESCC submission
2. Presentation to East Sussex County Council; Seven Sisters Country Park