

Key Decision	Yes
Listed on Forward Plan	Yes
Within Policy	Yes
Policy Document	
Overview Committee:	Treasury

EDGEWICK FARM WOBURN SANDS

Accountable Cabinet Member: Cec Tallack

Contact Officer: Peter Smettem Principal Surveyor (Operations) MK 252334

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek approval to the sale of Edgewick Farm to Woburn Sands Town Council and to authorise the Head of Legal and Property to complete the sale transaction.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet dispose of Edgewick Farm to Woburn Sands Town Council for £1 on the basis that the farm is available for community use and restricted to be used in perpetuity as public open space.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet note the opportunity forgone to improve the current financial position of the council's Capital Programme by adopting this proposal.

3. Issues & Choices

- 3.1 The potential disposal of Edgewick Farm was considered by Cabinet on the 4 December 2001 and the 19 March 2002. Cabinet resolved in the December meeting that negotiations be entered into with Woburn Sands Town Council and that if agreement is not reached by 31 March 2002, then the site be offered for sale on the open market. At the meeting of the 19 March Cabinet resolved that the period for Woburn Sands Town Council to consider the purchase of Edgewick Farm, Woburn Sands be extended until 30 June 2002. They also confirmed that in the event that Woburn Sands Town Council was unable to meet best consideration then further reports would be submitted to the Cabinet.

- 3.2 Woburn Sands Town Council was advised of both resolutions. They wanted to utilise the farm for community purposes but were unable to match the price it was thought could be achieved on the open market. At the negotiations it was confirmed that if they were unable to acquire at full market value then it was legally possible (subject to Cabinet approval) to acquire the farm at a nominal value and establish a community use on this site. To satisfy the community use requirements:
- The nature of the community use would need to be specified
 - A plan is needed about how the community use is to be established
 - Confirmation that monetary consideration is available to establish and maintain the community use is needed.
- 3.3 Woburn Sands Town Council responded formally on the 13 June 2002 and this is attached in Annex A. All the issues have been addressed. Additionally they have involved the Town residents in this project and obtained support from Wavendon Parish Council. A copy of the letter from Wavendon Parish Council is attached.
- 3.4 In the alternative Edgewick farm could be placed on the open market for sale. Proceeds in the order of £125,000 could be obtained in this manner. The sale would be on the basis of no restrictions as to use (other than those imposed by the usual planning regime).

4. Implications

4.1 Resources

- 4.2 See paragraph 3.4 above. A sale to the Town Council at nominal consideration of £1 would prevent this Council from maximising the monetary value of its property asset at a time when the funding of this year's Capital Programme is uncertain. The latest Capital Programme forecast indicates a potential shortfall of approximately £1m. A further £1m of schemes are being held back awaiting funding. Other asset sales are planned to meet the funding gap, but it is uncertain as to whether these can be achieved.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 The Council has an obligation to obtain best value from a disposal of property assets, but there are dispensations to this general rule. Lettings to another Council can be at less than market rent. Freehold disposals generally also can be at less than best value if restrictions are placed on the freehold requiring access by the general public for not less than 1,300 hours per calendar year. In the case of Edgewick farm this restriction will be incorporated as well as a covenant to only use the land as public open space. Woburn Sands Town Council are aware of these restrictions and they can be accommodated in any disposal to them.

Background Papers: None